

Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13th February 2023 @ 7:30 pm at Fernaig House

1 Present and Apologies

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

2 Approve and adopt previous minutes

The previous updates for December & January were proposed by Neil, seconded by Mary.

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 Bandwidth

There have been no reports of bandwidth issues.

Previous performance stats for the Achmore line suggested there might be a loss of capacity on the Plusnet internet connection however additional testing has shown that the line is performing as expected. **Action: Phil**

We have set up a series of automated speed tests from the three gateways (Achmore, Lochcarron and Plockton) to sample subscribers. On a few occasions these have reported speeds below those expected. To gather more detailed information we will set up additional speed tests running across smaller sections of the network to identify bottlenecks. **Action: Phil**

3.2 False RADAR

The connection from Creag Mhaol to the Achmore gateway will be upgraded to 60 GHZ which is not subject to FR events. We have been granted a license by Ofcom and will install the 60 GHZ link in due course. **Action: Phil**

In addition to the link to the Achmore gateway there have been a few of false RADAR events in the last month. It has also become clear that not all events are being reported in our logs. We will extend our own software to capture and log FR events. **Action: Phil**

3.3 Subscribers

Live subscribers	- 61
Waiting for activation	- 0
Waiting for subscriber's confirmation of details / deposits	- 0
Pending installations	- 0
Waiting for installations	- 10
Leavers since the last minutes	- 0
New joiners since the last minutes	- 0
Total	- 71

One new installation this month,

We have been asked to connect a new subscriber in North Strome - the line of sight to our relay is being checked. **Action: Phil**

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

3.4 New equipment

We have purchased 10 dual band MikroTik routers to hold in stock for spares in anticipation of problems with the older "vintage" AirRouters. We have also purchased another 2 "AC" antennas. **Completed**

Dedicated support laptop - our top three preferred laptops were all out of stock or sold out by the time we ready to order.

We will look at alternatives; it was agreed Phil will be allowed to exceed the normal £250 limit on unauthorised purchases so we can act quickly; a maximum budget of £700 was set. **Action: Phil**

4 Secretary's report

4.1 Risk register

No progress this month.

4.2 Long term support plan

We have adapted our software to work with the "AC Gen 2" units; we are looking at options to clone replacements devices remotely and in due course will look for volunteers at "remote" sites to hold spares. **Action: Phil**

4.3 Broadband in Achmore Hall

We discussed and agreed our response which will be sent via email to the Hall committee. **Action: Mary**

4.4 Zen price increase

Zen has recently increased their charges; we will review the value for money of all ISPs when we next look to increase capacity. **Action: Mary**

4.5 Electricity price increase

The recent electricity price increase is estimated to increase our annual charge from £500 to £1,200. Mary has looked at the alternative providers and concluded there is nothing to be gained by moving away from SSE. Mary will get meter readings at the end of March when our current contract expires. **Action: Mary**

5 Finance Director's Report

5.1 Monthly Statistics

Revenue for January

Brought forward

Balance		£1,110.35		
Creditors			£15,276.67	
Debtors			£14,119.47	
Net				£1,157.20
Bank balance				£10,015.52

This month

Income	£620.09			
Expenditure	£909.51			
P&L		-£289.42		
Creditors			£679.29	
Debtors			£179.86	
Net				£499.43
Adjusted P&L				£210.01

Carried forward

Balance		£820.93		
Creditors			£15,955.96	
Debtors			£14,299.33	
Net				£1,656.63
Bank balance				£10,225.53

5.2 Outstanding Expenses Claims

All claims are up to date.

5.3 This year's surplus

Another batch of cheques was written and is ready for despatch. As this is the last batch we will check that all subscribers' accounts have been processed. **Action: Kath, Neil & Phil**

We discussed the projected surplus for our year end August 2023. In the light of HMRC's capital allowance super deduction coming to an end on 1st April 2023 it was decided that we should buy more replacement kit this year. The accounts for February will be our half year and we will decide how much to spend at the next month's meeting.

Kath will make sure that February's accounts are as accurate as we can make them to get the best EOY forecast. **Action: Kath**

Phil will create a shopping list of kit to buy. **Action: Phil**

5.4 Next year's tariff

The total number of gigabytes sold was 22,050, which makes the break even tariff for 3 fibre lines 198 GB per £1 and for 4 fibre lines 160 GB per £1.

5.5 Outstanding subscribers' debt

Three accounts are in arrears, the subscribers have been informed. **Action: Kath**

5.6 Housekeeping

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

5.7 *Payments for installations of subscriber's equipment*

All payments are up to date.

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 *Issues raised by Subscribers*

7.1.1.1 *How can subscribers contact CMNet when the internet is down?*

We will investigate the options; ideally the CMNet support team needs to receive problem reports via email so our initial investigations will be whether voice mails can be forwarded via email. No progress this month.

