



Stowe by Chartley Parish Council

Community Internet/ WI-Fi Outage Report – 14 January 2026

Introduction

The report has been prepared by Cllr Tanya Alder and Cllr Eunice Finney from Stowe by Chartley Parish Council, regarding issues and problems relating to the internet/Wi-Fi, which went down on **Friday 12th December 2025**. The issues have affected over 40 households, which includes some businesses, within the community. We believe the area effected were properties on the A518, from Amerton Farm to Chartley Mews, and residents living at the far end of Station Road, travelling toward Chartley Estate in a northly direction. Most households and businesses were finally restored on **Friday 9th January 2026** although a few were not restored until **Monday 12th January 2026**. Please note, today(14/1/26) the BT website still states services will not return until, **Monday 14th January 2026 at 6pm**.

However, it is worth noting when the internet/Wi-Fi was finally repaired, those with internet landline phones were all reinstated and appear to have received immediate service again to the community. However, some appliances such as computers, tablets, mobile phones etc, have on many occasions have had to be reset two or three times, before they would work and pick up the internet/Wi-Fi from their service provider.

This report was presented to the **Stowe by Chartley Parish Council** meeting on **Wednesday 14th January 2026**, and approved. As the report has been approved it can be used if parishioners wish, as a factual document, to support their claims for compensation, when contacting their internet/Wi-Fi service providers, to complain.

There is **no evidence** when Openreach first started to investigate the disruption or address these problems and issues, unfortunately it appears no progress was made during the Christmas period, leaving many without service and very vulnerable customers at risk.

Timeline of events

This timeline of events has been prepared, using information provided by a BT customer.

- **12th December 2025** – A serious internet/Wi-Fi Outage, occurred in the Stowe by Chartley area affecting some customers. further customers lost service in the following days. *Customers were told over the phone the problem would be rectified in 24 hours, and this message continued for several days.*
- **22rd December 2025** – This was the first opportunity the customer had to monitor the BT website, when they received a mini hub from BT. Then the BT message said " We are aware of the disruption, and we are working on the fault
- **23rd December 2025**– BT website message advised "Internet/Wi-Fi Service would be restored on 29/12/25".
- **29th December 2025** - BT website message was changed to " Internet/Wi-Fi Service will be restored 9/1/26 at 11.15am."
- **9th January 2026** - Internet/Wi-Fi was final restored for most customers at 3 pm. However, BT website message was not updated and still states **14th January 2026**.
- **14th January 2026** - BT website has still not been updated and states the 14th January 2026. However, a BT employee confirmed by telephone to a BT customer today (14/1/26), that Openreach closed the case on **12th January 2026**.

The message from BT, has been very misleading and even reported the issue was planned scheduled work. However, according to Ofcom, it is a general understanding within the industry that service providers would give prior notice to all customers in the case of planned and schedule works.

Who and what is Openreach?

Openreach, install and repair the fibre optic cables and are responsible for the national digital network infrastructure that **other service** providers use and re-sell internet/Wi-Fi services to individual customers.

- Openreach, is a legally separate, wholly owned subsidiary of the BT Group.
- Unfortunately, it seems impossible to speak to them direct, unless you see workman in the area and you physically ask for an update.
- However, you can complain to Openreach via their website www.openreach.com and you could also email the Chief Executive Officer who is Clive Selley directly on clive.selley@openreach.co.uk

Who and what is Ofcom?

Ofcom (Office of Communications) is the UK's independent regulator for communications, overseeing broadcasting (TV, radio), telecom (broadband, mobile, landline phones), postal services, and the radio spectrum, ensuring competition and protecting consumers by setting rules, managing licenses, and enforcing standards for everything from fair pricing to online. They also handle complaints regarding internet/Wi-Fi issues.

- Both businesses, individuals and organisations can complain to Ofcom, and they will monitor the way Openreach, deal with any repairs.
- If you wish to ring Ofcom, yourself the number is **03001233333** and get a case number.
- Postal address is **Ofcom, PO Box 1285, Warrington, Cheshire, WAI 9GL**
- Email address is contact@ofcom.org.uk
- Report your problem directly online at www.ofcom.org.uk
- Whilst Ofcom cannot help with compensation claims, their role is to monitor and hopefully, improve the situation for the future and report directly to the government.
- Also, Ofcom create reports displayed on their website address above, regarding their work quarterly.

What we believe may have caused the problems with disruption of WI-FI service.

There have been many theories, as to why this has occurred with the internet/Wi-Fi service. As already stated, you are unable to **speak** to anyone at Openreach direct, for confirmation of the problems.

