# Getting broadband and wi fi into our churches June 2020

## Background

As part of Benefice of the Future, we have been seeking to grow the worshipping communities across 27 of our rural churches. These are currently situated in 3 multi –parish benefices spread across the Diocese.

In order to enable innovation, it has been necessary to introduce IT connectivity to some of these churches. Examples of these innovations include:

* streamed video and music as part of new forms of worship,
* contactless giving and indeed
* the streaming of whole services (especially relevant during the lockdown)

This report describes how this can be achieved as well as potential suppliers and estimated costs.

## Broadband

The traditional means of getting online is by having an active telephone line and then connecting it to a broadband router – this is what most of us probably have at home, and it works well. Costs are approximately £100 installation, plus between £30 and £40 per month rental. So far so good, but there is a catch - if a new line needs to be installed, this is simple with a domestic property but much more problematic with historic buildings. New lines need to be attached to the outside of any building, and holes then drilled for cable access; for many of our grade 1 and 2 listed buildings, this will cause damage to the fabric, so is not a viable option.

All new telephone line installations in the UK are carried out by Open Reach – regardless of broadband supplier. Every new line also requires a site survey; these are booked by your potential broadband supplier. There is normally a 2-4 week wait for the visit, and each survey costs £125 (including VAT). This is payable whether a line is then installed. For more details about Open Reach, see this link

<https://www.openreach.co.uk/orpg/home/contactus/contactus.do>,.

Overhead lines are the cheapest and easiest solution. New lines can also be run underground, but installation costs increase dramatically – often to sums of £6000-£10 000 . One workaround is if there is a non-listed hall or other building attached to the church, the cable can be attached to this and a signal booster purchased to ensure wi fi coverage in the church. These booster units cost in the region of £200.

The situation is much simpler when there is an existing phone line, and the process can be completed in a few weeks.

A case study for successful broadband installation is St Thomas’s at Charlton who used Daisy Communications <https://daisycomms.co.uk/?s=communications+broadband>

## Wi fi

So, what can be done if a new line cannot be installed?

 One option is plug in mobile wi fi. Sometimes known as dongles, these small devices use the mobile phone network to deliver wi fi, and because they are portable, have no detrimental impact on the fabric of the building. As a result, no faculty is necessary. Coverage can be patchy, but the MiFi units will work on any network depending on the SIM card, so churches can use whichever network is strongest in their location. Cost starts from £30 per month and rise to £32 pm (inclusive of VAT) for unlimited data. Another advantage is that you can put the unit in your pocket and use it in conjunction with a contactless payment unit anywhere in the parish for events such as fetes, fayres and collecting fees.

Mi Fi units are in use in 11 of the BoF pilot churches, although a full evaluation of their effectiveness had been delayed by the lockdown. Most of the suppliers will provide loan units so that they can be checked in each church before any order is placed. Contracts are normally for 12 months.

Suppliers include the following:

* DRC (our corporate telecoms supplier) <https://www.drc.ltd/>
* Gamma Communications

 [https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/broadband](https://www.parishbuying.org.uk/phone-and-broadband)

 <https://www.gamma.co.uk/>

* Daisy Communications <https://www.parishbuying.org.uk>

## Key contacts

## Table of costs (inclusive of VAT)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product**  | **Supplier** | **Set up £** | **Annual £** | **Faculty** | **Mimimum contract** |
| **Fixed line broadband- with existing phone line to building** | Daisy Communications | £8 for delivery of router | £50.50 pm | Yes – but only list B |  |
|  | Gamma Communications | 36-month contract:Line Installation FOCLine rental £13.20 per month;12-month contract:Line install £120Router and connection £112.80 | 36-month contract:Data connection & Router FOCFibre 40mb £30Fibre 80mb £39.60 Call charges: 0.75 pence per minute Local & National Calls2ppm Main uk mobile. | Yes - but only list B | 12 months |
|  | DRC | £42 | £144 | Yes - but only list B | 12 months |
| **Fixed line broadband- no existing phone line** | Daisy Communications | As above plus £125 for Open Reach survey plus £8 for delivery of router | £50.50 pm | Yes – list A |  |
|  | Gamma Communications | As above plus £125 for Open Reach survey | As above | Yes – list A | 12 months |
|  | DRC | As above plus £125 for Open Reach survey | £280.80 | Yes – list A | 12 months |
| **Mobile wi fi units** | Daisy Communications | £42 | Unlimited data – Vodafone £30 pcm;O2 £33 pcm | No | 12 months |
|  | Gamma Communications | Dongle 12 month term carries £42 activation charge | Dongle 24 month term £25.92 per month with 30gb. | No | 12 months |
|  | DRC | FOC & Wi-Fi Units supplied FOC | £360.00 | No | 12 months |