

# Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held by Microsoft Teams video call on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 @ 7:30 pm

## 1 Present and Apologies

Present: Phil Game, Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae, Kath Smith

## 2 Approve and adopt previous minutes

The previous minutes for May, were 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>

## 3 Chairman's report

### 3.1 COVID

Now we are free to enter homes work has started to bring all the new units software up to date and check configurations.

This will take a few more days effort and once complete, we will schedule installations.

### 3.2 Bandwidth

We reviewed our decision to leave Plusnet and move to Zen in the light of a very competitive offer from Plusnet. After some debate it was decided that we would take the offer from Plusnet even though their support is not as good as

Zen's. **Action Phil**

Mary has started investigating options in Lochcarron. As we are a very early stage with this task it was decided we would investigate several options simultaneously. **Action Mary**

### 3.3 False RADAR

We have had periods of ten days with no false RADAR events followed by one event which can then trigger a cascade of other events. However we are slowly reducing the frequency of events and gathering data over long periods which are identifying "stable" frequencies. In addition software has been written to detect and report on units that have changed frequency. There may be some merit in running the new software automatically at a set time and using it to reset any units that have changed frequency, hopefully before it can start a cascade. **Action: Phil**

### 3.4 Subscribers

Live subscribers	- 42
Waiting for installations / activation	- 3
Waiting for subscriber's confirmation of details	- 0
Pending installations	- 9
3.4.1 Waiting for new backbone relays	
Waiting for installations	- 19
Leavers since the last minutes	- 0
New joiners since the last minutes	- 0
Leavers since the last minutes	- 0
New joiners since the last minutes	- 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>- 73</b>

We have had requests for connections in Lochcarron, Strathcarron and North Strome; once our existing commitments have been met we will see if these are feasible. **Action: Phil**

We have had an enquiry for a new connection and have been told by the subscriber that they do not have line of sight. We may review this when all other subscribers have been connected. **Action: Phil**

We are now working on the twelve subscribers whose connections to CMNet were suspended whilst COVID restrictions were in place. **Action: Phil & Mary**

## 4 Secretary's report

### 4.1 Risk register

No progress this month.

### 4.2 Long term support plan

Software to automate the cloning of failed devices - work has restarted to further automate the process and it is being tested and used on the kit being prepared for the new installations. **Action: Phil**

### 4.3 Access to the bank account

Mary has spoken to our insurers who have said that the amended procedures at RBS do not affect our policy. After the "holiday from Zurich" our insurance now runs from 1<sup>st</sup> July to end June. **Completed**

Mary has obtained the forms required to register her as a bank signatory; this requires that all directors formally approve a resolution to appoint Mary. As the exact wording of the resolution is key it will be done through an email meeting. No progress this month. **Action: All**

#### 4.4 Electricity account

Mary obtained a set of meter readings however SSE has changed their website and so far it has proved impossible to enter the new readings; we will take this up with SSE. We have subsequently received new bills from SSE with estimated usage which is roughly in line with the actual usage. **Action: Mary**

## 5 Finance Director's Report

### 5.1 Monthly Statistics

#### Revenue for May:-

<b>Brought forward</b>			
Balance		<b>£1,341.89</b>	
Creditors			£6,781.64
Debtors			£5,020.33
Net			£1,761.31
<b>Bank balance</b>			<b>£10,381.28</b>
<b>This month</b>			
Income	£429.50		
Expenditure	£139.79		
<b>P&amp;L</b>		<b>£289.71</b>	
Creditors			£27.87
Debtors			£21.50
Net			£6.37
<b>Adjusted P&amp;L</b>			<b>£296.08</b>
<b>Carried forward</b>			
Balance		<b>£1,631.60</b>	
Creditors			£6,809.51
Debtors			£5,041.83
Net			£1,767.68
<b>Bank balance</b>			<b>£10,677.36</b>

### 5.2 This year's surplus

The current forecast annual surplus is in excess of £2,000. There was some debate as to what we should do with the excess. We have to balance reducing our "profit" to manage our tax bill with the need to retain cash to be set aside to replace equipment in the future. It was decided we would review our "stock" of equipment and make sure we have everything needed to complete all the outstanding installations as well as sufficient spares cover. The "shopping list" will be discussed at our meeting in July **Action Phil**

However it was decided we would buy three enclosures to replace two units likely to fail in the next few months plus one as a spare for emergency use. In addition we will buy a pair of the latest Ubiquiti subscriber antennas for evaluation.

**Action Phil**

### 5.3 Review of replacement equipment costs.

Although we have given more thought to estimating replacement equipment costs we are still not confident that we can produce an accurate figure. It was decided we would wait until we had tested some of the newer kit before proceeding.

