

Broadband Steering Group

Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th August 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.

Proposed by Joe, seconded by Hamish

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) Subscribers

Emails were sent out chasing households that had not yet provided preferred implementation dates. We have 28 households who have asked for a connection as soon as possible. There are a further 9 looking for a connection early next year. Three more will be connected in the summer of 2014.

Four subscribers have not yet confirmed a connection date and so have been left off the implementation plan. We will notify households participating in the volume trial with connection dates in the near future.

Action: Phil

4) Highland Council Discretionary Fund

Geoff has spoken to Robbie Bain and Audrey Sinclair and has copies of the forms. Geoff & Phil will meet to complete the technical details section of the form.

Action: Geoff / Phil

5) Relays

a) Plockton

Phil went over to the High School to meet with Duncan & back later to go up on the roof with Crisdean. There is a clear line of sight to the relay above Achmore, a reasonable line of sight to Portchullin which will need to be tested as there is a risk the link will be partially obscured by trees. There is also the bonus of a clear line of sight to North Strome, which may be useful to link to Strome Ferry. Thanks to Duncan and Crisdean for taking the time to help us locate the best position for the relay. We are now waiting for a date to meet the estates department at the school to discuss installing equipment.

Action: Phil

b) Lochcarron

Phil has surveyed upper and lower Strome Ferry and both have a line of sight to our proposed relay in Lochcarron. We will go over to Lochcarron to talk to residents about hosting a relay site.

Action: Neil & Phil

6) CMNet

Everyone has provided full details and signed the forms to set up the holding company CMNet CIC Ltd. Mary posted the forms last week.

We have agreed with Applecross (as our nearest community broadband group) that the assets of CMNet will revert to them in the event of the company failing. Hopefully the addition of our assets to the Applecross network will allow Applecross to continue to provide a service to ex CMNet subscribers.

Action: Mary

7) Role of Auditors.

Hamish has sent a draft spreadsheet to Geoff, they will have a separate meeting to finalise the format and content.

Action: Hamish & Geoff

8) Testing

- a) Outstanding issues
- b) Management & accounting capabilities
- c) Test to Joe's at Braeintra
- d) Test to the Glen
- e) Check all parameters
- f) More testing with routers

Phil has given examples of naming conventions, network standards and parameter values to Community Broadband Scotland, otherwise no progress this month.

Action: Phil

9) Restoring power to the old TV repeater

- a) Hydro power supply

We need to clarify the exact location of the power cable and decide on a suitable location for our consumer unit and other base station equipment. It may prove difficult to find an enclosure suitable for an UPS, Phil to forward dimensions of the UPS to Neil who will see if we can get something made locally. Hamish will see if he can find the exact location of the power cable with his metal detector.

Action: Phil, Neil, Hamish

- b) Trial to remove section of old cable

This is deferred until we have an alternate power supply in place.

Action: All

- c) Protection of cable on the hill - Phil

Phil spoke to Fay and she is happy for the relays to be erected and protected by fencing. The cable will be buried and marked as per SSE standards on the low ground. It will be left as it is, covered by protective pipe where needed on the slope and on the top of the hill it will be left to bury itself in the heather. We will provide Fay with a plan showing the exact location of all cable runs. Once we have an approved wayleave / relay licence and CMNET is operational we will formalise the agreement.

Action: Phil

10) Volume trial

All ten households have agreed to take part, thank you to everyone participating. We asked those taking part in the trial to provide information about software & printing facilities most have responded, we will chase those that have not yet done so. Hamish has produced a draft plan, Phil to respond.

Action: Phil, Hamish

11) Domestic contracts

Community Broadband Scotland has given us a template customer contract. As the contract needs to be finalised for the business plan to be submitted to Community Broadband Scotland (see 17) we discussed the detail of terms, rewards and penalties and the following was agreed.

As stated in the feasibility study the standard contract will be £13.50 for a monthly download limit of 10 GB (see 14 to explain why the limit is important). Anyone exceeding the 10 GB limit will be charged an extra £5 for each 5GB over the 10 GB limit; this is to be paid in the following month. Anyone that exceeds the 10 GB limit repeatedly **may** have their bandwidth capped for the rest of their contract. 10 GB equates to fifteen

hours of standard definition TV or ten hours of HD TV. Of course an allowance must be made for other usage of capacity e.g. emails, web browsing etc.

At the discretion of CMNet households that volunteer to help with the implementation of backbone equipment **may** be granted some free months broadband usage at the start of their contract.

