

Chairman's AGM Report 2022

CMNet is now nine years old and in December it will be eight years since the first subscribers joined.

CMNet remains the only provider that can deliver Next Generation Broadband speeds to all the premises in the area at a reasonable cost.

CMNet operates on a cost recovery basis with minimum overheads thanks to everyone volunteering to offer their services for free. As the number of subscribers and the volume of data grow CMNet's unit costs drop which means everyone benefits from cheaper broadband.

This year CMNet installed a new line at the Shinty club in Lochcarron which now means CMNet has three internet gateways. It is CMNet's intention to automate fault recovery as much as is possible and this new line is part of that strategy.

The average usage per subscriber is a little over 345 GB per subscriber per month. This year has seen a 31% increase in volumes over the previous year.

Total average monthly usage by year:-

2022 - 7,725 GB
2021 - 5,900 GB
2020 - 4,158 GB
2019 - 3,600 GB
2018 - 2,400 GB
2017 - 1,100 GB
2016 - 500 GB

The new generation equipment, bought as a trial last year, is working well and so CMNet has invested further in this latest technology.

Growth in volumes in the past year has allowed us to reduce the tariff from £1 per 75 GB to £1 per 150 GB.

By the end of August 2022 subscriber numbers had increased to 56 in spite of four departures. There are 14 subscribers waiting for a connection.

Other topics:-

Long term support plan

CMNet's software to automatically backup and restore configurations produces a daily report on frequency changes to help tune the system to reduce the impact of false RADAR events. It remains CMNet's goal to increase the number of people that can support the system. Work continues to make all the relays on Creag Mhaol fault tolerant by having backup equipment in situ CMNet will then look at implementing automatic failover to recover when a component fails.

Electricity supply

CMNet negotiated a fixed price for CMNet's electricity which will expire in the next financial year no doubt leading to a considerable increase in CMNet's costs.

Directors:-

There have been no changes in directors this year.

Here is a breakdown by area:-

Whole House Wi-Fi - Several subscribers have taken advantage of this package to ensure that a Wi-Fi signal is available throughout their properties.

False RADAR (FR) - There continue to be incidents of false RADAR detection on various access points interrupting the service for a couple of minutes. CMNet's software that reports when frequencies have been changed has reduced the frequency of events. The link from Creag Mhaol to Achmore Hall has been particularly difficult to resolve and so it is planned to upgrade to a 60 GHz connection which does not suffer from FR and is also considerably faster.

Internet Gateways

Achmore & Plockton - No issues.

Lochcarron - The performance of the line deteriorated to the degree it became untenable and so the decision was made to install a new line at the Shinty Club in Lochcarron. The new line has similar performance to Achmore and Plockton.

Backbone relays

Creag Mhaol - The Achmore side relays will be upgraded to install backup devices in due course.

Subscriber Connections

Portchullin - There are potential issues to resolve with the new plastic enclosures.

Strome Ferry - The problem of the signal being affected by the rise and fall of the tides has been resolved by upgrading to the latest technology.

Subscriber's Bandwidth - There are no bandwidth issues now the new Lochcarron line is in service. Bandwidth limits remain unchanged at 29 Mbps download and 14 Mbps upload. CMNet has set up more monitoring and testing to give advance notice of possible bottlenecks.

Equipment - The hardware continues to perform well with no hardware failures.

CMNet Software - The software is performing well.

There are many people to thank for their help:-

Fay Mackenzie who has so kindly given us permission to use Creag Mhaol and The Glen for our relays

Dave Whittingham and Beccy Smith who are hosting equipment in Ardaneaskan

Ken Hopper for his help with installations in Ardaneaskan

Andrew and Emma MacKenzie who are hosting equipment

George Hendry at the Lochcarron Shinty club who are hosting equipment which facilitates a connection to the BT exchange in Lochcarron.

David Geddes who is hosting a relay in North Strome which allows Strome Ferry to be connected

I would also like to thank all our potential subscribers for being so patient.

Finally I would like to thank my fellow directors who have all freely given their time and expertise.

Please accept my apologies if I have missed anyone off this list.

Phil