

Abthorpe Broadband Association Ltd.

Bringing Broadband to the community since 2003.

AGENDA and MINUTES Directors' meeting 29th November 2023

1. Attendance and apologies

Full attendance of 7 directors, 2 officers and 1 contractor.

2. "One Touch Switching"

Ofcom are making it easier to switch broadband providers. It was resolved to contact PureFibre to ascertain what our position might be. [action:Eric]

3. Changes to our infrastructure monitoring

*Do we rationalise all our control and monitoring systems for ease and longevity?
There was a general discussion about current monitoring tools used and what might be replaced by new tools. It was agreed that the secondary test kit should be completed in Tim's rack including obtaining a Ubiquiti Gateway and thoroughly testing out capabilities before identifying a way forward. [action: Tim, Peter]*

4. Legacy equipment support

Replacement of older Nanostations discussion identified about 150 CPEs still of the original version (non-AC). It was agreed that a continued programme of upgrading CPEs to AC should follow a priority pattern of urgency and need and that financing this operation is approved. [action: Tim,Keith]

5. Whittlebury and Blakesley

The long term plans for these communities was discussed and it was decided to remove the postcodes for Whittlebury from the check table so that persons cannot apply for service in these areas. This due to the demise of the support group and continuing leaching of membership.

In in-depth discussion was held on Blakesley mentioning that there seems no appetite for a voluntary group to further the prospect of getting FTTP to premises. Maintenance of the services will continue as at present.

6. Helmdon

Fibre has been put to Lukes Close making a deal of difference to the service. Wighton's still requires connecting and will be completed along with some tidying up over the next few weeks.

It was re-iterated that the support for Helmdon in getting fibre to the access points was to allow the Helmdon community to progress membership to the point where a GVS funded project could be mounted by them. In broad terms and with the infrastructure already in place, a project covering the north side Main Street and Lukes Close would comfortably fall within a grant financed project and allow Helmdon to demonstrate the practicality and advantages of a FTTP service in order to encourage further projects.

7. H&S policy review

Keith advised that he had added lifting platforms to the risk assessment in view of the lean towards using these rather than ladders. A draft would be sent out to Directors for final comment and Eric would then publish it to the website. [action: Keith, Eric]

8. Insurance review

A summary of insurances was circulated before the meeting and the only point for clarification was that of the scenario where we install fibre termination units inside houses and if these powered devices caused problems, were we covered? Eric to contact insurance brokers to check this point but to proceed with re-insurance. [action: Eric] Post-meeting note: The insurer's indemnify us against the scenario above and if necessary, they would make a claim against the manufacturer.

9. Financial position

Frank presented a summary of present position. There was discussion over the expectation of surplus monies but it was agreed to defer any decision until next year when the accounts would be clearer without the complication of grant income and GVS project expenditure.

10. 2024 AGM

14/15th May? Peter to report availability of old school. [action: Peter]

11. Tim's support contract continuation

Chairman asked if there were any reason any Director would not want Tim to be present for this item and there being none, Tim introduced his report. At the heart of this was the issue of network monitoring – item 3 refers.

The meeting had access to a risk assessment table of hardware and software operations within the organisation together with those people with the capability of handling same.

This provoked a lively discussion on the vulnerability of our organisation and highlighted several critical points of potential failure.

*As part of the exercise item 3, the integration of the **Cloudcore** with Ubiquiti Gateway will be assessed. Any continuance of the Cloudcore will need Mikrotik RouterOS expertise.*

***Nagios** will continue to be useful for monitoring the radio network for the time being. **MRTG** will be retained for tracking very high bandwidth users.*

***SwitchboardFree** answerphone system will be retained whilst other options are investigated.*

***The Ticket System**, currently on the i-server, is to be reviewed in light of UISP's equivalent which is more directly integrated with the membership. Item 3 refers.*

***The i-server** operations are to be assessed and wherever alternatives in the wider market can provide similar facilities, migration should be considered.*

***UISP and other programs** which continue to be used will need short education courses to widen the number of people who can effectively use the products.*

[actions:

- Eric/Tim:update the risk table in light of these discussions;*
- Eric:assess primary and secondary support for the i-server and its applications and report back;*
- Tim,Richard,Alex to implement and trial UISP equivalent ticket system; Review SBF;*
- Several core members to arrange short introductory courses for products which are or become part of the ongoing repertoire of facilities.*

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12. Membership, support and demarcation

The discussion around Tim's support contract brought up the ancillary subject of Membership expectations for (free) service beyond the provision of broadband.

This provoked a lively discussion including: do we provide a standard issue router on the back of a CPE/ONU? Should we charge for services concerning internal WiFi support?

It was resolved to

Impress on Membership that ABbA service extends to the provision of broadband service at an ethernet port at every opportunity.

Re-development of the local coordinators role in looking after local's internal issues.

Encourage the formation of an independent group to amass technical knowledge of internal issue solutions.

13. AOB

Tim raised the issue of our network cables being vulnerable to damage and the responsibility TVB have in their upkeep, particularly where these cables are on Member's ground. Eric informed the meeting that he was to bring right up to date all wayleaves and issue same wherever cables were delivering service beyond the immediate property. Part of this exercise could survey any vulnerability.

Being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.15pm.