

Connect Fibre have arranged a public consultation in Alstonefield Village Hall on

Wednesday 21st August starting at 3PM.

If you have anything to say on this subject, or have any questions to ask, this is your opportunity.

Their Chief Delivery Officer, Dale Regan, will be there.

As you know from the signs that have sprung up around the Parish, Connect Fibre have won the contract to install the infrastructure for (up to) gigabit broadband in our area.

This will be installed by using fibre optic cable to connect each property back to the Openreach cabinet, which for Alstonefield is at the top of Lode Lane opposite the old BT exchange.

Supplying fibre to properties can be done either by overhead cables strung from poles and from there to the property, or by trenching work to provide underground connection.

Connect Fibre are responsible for deciding how this should be done and have decided to do this by poles. They have two main problems using underground supply. Firstly, it is more expensive for them. Secondly, it takes longer and requires more planning, as road closures and permissions are required. Therefore, it is not surprising that they want to erect poles and strung cables, rather than keep it underground.

According to their notices, they are planning several poles in the village and a line of a dozen or so from the top of the Rakes to the Wetton turn on the way to Hulme End. There are also some towards Hopedale, the bottom of the Pinch and on Tinman Lane by Upper Hurst Farm in Hulme End.

From the perspective of supplying fibre broadband, there are two types of property in Alstonefield:

1) You already have your phone and Internet connection provided by a pole on the verge/pavement, supplying your house by an overhead cable.

There will be no apparent change for you, other than an additional overhead cable.

2) You have an underground supply to your house.

Almost certainly, you will have a new pole installed nearby and an overhead cable to your house. This will not be your choice to make, unless you don't mind not having a phone or any other communications directly from your property when the copper supply is turned off. You will then be relying on mobile communications.

This is part of a "once in a lifetime" communications infrastructure upgrade. Would it not therefore justify a less slapdash and more thoughtful approach to the installation? Shouldn't we be looking forward to fewer poles, not more?

Our MP, Karen Bradley and our district councillor, Edwin Wain, are both against the use of poles and strung cables in Alstonefield village and the surrounding countryside and are doing their best to stop this.

The only time that this can be challenged is NOW. If these poles and cables are strung around this countryside we love, they will be there for many decades to come.