



Press Release – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2004

## ORB brings Broadband to West Oxfordshire

The West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) has announced today that Oxfordshire Rural Broadband (ORB) have been awarded a £53,000 grant made up with funds from the European Community West Oxfordshire Network LEADER+ programme and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

The grant will be used by ORB to roll out broadband Internet services to the villages of Shipton, Milton and Ascott-under-Wychwood, Bruern, Lyneham, Kingham, Churchill, Cornwell, Fifield and Idbury. These communities have been identified by ORB, WODC and SEEDA as being economically disadvantaged by being unlikely to get broadband in the short to medium term.

Jeremy Renwick, ORB Commercial Director explained the problem "While rollout of Broadband Internet access using ADSL from BT in urban areas is nearly complete, rural areas are lagging behind. In fact, the Shipton and Kingham exchanges that serve these villages were only given a trigger level in late November and it is unlikely that these will be reached before late 2005 or 2006, if at all".

Cllr Mary Neale, Cabinet Member for Economic Development at West Oxfordshire District Council, describes the impact on the local economy, "The rural economy in West Oxfordshire is dependent on large numbers of small businesses, many of which operate from peoples homes. These businesses are potentially losing more and more of a competitive edge by not having high speed internet access. The Council is committed to doing what it can to support the rural economy and we have therefore been pleased to work with ORB and SEEDA as part of this successful funding bid."

ORB is funded by:



ORB will use the grant to implement a wireless broadband network in the Wychwoods and Kingham. Jeremy explained the plans, "We have chosen wireless technology because the hardware is inexpensive and we can implement the "first mile" to our customers' premises very quickly and reliably." He continued, "The customer equipment will connect back to the Co-op store in Milton-under-Wychwood and then through a high speed connection to the Internet." "We expect to finish the rollout to all the villages by Easter" he concluded.

Hugo Pickering, leader of the Broadband 4 the Wychwoods campaign and a local businessman said. "Everyone in the area will be relieved that we are finally getting broadband after being ignored by BT. It is great that we will all own part of the Internet revolution!"

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## Terms

**ADSL** – Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line, the basic broadband service delivered on BT telephone lines.

**Trigger Levels** – BT has implemented a scheme where each exchange has to have a pre-defined level of interest before they will implement ADSL. This level is set by BT using their internal criteria.

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