

Internet boost as landowner agrees to two transmitters

Blackspot problems may be eliminated

A week after the launch of our campaign to boost the pitiful internet services affecting large swathes of the district, the Chronicle can reveal a potential solution to part of the problem. Doug Kempster reports...

A KEMPTON landowner has struck a major technology deal which experts claim could wipe-out internet blackspots across large areas of Sevenoaks.

Ella Sedokova, owner of the St Clare Estate, invited service providers to install two low-profile transmitters on the Woodman Hill part of her property to tackle problems faced by her tenants.

Range

For the best's height - 22m above sea level - has boosted the equipment's range to reach households a staggering 15km away. Now the company behind the technology, Cell Fibre Solutions, says the St Clare transmitters can provide coverage as far away as Liphinst and Dungeness.

Andy Goddard, the company's managing-director, said: "By offering services from the St Clare transmitters that can deliver speeds of 20Mbps (megabits per second) download and 5Mbps upload."

"If we get enough interest in the future, this will be upgraded to 40Mbps download and 10Mbps upload."

The four-metre-high posts are



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positioned in thickets near the top of Woodman Hill and beam data into houses through a 30cm square aerial. One transmitter faces towards the south west, the other to the south east, giving nearly a 360 degree arc of coverage which sweeps across the district from Liphinst through Kenting, St John's, Riverhead, Sandridge and Hoisted.

Mr Goddard reckons the transmitters can reach targets as far south as Mile Hill and Sevenoaks Common, but stresses the coverage is restricted upon customers being in the transmitter's line of sight.

The system, which went live earlier this month, has been just eight months in the planning.

Ms Sedokova said: "Our broadband speeds had been terrible. Something as simple as watching a player was impossible."

"Our tenants weren't happy - especially the businesses - and they were saying they may have to leave. Private estates, like ours, can't afford to be without broadband - we would lose business. We need to be at the top of our market. To see our broadband services consistently under-delivering was incredibly frustrating. It isn't the technology of the future, it's the technology of today and we didn't have it."

"What's more, it was clear to us that the situation would not get any better - it would only get worse. So we decided to take matters into our own hands."

For more information visit www.cellfibre.com



FIRST POST: Ella Sedokova from the St Clare Estate at Herve with the broadband mast

OBJECTIVES OF CAMPAIGN

Launched last week, our Get Us Up To Speed campaign will do the following:

■ Lobby local government and broadband suppliers to improve local services

■ Ensure Sevenoaks gets its fair share of grants aimed at improving speeds

■ Highlight existing ways people can boost their internet service

■ Shine a light on the hidden problems faced by readers with slow broadband

Show your experiences by e-mailing editor@sevenoakschronicle.co.uk