However, a local resident spoke to Openreach workmen on **Friday 14th January 2026**, and they told him the following:- “That the problems and issues had been caused by vermin mainly rats and mice chewing the cable in the pipework that the actual internet/I Wi-Fi cable is housed in. We also understand the problem was identified close to the fibre optic cable box, placed in the Staffordshire County Council layby, which is adjacent to the driveway leading to Waddens Farm”.

Waddens Farm is the only property on the A518 after Weston Traffic lights before you reach Amerton Farm. The farm is set back up a short drive. The owners have been concerned regarding the condition of the layby and started complaining in August 2025, to Staffordshire County Council, local councillors and our MP.

Since the parish council has highlighted these problems, the owners of the Waddens Farm, have again contacted all the above, with updated photos and also informed Weston and Gayton Parish Council of the issues.

Below are pictures taken of the said layby on Sunday 11th January 2026.



Green fibre optic cabinet on the left of the picture.



Rubbish on the layby



Further rubbish on the layby



Used road plainings in the layby



Used road plainings in the layby

Cllr Richard Rayson was contacted on **Monday 12th January 2026**, in his employment capacity working for Staffordshire County Council Highways Department and he has already taken action with RMS who are sub contractors of AMEY, who contract to SCC on highway maintenance, to get the mess cleaned up in the layby.

If the rubbish on the layby is the cause of the disruption of internet/ Wi-Fi services in the community, then as a parish council we need to make sure, we do everything in our power to ensure this does not happen again in the future, because the problems it has caused can only be described as horrendous.

Useful facts which may help with any claim:

Three parish councillors were directly affected by the internet/Wi-Fi issues. As already stated, we have names and addresses of those effected in the community and so far there are over 40 households which includes some businesses who have experienced problems and issues. If you want to add your name to the list please contact Cllr Tanya Alder or Cllr Eunice Finney, contact details are below, for your reference.

- Complaints must be made by individuals or businesses directly to their internet/Wi-Fi service supplier i.e. BT, EE, SKY etc.
- **Openreach agree to resolve all compensation claims in 30 days, so we advise that everyone needs to submit the details, as soon as possible, and within the above time period.**
- You can **only** claim compensation from your internet/Wi-Fi service provider.
- Also please note, you can only claim compensation from the date you first complained and some providers do not pay from the first day of any disruption.
- For example, BT calculate personal claims at £9.98 per day after the first 2 days following the customer reporting the break down to them, they will then compensate for every day your service is lost .
- If your telephone is also internet/Wi-Fi, don't forget to mention that information, as you may have possibly been denied access to more than one service, for example if you are with different internet/Wi-Fi service provider for example your phone may be with BT and your internet may be with EE.
- Business claims should be higher, than a personal claim, but we understand the amount can vary. The more evidence you can provide, i.e. the invoices to prove the cost of any emergency service which was installed, this may help any personal and business claims.
- The cost of hiring facilities with an internet connection is another reason to claim.
- Sadly, some text messages do not allow you to reply. If you are unable to reply contact your internet/Wi-Fi service provider, as soon as possible and remind them, you have an outstanding claim.
- Please note, some internet/ Wi-Fi service providers are claiming that "The work on the wifi service, was planned and schedule works." This statement **always needs to be challenged as no notice** was given to their **customers** of this "so called" scheduled planned work.
- If you have had a text message from your internet/Wi-Fi service provider saying "The case has now been closed", **reply saying** "Compensation has not been sorted, therefore you do not except that the case is closed, please contact us the details are below for your reference. by ringing or emailing me on ??? (state your own email address and phone number)".
- It appears some providers are more sympathetic than others and some internet/Wi-Fi suppliers have advised customers there is no compensation, if this is the case, please then contact your MP, who is Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson MP CBE and take this matter up with him on gavin.williamson.mp@parliament.uk or phone 01785 847027.
- Also, please feel free to ring either of the parish councillors who have prepared this report for help and please copy us into any replies, you think should be circulated.

The problems this has caused for some individuals and businesses

The following have been reported:-

- Many residents with no landline or mobile phone had no way to contact emergency services and this is not acceptable and a return to the "Dark Ages."
- There seem to be issues and risk especially associated to elderly parishioners in the community, who may not like change and are only comfortable using the old type of fixed copper cable landline and they also often find it difficult to use mobile phones.
- A parish councillor with no service had to use another parishioners internet/Wi-Fi, to communicate with other councillors and the clerk.
- A resident who worked, from home, has had to become office based again.
- We understand, two residents have had to book office space at the Beaconside office complex at a cost of £80 a day, just to gain access to an internet service.
- One local business has had to install a satellite system, as their business could not operate without the internet, as it runs tills, phone and printers, if they had not done this, they may have faced a very difficult financial situation over Christmas, by having to refund hundreds of customers.

