

# Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 @ 7:30 p.m. Fernaig House

## 1 Present and Apologies

**Present:** Phil Game, Joe Grimson, Mary MacBeth, Neil MacRae

**Apologies:** Hamish Howat Hurst

## 2 Approve and adopt previous minutes

The previous minutes for June, were approved, proposed by Mary, seconded by Joe.

However it was noted that May's minutes did not document that it had been decided to give Joe online access to the bank account so that up to date information could be obtained if Hamish was not available. May's minutes will be updated and a new version loaded to the website. **Action: Phil**

Copies of previous minutes are on our website at:-

<http://www.stromeferry-and-achmore.co.uk/index.asp?pageid=433827>

Email [cmnetcic@gmail.com](mailto:cmnetcic@gmail.com) if you would like to be put on the circulation list or you have any questions.

## 3 Chairman's report

A lot of effort has been expended this month reconciling subscribers' accounts; as a consequence very little time has been spent on system enhancements.

### 3.1 Bandwidth

Bandwidth is holding up well despite an 11% increase in usage in June.

Some testing has been done on the new line in Lochcarron. Initially the router was unstable and was freezing and then rebooting at random; this appears to have been a bug in its operating system and so the software was upgraded to a later more stable version on the 10<sup>th</sup> July. Fortunately the later version has been much more stable and just 24 hours after the software was upgraded we had to put the new Lochcarron line into use on the 11<sup>th</sup> as there were ongoing problems in Plockton. The Plockton problems were resolved on the 12<sup>th</sup> so the new line in Lochcarron was only in use for a little over 24 hours.

However the period that the line was in use had an average day's throughput and the one line in Lochcarron was able to support all 32 subscribers. I.e. it could handle the volume of traffic currently using three lines in Plockton. See item 7.1.1 for more details about the problems on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Lochcarron line speed was tested in Fernaig and in Braeintra and showed impressive speeds rarely below 16 Mbps and topping out at just over 18 Mbps. The tests also showed our network was able to deliver speeds of 18 Mbps to subscribers.

### 3.2 CBS

Joe has submitted his expenses claim form for his attendance at the CBS training course at SMO, Phil will pass a copy to Hamish to pay and retain a copy to reclaim the amount from CBS. **Action: Phil, Hamish**

### 3.3 Subscribers

#### 3.3.1 Existing relays

Live subscribers	- 32
Subscriber installation pending	- 1

#### 3.3.2 Live relays but waiting for backhaul

Kit installed	- 0
CMNet installations pending	- 0
Subscriber installations pending	- 0
Total number waiting for backhaul	- 0

#### 3.3.3 Waiting for new backbone relays

Waiting for surveys	- 3
Waiting for installations	- 30

#### 3.3.4 Others

On live access points but requested a delay	- 2
No response when asked for an installation date	- 2
Withdrawn from CMNet since the last minutes	- 0
New joiners since the last minutes	- 0
Total	- 70

No change this month.

### 3.4 Terms of Reference

Deferred

## 4 Secretary's report

### 4.1 Companies House

Nothing to report

### 4.2 Long term support plan

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

### 4.3 Risk register

No change this month. **Action: Mary**

### 4.4 Terms of Reference

Deferred

## 5 Finance Director's Report

### 5.1 Monthly Statistics

Hamish was not able to attend the meeting the following figures were produced by Phil

All figures are up to the end of June.

Capital expenditure claimed against our grant of £37,538:-

Brought forward	- £24,985.75
This period	- £ 0.00
Carried forward	- £24,985.75
No Change	

Revenue:-

Brought forward	- £4,384.16
Income this month	- £720.68
Expenditure this month	- £260.57
Carried forward	- £4,844.27

Liabilities

Estimated Liabilities	- £4,650.00
Estimated balance after liabilities	- £194.27

For the first time we have enough cash at the bank to pay off our liabilities; i.e. all our debts and any monies due on existing contracts. We will now pay off some or all our debt to the CC to reduce interest payments. We will also start to accrue enough cash to offset the need to replace electronic equipment using a five year replacement cycle. I.e. by the time our electronic kit is more than 5 years old we need to have enough cash in the bank to cover its replacement. The 5 year period is an arbitrary figure imposed on us by CBS; as we gain more experience on the life expectancy of the kit we will adjust the amount accrued. A crude approximation of the amount required works out at £4.70 per subscriber per month. However this figure is distorted because not all the kit we have bought is five years old and we have enough kit in hand for approximately another 24 subscribers. When all the kit is past its fifth birthday and all our installations are complete this figure should drop to less than £3.00 per subscriber per month, if the equipment lasts more than five years this figure can be reduced further.

Electronic equipment replacement accruals

Total value purchased	- £9,000.00
Balance after accruals	- £-8,805.73

### 5.2 Outstanding subscribers' debt

Current month	£46.66
Over one month	£18.00
Over two months	£5.40
Over 18 months	£2.70
Total outstanding debt	£72.76

Two subscribers are in credit and refunds will be issued ASAP once their standing order changes have been confirmed by our bank.