7.1.1.2 *Fernaig*

No issues

7.1.1.3 *Achmore*

No issues

7.1.1.4 *The Glen*

No issues

7.1.1.5 *Braeintra*

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

7.1.1.6 *Craig*

We have asked a subscriber to check the line of sight for obstructions. **Action: Subscriber**

7.1.1.7 *Ardaneaskan East*

No issues

7.1.1.8 *Ardaneaskan West*

No issues

7.1.1.9 *Leacanashie*

No issues

7.1.1.10 *North Strome*

One subscriber is having issues preventing the installation of a whole house Wi-Fi system. **Action: Phil**

7.1.1.11 *Strome Ferry*

No issues

7.1.1.12 *Ardnarff*

Poor speeds between buildings have been traced to mains LAN extenders not connecting properly probably caused by "noise" on the mains power these will be replaced with radios to link the buildings. **Action: Phil / Subscriber**

7.1.2 *Usage quotas*

The monthly total for January was 9.6 TB, the daily average was 311 GB, with a peak usage of 409 GB on Sunday 1st. CMNet peaks since operations started; highest average daily usage 345 GB, highest single days usage - 708 GB, highest monthly usage - 10.7 TB.

No subscribers exceeded their quota in January.

7.1.3 *Possible virus infection*

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

7.1.4 *Planned upgrades of equipment*

7.1.4.1 *Fernaig*

No issues

7.1.4.2 *Achmore*

No issues

7.1.4.3 *The Glen*

A new unit has been configured to replace the dish on Creag Mhaol; it and a backup will be installed when weather permits. Although we planned to upgrade this link it was not possible as there is not enough space on the relay until the Achmore link has been moved and upgraded to 60 GHz. **Action: Phil.**

7.1.4.4 *Braeintra*

The upgraded access point is highlighting potential alignment errors on subscribers' antenna, further investigation is required. **Action: Phil**

7.1.4.5 *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**

7.1.4.6 *Ardaneaskan East*

No issues

7.1.4.7 *Ardaneaskan West*

No issues

7.1.4.8 *Leacanashie*

No issues

7.1.4.9 *North Strome*

No issues

7.1.4.10 *Strome Ferry*

No issues

7.1.4.11 *Ardnarff*

No issues

7.1.5 *Backbone relays*

7.1.5.1 *Plockton*

We will check the installation and apply a second coat of paint to the school wall. **Action: Phil & Mary**

7.1.5.2 *Achmore*

The Plusnet router will be replaced with something more suitable. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

We have received our 60 GHz license from Ofcom and the unit will be upgraded in due course. **Action: Phil**

7.1.5.3 *Lohcarron A*

No issues.

7.1.5.4 *Lohcarron B*

No issues.

7.1.5.5 *Other relays*

No issues.

7.1.6 *System monitoring servers*

The MikroTik server ("The Dude") is having its database rebuilt - the newly installed equipment has been set up but there is still more work to do. **Action: Phil**

7.1.7 *Documentation*

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**

7.1.8 *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 and simplify the configuration of backup units. **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*

Nothing to report

7.3 *Volume trial*

7.3.1 *Review of the trial*

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

7.4 *Terms of Reference*

Deferred

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 *Backbone development*

8.2.1 *New relays*

8.2.1.1 *Completed*

No progress this month.

8.2.1.2 *Next steps*

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

The buried mains power cables need to be permanently marked and documented. **Action: All**

8.2.1.2.1 *Portchullin (raised beach)*

The Portchullin enclosures will be upgraded. **Action: Phil**

Re-align the existing Portchullin Access Point

Install test equipment in Portchullin

8.2.1.2.2 *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**

8.3 *Testing*

8.3.1 *Management & accounting software*

Nothing to report

8.4 *Restoring power to the old TV repeater*

8.4.1 *Removal of old cable*

No progress this month.

8.4.2 *Protection of cable on the hill*

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

8.4.3 *Backup Generator*

No progress this month.

8.5 *ISPs*

No issues

8.6 *Implementations*

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

All the equipment for the next batch of installations has been configured. **Completed**

8.6.1.1 *Ardaneaskan East*

All installations have been completed.

8.6.1.2 *Ardnarff*

One installation needs to be upgraded. **Action: Phil**

8.6.1.3 *Strome Ferry*

One installation is waiting to be scheduled. **Action: Subscriber**

8.6.1.4 *North Strome*

One installation is waiting to be scheduled. **Action: Subscriber, Phil, Mary & Ken**

One installation is waiting to have their line of sight checked. **Action: Subscriber, Phil, Mary & Ken**

8.6.1.5 *Achmore*

One installation is waiting to be scheduled. **Action: Subscriber**

8.6.1.6 Portchullin

New enclosures have been purchased to act as replacements for the corroded units. **Action: Phil**

8.6.1.7 Craig

All installations have been completed.

8.6.2 Phase 4 - Further investigations / backbone development required.

8.6.2.1 Ardaneaskan West

8.6.2.2 Reraig

8.6.2.3 Lochcarron

8.6.2.4 Strathcarron

8.7 Company Logo

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

8.8 General Data Protection Regulation (Data Protection Act)

We will review our GDPR policy. **Action: Mary**

9 Director's training session

9.1 Configuring Ubiquiti and MikroTik equipment

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

10 AoB

11 Next meeting

Monday 20th March

The meeting finished at 10:15 pm