

## **Broadband backup solutions**

### **Introduction**

Tove Valley Broadband does all it can to maintain a reliable service. However, from time to time it is inevitable that there is a break in the service. This is no different from all other broadband solutions. In fact broadband supplied over a fixed phone line can have quite long periods of interruption (several days)

We have put together this document as a result of being asked how our members can survive a broadband outage.

A sample of solutions is detailed below....

### **Ignore it**

Any outage is likely to be pretty short. If you can, just take it as an opportunity to chill out and do something else! Of course this doesn't really address the problem that some of our members have where it is important to at least have access to email and internet browsing.

### **Alternative locations**

If it is possible to take a laptop or tablet away from the house you will find plenty of FREE WiFi available in the area. For example..

- Costa Coffee (Towcester)
- Waitrose (Towcester)
- Library (Towcester and Brackley)
- MacDonalds (Towcester)
- Lots of other cafes and pubs

We have heard that some of our members have embraced the opportunity to spend some time elsewhere working on their computers. Of course you may feel obliged to buy a cup of coffee.

## **Solutions in your home**

We appreciate that many of our members work from their homes and would like a backup solution that would allow them to carry on more or less as normal. Because Tove Valley Broadband has no competition in this area for the provision of Superfast Broadband, no backup solution is going to provide the speed and bandwidth that you enjoy normally. However there are several things that you can consider that will allow email, browsing and other functions like logging into your remote office systems.

### **Solutions using 3G/4G connection**

Of course, in order to use these solutions you do need to have a usable mobile signal in your house. However there are ways that you can improve things if necessary using external antennas and selecting the best mobile supplier for your location.

#### ***Use your mobile phone***

Many people do not realise that you can turn your mobile phone into a WiFi access point. To do this you need to use the “Tethering” facility. Most mobile operators now allow this facility on a majority of their plans (both contract and PAYG).

You turn on this facility in the Settings (in both Android and iOS). Once this is done you can connect your tablets and laptops via WiFi as normal, using the AP name and password that you defined when you turned the facility on.

You can also connect a PC to your mobile phone by using the USB lead that came with the phone and selecting USB tethering in the phone Settings.

#### ***Using a separate SIM card***

You can buy a separate data SIM card to use with a “Broadband dongle” or separate 3G/4G router. It is possible to purchase these SIMs from about £20 for 12Gbs of data, valid for 12 months. So it’s very affordable as a backup or for occasional use.

A dongle is a small device that contains a SIM card and plugs directly into a USB port on a laptop or PC. These are simple to configure and can be carried around with you to use with a laptop.

Similarly, for under £30, you can buy a mobile router. These units use a rechargeable battery, so do not need a power supply. They can typically connect upto 10 WiFi devices and some have LAN ports as well so that you can connect a PC (or even your whole home network if you wanted)

If you want an automatic backup to a 3G/4G supply you can obtain a home router with a SIM card slot. These can be configured to use your normal broadband service (eg TVB) and then automatically switch over to the backup service if the main supply fails.

Some home routers also have a USB port into which you can plug a broadband dongle to receive an alternative supply.

Some dongles and routers have provision to attach an external antenna that can be sited either in your home or even outside (eg on your TV pole). This can make a big difference to reception, so do not assume that because you can't normally receive a signal on your phone in the house, these options are not open to you.

### **Solutions using an ADSL connection**

A conventional ADSL connection (ie using a fixed phone line) is still available to most of our members. This can form the basis of a backup solution, albeit rather slow.

However, it is important to remember that a permanent land line is necessary and is therefore rather expensive for just a backup solution (around £25 - £30 per month.)

However, if you still have a landline for your telephone the addition of broadband would be a lower cost. Although at £5+ per month is still more expensive than the mobile solutions mentioned above.

An ADSL connection can also be setup to be an automatic backup by using a suitable router.

### **Conclusion**

If you regard having some form of backup solution as being important, there should be some suggestions above that will help.

Please remember that this document is put together by Tove Valley Broadband volunteers and we cannot provide consultancy or practical help with this.

A few minutes on the internet will provide plenty of information regarding the units available.