



# Picture News

*Advanced*

*29<sup>th</sup> March 2021*

What's going on this week?



Thousands more traditional red telephone boxes are to be revived by local communities and could be transformed into museums, libraries and homes for defibrillators. The telephone company, BT, has revealed that almost 4,000 more of its phone boxes across the UK are being made available because they have become unnecessary due to the use of mobile phones. Since 2008, more than 6,600 phone boxes have been taken on by communities for only £1 each through the Adopt a Kiosk programme. Phone boxes have been transformed into defibrillator units, history museums, art galleries and book exchanges.

This week's news story: <http://bit.ly/3qP9gY8>

This week's useful video: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTcshWrIKOw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTcshWrIKOw)



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## Main question: Should we keep red telephone boxes?

### Listen, think, share

- Read through this week's story. Do we know where our nearest red telephone box is? Have we ever used a public telephone? Talk about why they have declined so much over the past decade. Discuss how the growth of the mobile phone industry has meant that the need for phone boxes has dropped dramatically; nearly half of the phone boxes in the UK have been removed.
- Parts of the UK, however, have fought to keep the red boxes with working telephones. In October 2020, plans to remove more than 100 payphones in the Scottish Highlands were contested by mountain rescuers. Mountaineers said that they prove critical for mountain rescues and other emergencies, especially in areas of unreliable mobile reception. Highland Council have said they are identifying payphones marked for closure that should be retained due to poor mobile reception. Can you think of any other examples of why some communities would like to keep their red boxes with a functioning telephone?
- BT have announced 4,000 additional telephone boxes are being offered to communities to repurpose. Why do you think they have decided to do this instead of just taking the boxes down and selling them? Their 'Adopt a Kiosk' scheme enables communities to retain the telephone kiosks. It means organisations such as charities, local authorities, town councils and even private landowners can find a new lease of life for the red boxes. If the alternative usage is approved, BT sell the box for a nominal £1 and BT will disconnect and remove the old phone. Why do you think the boxes are sold for just £1?
- BT have said much of the idea behind the campaign isn't to make a profit on the unused phone boxes, but to give them a new life in their community. For example, Community Heartbeat Trust has installed defibrillators in disused phone boxes across the country. Trust secretary, Martin Fagan, explains, "with something as serious as a cardiac arrest, time is of the essence. Unfortunately, ambulance services often can't reach country villages in time. To install defibrillators in disused phone boxes is ideal, as they're often in the centre of the village." As well as for medical purposes, communities around the UK have found many other purposes for their phone boxes including, libraries, museums and more than 400 have been upgraded by BT to digital units called Street Hubs offering free broadband, USB charging and environmental monitoring. Out of these, which do you think are the most useful? Explain your thoughts.
- The red phone boxes are often referred to as 'iconic'. Why do you think this is and what do you think this means? Do you agree that they are an important part of British culture and history?

### Further questions for discussion

- Who do you think should decide what phone boxes become, local communities, British Telecom or the government?
- If you could re-purpose a red telephone box in your local area, what would you choose to do with it? Explain the pros and cons of your idea.