As part of the household's contribution to the domestic implementation the contract will contain a clause that it is the householders' responsibility to clear a line of site to a relay and fix an antennae mount (which CMNet will supply) to a designated location on their property. It will be the householder's responsibility to provide a route to run cable into the house. I.e. drill through window, door frame or wall. The householder should then provide the CMNet installation team with access to the antennae mount (ladder if required) and CMNet will install the equipment. If the householder is unable to fix a mount and / or drill through the skin of the house then CMNet will do so for a nominal charge of £20. It will be the householder responsibility to determine the location of any fixings or access, CMNet will not accept any responsibility for damage to the property. We will investigate whether it is feasible to use a flat cable which can pass through a closed window.

As stated in the feasibility study there will be no compensation if the whole system is unavailable. However if part of the system is down due to reasons under CMNet's control there will be compensation if the system is unavailable for more than three working days at the rate of the normal daily charge for each day that the system is not useable.

Phil is to add in the details specific to our set up to the CBS template contract and finalise with Joe.

Action: Phil, Joe

12) Wayleaves

We have received a template from Community Broadband Scotland, Phil to distribute.

Action: Phil

13) Bond contract

We will contact Business Gateway to see if they can help with the contract.

Action: Hamish

14) ISPs

Phil presented figures for single line and ADSL bonding of 2, 3 and 4 lines from Eclipse, Managed Communications, Andrews and Arnold and Evolving Networks. We are waiting for information from a further three suppliers. The contrast in prices is marked, the most expensive being twice the price of the cheapest. Basically the more you pay the greater the permitted monthly download quota and the easier the management of the capacity. All contracts are for a period of at least one year and it is likely that there will be an announcement from HIE on the BT upgrades and delivery dates by the time contracts come up for their first renewal. All the companies contacted so far allow for an incremental increase in capacity within certain parameters. It is particularly difficult to compare value for money as we do not yet have a clear idea of our own usage profile and we won't know that until we have completed the volume trial. It is therefore likely that the best approach will be to run with the cheapest which will have the lowest download limit (hence the need to be very strict on 10 GB per subscriber per month) and accept that we will have to put in extra effort to manage the network ourselves. Phil will chase up the outstanding quotes.

Action: Phil

15) Funding - See 17.

16) Implementation Plan

The first draft of the implementation plan is now complete, anyone who has not received an email acknowledging their specific preferred date will not have been included in the implementation plan and will be given the option to join after all other households have been connected. See 17.

Action: Phil

17) Meetings with Community Broadband Scotland (CBS)

We met with Alaistar Nicolson and Sandra Holmes of CBS on the 17th July and again with Sandra on the 25th July.

At our first meeting we hoped to obtain guidance and answers to most of the outstanding issues but it quickly became apparent that CBS are taking an arm's length approach to providing help and guidance. Very few of our questions received a definitive answer. We were surprised to learn that there will be no restriction on any company using the taxpayer funded network upgrades. For example BT retail would be permitted to offer services in direct competition with community schemes. We were advised by CBS that our own scheme should have cleared all debts within the next 5 years.

The meeting then turned towards funding and the timescales involved in obtaining a grant. We understood from the meeting that some of the pioneer schemes had received their funding and money was at last beginning to flow. After some pressure to be specific Alaistar stated that a completed application for funding would receive a decision from CBS within a month. We went through the CBS funding stages and it was clear that we had already completed the first two stages and had most of the information ready for the third stage which is capital assistance, i.e. money to buy the kit.

CBS only allow one shot at the funding application, so we have to have every location and every piece of equipment defined. CBS will provide 89% and we have to contribute 11% which cannot come from public funds.

Since we have a delay whilst we wait for the company to be set up it was decided we would spend some time working on a business plan to submit to CBS for funding.

To that end we set up a separate meeting with Sandra where we went through the feasibility study, capital expenditure / implementation plan and running costs.

Phil then produced a business plan, minus financial information. This was circulated to members of CMNet for comment and also to Sandra.

Subsequently the financial information was completed and circulated; these were discussed and will be modified with the decisions made at this meeting.

Mary is to produce a new section for the business plan covering troubleshooting.

Action: Mary

The business plan is to be amended, financial figures updated and then circulated for everyone's comments.

Action: Phil

18) Items to add to the agenda of the next meeting

None

19) Next meeting.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, 4th September at 7:30 Fernaig House.

The meeting closed at 10:15.