



CASE STUDY

Lakeside Café

A café and restaurant business run by Mari Rees-Stavros located in Tanygrisiau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, at the foot of the Moelwynion. Because of its location within Eryri National Park, this café is a popular rest spot for tourists, particularly with climbers, mountaineers, and bikers. There are local patrons who regularly come to the café, but in the summer, the business is mostly busy with customers from outside the area.

Increasing need for connectivity

These days, it has become standard for café businesses to offer WiFi to its customers. For Lakeside Café, WiFi access can be particularly useful for travellers who may require information on the area.

Particularly after the pandemic, Mari has also found that there is an increase in preference to pay by card rather than cash. They use a card machine which is crucially reliant on Internet access to operate.

Unfortunately, like many rural areas across the UK, fibre broadband rollout in the area is significantly lagging behind bigger urban areas. This means that Lakeside Café has faced issues related to getting WiFi access, including a period of eight months without Internet access.

Because the nearest cash machine is about two miles away from the café, this has led to lost payments from those who do not have immediate access to cash during their visit.

Starlink - a solution

Mari has tried several solutions, including switching providers and trying 4G routers. However, going for satellite broadband, particularly with Starlink, has been the most successful solution, with Internet access almost instantly available after setting it up. As of August 2024, they have been using Starlink for fourteen months and are satisfied with their service.

Starlink has had a positive impact on the business and on Mari's wellbeing now they no longer face the issue of lost payments. Naturally, customers can also use the WiFi service, and the business has the capacity to use two card machines now.

Mari has found that Starlink has been a boon for the business and suggests that rural businesses should consider going satellite internet options if fibre broadband is not available to them already.