



Andy Harding at St Edwards Park.

Broadband boost for housing estate

By Leslie Jackson

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HIGH speed broadband is set to become a reality for dozens of residents on a parkland housing estate courtesy of a Leek-based company.

Every Tuesday for the last two years, managing director of Internet Connections, Andy Harding, and his friends have gathered at The Red Lion in Cheddleton when the talk would invariably turn to grumbling about the slow and unreliable broadband they had to live with at St Edwards Park in the village.

Just a short distance down the road in Leek seemed a digital world away, as the town had been promised superfast fibre-optic broadband.

Mr Harding, aged 29, set up his own company 10 years ago and has been supplying businesses with the latest technology in London, Manchester, Leeds and other cities.

Mr Harding said: "St Edwards Park doesn't present a worthy business case to the major players.

"Our community is so far away from the Cheddleton exchange that the cost of rolling out fibre

are simply too high, so the chances of super-fast fibre broadband for the site was pretty bleak.

"Then we noticed that on its journey from Manchester to Leeds, our own fibre network runs along the A520, passing the junction with the East Drive entrance to St Edwards Park."

The company then decided to leaflet residents on the estate to see if they were interested in having the system brought to their homes.

Mr Harding added "We needed 50 people to show an interest to make it viable. Already we have 55.

"We have now put in a planning application to have a small box at the edge of the driveway to take in the system.

"The company was started in 2002 and we have built up a national supply, and have worked all over the country supplying business.

"This, however, will be the first time we have supplied residential properties and it is great to do it in the Moorlands, which is my home.

"There will be no change to anyone's house, but the speed will increase by around 10 times for residents.

"If this proves successful we could move the system further into Cheddleton village and then towards Wetley Rocks."

"If planning permission is secured the company hopes to start work right away.

"Homes could then be receiving the fast system within three months."

Office and marketing manager James Burns said people living on St Edwards Park had been really positive.

He said: "A lot of people are excited about getting a decent service, especially from a local company."

Mr Harding is looking for a local groundwork contracting company which would be interested in the development work.

If you live at St Edwards Park and would like to register your interest in receiving super-fast broadband, visit the Internet Connection own website at www.superfast.co.uk

For further information on the new service or if you are interested in a groundwork contract email questions@superfast.co.uk.

SEE OUR WEBSITE

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