



11 February 2016

## **SILCHESTER TO RECEIVE MOBILE COVERAGE WITH VODAFONE RURAL SURE SIGNAL PROGRAMME #ROSS100**

- Vodafone UK lights up one of the UK's oldest villages and a Hampshire not-spot with reliable 3G coverage for the first time
- Silchester is the latest community to be connected in Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal programme
- Silchester's ROSS unit is already taking an average of 30 mobile calls and supporting 3,000 data sessions a day
- Part of approximately £2 billion Vodafone is spending on its UK network and services across 2014 and 2015

Vodafone UK has announced the beautiful community of Silchester, one of the few villages to have been continuously occupied since the Iron Age, as the latest community in a rural mobile not-spot location to receive 3G coverage with Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal programme.

Silchester's inhabitants and the thousands of visitors to one of the best preserved Roman towns in Britain, have until now suffered from unreliable mobile coverage. The Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal (ROSS) programme uses Vodafone's innovative Sure Signal technology, to bring high quality 3G voice services and much needed access to the internet via mobile devices to communities in some of the UK's most beautiful or remote areas. Silchester is the third village in Hampshire, along with Easton and Itchen Abbas, to have been brought coverage through the ROSS programme.

The ROSS programme is a national initiative by Vodafone UK to provide reliable mobile access to up to 100 rural communities in mobile not-spot locations. Launched in July 2014, with support from local MPs, councils and rural action groups, the programme received an overwhelming response, with over 30 communities now live across the country from the Shetland Islands to Cornwall and from the mountains of Snowdonia to the Norfolk coast.

Mobile connectivity plays a vital role in keeping communities in touch and helps support local economies. However, rural and remote locations often miss out on advantages provided by modern communication tools, due to the

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complexity of delivering network coverage. This can be because of the geography of the area or difficulties with planning permissions in places of outstanding natural beauty. The ROSS programme uses innovative 'femtocell' technology to provide an alternative solution to bring 3G mobile access in locations where it isn't possible for networks to provide coverage through traditional means.

As part of the ROSS programme, Vodafone teams have now surveyed each of the 100 communities which were added to the programme at the end of last year. The surveys included physical ground assessments by Vodafone engineers as well as detailed fixed broadband speed checks. The teams have also drawn up plans for viable communities to illustrate where the equipment will be sited. The process saw some of the initial communities having their implementation postponed until their community broadband speeds and availability have improved.

*Jorge Fernandes, Vodafone UK Chief Technology Officer, said: "I am delighted that Silchester has joined our Rural Open Sure Signal programme. Mobile connectivity is an essential service for communities and businesses to thrive in today's digital world and support local economies. As part of the Rural Open Sure Signal programme, we are committed to investing in our network to provide access even in remote locations where it is otherwise almost impossible to reach. The number of calls and data sessions the unit is supporting every day, in an area where there was marginal coverage previously, shows the significant benefit the technology is making to members of the community. I am excited to see the transformation for Silchester and other communities which have been successful for this pioneering programme."*

Ranil Jayawardena, MP for North East Hampshire said: *I am very pleased to be here today for the launch of the Vodafone Rural Sure Signal Programme in Silchester. I believe that in the 21st century, everyone should have access to fast and reliable mobile coverage and it is great that 3G and mobile internet will now be available to the residents of Silchester.*

Steve Spillane, Village champion for Silchester commented: *"Silchester has always suffered with poor mobile coverage. The arrival of the Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal programme is important for our residents, businesses and visitors to the village. We can now start enjoying the benefits of improved mobile coverage in the centre of the community."*

As well as using Rural Open Sure Signal to plug rural "not-spots", Vodafone is spending around £2 billion on its network and services across the country over 2014 and 2015. This includes the provision of HD (High Definition) Voice

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# news release



technology on its 3G network and the extension of its 4G coverage to 757 cities and towns and thousands of smaller communities across the UK.

Further communities will be announced over the few months. For more information on the programme, visit [www.vodafone.co.uk/rural](http://www.vodafone.co.uk/rural).

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## Notes to editors:

- Launch event photos available on request.

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