**Action Phil**

### 5.4 Outstanding Expenses Claims

With the payments for HMRC tax, Companies House and Insurance Phil & Mary's expenses claims are now ready to be submitted. **Action Mary, Phil & Kath**

### 5.5 *Next year's tariff*

The total number of gigabytes sold was 9,850. The break even tariff for 2 fibre lines is 116 GB per £1, for 3 fibre lines is 77 GB per £1 and for 4 fibre lines is 58 GB per £1.

Setting the tariff for next year will be reviewed once we are confident we can estimate the cost of replacement equipment.

### 5.6 *Outstanding subscribers' credit*

One subscriber has asked that rather than refund their surplus we donate it on their behalf to the hall. **Action: Kath**

### 5.7 *Outstanding subscribers' debt*

The outstanding debt is £6.

### 5.8 *Housekeeping*

Work continues to automate the reconciliation of payments; priority will be given to Zen & Plusnet. **Action: Phil**

### 5.9 *Payments for installations of subscriber's equipment*

All payments are up to date.

### 5.10 *Annual Accounts, HMRC & Companies House Returns*

The annual returns for HMRC & Companies House were submitted and the tax and Companies House fees paid by Mary. There was something of a saga with Companies House return -

Initially the forms were rejected by C.H. citing that the wording of one clause was incorrect. Mary pointed out to C.H. that the wording was generated by the HMRC software. So C.H. was actually complaining that HMRC were in the wrong. Finally C.H. agreed the wording acceptable and asked for the documents to be returned to them unchanged.

On receipt of the documents that C.H. had rejected and then accepted they rejected them again - this time complaining that our company name was not shown. Again Mary told them that the forms were generated by the HMRC software and so they should take the issue up with HMRC. Mary also pointed out that C.H. had accepted all of our previous years returns which were in the same format.

C.H. said they would "consult internally" about our case; we asked them to email us with the result.

We did not receive a response from C.H. but a couple of days later our documents were uploaded to their website; all accepted in their original form.

After over 4 hours on the phone this task was finally... **Completed**

## 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*

We are still seeing sporadic problems with the Achmore access point. **Action: Phil**

One subscriber reported poor performance in Braeintra - this is down to obstructions in the line of sight of the subscriber's antenna. **Action: Subscriber**

Drop outs in Craig - we are still recording a few drop outs due to false RADAR. **Action: Phil**

Unable to access a website - This has been resolved. **Completed**

Due to a very low renewal price from Plusnet we have decided to stay with them. It was decided we could put up with some minor issues and poor technical support given the low price. **Action: Phil**

We continue to hold the Lochcarron gateway in reserve should there be a need to increase capacity.

The MikroTik server ("The Dude") is having its database rebuilt - no progress this month due to other priorities. **Action: Phil**

Phil is part way through a document to list the options for automatic recovery of failures and loss of capacity. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

The Strome Low relay dish that connects to Achmore High will be recovered when we next schedule work on Creag Mhaol. **Action: Phil**

The Creag Mhaol dish that connects to Ardaneaskan West that was replaced after storm damage is showing some slight dips in signal strength. This is probably due to a damaged housing, the housing will be replaced when we next schedule work on Creag Mhaol. **Action: Phil**

#### 7.1.1 Usage quotas

The monthly total for May was 5.7 TB. The daily average was 185 GB, with a peak usage of 255 GB on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup>. CMNet peaks since operations started; highest average daily usage 229 GB, highest single days usage - 367 GB, highest monthly usage - 7.1 TB.

One subscriber exceeded their quota in May and have had their contract amended accordingly.

#### 7.1.2 Possible virus infection

No new instances of the Ubiquiti virus were detected; we will continue to run scans. **Action: Phil**

#### 7.1.3 Installation of equipment

##### 7.1.3.1 Achmore

Nothing to report

##### 7.1.3.2 Ardaneaskan East

One subscriber's connection is under test. **Action: Phil**

##### 7.1.3.3 Ardaneaskan West

Nothing to report

##### 7.1.3.4 Ardnarff

Nothing to report

##### 7.1.3.5 Braeindra

Nothing to report

##### 7.1.3.6 Craig

We are investigating a report of drop outs. We will review the situation when we have more experience of low level links over water or other options become available. **Action: Phil**

##### 7.1.3.7 North Strome

The North Strome installation will be completed at the first opportunity. **Action: Phil**

##### 7.1.3.8 Strome Ferry

The North Strome relay will be completed at the first opportunity. **Action: Phil**

The Strome Ferry installation will be completed at the first opportunity. **Action: Phil**

We will install a further low level test site in Strome Ferry. **Action: Phil**

##### 7.1.3.9 Other installations

Nothing to report

#### 7.1.4 Customer Contracts

We will check that all changes to customer contracts and charges are now correct. **Action: Phil**

### 7.2 Changes for next month

#### 7.2.1 Additional Management tools / reports

Management Reporting Software upgrades. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

Software to check the configuration of equipment - this is being upgraded to increase the automation when configuring new devices. **Action: Phil**

#### 7.2.2 Potential personal safety issue

The new naming standard has been used for all the new installations. **Action: Phil**

#### 7.2.3 Additional equipment for subscribers

No requests outstanding.

