

Gigaclear On-Line Meeting – 1 December 2021

Start: 18:05

In attendance

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson, Cllr Derek Walters and Cllr Helen Belcher

Ros Griffiths – Community Engagement Manager

Kevin Fielding – Democratic Services Officer

Dominic Hones & Arron Parsons- Gigaclear

Tina Ellis, Jane Robertson, Anne Keat – Local residents

Apologies – Cllr Brian Mathew

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Everybody introduced themselves.

Dominic Hones outlines the current works of Gigaclear in the Corsham community area and advised that a revised work program to go out in the New Year.

That Gigaclear were now having regular Monthly updates with the Corsham Area Board members.

(Dom to add Cllr Helen Belcher to the distribution list)

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson agreed to share a Gigaclear cabinet location map to other Area Board members.

That work was subject to road closures, and that jobs would get moved around on the calendar to get this done.

Two questions were then discussed:

From Lacock Parish Council

- 1. We would appreciate confirmation from Gigaclear regarding the plan for installation at Reybridge. This was originally proposed as part of the Derry Hill installation but we understand that was completed before Lacock village was progressed and Reybridge was not included.***

Dominic Hones to follow up this question

2. Further to our exchange on Facebook regarding the upcoming Area Board meeting, I'm emailing you as requested. I'm disappointed that use of the installed fibre seems to be limited to the customers of Gigaclear and a few other, small providers.

A very significant proportion of broadband is provided by big players (BT, Sky, Virgin etc.). These providers do not appear to be partners of Gigaclear. The big providers offer advantageous 'bundled' phone, broadband and TV packages, not available with some small players.

As the Gigaclear installation was enabled by £Millions of taxpayers money, I feel that restrictions on the choice of Broadband providers is wrong. I do not relish the streets and pavements being dug up over and over again as further providers install their own fibre.

Please ask the Board 'Does the contract which Wiltshire Council has with Gigaclear prevent the opening up of the fibre network to all Broadband providers?'

If the answer is 'Yes', please ask why this is the case and if it is regarded as a best use of taxpayers money.

Answer to the query:

Although Gigaclear has installed the network, because public money has been invested it's an open network and all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) large and small will have been offered the opportunity to provide their services across the improved infrastructure. Please note that whilst ISPs will have been given this opportunity, it's down to each individual provider as to whether they take up the offer and this is outside the scope of Wiltshire Online to influence; the larger ISPs generally require a significant number of premises to be upgraded (in the hundred thousands across the UK) in order to upgrade their systems to integrate with a new telecom provider. As Gigaclear install to more premises, over time we would expect to see the larger ISPs offer their services across Gigaclear's network but we cannot influence when or if this will happen.

**Marie Nash
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Questions raised during the meeting

How many providers have signed up with Gigaclear? – *6 providers so far, as we get bigger, the bigger ESPs will join up. HFL Broadband, Merula, Squirrel, Village Networks & Wurzel*

Are there any plans for Park Place and the Copenacre estates to be covered? – *Gigaclear will be looking into these areas.*

Anne Keat a resident of Clift Close, Rudloe outlined her issue with Gigaclear.

Gigaclear had been working in Springfield Close and Clift Close for a few days when I suddenly realised that they were digging up the grassy area at the side of my house and were about a metre from my sitting room window. I quickly asked them what they were doing and was told it was public land.....despite the whole area being mine and maintained by me since 1986 when we moved in.

To be fair, the firm did reseed and 'made good' the area., but it has since been dug up three more times for various reasons. The next thing that happened was that I had to stop Gigaclear digging up the grass near a Leylandii hedge and I was told they were to install some sort of control box. At this point, I think, I was told that neither my house or the house next door were on the Land Register, which is plainly ridiculous. They redug the area last week and I was told there was a connection to be made.

They have now installed the control box on the pavement next to my grass and it looks really stupid standing out like a sore thumb! Cllr Derek Walters did come to check things out in the middle of all this so can vouch for all I

This saga is pretty dreadful but I really do take exception to the very obvious lack of research by some whizz kid probably in another part of the country! If you do approach the firm I would appreciate some details of what research was done.....and when! In addition to all this the state of the paths that were dug up to install the cables is really awful. Some bright spark suggested I charge rent for the cables on my land.....it's worth thinking about!

Dominic Hones did not know why Anne Keat was told that her house was not on the land registry

It was agreed that the Network access officer would contact Anne Keat to discuss and prove evidence that Anne owns the land.

It was agreed that Dominic Hones & Arron Parsons would visit Anne Keat's property to move the issue forward in positive manner.

Points made by the Area Board members included:

That GigaClear should have done their research better re the siting of boxes and cables.

That Wiltshire Council Highways land searches could be vague from personal experience.

That cabinets seemed to appear in inappropriate locations – issues could be headed off if local residents were given some warning where cabs were planned to be sited.

Cabinet locations – that these were signed off by Wiltshire Council – we will try to speak to communities more in future to head off any future issues.

That there were some useful discussions in some areas re siting – hopefully we can get these discussions going again – *Dominic Hones & Arron Parsons happy to lead any future discussions.*

That some restoration work had been poorly carried out in various areas, also pavements left in a poor state after repairs. *Cllr Helen Belcher to email list of effected areas to Dominic Hones*

Were GigaClear still checking repairs? *Arron Parsons – yes we do, work was checked and GigaClear are pulled up over its standard. Keep sending any photos of repairs that you're not happy with. Lots of remedial work on going at the moment, some can take a while to sort – they will all be sorted.*

The importance of good written and oral communications with Area Board members and local residents – they know their communities and community areas.

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson thanked everybody for attending.

Meeting ends: 19:00