

# Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 @ 7:30 p.m. Fernaig House

## 1 Present and Apologies

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

**Apologies:** Hamish Howat Hurst

## 2 Approve and adopt previous minutes

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

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

### 3.1 Bandwidth

The current cap of 5.5 Mbps for downloads was left in place over Christmas and the New Year as quotas (and usage) increased substantially once the new tariff came into effect. There have been no performance problems since the last meeting. Our increased usage is well below the theoretical maximum of the ADSLs. However we have increased the network monitors to gather statistics about potential bottlenecks as increasing bandwidth will most likely reveal network problems. The most obvious problem at the moment is the upload capacity of the Lochcarron line. Some subscribers will be moved over to Plockton to remove this bottleneck. The monitors have also shown that some units are running below their maximum potential and we will update configurations as we increase subscribers' speeds. Although there are signs (BT cabinets) that the Lochcarron line will soon be upgraded to fibre to match Plockton we have no firm date for this change but CBS advise that this is scheduled to take place in a couple of months. For the foreseeable future our two main gateways will operate at very different speeds. It was agreed that we will migrate subscribers with higher demands to the faster connection so they will be the first to get the benefit of the higher speeds.

### 3.2 Cyber Attack

Ubiquiti have released a new version of their firmware; three units have been updated and we will trial these before updating all the other units.

### 3.3 Admin Overhead

We are now actively encouraging subscribers to move to a higher tariff when they exceed their monthly quota to reduce the effort required to produce and issue invoices and then reconcile subscribers' accounts.

### 3.4 WHAN

There have been no WHAN meetings since the last minutes were issued.

### 3.5 CBS

We received details from CBS about alternative funding sources for projects which may become relevant if we exhaust our grant.

CBS have asked us to provide details of the bandwidth we currently provide and plan to provide in the next two years and the premises served. This is to ensure that public funding is not duplicated for the R100 team. R100 is the new group set up by the government to complete the roll out of superfast broadband to the remainder of premises to achieve 100% coverage. As often happens there is very limited time (48 hours) to return the information so our response can only be our best guess as there is not enough time to check that our assumptions are correct. Our return will state we will supply every household in our designated areas and deliver speeds of 30 Mbps download and 15 Mbps upload. Our return does not impact any initiatives agreed between the government and BT; these have already been approved and funded.

### 3.6 Subscribers

#### 3.6.1 Existing relays

Live subscribers - 35

Subscriber installation pending - 1

#### 3.6.2 Live relays but waiting for backhaul

Kit installed - 0

CMNet installations pending - 0

Subscriber installations pending - 0

#### 3.6.3 Waiting for new backbone relays

Waiting for surveys - 3

Waiting for installations	- 32
<b>3.6.4 Others</b>	
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	- 2
Total	- 73

One subscriber has given notice to terminate their connection.

### **3.7 Terms of Reference**

Deferred

## **4 Secretary's report**

### **4.1 Risk register**

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

### **4.2 Long term support plan**

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

### **4.3 Update Bank Account details**

Most of the changes to the bank details are complete Mary still has one form to complete and submit. **Action: Mary**

### **4.4 Zen Refund**

We chased Zen on the 11<sup>th</sup> January and will chase again. **Action: Mary**

### **4.5 Terms of Reference**

Deferred

## **5 Finance Director's Report**

### **5.1 Monthly Statistics**

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	

November's figures

Revenue:-

Brought forward	- £4,203.36
Income this month	- £683.18
Expenditure this month	- £911.81
Carried forward	- £3,974.63

Liabilities

Estimated Liabilities	- £985.00
Estimated balance after liabilities	- £2,989.36

Provision for replacement of Electronic equipment

Total value purchased to date	- £9,000.00
Balance after provision	- £-6,010.64

December's figures

Revenue:-

Brought forward	- £3,974.63
Income this month	- £589.01
Expenditure this month	- £500.70
Carried forward	- £4,062.94

Liabilities

Estimated Liabilities	- £811.00
Estimated balance after liabilities	- £3,251.94

Provision for replacement of Electronic equipment  
Total value purchased to date - £9,000.00  
Balance after provision - £-5,748.06

Please note that our liabilities have reduced considerably since the last statement as we have now paid off all but one of the subscriber loans.

## 5.2 *Outstanding subscribers' debt*

The total outstanding debt as of the date of the meeting was £1, a reminder has been sent out. Some subscribers are in credit as they have not reduced their monthly standing orders, reminders have been sent out. It was agreed the best approach will be to issue refunds once subscribers have settled on their final desired quota and amended their standing orders accordingly.

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

Hydro bills, it was decided we would not set these up on direct debit at the moment until we were sure that SSE would estimate usage correctly. **Action: Mary, Kate**

Mary is to claim back the cost of the last Hydro bills. **Action: Mary**

### 5.2.2 *Housekeeping*

Changes are now mostly complete to the accounting and reconciliation package for subscriber payments. More work is required to automate the reconciliation of suppliers' payments. **Action: Phil**

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

All payments are up to date.

## 5.4 *Standing orders*

Several subscribers have yet to decide on their final quota and update their standing orders. Where refunds are required there will be a separate meeting to prepare letters and cheques **Action: Joe, Phil**

## 5.5 *Loan Contracts*

Cheques have been issued to repay all loans. Once again we would like to thank everyone that lent money to CMNet, without their help the project would not have got off the ground. **Completed**

## 5.6 *Additional access to the bank account*

Kate will contact the bank to get online access to the accounts. **Action: Kate**

# 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*

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**

Joe's problems accessing the new version of the Ubiquiti network package (AirControl) have been resolved. **Completed**  
In December one customer reported that he was unable to communicate with his heating system remotely, this is currently under investigation. We are waiting for the subscriber to provide copies of the relevant manuals.