- Some parishioners have been unable to contact family and friends over Christmas living away and abroad, because their landline phone was linked to internet/Wi-Fi and their mobile phones radios and had no or poor connection, due to the lack of Wi-Fi. They also had no internet on appliances, so could not use services such as WhatsApp.
- Councillors have received the following message from the daughter of a local resident: “An elderly parishioner in her 90’s who had recently lost her husband, so is vulnerable for a number of reasons who relies totally on her landline to contact her family. It’s been a very long and difficult period for her, especially as she is not a mobile phone user and feeling isolated before, the BT outage problem only increased her problems. Family members have stayed with her to ensure she feels comforted during the last few weeks because of these BT problems and this has become a real issue for her, she described the situation as **cruel**. We just want this not to happen again, we want compensation for the loss of this service as we are told our quarterly bill from BT, will be the usual sum, shocking. The impact of this event on someone’s independence is immeasurable.”

If you can add to the above examples, please let us know and we will consider including the information, if the report is updated. Our contact details are below for reference.

How can the PC contact parishioners

The report will be advertised in the following way:

- The report will be circulated to anyone on our list of householders and businesses which have experienced loss of internet/Wi-Fi, if we have an email address for these individuals we will send a copy of this report.
- Please note, the list of householders and businesses, are subject to Stowe by Chartley Parish Council GDPR Policy.
- The community report will be place on the Stowe by Chartley Parish Council website for reference - www.stowebychartleyparishcouncil.co.uk
- A notice on the PC notice board, next to the church under Community Message.
- The report will be advertised on social media by councillors on their own accounts, as the parish council do not have any social media accounts, with the following message:



Action taken:

Cllr Tanya Alder and Cllr Eunice Finney have been collating information to write this report. They both have case numbers with Ofcom, when complaining regarding their own personal problems and also speaking as a parish councillor on behalf of the community. These complaints to Ofcom, will be followed up by the clerk of the parish council, after the meeting on Wednesday 14th January 2026 .

Aim of this report:

We have attempted to update as many individuals as possible within the community, who have lost their internet/Wi-Fi service recently, especially during the festive season. We have aimed to provide the facts, which we are aware of, relating to this Wi-Fi outage problem, and provide parishioners with information on what has been achieved to date to help resolve the situation and action taken by councillors from Stowe by Chartley Parish Council, prior to the PC meeting on 14th January 2026 and following the meeting.

Proposed recommendation from Stowe by Chartley Parish Council:

This report was proposed at the parish council on Wednesday 14th January 2026 and was approved, and agreed that the PC, should write to the following to highlight these issues and complain vigorously regarding the problems of the loss of Wi-Fi, and the issues which have been caused in the local community and include a copy of this report.

- Chief Executive of Staffordshire County Council – Mr Patrick Flaherty, regarding layby and loss of internet Wi-Fi service in the community. The PC will also include a list of properties effected by the problems.
- Our County Councillor – Cllr Andrew Mynors, regarding layby and loss of internet/Wi-Fi service in the community. The PC will also include a list of properties effected by the problems.
- Our Borough Councillor – Cllr Frances Beatty, regarding layby and loss of internet/Wi-Fi service in the community. The PC will also include a list of properties effected by the problems.
- Our MP – The Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson MP CBE, regarding layby and loss of internet/Wi-Fi service in the community. The PC will also include a list of properties effected by the problems.
- Ofcom Complaints Department, following a telephone complaint to obtain a case number, so the said case number can be included in the correspondence sent. Email contact@ofcom.org.uk regarding layby and loss of internet/Wi-Fi service in the community. The PC will also include a list of properties effected by the problems.
- Complain to Openreach by going to www.openreach.com and also write directly to Openreach Chief Executive Officer on clive.selley@openreach.co.uk and also send a copy of this report, and addressing the loss of internet/Wi-Fi service in the community. The PC will also include a list of properties effected by the problems.
- A copy of all the correspondence will be sent to Weston and Gayton Parish Council, as some parishioners who are affected are within the area of the above mentioned PC regarding the layby, highlighting the problems of the loss of internet/Wi-Fi service in the community.
- Please note, the said layby is also situated in Gayton Parish Council area.

Conclusion

Please feel free to circulate this report to any neighbours or friends that you know have been without the internet, over the last few weeks. Also please use this report when making a claim, if you feel it will help your submission for compensation.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the councillors, who have prepared this report, their contact details are below for reference, if you require further information or you have anything you think should be added to this report.

<u>This Community Report, has been prepared by:</u>	
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