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## **EWYAS HAROLD TEAMS UP WITH JESSE NORMAN MP AND VODAFONE UK TO LAUNCH HEREFORDSHIRE'S FIRST COMMUNITY-LED MOBILE PHONE NETWORK**

- Community-led initiative brings much needed mobile coverage to the Herefordshire community
- Vodafone 3G coverage arrives at the mobile 'not-spot' of Ewyas Harold
- Community chosen over more than 170 other rural communities across the UK who put themselves forward for trials to provide Vodafone mobile coverage to smaller rural communities

Ewyas Harold in Herefordshire is one of only twelve communities across the country trialling a 'community-led network' that is bringing much needed mobile coverage to homes and businesses in the area. Ofcom's latest annual Communications Market Report highlights that half of people now use their mobile phone to access the internet.\* Vodafone Open Sure Signal will enable not only Vodafone 3G voice services, but also provide the community with access to the internet via their mobile.

Working with the community and local MP Jesse Norman, Vodafone UK has installed ground breaking Vodafone Open Sure Signals in locations across the village of Ewyas Harold to provide 3G coverage throughout the community, where before there was little or none.

Vodafone Open Sure Signal uses femto cell technology to provide a Vodafone 3G signal in 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 3G mobile signal. They have been placed in a number of locations across the village to give a good spread of coverage, including the Dog Inn Public House and the village surgery.

Local MP Jesse Norman said, "I am delighted that after a lot of hard from myself and Cllr Graham Powell, Ewyas Harold has qualified as one of the 12 communities from across the UK to be involved in this Vodafone trial. With luck Ewyas Harold will enjoy the benefits of improved connectivity and I hope that the success of this trial will allow Vodafone's Open Sure Signal to be rapidly rolled out across rural communities in Herefordshire."

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Graham Powell, Councillor of Herefordshire Council added, "The impact of poor connectivity on rural communities has been increasing as technology develops. Effective communications is at the heart of the community and its prosperity which is why we are trying hard to ensure that Herefordshire is at the forefront of new developments. Ewyas Harold has struggled with poor mobile connectivity for too long and we are already seeing the benefits of having a strong Vodafone 3G signal."

Alyne Johnson, Senior Government Affairs Manager at Vodafone UK added, "Ewyas Harold has shown how partnership with the local community and local MP is the answer to not-spot mobile problems. Interest in our rural mobile coverage trials has been phenomenal, with communities crying out for the better mobile coverage they need to boost the local economy. We're delighted that Ewyas Harold is amongst them and that the community will be able to benefit from the advantages that this Vodafone service will bring."

As well as using innovative Open Sure Signals to plug rural not-spots, Vodafone is also committed to increasing the scale of its existing network and is spending £900m on its network across the country 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. In 2013, Vodafone UK pledged to deliver indoor 2G, 3G and 4G coverage to 98% of the UK population by 2015.

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**Notes to editors:**

- Ewyas Harold was chosen from the over 170 communities who applied to take part in a trial, following Vodafone's call in late 2011 for rural communities to get involved in the 'open femto' project. The installation of the technology in Ewyas Harold follows an initial pilot at East Garston in West Berkshire, where the technology is still being used by residents.
- 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](http://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/>