

Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12th April 2017 @ 7:30 p.m. Fernaig House

1 Present and Apologies

Present: Kate Biss, Phil Game, Joe Grimson, Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae

2 Approve and adopt previous minutes

The previous minutes for March, were approved, proposed by Mary, seconded by Neil.

Copies of previous minutes are on our website at:-

<http://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=433827>

Email cmnetcic@gmail.com if you would like to be put on the circulation list or you have any questions.

3 Chairman's report

3.1 Bandwidth

All subscribers have been routed through Plockton for the past month - there are no signs of any performance problems with the fibre line.

We have a new version of the Ubiquiti firmware under test; so far there has been one repeat of the spontaneous AirRouter reboot problem. We will upgrade all units to the latest version only if it proves to be more stable.

We tested an increase to the signal strength to improve connection quality in Braeintra - this was not successful so we will run further tests to determine the best way to improve the quality of the connections.

We have asked CBS to clarify whether an upgrade of the Lochcarron line to fibre is now possible.

3.2 Cyber Attack

There has been no further attempt to attack our Lochcarron access point. Neil reported the incident to the police who have given us a reference number to be quoted should we come under attack again. For the moment we consider this issue closed. **Completed**

3.3 Admin Overhead

After the new tariff was introduced in April ten subscribers' accounts had errors.

3.4 WHAN

There have been no more WHAN meetings since the last minutes.

3.5 CBS

CBS have informed us that the cabinet to provide a fibre connection has been installed in Lochcarron, but the Openreach website shows that we cannot have a faster connection than our existing 17 Mbps due to the length of the cable from the cabinet. However within the past couple of days the Zen website has been updated to show speeds of 55 Mbps might be possible. We have asked CBS if they can clarify the situation.

It was decided that we would apply to upgrade the Lochcarron line to fibre once we had confirmation that there are no other upgrades planned that would affect our connection.

3.6 Subscribers

3.6.1 Existing relays

Live subscribers - 35

Subscriber installation pending - 0

3.6.2 Waiting for new backbone relays

Waiting for surveys - 4

Waiting for installations - 38

3.6.3 Others

On live access points but requested a delay - 2

No response when asked for an installation date - 2

Withdrawn from CMNet since the last minutes - 0

New joiners since the last minutes - 0

Total - 81

No changes this month.

3.7 Terms of Reference

Deferred

4 Secretary's report

4.1 Risk register

We will continue to evaluate the costs and benefits of a third connection through the Strome ferry exchange. **Action: Mary**

4.2 Long term support plan

Mary will think about the skills required and how to develop a wider support network. **Action: Mary**

We will look at the possibility of developing software to configure equipment; our goal will be to reduce the skill level requirement of most support functions to the equivalent of changing a fuse. **Action: Phil**

4.3 Zen Refund

We have received a copy of the charge levied by Openreach which does not agree with the refund from Zen and consequently have asked Zen for an explanation. **Action: Mary / Phil**

4.4 Terms of Reference

Deferred

5 Finance Director's Report

5.1 Monthly Statistics

Capital expenditure claimed against our grant of £37,538:-

Brought forward	- £24,985.75
This period	- £ 0.00
Carried forward	- £24,985.75
No Change	

Revenue:-

Brought forward	- £4,505.38
Income this month	- £3,668.47
Expenditure this month	- £611.58
Carried forward	- £7,562.27

N.b. A refund from Zen and a claim covering expenses incurred over the past few months are included in this month's figures.

Liabilities

Estimated Liabilities	- £3,200.00 (includes ~ £2,800 to "repay" CBS)
Estimated balance after liabilities	- £4,362.27

Provision for replacement of Electronic equipment

Total value purchased to date	- £9,000.00
Balance after provision	- £-4,637.73

We have cancelled our direct debit payment to Daisy / Managed Comms and will perform our own audit on the accounts. **Action: Phil & Kate.** We are **still** trying to get a termination of contract statement from Daisy.

Action: Mary & Phil

We have agreed with CBS that we will send in claim forms but not request payment until we have "repaid" the amount refunded from Zen. **Action: Phil**

The last SSE bill was much more reasonable unlike previous estimates which appeared to have been based on a typical household's usage. It was decided we would wait for one more bill to come through and if that was also close to our actual usage we would set up a direct debit payment for electricity. **Action: Mary & Kate**

5.2 Outstanding subscribers' debt

Four accounts are in debit, the total outstanding debt on these accounts as of the date of the meeting was £38.50.

Reminders to pay have been sent out. **Action: Phil**

5.3 Next three month's budget and cash flow

No issues.

5.4 Housekeeping

Work continues to automate the reconciliation of payments to suppliers; priority will be given to Daisy / Managed Comms and Zen. **Action: Phil, Kate**

5.5 Payments for installations of subscriber's equipment

All payments are up to date.

