

02/01/22

Thank you for your response to my query about the future of the telephone box in our village of Luccombe in Somerset. We have submitted a further response to the OFCOM consultation in the hope that this vital lifeline to the village will be preserved as a result.

Another matter has come to our attention that does not appear to be part of the consultation but is of considerable concern to the people of Luccombe.

As I noted, the total absence of any mobile phone signal in Luccombe means that our public telephone kiosk may, in an emergency, be the village's only link to the outside world. This is of particular importance because we understand that, for now, in the event of a power cut, the public phone will continue to be powered by the exchange and so will continue to work, unlike domestic, digital telephones.

Following the recent weather that cut off other parts of the UK from power and telephones (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-59564480>) we gather that BT intend to end the Public Switched Telephone Network, or PSTN in 2025.

Such a change means that not only those of us who keep an analogue phone for power cuts when only analogue phones powered by the telephone exchange continue to work will be incommunicado in the event of power failure, but that the telephone kiosk (should it be saved in the current consultation) will be useless in a power cut.

Predictably, given BT's desire to remove our telephone box, the company has failed to alert us of the proposed change, the risk it poses and what measures it intends taking to ensure that the telephone service available from the public phone box continues to be powered in the event of power cuts.

Please can you advise us what direction OFCOM has given BT to ensure that the power supply for the public telephone kiosks such as that in Luccombe is preserved when the change over from PSTN occurs?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Henry Harington

Chairman

Luccombe Parish Council

10/01/22

Since the consultation ends tomorrow please could you accept the comments below as a further submission to the consultation on the future of public telephone boxes where there is no mobile signal?

As made clear in our original submission, Luccombe's remote location and the absence of any mobile telephone signal renders the village vulnerable to the loss of any communication to the outside world and in particular to the emergency services in the event of a power cut.

This was a primary reason for our submitting a plea for the preservation of the telephone box and telephone service in the village to the Ofcom consultation. We understand that currently, in the event of a general power cut, a power supply would be provided from the exchange to the telephone box ensuring a communication link.

It is self evident that the preservation of the telephone box and telephone service would not meet this primary reason for maintaining the facility if it had no power to operate in a power cut as is expected to be the case from 2025.

Luccombe's remoteness and its lack of a mobile signal make the villages circumstances exceptional. We do not believe that in the event of, for example, village being cut off by bad weather, a three-hour battery back up would be sufficient. Moreover in those circumstances it is unlikely that BT engineers would be able to access the village to replace the batteries.

We therefore require either a system that will provide power for a longer period or a scheme that would allow the community to easily replace the batteries with batteries that could be charged locally by cars, for example.

Accustomed as we have become to instant and constant communications, we cannot emphasise strongly enough the vulnerability many of Luccombe's residents (particularly the elderly of which there are many in the village) would feel if the village was cut off for more than three hours or, indeed, for days.

Yours sincerely,

Henry Harington

Chairman

Luccombe Parish Council

11/01/22

I am writing this email to you on a battery-powered tablet. By sheer coincidence, following my email to you yesterday, Luccombe is in the grip of a power cut that began around 2 a.m. I have been informed by Western Power Distribution that power will not be restored until at least 11 o'clock this morning. It is now 10 a.m. I will not be able to send this email until power and the Internet are restored.

I was informed by Western Power Distribution that the type of power cut at we are experiencing would only be drawn to their attention by a consumer telephoning them advising them of the outage. Their technology does not automatically notify them of power failures a local level.

As I have an old analog telephone and, as PSTN is the extant, I have been able to make the call. The only other means of informing the power distributor of the power cut would be by making a call from the public telephone box as there is no mobile signal in Luccombe.

With the proposed retirement of PSTN, the absence of a power supply to the telephone box it would mean that we had no means of informing the power distributor that there was a power cut in the area.

May we request that you take such issues into account in determining the future of our telephone box and the security of its connection once PSTN is abandoned?

Yours sincerely,

Henry Harington

Chairman

Luccombe Parish Council