Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th May 2014 @ 7:30 p.m. Fernaig House

Present: Phil Game, Joe Grimson, Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae (and son who did not participate in any votes)

1   Apologies:

Geoff Harrington, Hamish Howat Hurst

2   Previous minutes

Proposed by Joe, seconded by Neil

Copies of previous minutes are on our website at:-
http://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=433827
Email Broadband@fernaig.fsnet.co.uk if you would like to be put on the circulation list or you have any questions.

3   Chairman's report

3.1   CBS

No response from CBS to our email of the 18th March, however they have received and say they have processed our first claim. Sandra suggests we have a meeting. It was agreed we would organise a meeting with Sandra after we had made progress with installations when we have more time.
Action: Phil

3.2   Subscribers

The total number of subscribers remains unchanged at 47.

3.3   BBC Alba

No change this month.

3.4   Update

Phil & Mary went to the West Coast Backbone (WCB) meeting on the 26th April. The proposal is for a leased line in Fort William or Oban with a backbone of radio links to bring the signal all the way up the coast to Applecross (or possibly even further north). The system is to be designed to provide superfast bandwidth for at least 3,000 subscribers. The conclusion was that it is technically feasible, i.e. the lines of sight exist.
Our nearest "node" is not directly visible and will require a "bounce" probably via a relay in Broadford.
There is still a lot of work to do on the proposal to confirm it is economically feasible, Phil is to help set up and run the new company to administer the new service.
It is hoped that the WCB could be operational by this autumn.

The possibility of alternate backhaul through the WCB raises questions about our current plans. We have the following options:-
1) To ignore the WCB and proceed as planned installing bonded ADSL lines. The advantage is we do not need to wait for the WCB but the disadvantage is we will be tied into 12 month contracts and so will not be able to take advantage of the WCB until these contracts expire.
2) Do not install any ADSL lines and wait to see what happens with the WCB. The advantage is we will be able to use the faster backhaul as soon as it is available but the disadvantage is we will suffer delays in our implementation and will have a "big bang" rather than a phased approach and there is always the risk that the WCB is delayed or proves uneconomic and is abandoned.
3) Change the emphasis of our ADSL supplier to the most flexible rather than the highest quality and continue with the volume trial as planned keeping a watching brief on the WCB. The advantage of this approach is that we will be able to continue with the first phase of our implementation plan in our own time and gain experience configuring all the equipment we propose to use. By signing up to a flexible plan we will be able to reduce the monthly cost of the ADSL connection if we want to switch to the WCB. (For example from £50 per month to £15 per month). If the WCB does not prove viable we will have to enter into another contract with a second ADSL supplier to get the performance we require from bonded lines. However we should be able to continue to use the line from the first supplier until the contract expires.

After some debate we decided to pursue option 3 as this is the most flexible approach and it allows us to take advantage of the WCB if and when it materialises.

3.5 Terms of Reference
Deferred

4 Secretary's report

4.1 Public liability insurance
We have received a rather high quote that unfortunately combines all the separate items in one figure, we will go back to the insurers and ask them to break down the quote into its constituent parts.
Action: Mary

4.2 Equipment insurance
See 4.1 above.
Action: Mary

4.3 Terms of Reference
Deferred

4.4 Risk register
Mary has updated the register
Action: Mary

5 Finance Director's Report
As Hamish wasn't able to attend the following figures were taken from the last finance spreadsheets produced by Hamish.

Opening balance	£ -598.83
Income this period	£ 0.00
Expenditure / accruals this period	£ 3.42
Closing balance	£ -602.25

We have sent out the contracts to everyone that volunteered to help with a loan.
Action: Hamish, Phil

6 Internal auditor's report
Unfortunately Geoff was unable to attend this meeting due to prior commitments. However Geoff did suggest an alternate date to meet with Hamish & Phil but due to Hamish's mother being unwell we have postponed the meeting.
Action: Phil, Hamish Geoff

7 Customer Relations

7.1 Volume trial
The emphasis of the volume trial will probably change if the WCB proves viable as purchasing units of capacity will be more flexible and therefore less of an issue.
Action: Phil, Hamish, Joe

7.2 Terms of Reference
Deferred

8 General topics

8.1 Documentation
Phil & Mary have been unable to organise a trip to Portree to hand in proof of identity due to family commitments, Phil to reorganise.
Action: Phil

8.1.1 Domestic contract
No progress this month as we still need to sort out the situation regarding insurance.
Action: Mary, Phil

8.1.2 Mast lease

No progress this month.

