**Five ways in which the internet changed the Vale of Glamorgan**

A superfast broadband network is being rolled out across Wales as part of the Welsh Government’s Superfast Cymru project. But what could it mean for the people of the Vale of Glamorgan?

The majority of the Vale of Glamorgan already has access to superfast broadband, but just how much has the internet changed things for the local community? Here are four ways the online world has changed things for the people who call the Vale of Glamorgan their home….

1. **Get the Vale Online initiative**

The Vale of Glamorgan council launched the ‘Get the Vale online’ initiative to encourage everyone in the county to get online so they could reap the benefits of being connected to the internet. They offer a range of free drop-ins, 1-2-1 support sessions and courses to help people across the county get started, increase their confidence and build on existing skills and ensure that everyone can benefit from saving money on household bills, food and other essential items by being able to shop around online.

<http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Get-the-Vale-Online.aspx>

1. **Cowbridge Food and Drink festival goes social**

The organisers of the ever-popular annual food and drink festival have taken to social media to keep eager foodies across south Wales informed of any news and information on the festival. The event showcases some of the finest produce from around the county as well as having top notch demos and an abundance of free entertainment. The Facebook page has more than 4k followers and their Twitter following has reached over 2k.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/The-Cowbridge-Food-Drink-Festival-128210077222832/about/?ref=page_internal>

1. **Guest WiFi solutions in the Vale of Glamorgan**

Guest Wifi Solutions in The Vale enables anybody in a public space within the county to access the internet for anything from learning to location services, work to leisure or simply surfing. The service is accessible in public connection points including cafes, shopping centres, libraries and museums and is free to anyone and everyone.

<http://www.networksecurity.org.uk/guest-wifi/the-vale-of-glamorgan/>

 **4. Cowbridge pupil harnesses power of internet to help homeless at Christmas**

A student from Cowbridge played Father Christmas last year after taking advantage of the powers of the internet to encourage people to donate money, gifts, food, inflatable pillows, drinks bottles and blankets for homeless people across Cardiff. The campaign attracted support from people across the Vale of Glamorgan as well as the city and helped make a huge difference to the lives of homeless people across Cardiff last Christmas highlighting just how influential and powerful the internet and social media can be.

<http://www.cowbridge-today.co.uk/article.cfm?id=102404&headline=Calum%20harnesses%20the%20%20power%20of%20the%20internet%20%20%20to%20help%20the%20homeless&sectionIs=news&searchyear=2016>

 **5. The Real Cowbridge Hub takes to Facebook to connect people across the county**

The Real Cowbridge Hub Facebook page was launched as a local community forum to help connect people in Cowbridge and the wider county. The group also encourages open and honest discussions about local issues and is designed to help people advertise their business, get answers to requests or enquiries and buy or sell items. The group now has 3605 active members and has become the go to Facebook page for people across the town.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/therealcowbridgehub/>

In addition to roll out of the technology by the private sector, Superfast Cymru has provided an extra 14,950 premises in the area with access to superfast broadband. Superfast Cymru is a partnership between the Welsh Government, BT, UK Government and the European Regional Development Fund, it’s bringing faster broadband to areas which would not otherwise receive it.

With the project now more than 80% complete in the Vale of Glamorgan, most homes and businesses are able to access superfast broadband.

To find out more about superfast broadband, including information about availability in your area visit the Welsh Government’s dedicated website:
[www.gov.wales/broadband](http://www.gov.wales/broadband)

The website also includes information for those not yet able to receive superfast broadband, as support may be available through the Welsh Government’s ‘Access Broadband Cymru’ scheme.

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