

Broadband in Barton – The Latest News

A few years ago Barton finally got connected to BT's Fibre to the Cabinet service (explanation on the next page). This replaced the old aluminium telephone cable from Baltonsborough but there remain problems;

- The speed depends how close you are to the green BT cabinet
- Our houses are still connected to the cabinet by 50 year old metal string.

BT are planning to roll out the much faster Fibre to the Premises Broadband to 60% of the country by 2025. The last 40% of the country is only covered by a vague plan and there are no prizes for guessing which group Barton falls into!

Another company, Truespeed, also offer this faster broadband and are actually connecting villages in this area now. If we can show there is a demand then in 12 months we could all have a much better and faster service.

What I've tried to do in this document is translate the promotional and technical information into plain English. If you want to talk further then there are contact details at the end and I'd be happy to talk it through with you.

Quick Explanation

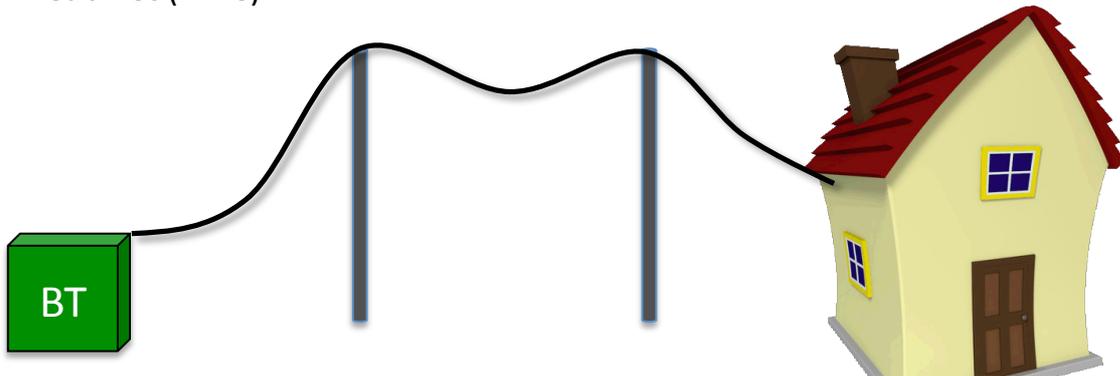
Broadband speed, sometimes called bandwidth, is measured in the number of bits of data you can get along the connection. Broadband is quite fast with over a million bits per second which you'll see abbreviated to Mbps. This stands for Mega Bits per Second (Mega is Ancient Greek for Million so yes we measure data speed using language from 2,000 years ago).

The Broadband speed you get is determined two main factors;

- The distance from the green BT cabinet to your house and
- The number of people using the connection at the same time, known as Contention.

Current Broadband

Today you get your broadband down the fibre optic BT line which runs from the main exchange in Baltonsborough to the green cabinet in the centre of Barton. From the cabinet copper or aluminium cables run to the BT box inside your house. This provides both the telephone link and also power to make the phone ring and is known as Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC).



Once inside your house you will have a little box, like the one to the right, called a ADSL Filter or Splitter into which you plug your telephone and the Router provided by your Internet Service Provider (ISP). It doesn't matter if your ISP is BT, Plusnet, Virgin or another the equipment will be very similar.



That's very informative but so what?

Like many villages, Barton is spread out across a large area and this distance means that while some people can get 50Mbps by the time you get to the bottom of Silver Street or up to Jarmany Hill this is typically down to 10 or 15Mbps. The metal cables are old and this means that the connection can also drop off and on, particularly when it is wet.

In addition you have probably noticed that at peak times, such as early evening when people are home from work or school, that the service will slow even further as the BT cabinet shares out the limited bandwidth between all users.

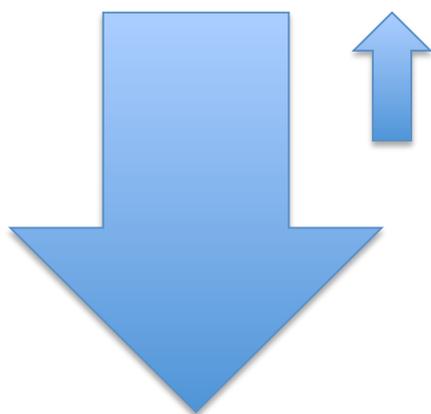
Quick Explanation

As most people don't think in terms of Mbps it is useful to know that to watch BBC iPlayer, without endless pauses, requires approximately 5Mbps.

If you are downloading movies or TV programmes 1 hour of High Definition TV is about 1,000 Mega Bytes in size. At our typical pre FTTC speeds that would have taken an hour to download. If you are now lucky enough to get 40Mbps then that drops to 5 mins and if we get Truespeed's 200Mbps service that will be down to less than a minute.