About £400 has been spent on equipment this month.

Hamish, Mary and Phil met as planned and an action list drawn up to tackle outstanding debt as noted in May's reconciliation. Mary contacted all those involved who all credited their accounts promptly. Cheques were

issued where overpayments had been made. The same exercise was performed to reconcile June's accounts and to check July's standing orders. Again all subscribers contacted credited their accounts promptly. There are still a small number of discrepancies to resolve and these will be tackled as soon as possible. We will not refund monies for overpayment until subscribers' standing orders have been verified corrected. **Action: Phil**

#### 5.2.1 Next three month's budget and cash flow

Direct debits for the Hydro bills are to be set up. **Action: Hamish**

As the CC bank account may be frozen if a new CC cannot be formed in the near future we will pay back both loans from the CC ASAP to ensure the monies are credited for use by a future CC. **Action: Joe, Hamish**

#### 5.2.2 Housekeeping

Migration of the accounts from Excel to Access continues. **Action: Hamish**

#### 5.3 Payments for installations of subscriber's equipment

One payment is outstanding, we will chase for payment. **Action: Phil**

#### 5.4 Standing orders

Phil issued reminders, we believe all standing orders have been corrected and will check again next month. **Action: Phil**

#### 5.5 Customer contracts

We are waiting for 8 customer contract to be signed and returned, Mary will chase. **Action: Mary**

#### 5.6 Loan Contracts

Nine subscriber loans have been repaid in full, thirteen loans are outstanding and these are all due to be repaid by the end of 2016. **Action: Phil**

#### 5.7 Additional access to the bank account

Joe is still waiting for RBS to grant him access to online banking, Joe will chase. **Action: Joe**

Currently all cheques have to be signed by two directors, this means if either are away we cannot pay bills. It was decided that we would add Neil as a signatory for cheques so we have cover if either Joe or Hamish is absent. **Action: Joe**

#### 5.8 Unpresented Cheques

The recent account reconciliations at the end of May and June have revealed that some cheques issued for interest payments on loans are very nearly 6 months old. Once they exceed six months the bank will not process them. We do not want the expense of re-issuing replacement cheques so it was decided we should remind people to cash the cheques before they expire. **Action: Phil**

#### 5.9 Business savings account

Hamish had asked for this to be put on the agenda but as he was not present we decided to defer discussions to the next meeting.

#### 5.10 HMRC return

Hamish will complete the forms to submit our accounts to HMRC and circulate them to all directors. **Action: Hamish**

Mary will check the deadline for submitting our annual accounts to HMRC. **Action: Mary**

#### 5.11 Change to invoice terms and conditions

The recent subscribers' account reconciliations have shown the difficulty balancing the books when payments for invoices come in the month following the one when invoices are issued. If a payment is not made on time it will only be flagged at the following month end which may be seven weeks after the invoice was issued. This time delay causes additional work and leads to errors and omissions when reconciling invoices and payments. It was therefore decided that we would reduce the grace period on invoices from 30 days to 14 days. As most invoices are issued in the first few days of the month the end of month reconciliation will flag up any that have not been paid and we can therefore chase for payment promptly without the additional effort of a second reconciliation half way through the month. Phil will change the wording on our invoices. **Action: Phil**

## 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 *Problems and complaints*

Intermittent internet connection failures - Pingtest.net showed packets being dropped and the relevant link has had its maximum speed reduced from 130 Mbps to 26 Mbps to increase stability. This appears to have reduced but not resolved the problem; this link is due to be upgraded in the next few weeks as part of the Ardaneaskan West implementation and that upgrade should resolve the problem. **Action: Phil, Joe**

There was a major failure on Sunday 10th around 6pm. We are not sure what caused the initial problem, our tests showed poor performance on all four lines, all three in Plockton and also the new line in Lochcarron which is still under test. So it seems likely the problem was fairly severe affecting more than one BT exchange. The situation had not improved in Plockton by Monday morning but the new Lochcarron line speeds had returned to normal. Even though the Lochcarron line was not fully tested it was decided to reroute all traffic through this line. As far as we are aware this resolved the problems for all subscribers. Late on Monday testing showed that two of the three lines in Plockton had returned to normal speeds but one line was still not active. This was reported to Managed Comms. On Tuesday morning more problems were reported and although there was no reason to believe that the previous night's tests had caused the problem these were reversed as they were the only changes made to the system. Further tests showed the system was now working correctly. We will investigate the cause of Tuesday morning problems when time permits.

On Tuesday morning Managed Comms reported that one line had failed at 6:30 pm on Sunday and that it had since auto recovered, no problems were detected with the line their side but they could not contact their router based in the school. So it was agreed we would visit the school and recycle their router, this then set the line active around midday.

At 6pm on Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> we rerouted the system back through Plockton. No faults have been reported since this change was made. As a precaution the other two routers in Plockton were also recycled during Tuesday's visit.