5.6 *Standing orders*

About 30% of accounts have an error of some sort; most are in credit as they have not reduced their monthly subscriptions for the new tariff which came into effect on the 1st April. We have emailed all those concerned asking them to change their standing orders in May. **Action: Joe, Phil**

5.7 *Loan Contracts*

It was agreed we will review all loans and repayments to ensure all the documentation is complete. **Action: Phil, Kate**

5.8 *Additional access to the bank account*

With help from Joe, Kate has now tracked down the correct form to apply for online banking access. The forms require that we formally agree and minute that the board have approved Kate's access to online banking. Approval was agreed unanimously. Mary countersigned the forms as company secretary and Kate will forward them to RBS. **Action: Kate**

5.9 *Check Daisy account*

Kate is working her way through the Daisy invoices; although there are only a couple of dozen invoices about a quarter had errors which required our intervention and later correction by Daisy. The reconciliation of invoices to payments is very complex. Phil passed Kate a spreadsheet containing a cross reference of invoices and payments made. If necessary there will be a separate meeting to check and agree the audit of the Daisy account. **Action: Kate, Phil**

5.10 *Accounts for y/e August 2016*

Prior to the meeting Phil circulated detailed figures for the annual accounts including a reconciliation with the bank account. The HMRC software to calculate tax payments due was a little flaky but it was also possible to circulate the HMRC tax calculations a couple of days before the meeting. We went through the accounts and the HMRC documentation and agreed the derivation of all the figures. Phil is to provide additional documentation for the HMRC tax calculations, check and if required amend one figure and then send off the documents to the accountant. We will also check the correct way to treat a portion of depreciation and we will ask the accountant for clarification on this point. **Action: Phil**

6 **Internal auditor's report**

It was agreed we would prepare a synopsis of our current practises, needs and areas of weakness to assist ourselves and the auditor. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

6.1 *Assets, bf, acquired, relinquished / written off, cf*

No progress this month.

6.2 *Liabilities*

No progress this month.

6.3 *Description of the Audit Trail*

No progress this month.

7 **Customer Relations**

7.1 *Production Environment*

7.1.1 *Problems and complaints*

Joe is still having problems updating firmware, this is not a high priority to fix and will be addressed in due course.

Action: Phil, Joe

There have been no reports of any network dropouts in The Glen since the dish was changed. **Completed**

There have been no more attempts to hack into the Lochcarron access point. **Completed?**

AirRouters randomly rebooting - Joe checked to see if there is any specific batch of AirRouters with the problem and there is not. The cause remains unknown and is probably software rather than hardware. The rollback to an earlier version of firmware appears to have fixed the problem. Ubiquiti have now released two new versions of their software and so far there has been one problem with the latest version. We will rollout this version progressively in due course and update AirRouters if there are no further problems. **Action Phil**

Only one customer reported a defect this month and after checking cables, powering down the equipment and restarting the system the system returned to normal working.

It is worth noting that before calling for help customers should do the following:-

- 1) Check that there are no planned outages - these mostly take place at 11:00pm.
- 2) Check connections; refer to your user guide to make sure the right wire is in the right socket.
- 3) Check everything is powered up, again refer to your user guide to see what lights should be active.
- 4) Power down, wait for 30 seconds and then power up again.
- 5) If this does not solve the problem then call Phil or Joe.

Please note if you power down equipment whilst a system change is in progress and your kit is being reconfigured then it will be corrupted and will have to be swapped out for another unit which will require a site visit.

Two customers in Braeintra are experiencing poor signal levels. Investigations into this are ongoing. Boosting the signal strength did not have the desired effect so we will now look at other options.

Please note that the poor signal level in Braeintra is still good enough for 30 Mbps but we want to increase the signal strength in Braeintra to bring the units in line with the rest of the network to provide an additional margin.

7.1.2 Usage quotas

The monthly total for March was 791 GB with a daily average of 26 GB, the same daily average as February and January. As the monthly usage now appears to have reached a plateau it was agreed we would also report on the highest day's usage during the month so we can start to build up a record of peaks. The peak usage in March was 36.3 GB for Thursday 30th.

Four people exceeded their quota in March, three have opted to increase their monthly quota to the next band, and one will pay the excess surcharge.

7.1.3 Possible virus infection

The monitoring system will be amended to increase the reporting threshold. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

7.1.4 Installation of equipment

No installations since the last minutes.

7.1.5 Customer Contracts

Joe is working on the wording of an amendment to contracts to reduce the amount of paper we produce. **Action: Joe**

7.2 Changes for next month

7.2.1 Increases in quotas for existing subscribers

There have been no requests for quota increases this month.