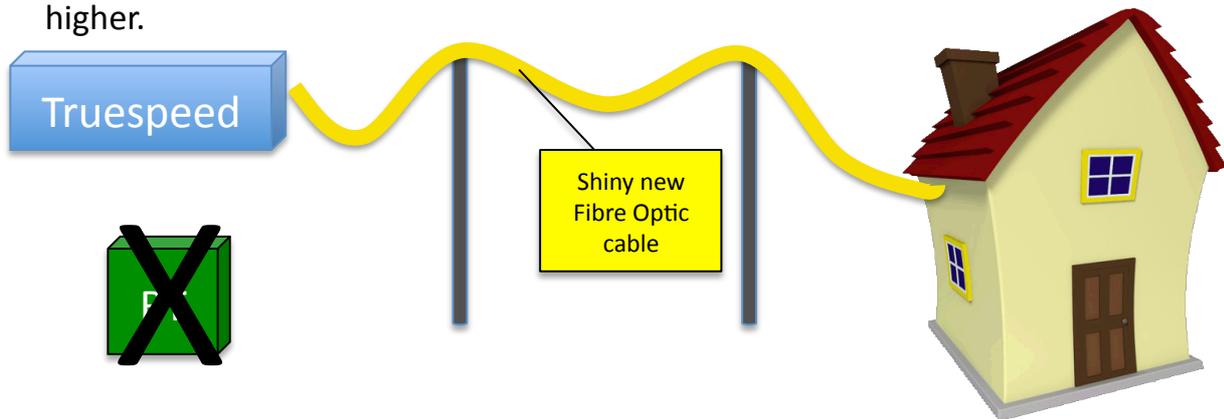
The Truespeed 200Mbps service will enable you and your family to simultaneously watch multiple TV shows while surfing the internet and downloading updates for a computer. Perfect if you have a family who are all wanting to use the internet at the same time, you run a business and want to do more from your home office or you have friends over who want to connect.

Another factor to consider is the upload speed (How fast data is sent out of your house) . If you are wanting to post your latest funny cat video on Youtube or send a large selection of photographs that is as important as download speed. ISPs sell their packages based on download speeds but it's worth noting that upload speeds are much less, typically a third to a quarter of the headline download speed. Using my house as an example I get 45Mbps download speeds but only 18Mbps upload speeds.



What and Who are Truespeed?

Truespeed are offering a different type of service. Unlike BT they use Fibre Optic cable to the individual house or premise, abbreviated to FTTP. This cuts out the BT cable network entirely and means the losses we see today between the BT cabinet and our houses doesn't exist (technically there are losses but it's negligible). In addition Fibre Optic cable is capable of carrying well over 1,000 times more data bits than metal cable so the speeds both up and down are a lot higher.



With a Truespeed connection you will still have a Router inside your house and you can still plug your phone into it with your original number (subject to a fee to change over the number from BT). The major advantage is speed as Truespeed are offering 200Mbps up and download speeds with no contention (so it won't slow down in the evening) and the ability to increase the speeds in the future without building any further infrastructure.

Routers usually come with mix of wired and wireless connections and whilst the most modern routers are capable of using all the 200Mbps bandwidth offered by Truespeed be aware that mobile devices older than a few years may not be capable of receiving Wifi at that speed so don't expect the full 200Mbps if you are using such equipment.

Quick Explanation

It is worth mentioning the way voice phone calls are handled by Truespeed.

Rather than a direct connection to the BT exchange, Truespeed uses a system called Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) for normal phone calls which is similar to the way mobile phones work. This does mean that unlike today, where phones will still work in the event of power cut, a VOIP phone will stop working unless you have some form of backup power.

Surely such a good service costs lots of money?

The headline figure from Truespeed is a cost of £47.50 per month which compared to a typical Broadband Package of £20-£25 is more expensive but you also have to take into account that you pay BT for line rental every month as well. Worthwhile completing the table below to see how the costs stack up for you and see if the extra speed is worth the price difference. To give you an idea my current deal is approx £40/month so for less than £10/month extra I can get over 4 times faster broadband. Signing up to Truespeed now means you get free installation which normally costs over £100.

| Current Item | Cost | Truespeed | Cost |
|---|------|--------------------------------|--------|
| BT Line Rental | | Broadband | £47.50 |
| BT Call Packages (e.g. call waiting) | | Call Packages (See leaflet) | |
| Broadband | | | |
| Total | | Total | |

Quick Explanation

Truespeed offer a number of additional packages such as unlimited evening and weekend UK calls for £2.99 /month but if you have a mobile phone with VOIP capability (sometimes called Wifi calling) or you use applications such as WhatsApp then you can make calls without needing to use such packages.

What do I do if I want Truespeed?

Truespeed have the backing of some large financial institutions and once they have notification that 40% (ish) of a village want their service they will expand into that area. They hop from one village to the next and have currently made it from Bath to Street, Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet. As of mid Jan 2020 we are somewhere in the 10-15% area and need to get closer to the 40% before Truespeed will make plans and from that date it's approx 12 months before we'll be connected.

Whilst you will benefit from better broadband Truespeed will also connect the Village Hall to this faster service at no monthly cost. With improved speed in the village we also have the ability to attract businesses and those who work away can work from home knowing they have a fast stable connection.

To sign up complete the form on the Barton website www.bartonstdavid.org.uk/home/broadband and email to tony@truespeed.com

Final Word

I've tried to keep this document as short as possible but there is a lot of information to cover. I am also aware that there is a wide range of technical literacy in the village hence trying to keep the language clear.

However if you would like more information or just to discuss Truespeed with an actual human being please contact either myself, Jon Harrington (850052), or Paul Eitzen (850011).