

## Broadband in West Hill - update Jul 2021

Cllr Jess Bailey, Devon County Council and East Devon District Council

Report for West Hill Parish Council, July 2021

### Broadband upgrade

There are in essence three ways in which broadband can potentially be upgraded in West Hill. First, via a commercial roll out from an operator such as Openreach or Jurassic. Second, via the Connecting Devon and Somerset Airband Contract. Third, via a pooling of gigabit vouchers through a scheme such as Openreach's community fibre partnership.

### Commercial Roll Out

Earlier this year we received the disappointing news that Jurassic Fibre were no longer intending to roll out to West Hill, as it was anticipated that Openreach would be doing so. There has in fact been a 'trickle' from Openreach and nothing more, with no suggestion that there will be anything further from them until 2024 at the earliest. I am in touch with both Jurassic and Openreach and hope that will be doing my best to persuade them to have a change of heart. There is considerable appetite to upgrade beyond the current fibre to cabinet service, not least because for many of our residents who live considerable distances from the cabinet experience speeds that are extremely poor. It is also possible that other commercial operators may be interested in rolling out to West Hill and this requires further investigation.

### Connecting Devon and Somerset – Airband Contract

This contract was placed in December 2019 but I do not believe that West Hill is within a contract area for Airband.

### Gigabit Voucher Scheme

I am told by CDS that even though West Hill postcodes are not shown as being eligible for the vouchers that it could potentially qualify if there is no intention of a commercial roll out. This is something that would require further discussion with CDS. The gigabit voucher scheme is designed for rural areas and, looking at the ONS map, West Hill does meet the rural element criteria Rural-Urban Classification for Output Areas Locator Tool ([arcgis.com](http://arcgis.com)). I am advised by CDS that a voucher pooling scheme could typically take around 12-18 months and where this has been rolled out in other communities it is usually led by a motivated individual or individuals from the community rather than a parish council itself (but with a parish council or other village group providing support).

Cllr Jess Bailey