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## **Willersey Residents Force Delay to Ugly Broadband Pole Installations in AONB**

A large number of Willersey residents are outraged with plans by Full Fibre Ltd to install a significant number of huge and ugly 10-metre-high new poles to feed their high-speed fibre broadband network cables to homes rather than go discreetly underground. What is even worse is that this is a duplicated network as Gigaclear have already installed an underground high speed fibre broadband network three years ago in the same roads with public funding from the Government's £5 Billion GIGABIT Project to meet the target of having 85% of the UK Gigabit-capable by 2025. The current status is that the UK is at 79% (Oct'23). It appears however, that despite the Public Funding, Gigaclear are not forced to share with other Network Providers. Creating competition appears to be the Government's primary priority.

This is happening across the whole Country, not just in the Cotswolds, and it is within the current "Permitted Development" rules. Any Network Installer can provide just 28 days' notice prior to installing poles. In many cases residents were not aware that this would be happening right outside their own property. In some Communities there are now 3 or 4 competing Network providers all installing their own networks in the same streets – it is completely unnecessary desecration of our beautiful country.

The affected areas within Willersey are Collin Close, Field Lane, Hayes Close, Jordans Close and Willow Road which comprise around 100 houses. The remaining parts of the village comprising ("of" removed) around 420 houses already had Full Fibre Ltd able to use existing infrastructure. To date 80% of Willersey has the Full Fibre Ltd network in addition to the Gigaclear network.

Willersey is in a designated AONB, an area of outstanding natural beauty, yet Full Fibre Ltd are going ahead with plans to erect 15 monstrous new poles in roads, some of which currently have no lamp posts, or indeed any other street furniture. So far Full Fibre Ltd have only been able to install 4 new Poles and have then had to

temporarily abandon further work due to the strong resistance from the residents who have mounted a determined protest campaign to stop this vandalism of their rural community.

Full Fibre Ltd have refused to listen to villagers' concerns, failed to reply to any emails, treated all protests and discussions with contempt and are determined to erect poles rather than go underground.

The matter has been raised with the local MP, **Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown**, who has given his strong and vocal support to the campaign and is raising the matter in Parliament. The activity in Willersey has also been covered in the local media "Cotswold Journal" and also the national "Daily Mail On-Line" with further coverage planned.

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP said: **"This is a crazy situation where a highly attractive village is being forced to accept a significant number of ugly wooden poles blighting people's properties when a satisfactory broadband system already exists"**. Sir Geoffrey has also written to Full Fibre Ltd demanding that the pole installations stop now due to the strong resistance and feelings from Willersey villagers. He has also formally lodged a complaint with OFCOM who are the Government Regulatory Body.

Similar protests have been held in nearby Broadway where unfortunately one resident was injured and taken to hospital during the protests.

One of the Willersey residents said **"We remain astounded and frustrated that Full Fibre Ltd refuse to listen to local concerns, especially as there is already an existing fibre network installed underground. We urge the local authority to add its weight behind our campaign and stop any more poles ruining our beautiful village"**.

The residents involved in the protest are very grateful for the ongoing time and support given by our parish council, local Councillors Tom Stowe and Gina Blomefield on this whole topic.

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Residents Protesting – Tuesday 07 November 2023



Protest In Willersey,  
Jordans Close,  
Wednesday 08<sup>th</sup>  
November 2023. Note  
Police presence



One of the 4 Poles installed by Full Fibre  
Ltd prior to them halting further work