Action: Phil

8.1.3 Hosting Agreement

No progress this month, now the school has agreed to host our equipment we will forward the agreement to the school for their comment.

Action: Phil

8.1.4 Loan Agreement

The final version has been approved by our solicitor.

Completed

8.2 Relays

8.2.1 Plockton

Robbie Bain, our Community Council ward manager, has intervened on our behalf and we now have approval to use Plockton High School, we will organise a date to visit and start installation work.

Action: Phil

8.2.2 Lochcarron

No progress this month.

Action: Neil & Phil

8.3 Testing

8.3.1 Outstanding issues
8.3.2 Management & accounting capabilities
8.3.3 Test to Joe's at Braeintra
8.3.4 Test to the Glen
8.3.5 Check all parameters
8.3.6 More testing with routers

Phil has started work on the MikroTik router which has its own very comprehensive operating system RouterOS. It would appear that it might be possible to configure it to automate billing, if this is the case it will considerably reduce the effort required to administer the system.

Action: Phil

8.4 Restoring power to the old TV repeater

8.4.1 Hydro power supply

As soon as the first relay is constructed at the top of the hill we will look for a location for the power supply so it has line of sight to the relay. This will allow it to be online and managed remotely.

Action: Phil, Neil, Hamish, Joe

8.4.1.1 Removal of old cable

We will organise a temporary supply to allow the installed equipment to be tested.

Action: Phil

8.4.1.2 Protection of cable on the hill

No progress this month.

Action: Phil

8.4.1.3 Backup Generator

No progress this month.

8.5 ISPs

8.5.1 Use of C&W at Plockton School

Still nothing from CBS!

Action: Phil

8.5.2 Community backhaul, West Coast Backbone (WCB)

It seems this is technically feasible (see 3.4 above), if it is economically feasible it will remove some of the bottlenecks we would otherwise experience. The biggest change would be to allow upload bandwidth the same as download. This would greatly increase the speed to upload data e.g. photographs and video. Although we will still need monthly usage

limits we will have more scope to offer different tariffs with limits above 10 GB. It's too early to go into any more detail at this stage.

Action: Phil

8.6   *Implementation*

8.6.1   Phase 1

8.6.1.1   Plan

8.6.1.1.1   Install Domestic kit

Phil handed out a revised detailed implementation plan for the installation of the domestic equipment for comment.

Action: All

8.6.1.2   Equipment

Fay has kindly agreed to us using a quad bike to move the equipment to the top of Creag Mhaol and for us to bolt the relay to the rock.
We have now collected the scaffold from Inverness and built a test rig, so we are now ready to start the installations.
The exterior quality Ethernet cable is now in stock at the suppliers so we can order the remaining electronic equipment. We will also order stationery.

Action: Phil

8.7   *Company Logo*

No progress this month.

Action: All

9   Director's training session

Neil & Archie had to leave before the training session; however the rest of us went through the main options when setting up the Ubiquiti kit; LAN, WAN, WLAN, Bridges, Routers, SOHO routers, dynamic allocation of IP address - DHCP, web site reference by name rather than address - DNS and the expansion of IP addresses through network address translation - NAT. This completes the groundwork required to understand how to configure the Ubiquiti equipment.

10 AOB

11 Items to add to the agenda of the next meeting

None

12 Next meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday 4th June at 7:30 Fernaig House.
The meeting closed at 8:45 pm and was followed by directors training see 9 above.