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NEWTON ST CYRES TEAMS UP WITH VODAFONE UK AND MEL STRIDE MP FOR DEVON'S FIRST COMMUNITY-LED MOBILE PHONE NETWORK

- Community-led initiative with Vodafone brings much needed mobile coverage to Devon community
- Newton St Cyres chosen from more than 170 other rural communities across the UK for Vodafone coverage solution

Newton St Cyres in Devon is the latest community across the country chosen by Vodafone UK to develop their own 'community-led network' which is now bringing much needed mobile coverage to homes and businesses in the area.

Working with the community and local MP Mel Stride, Vodafone UK has installed four Open Sure Signal units, which use innovative femto cell technology to provide a Vodafone 3G signal to areas which traditional mobile coverage has been unable to reach. About the size of a small suitcase, the units use existing broadband services to deliver the mobile signal needed to provide 3G coverage, where before there was little or none. In Newton St Cyres the units have been placed across the village, including on top of the Crown and Sceptre and Beer Engine pubs, the Recreation Centre and the Village Hall.

Ofcom's latest annual Communications Market Report highlights that half the UK population now use their mobile phone to access the internet.* So Vodafone Open Sure Signal not only enables Vodafone 3G voice services, but also provides the community with much needed access to the internet via their mobile.

As well as using Open Sure Signals to plug rural "not-spots", Vodafone is also committed to increasing the scale of its existing network and plans to invest more than £1 billion in 2014 on its network and services this year. That investment comes on top of the £802m that Vodafone spent acquiring the widest portfolio of mobile spectrum in last year's auction of new capacity by Ofcom. Vodafone has committed to provide coverage using 2G, 3G and 4G services to 98% of the UK population by the end of 2015.

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Mel Stride, MP for Central Devon said: *"I am delighted that rural Devon has been selected as one of the few locations for Vodafone's Open Sure Signal trials. Roger and the local community put a lot of work in to ensure that Newton St Cyres was one of the communities chosen to take part in the trials across the UK. The commercial and social benefits of good connectivity are widely recognised and I hope that the success of Newton St Cyres will enable Vodafone's innovative solutions to be extended to other rural communities in Devon."*

Roger Cashmore, Newton St Cyres Parish Councillor, said: *"We worked hard as a community to ensure that Newton St Cyres became one of Vodafone's twelve communities. Due to the surrounding hills, as well as past planning decisions, our mobile connectivity previously has been poor. Now both residents and visitors to the village may begin to reap the benefits of having a strong Vodafone 3G signal."*

Paul Morris, Head of Government Affairs at Vodafone UK added, *"Newton St Cyres has shown how real partnership between the local community and their MP is the answer to helping to bring mobile coverage to rural communities. Interest in our rural mobile coverage trials was phenomenal, with communities engaging with us wholeheartedly to grasp the better mobile coverage that they need to boost both local life and economy. Without the support of Mel, Roger and the whole Newton St Cyres community, this project wouldn't have been possible and we're delighted the community is now benefiting from their great coverage."*

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Notes to editors:

- Vodafone UK has pioneered the use of femto cell technology with its Vodafone Sure Signal product. Launched in 2009, Vodafone Sure Signal is used by hundreds of thousands of people across the UK every day to boost the in-building 3G coverage of phones they register to use the device. For more information visit vodafone.co.uk/suresignal
- *Ofcom Communications Market Report 2013 <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/market-data-research/market-data/communications-market-reports/cmr13/telecoms-networks/>