### 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

A trial WhatsApp group has been set up by Mary - testing is continuing amongst directors. **Action: All**

## 8 General topics

### 8.1 Documentation

#### 8.1.1 Creag Mhaol

We have received a draft lease agreement from our solicitors; we have yet to go through this in detail. We will need to reconfirm all the GPS coordinates of the relays before we can proceed; priority will be given to completing the set up of the relays on Creag Mhaol. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

### 8.2 Existing Relays

#### 8.2.1 Plockton

After a few weeks have elapsed we will check the installation and apply a second coat of paint to the school wall.

**Action: Phil & Mary**

#### 8.2.2 Achmore

The Plusnet router will be replaced with something more suitable. **Action: Phil**

The test the maximum speed that the radio link from Achmore Hall to Creag Mhaol will support the router in Achmore Hall will need to be upgraded. At the moment it has “only” 100 Mbps Ethernet ports and it is expected that the radio link will be able to run well over this speed. However we test the speed from router to router so the 100 Mbps port on the Achmore Hall router would be the limiting factor. We will therefore replace the router with one that can support 1 Gbps Ethernet ports; we have a suitable router “in stock”. The corresponding router on Creag Mhaol has already been upgraded. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.2.3 Lochcarron

Link capacity testing is required. **Action: Phil**

We will install a Raspberry Pi micro computer to facilitate gateway line speed tests. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.2.4 Other relays

No issues.

### 8.3 Backbone development

#### 8.3.1 New relays

##### 8.3.1.1 Completed

No progress this month.

##### 8.3.1.2 Next steps

The new relay automated recovery algorithms are being tested (some rather unexpectedly)

Re-align the existing Portchullin Access Point

Add an additional Portchullin Access Point

The buried mains power cables need to be permanently marked and documented.

Install one subscriber’s test equipment in Portchullin

**Action: All**

#### 8.3.2 The Glen

One access point will be upgraded to see if that will reduce the noise levels. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.3.3 Ardaneaskan East

Some configuration changes are pending. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.3.4 Leacanashie

Nothing to report

#### 8.3.5 Portchullin (raised beach)

The Portchullin access points will be upgraded. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.3.6 Craig

We will review the link when other work is complete. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.3.7 North Strome

Nothing to report

#### 8.3.8 Strome Ferry

Nothing to report

#### 8.3.9 Ardnarff

Nothing to report

### 8.3.10 Reraig

We have surveyed various locations for a relay to provide an access point for Reraig. Access will almost certainly require a much higher relay than we have built so far. We will return to the relay investigation and build once the current relays are active. **Action: Phil**

## 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 old cable

No progress this month.

### 8.5.2 Protection of cable on the hill

All the cable on the hill has been buried but the routes still need to be marked.

### 8.5.3 Backup Generator

No progress this month.

## 8.6 ISPs

No issues

## 8.7 Implementations

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

Work at subscriber's premises can be resumed now the government has relaxed the COVID restrictions.

#### 8.7.1.1 Ardaneaskan East

We are part way through the firmware updates and configuration of the new subscribers' equipment. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.7.1.2 Strome Ferry

Waiting on the upgrade of the North Strome relay

#### 8.7.1.3 Leacanashie

Ready to start installations

#### 8.7.1.4 North Strome

Ready to start installations

#### 8.7.1.5 Achmore

Ready to start installations

#### 8.7.1.6 Portchullin

Installations pending Portchullin raised beach enclosure test.

### 8.7.2 Phase 4 - Further investigations / backbone development required.

#### 8.7.2.1 Ardaneaskan West

#### 8.7.2.2 Reraig

#### 8.7.2.3 Lochcarron

#### 8.7.2.4 Strathcarron

## 8.8 Company Logo

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

## 8.9 General Data Protection Regulation (Data Protection Act)

Nothing to report this month

## 9 Director's training session

### 9.1 Configuring Ubiquiti and MikroTik equipment

We will organise another training session for all directors

## 10 Next meeting

Date of next meeting Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 19:30 maybe face to face?

The meeting was held by Microsoft Teams video conference and finished at 20:30