7.2.2 Additional Management tools / reports

Software to check the configuration of different types of equipment - no progress this month due to other priorities

Action: Phil

7.2.3 Potential personal safety issue

Changes are ongoing. **Action: Phil, Joe**

7.3 Volume trial

7.3.1 Review of the trial

No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

7.4 Terms of Reference

Deferred

7.5 Problem reporting procedure

No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

8 General topics

8.1 Documentation

8.1.1 Mast lease

Nothing from the Highland Council as yet

8.1.2 Network Plan

The network design will be extended utilising the agreed new relays on Creag Mhaol. **Action: Phil**

8.2 Relays

8.2.1 Creag Mhaol

Phil met with Fay and her brother Barney who gave up their time to walk to the top of Creag Mhaol to view the site for the proposed new relays. Fay has very kindly given us permission to build a new relay above Strome Ferry which will link Lochcarron, North Strome and the raised beach above Portchullin and a second relay to be used to "bounce" the signal around a hillock which is blocking the direct line of sight to one of the existing relays on Creag Mhaol. **Action:**

All

8.2.2 Plockton

8.2.2.1 Hosting agreement

We will add details of the solicitor's quote to the accounts. No progress this month. **Action: Phil, Kate**

8.2.2.2 Equipment and tidy up

No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

8.3 *Backbone development*

8.3.1 Plockton

No issues.

8.3.2 Lochcarron

We will prioritise finalising the contract for Andrew. No progress this month. **Action: Phil.** We will upgrade the link to fibre if CBS confirm it is feasible. **Action: Mary**

8.3.3 Creag Mhaol

8.3.3.1 *Existing relays*

We will investigate the use of additional shielding to reduce noise on the links. **Action: Phil**

8.3.3.2 *New relays*

We will start work planning the new relays and enhance the network design so we can buy any required additional kit.

Action: Phil

8.3.4 The Glen

Since the new dish was installed the automatic monitoring has not shown any network dropouts on the line and no problems have been reported by subscribers in The Glen. This problem has now been closed. **Completed**

8.3.5 Ardaneaskan

We will prioritise finalising the contract for Beccy. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

8.3.6 Portchullin (raised beach)

Activation of the Portchullin relay is waiting on the activation of the new Creag Mhaol relays. **Action: Phil**

8.3.7 Craig

A further signal strength test and antenna alignment is required in Ardaneaskan West before we can start work in Craig. It was agreed we would complete the work for Craig before starting work on the new Creag Mhaol relays. **Action: Joe, Phil**

8.3.8 North Strome

Activation of the North Strome relay is waiting on the activation of the new Creag Mhaol relays. **Action: Phil**

8.3.9 Ardnarff

No progress this month.

8.4 *Testing*

8.4.1 *Management & accounting software*

The subscriber usage email will be enhanced to give the specific amount of data used to allow subscribers to better manage their quotas. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

8.5 *Restoring power to the old TV repeater*

8.5.1 *Removal of equipment from Holly Croft*

Phil is to check Eric & Elizabeth are happy with our proposal to compensate them for the use of their electricity. Phil is to tidy up all the equipment left on their premises. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

8.5.2 *Removal of old cable*

No progress this month.

8.5.3 *Protection of cable on the hill*

No progress this month.

8.5.4 *Backup Generator*

No progress this month.

8.6 *ISPs*

8.6.1 *Community backhaul, West Coast Backbone (WCB)*

No update since the last minutes.

8.6.2 *ADSL Broadband installation at Plockton High School*

No performance issues have been reported this month.

8.6.3 *ADSL Broadband installation at Lochcarron*

The Openreach website is now showing Lochcarron as “Accepting Orders” suggesting the upgrade to fibre is complete and the Zen website shows speeds of 55 Mbps might be possible at our location. CBS have also informed us that the cabinet to provide a fibre connection has been installed in Lochcarron.

However the Openreach website used by CBS shows that we cannot have a faster connection than our existing 17 Mbps due to the length of the cable from the cabinet.

We have asked CBS if they can clarify the situation before we place an order to upgrade to fibre. **Action CBS**

8.7 Implementations

8.7.1 Phase 3 - Relays and creation of access points for the remainder of residents and connect trial subscribers.

8.7.1.1 Equipment

No additional purchases this month. It was agreed we would buy a MikroTik router to use as a server for additional network monitoring software. We will check current stock of equipment and put together a shopping list to ready to start work on the next phase. No progress this month. **Action Phil**

8.8 Company Logo

No progress this month. **Action: All**

9 Director's training session

9.1 Configuring Ubiquiti and MikroTik equipment

We will organise another training session. **Action: Phil, Joe.**

Joe and Phil went through the management reporting system documentation. Phil will update and extend the document.

No Progress this month. **Action Phil**

Joe and Phil went through the configuration of the Lochcarron router, more training will be organised in due course.

Action: Phil, Joe

9.2 AirControl

No issues.

9.3 The Dude

A new version of The Dude is available; this requires new hardware and will be installed when time permits. **Action: Phil**

10 AOB

None

11 Items to add to the agenda of the next meeting

None

12 Next meeting

Date of next meeting Wednesday, 17th May 7:30pm at Fernaig House.

The meeting closed at 9:30 pm.