One customer has reported performance problems; these appear to be Wi-Fi only. We are waiting for them to nominate a testing slot so we can investigate the problems further.

A CMNet first was achieved in November when a customer's Air Gateway was rebooted remotely from Estonia (we're always on hand even when on holiday).

The equipment on the hill coped very well with the storms over the Christmas period.

### 7.1.2 *Usage quotas*

The monthly total for November was 574 GB with a daily average of 19.1 GB, seven people exceeded their quota.

The monthly total for December was 571 GB with a daily average of 18.4 GB, three people exceeded their quota and two have opted to increase their monthly quota to the next band.

### 7.1.3 Possible virus infection

Although the automated monitoring system has reported some very high website access counts these appear to have just been intensive usage. The monitoring system will be amended to increase the reporting threshold. **Action: Phil**

### 7.1.4 Installation of domestic equipment

No change this month. We are waiting for one subscriber to complete their pre installation work so we can complete their installation.

### 7.1.5 Customer Contracts

Three contracts are still outstanding; two new contracts with increased quotas are to be issued. **Action: Phil, Joe**

### 7.1.6 Abusive emails

We will not tolerate abuse of the system or directors. Any director receiving abusive emails will refer them to the board to determine a suitable response.

This is a community system, we all share the resources, including the directors who have no special privileges and it is important that everyone, subscribers included, play their part.

If you report an issue we will **always** investigate the problem and do our best to determine the cause. If we ask you to provide additional information or help with further testing please do so promptly. If we do not receive a prompt response the problem report will be closed. We will take a dim view of any subscriber that does not provide the information we request who then raises the same issue again.

Please remember CMNet is run by unpaid volunteers in their very limited “spare” time.

## 7.2 Changes for next month

### 7.2.1 Increases in quotas for existing subscribers

More quota increases have been requested and processed. To encourage subscribers to move to the correct tariff we are allowing quotas increases to be backdated instead of surcharging subscribers exceeding their quotas. New contracts will be sent out in due course. **Action: Phil, Joe**

### 7.2.2 Additional Management tools / reports

The automatic capping of excessive usage is under review.

New software has been developed to check the configuration of different types of equipment; this will be used periodically to ensure all equipment has the optimum configuration. **Action: Phil**

### 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

Nothing from the Highland Council as yet

### 8.1.2 Network Plan

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

## 8.2 Relays

### 8.2.1 Creag Mhaol

We will talk to Fay about further use of Creag Mhaol sites. **Action: Phil**

### 8.2.2 Plockton

#### 8.2.2.1 Hosting agreement

We will add details of the solicitor’s quote to the accounts. **Action: Phil, Kate**

No progress this month.

#### 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. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.3.2 Ardaneaskan

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

#### 8.3.3 Portchullin

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

#### 8.3.4 Craig

A further signal strength test and antenna alignment is required in Ardaneaskan West before we can start work in Craig.

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

#### 8.3.5 North Strome

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

#### 8.3.6 Ardnarff

No progress this month.

### **8.4 Testing**

#### 8.4.1 Management & accounting software

The subscriber usage email will be enhanced to give the specific amount of data used to allow subscribers to better manage their quotas. No progress this month. **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 since the last minutes, the last meeting was cancelled.

#### 8.6.2 ADSL Broadband installation at Plockton High School

Work has started to increase subscribers' bandwidths to take advantage of the increased capacity. **Action: Phil**

#### 8.6.3 ADSL Broadband installation at Lochcarron

The Lochcarron line is coming under stress due to high upload traffic, some subscribers will be switched to the Plockton line. **Action: Phil**

We have registered with Zen to be informed when a fibre connection is available so we can upgrade.

### **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

No additional purchases this month. It was agreed we would buy a MikroTik router to use as a server for additional network monitoring software. We will check current stock of equipment and put together a shopping list to ready to start work on the next phase. **Action Phil**

##### 8.7.1.2 Finalise the properties to be surveyed

We are still 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.**

Joe and Phil went through the management reporting system documentation. Phil will update and extend the document.

No Progress this month. **Action Phil**

Joe and Phil went through the configuration of the Lochcarron router, more training will be organised in due course.

**Action: Phil, Joe**

The Dude - The old version has been reinstalled to use as a syslog server, new hardware is required to run the latest version. **Action: Phil**

## **10 AOB**

### ***10.1 Mobile phone service***

We have received a request from a subscriber to investigate using our masts for a mobile phone service. CMNet does not have the resources to provide a mobile phone service and we doubt that this is possible via the masts in any case given the equipment we use.

However there have been initiatives from mobile phone companies to provide low power access points which are typically mounted on village halls and provide a service covering a small localised area. All the units we are aware of are specific to one service provider only. However CMNet would be able to provide a broadband link fast enough for such a system if someone else wanted to investigate this further.

This request led into a broader discussion about telephone services through broadband.

### ***10.2 Telephony through broadband***

Although we feel that “exterior” mobile phone services are beyond the scope of CMNet. “Interior” phone services are readily available through broadband.

We are aware of the following products:-

Vonage - this service replaces a landline with a handset that works through the internet and undercuts BT's rates.

Although it is cheaper than BT there is no service in the event of a power failure. BT landlines provide power to a “dumb” handset through the telephone cable so it can still be used when the mains power is out.

Most mobile operators now offer apps for smartphones that allow data and voice to operate through Wi-Fi when no mobile signal is available.

If you need help with telephony through broadband please contact Phil.

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

None

## **12 Next meeting**

Date of next meeting Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February 7:30pm at Fernaig House

The meeting closed at 10:00 pm.