

The Garforth Story

Garforth is a small town to the east of Leeds. It has some older housing which have always been served by telegraph poles. Three estates built in the 1970s estates were designed with open uncluttered streets and have never had telegraph poles.

Giggle fibre have now imposed a network of telegraph poles on the area against the majority of residents in areas already served by a growing underground network supplied by OpenReach.

Background

- In April 2024 Spring Fibre announced plans to erect 500+ telegraph poles in Garforth.
- Most of these were new telegraph poles in housing estates which were designed in the 1970s without telegraph poles. These estates have direct buried copper delivering telecoms since they were built.
- Residents and this group are NOT against the full fibre rollout, just how it has been delivered and the impact on Garforth.

Action taken in 2024

Action was taken by residents, our Local Councillor and MP.

- Residents campaigned by leaflet dropping every house on the East Garforth estate.
- Residents were asked to sign a petition (paper and online) to say that they would never connect to a network using a telegraph pole. Hundreds of signatures were obtained.
- Residents, our Councillor and MP were instrumental to arranging a public meeting attended by Spring Fibre and their installation partner, SCD.
- The public meeting was very well attended with hundreds of residents attending.

Action taken in 2024

- The outcome from the public meeting was that Spring Fibre would rethink the build and see if underground was feasible.
- Spring Fibre halted all work and no telegraph poles were installed.
- Spring Fibre kept in touch and it looked like they were planning to go underground.
- Unfortunately Spring Fibre went into administration towards the end of 2024.

Giggle Fibre

- The contractor, SCD which worked with Spring Fibre purchased the assets of Spring Fibre out of administration. SCD knew the strength of public opposition
- Giggle Fibre started work in Garforth in February 2025 without any notices on lamp posts or contact with residents.
- A larger residents group was formed to oppose this, but despite best efforts from our local Councillor and current MP, over 200 telegraph poles have been installed against the wishes of the residents and in areas which already have full fibre underground.
- Currently not a single house is connected to this telegraph pole network

Issues with Giggle Fibre

- Some workers rude and intimidating and offensive to residents.
- Initially refused to engage with the community. Later they did meet up to 10 of us, but would not change plans.
- Probable health and safety breaches including working without permits.
- Driving through red temporary traffic lights erected by Northern Gas Networks.
- Some of the new telegraph poles are wobbly in the ground.
- Some telegraph poles are leaching out creosote and have had to be wrapped in hessian. We know of at least 4 cases of unexplained and sustained rash on children who have come into contact with these telegraph poles.

