

After Hours



Digicel Play CEO Charlie Clementson sharing a moment with staff. (Pictures by Reco Moore.)

New-look Digicel at Dome Mall



Digicel's head of commercial Dionne Emtage outlining the company's renewed focus on its customers.

After being there since 2014, Digicel has started anew at the Dome Mall in Warrens, St Michael.

Management and staff of the communications company were in a happy mood as they welcomed guests, including customers and the media, to the official reopening of the revamped store.

Customer service and access to the latest technology and Digicel Play services will be a major focus of the store, said Digicel's head of commercial Dionne Emtage, and Digicel Play chief executive officer Charlie Clementson. (SC)



Reverend Dr Marcus Lashley blessing the new store.

Europe dumps roaming charges

BRUSSELS – Roaming charges for using mobile phones when travelling within the European Union (EU) disappeared last Thursday, capping a decade-long battle by Brussels to show increasingly sceptical Europeans it can make their lives better.

Yet, for all the excitement it is generating within EU institutions, opt-outs secured by major telecoms firms and member states' refusal to give up their lucrative national airwaves may leave many holidaymakers disappointed this summer – and facing higher bills at home.

Ending the practice of adding hefty charges to surf the Internet, call or send texts when abroad within the EU has been a *cause celebre* for the

European Commission and Parliament, which saw it as an affront to common market ideals.

"The European Union is about bringing people together and making their lives easier. The end of roaming charges is a true European success story," the institutions said.

The commission draped a victory banner down its Berlaymont headquarters reading **Goodbye Roaming Fees**.

The change in legislation finally passed several months ago was certainly welcomed by some visitors to Brussels.

"I think it's excellent," said Charlie Wild, a musician from Scotland.

"I've been in Europe for two weeks spending £3 a day to be able to use my

phone, and [now] I don't have to, and it's great."

Julie DuBlanc, visiting from France for work, said: "We'll be checking our phones more often, as we would in Paris."

But she may need to be careful. The project has faced numerous setbacks as mobile phone operators have lobbied to maintain what has been a significant source of revenue while the realities of a fragmented telecoms market have confounded politicians' efforts to do away with the charges.

The snag was that while customers can no longer by law be asked to pay extra when using phones abroad, operators still face wholesale fees from the foreign networks that connect them.

A solution which involves capping wholesale charges has proved fiendishly complex since it means setting a cap that suits companies in all 28 member states, even though domestic mobile rates vary hugely.

In northern Europe countries, which are effectively net exporters of tourists, there is concern that high wholesale fees being paid to networks in southern holiday destinations, combined with the loss of roaming revenue, could force firms to stop letting customers use their phones abroad at all.

Alternatively, the companies in the north could raise charges at home to offset the losses, effectively forcing poorer, stay-at-home customers to subsidise travellers.

(Reuters)