

Reports from Andrew Wedmore for Brightling Parish Annual Assembly April 2025

Broadband

Following completion of the Brightling Exchange fibre project, all houses in Brightling except one now have access to full fibre broadband (with speeds of up to 1000 Mbps). [The one exception is a house in Fontridge Lane which is connected to the Burwash exchange and is therefore unfortunately outside the scope of the project].

You do not get switched to full fibre broadband unless you request it. However on 15th February 2025, the Brightling Exchange joined the “Openreach Fibre Priority Programme”. This means that any order processed by Openreach (Change ISP, Change Speed, Change Owner, ...) will result in the premises being upgraded to a full-fibre connection, if the service is available and they aren’t already on it. Since Openreach is the only wholesale provider of terrestrial fibre broadband in the area, this effectively applies to all properties in Brightling parish.

When last checked, about 44% of the houses in Brightling parish had taken up full-fibre broadband. Generally speaking the costs are no more than the non-full-fibre service (sometimes less) and the service is definitely superior.

When switching to full-fibre broadband, you will generally find that your landline is switched to “digital voice” at the same time. You shouldn’t notice any change except that the sound quality on digital voice is a lot better. However, this will mean that your landline will not work during power-cuts unless you have battery back-up for your ONT and router. Vulnerable customers, and those without a decent mobile signal, should be offered a battery back-up as part of the upgrade. Other customers can choose to install their own battery back-up.

A presentation on the switch-over to digital voice has been arranged for Wednesday 11 June 2024 in the Village Hall, given by a representative of BT/EE/Plusnet. I’m planning to say a few words myself to put this in the context of resilience planning particularly with regard to power cuts.

Village Website

The village website is at <https://brightling.community/>

In a typical week, there are approximately 100 – 150 visitors to the website, viewing a total of 250 – 300 pages.

There are 132 “subscribers” to the website. These people get an email each time there is a new post to the website. If you are not currently subscribed you can easily sign up by going to the homepage at <https://brightling.community/> and entering your email in the section “Keep up to date with Brightling news”. Every email contains a working unsubscribe link so you don’t have to worry about getting unwanted emails that you can’t stop.

Typical open rates for the emails are around 60%, suggesting that the majority of the 132 subscribers are real people!

In the past 12 months there have been approximately 130 “posts” (ie news/event announcements) to the website.

The website also includes a calendar enabling you to see “what’s on” in Brightling at a glance.

The main contributors continue to be me, the Parish Clerk, the Village Hall representative, Jane Beard, and Parish Councillor Katrina Blench. Nicola Magill and Parish Council chair Judy Petty also have logons.

If other contributors want to come forward I would be very happy to get them a logon and give any necessary training.

The site continues to be hosted by Rother District Council, free of charge (what will happen when RDC ceases to exist?)