This incident shows the value in designing the system to use multiple lines and two BT exchanges. The configuration and testing of the Lochcarron line will continue once we are sure that there are no further problems in Plockton.

Statistics for June show that the download speeds continue to hold up well.

In the past month there were several occasions when the daily stats program failed to produce emails on time. In every case our software was rerun successfully. This may have been due to issues with the Google email server or our server's Windows operating system. As a precaution all the system software on the server has been updated to the latest versions. Since this was done there have been no further issues apart from the general failure on the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. We will continue to monitor the production of emails.

Joe is still having problems updating firmware, this is not a high priority to fix and will be addressed in due course.

**Action: Phil, Joe**

#### 7.1.2 *Usage quotas*

The usage for June was 417 GB an increase of 11% with a daily average of 13.8 GB, stats so far for July show usage is starting to plateau. Two subscribers exceeded their quota for June.

#### 7.1.3 *Possible virus infection*

No issues this month

#### 7.1.4 *Installation of domestic equipment*

We are waiting for one subscriber to complete their pre installation work so we can complete their installation.

### 7.2 *Changes for next month*

#### 7.2.1 *Increases in quotas for existing subscribers*

No increases have been requested.

#### 7.2.2 *Additional Management tools / reports*

The automatic capping of excessive usage is under review.

#### 7.2.3 *Potential personal safety issue*

Changes are ongoing. **Action: Phil, Joe**

### 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*

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

## 8 **General topics**

### 8.1 *Documentation*

#### 8.1.1 Mast lease

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

#### 8.1.2 Network Plan

No progress this month due to time being spent on account reconciliations.

**Action: Phil**

### 8.2 *Relays*

#### 8.2.1 Creag Mhaol

We will complete the Ardaneaskan West and Craig installations before doing more work on Creag Mhaol.

**Action: Phil**

#### 8.2.2 Plockton

##### 8.2.2.1 *Hosting agreement*

Hamish will add details of the solicitor's quote to the accounts. **Action: Hamish**

##### 8.2.2.2 *Equipment and tidy up*

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

### 8.3 *Backbone development*

#### 8.3.1 Lochcarron

No progress this month.

#### 8.3.2 The Glen

No change since the last minutes.

#### 8.3.3 Ardaneaskan

All the new equipment for the installation of the Ardaneaskan relays has been ordered and received with the exception of the dish shield; this is out of stock and its delivery will be delayed until the last week of July. Weather permitting we hope to start work on the Ardaneaskan West upgrade in the near future.

#### 8.3.4 Portchullin

No progress this month due to wet weather and time being spent on account reconciliations. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.3.5 Craig

Once the Ardaneaskan West upgrade is completed we will start work on the Craig installations. **Action: Joe, Phil**

#### 8.3.6 North Strome

No progress this month due to other priorities. **Action: All**

#### 8.3.7 Ardnarff

No progress this month.

### 8.4 *Testing*

#### 8.4.1 Management & accounting software

Some progress this month but delayed as time is being spent on account reconciliations. **Action: Phil**

### 8.5 *Restoring power to the old TV repeater*

#### 8.5.1 Removal of equipment from Holly Croft

Phil is to check Eric & Elizabeth are happy with our proposal to compensate them for the use of their electricity. Phil is to tidy up all the equipment left on their premises. No progress this month. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.5.2 Removal of old cable

No progress this month.

#### 8.5.3 Protection of cable on the hill

No progress this month.

#### 8.5.4 Backup Generator

No progress this month.

### 8.6 *ISPs*

#### 8.6.1 Community backhaul, West Coast Backbone (WCB)

No update from WHAN this month

### 8.6.2 ADSL Broadband installation at Plockton High School

We will order a high speed fibre line as soon as the Lochcarron line has been set up, tested and proven to be stable.

**Action: Mary**

### 8.6.3 ADSL Broadband installation at Lochcarron

Some testing has been done on the new line this month. Initially speeds were erratic and the router unstable; configurations were checked and updated and software brought up to a later version. The line was pushed into service ahead of time for a brief period due to problems in Plockton, during this period it worked without fault and we obtained maximum speeds just over 18 Mbps. More configuration changes and testing are required.

## 8.7 Implementation

8.7.1 Phase 2 - Relays and creation of access points for the remainder of residents and connect trial subscribers.

### 8.7.1.1 Equipment

Approximately £400 of purchases made this month for the Ardaneaskan West implementation.

### 8.7.1.2 Finalise the properties to be surveyed

We are waiting on one subscriber to prepare their installations so we can install our equipment.

## 8.8 Company Logo

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

## 9 Director's training session

### 9.1 Configuring Ubiquiti and MikroTik equipment

We will organise another training session. **Action: Phil, Joe**

### 9.2 The Dude

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

## 10 AOB

### 10.1 Proposed changes to the subscribers usage reporting system

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

## 11 Items to add to the agenda of the next meeting

None

## 12 Next meeting

Date of next meeting Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> August 7:30pm at Fernaig House.

The meeting closed at 8:55 pm.