

West Berks Community Broadband Report for Sulhamstead Parish Council May 2019

ACTIVITY

WBCB was established as a limited company in early 2016 following the Charity Commission's refusal to accept registration as a charity. The company is being run as a not-for-profit staffed by local volunteers.

OFCOM has licensed the business.

Over 50 paying customers have so far been connected, with another 5 sites online as relay stations, including The Village Hall and The Spire. Wises Firs and Island Farm Road now have service.

Finance

Funding has been obtained in the form of loans from Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet Parish Councils, St Marys Parochial Church Council and one individual. The loan from Sulhamstead Parish Council, for which we are extremely grateful, was partly repaid in May 2019. Several customers have prepaid for three years service.

The business is now running above monthly break even, which means that the costs of the Claranet connection are covered by the monthly income. Further expenditure on infrastructure rollout is expected this year. Surplus funds are being used to pay back the loans gradually.

Customers

There are currently more customer applications than technical capacity to supply them, which is another way of saying that trees are still the biggest practical issue faced by the installation team. Creative use of remote sites in areas such as Woodcote are helping to overcome these problems.

Outlook

The prospects for continued expansion of the network, and therefore repayment of the funding loans, continue to be good. Additional volunteers are always welcome.....