Photos showing some of the issues



Media coverage

As a result of our campaign we have received coverage on the

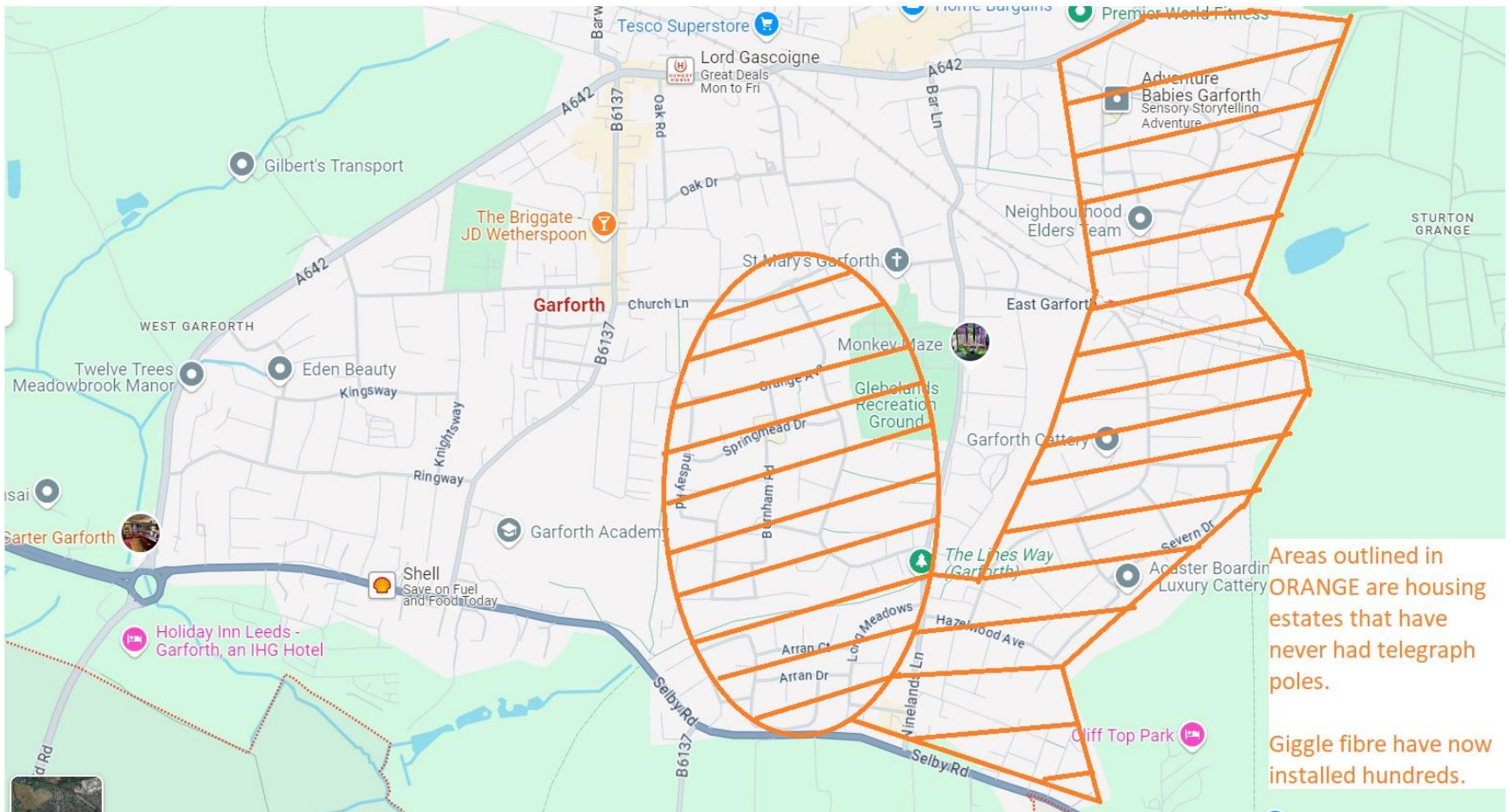
BBC (website and Radio Leeds)

Yorkshire Evening Post

ITV Local News

More information on www.garforth.org

Map showing large areas of Garforth now blighted by new telegraph poles.



How we would like your help

- It may be too late to save Garforth, but we would like to stop the same happening to other areas.
- We seek your support to change the law which allows operators to overbuild network for a quick profit against the wishes of residents.

The current law

- Currently an unlimited number of Telecommunications operators can overbuild alternative full fibre networks.
- Each operator can have their own overground infrastructure.
- Operators can overbuild even if the area already has full fibre capability underground.
- Telegraph poles are covered by permitted development. The local authority cannot stop them.
- Many operators will not engage with the community, so the majority view of residents is ignored.

How we want the law changing

- New telegraph poles should not be allowed as permitted development. The local authority needs to have the power to stop plans taking the majority of residents views into account.
- In areas where copper cables are directly buried, the first new operator who wants to build a network must install underground ducting that can be shared by other operators. The only exception would be for truly rural areas where underground would be technically infeasible and telegraph poles would be the choice.
- Once an area has full fibre capability it should be off limits to new operators to prevent constant overbuild of networks and allow operators to target areas with no full fibre.
- In an area with no existing over ground infrastructure there should be a local referendum before it can be installed.
- Underground should always be used where technically possible.
- A limit on the number of telegraph poles allowed per number of houses.
- All infrastructure to be shared between operators to avoid poles from different operators to be put up next to each other.
- Use of creosote on telegraph poles to be banned **immediately** on environmental and health and safety grounds.
- Telegraph poles that have been installed against the will of residents, should not be allowed to go into service.

Next steps

We hope that you will give this your careful consideration.

Should you need to contact us our details are: