Broadband access in the village of Butterstone, Perthshire PH8 0HA

The village of Butterstone lies on the A932 between Dunkeld and Blairgowrie. In spite of its small size and lack of infrastructure the village enjoys a vibrant community life. The residents and farmers come together regularly for social events including bonfire night, the village pantomime, the annual Burns Supper, the Boxing Day Barbeque, the Royal Wedding Garden Party and so on.

All the residents complain about the lack of a decent broadband capability. Our line speed is capped at 0.5 mps. Conversations with BT have confirmed that the existing line from Dunkeld to Butterstone is capable of delivering much higher speeds and the only thing holding them back is the cost, estimated at £40,000, to upgrade the exchange and the equipment.

The small size of our community conceals the fact that we have several unique needs to improve our broadband speed.

- There are seven families with school and pre-school children living in and around the village, and another family would relocate to Butterstone permanently if the father was able to operate his business from here.
- The New School Butterstone caters for children with learning difficulties including Asperger’s and Autism.
- Butterstone Recording Studio, based in the old school house, has to use expensive satellite broadband to allow it to operate effectively.
- Dougie McLean OBE, the internationally acclaimed folk singer, organises the Perthshire Amber festival from his home in the village but has to relocate to Dunkeld to gain decent broadband access to run the festival.
- Sir Magnus Linklater, the Scottish Editor of the Times newspaper struggles to work from his home in Butterstone due to the slow speeds.
- A new business The Highland Bagpipe Company has just been set up in the village and relies on on-line sales and decent broadband access.
- Cardney Shooting Estate, which includes the famous Butterstone Loch Fishery, has recently built a new fishing lodge with meeting rooms and a restaurant. They are unable to offer decent broadband speeds to attract business meetings to the Fishery Lodge.
- There are two holiday letting companies and two bed and breakfast establishments in the village, all of which rely on the internet to manage their business. Increasingly clients expect to find decent broadband speeds.
- Finally I run a Scottish company with offices in 32 countries around the world. I choose to work from my base in Butterstone but am reluctant to employ staff here due to the slow and unreliable broadband.

I am sure the Committee would agree that, in spite of having a permanent population of around 60, we can make a very strong case why improved broadband would allow our community to grow, provide employment and educational opportunities.