

Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 3rd April 2013 @ 7:30 p.m. Fernaig House

Present: Phil Game, Joe Grimson, Geoff Harrington, Hamish Howat Hurst, Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae,

1) Apologies: None

2) Previous minutes.

None

Copies of 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.

This was the inaugural meeting of the Broadband Steering Group and so although there was an agenda it was fairly “free format” to give everyone that chance to raise any issues and to clarify any points in any area. These minutes do not attempt to report everything that was discussed but they do record issues raised that alter or refine items detailed in the feasibility study. Any decisions or recommendations made at the meeting are recorded and will be reported to the next CC meeting.

1) Description of Ubiquiti equipment and demo of the test bed set up around Fernaig.

Phil described the equipment we will use for the demonstration of 5+ Mbps in the hall and the role that each piece of equipment plays in the network. A test network was set up around Fernaig, this used all the components that would be required for a speed test from Plockton but they were not in their final configuration. E.g. due to the short distances involved the Nanobridge transceivers were not mounted in their dishes.

There was a brief demonstration of standard definition TV video streaming using the Ubiquiti wireless link and a speed test showing just under 20Mbps. In an earlier test with a slightly better configuration a 60GB file transfer had been completed with an actual transfer speed of 40Mbps.

After the demonstration we adjourned to the kitchen and started the meeting proper.

2) Minutes.

Phil & Mary volunteered to produce notes / minutes.

3) Election of office bearers

As the Broadband Steering Group (BSG) was to act as a sub group reporting to the CC it was not felt necessary to elect office bearers (chairman, secretary etc) at this stage. Once a separate entity is created to take over from the CC then a formal structure with office bearers will be defined.

4) Role of auditors, finances and liabilities

Hamish had produced terms of reference for the Auditors (Hamish & Geoff) which were distributed before the meeting. Hamish explained that there may be an issue regarding the Data Protection Act as we will need to hold personal data. However as the CC has already complied with the Data Protection Act this will not be an issue for the moment, but it would have to be looked at again once the holding company was set up.

The terms of reference for the auditors will be updated to show full income, expenditure, asset and liabilities.

Action: Hamish

The auditors will keep a record of all assets acquired by the CC for the broadband project and all liabilities. Initially liabilities will mostly be monies to be repaid to the CC. Geoff suggested we look at raising bonds as soon as possible to allow us to implement the CBS without delay. Phil explained that for the purposes of the feasibility study the finances had been calculated assuming bonds would only be raised when all the CC funds had been exhausted. I.e. the CC funds would be used first and paid back last, with an annual interest rate of 5%.

It was thought it would be better to keep the CC funds in reserve to pay for backbone equipment and raise capital through bonds earlier in the project. This should reduce delays between the implementation of phases to a minimum.

Phil is to revise the financial spreadsheets from the feasibility study to reflect this proposal.

Action: Phil

Hamish will keep a computer based record of all assets and liabilities. Geoff will hold paper copies of all documents. Periodically an electronic copy will be sent to Phil for backup.

Action: Hamish, Geoff, Phil

Phil explained that the financial figures in the feasibility study had been calculated assuming that everyone will switch to the new broadband system when their contract with BT ends and that there was an even distribution of end dates for each phase. I.e. if phase 7 starts 12 months into the implementation and there are two people to connect then one will end their BT contract 18 months after the start of the project and the other 24 months after the start. I.e. with two subscribers the average BT contracts would expire 6 months apart. In practise the cut over dates are likely to be much quicker.

The question was raised as to what would happen if someone terminated their BT contract but then could not be connected to the CBS. Hamish explained that BT would allow immediate reconnection with no penalty, but BT would insist on a minimum 12 month contract for the renewal.

The question was raised about liabilities for subscribers for equipment on their premises. This was not covered in the feasibility study and needs further investigation. Joe volunteered to check with his insurance company whether equipment mounted externally would be covered by his policy. Mary volunteered to check with our insurers.

Action: Joe, Mary

There was some discussion about what format the holding company should take and when it should be set up. It was felt that the company should be set up after the demonstration of 5+ Mbps and before the volume trial is complete. Investigations should start now as to what is the best format.

Phil to see what type of company other community broadband groups have set up.

Action: Phil

Neil will talk to Plockton Harbour about their company format.

Action: Neil

Public liability insurance will need to be investigated once the holding company is set up, until then the CC public liability insurance should suffice.

5) Testing

a) The demonstration at the start of the meeting was the first basic test.

In 5 easy steps:-

Internet (BT Home Hub) to Nanobridge Access point (AP) via Ethernet cable (represents Plockton)
Nanobridge AP (Plockton) to Nanobridge Station (Achmore Hill) via wireless
Nanobridge Station (Achmore Hill) to Nanostation AP (Achmore Hill) via Ethernet cable
Nanostation AP (Achmore Hill) to Nanostation Station (Fernaig House) via wireless
Nanostation Station (Fernaig) to Laptop via Ethernet cable (the Ubiquiti replacement for the BT home hub is currently unavailable)

Outstanding issues to be resolved for this configuration

Check all parameters for the best setting

Set up second Station on each AP, i.e. more than one user at a time.

Check out AirControl, which is additional management software from Ubiquiti

Decide on naming conventions

Purchase domestic routers AirRouter, which are currently out of stock with expected delivery to suppliers on the 9th April

Investigate management & accounting capabilities

More speed tests

b) Long range test, this can be done in parallel with the outstanding testing detailed in a) above.

This is stalled and cannot be progressed until we get power back up to the hill

Once the power has been restored to the hill the following configurations will be tested:-

Bounce a signal from Fernaig to the hill and back

Bounce a signal from Fernaig to the hall via the hill

Connect the hill to Plockton

Test from Fernaig to Plockton

Test from the Hall to Plockton

Demo > 5Mbps, and get everyone's approval to proceed.

6) Restoring the power to the TV repeater station

This is the top priority as we do not yet have a definitive list of what needs to be done to restore the power.

The cable from Holly Croft to Jim Coomber looks serviceable but we will need to check the Holly Croft end

The cable from Jim Coomber to Half Way House (HWH) looks OK

The cable from HWH to damaged joint looks OK

The cable from damaged joint to Top of Hill (ToH) looks OK

The cables on ToH to transmitters look OK

Due to the urgency it was decided to action these tasks immediately

Remove the cable from Jim Coomber's garden

Action: Phil, Mary, Neil, Joe

Find the cable on the Holly Croft side of Jim Coomber's garden

Action: Phil, Mary, Neil, Joe, Hamish

Are the cabinets on the hill suitable for the demo?

Action: Phil, Mary, Neil, Joe

Buy cable, joints and anything else required

Action: Phil

Investigate cable at Holly Croft

Action: Phil, Mary

Buy a few aluminium scaffold poles and fittings to mount box, raise equipment & brace what's already there.

Action: Phil, Mary

7) What needs to be done to demo a link from Plockton?

How do we mount the dish at the "donor's" house, will we need more scaffold?

Action: Neil

How will we gain access through the skin of the "donors" house?

Action: Neil

Can we have exclusive use for the demo in the hall?

Action: Neil

How do we express our thanks to the donor?

Action: Neil

What testing slots will we need?

Action: Phil

There was not enough time to discuss the following topics and these will be left for the next meeting:-

8) Discussion of major areas to investigate and /or action and relevant timing.

Volume trial, to determine how many lines we will need

Legal issues, wayleaves, contracts etc.

Outstanding Technology, e.g. maybe a sector antenna would be a better AP, link to the glen, trees etc

9) Who does what?

10) Next meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 1st May at 7:30 p.m. Fernaig House.

The meeting closed at 10:30pm.