

Edderton Community Newsletter

Spring Edition - March 2017

EDITORIAL

There is a possibility that measures can be taken to improve the broadband connection for all households and businesses in the Edderton area, and in particular those that are located more than 2km from the village's telephone exchange. Whilst a download speed of 9.41 M/bps has been experienced in the village centre, this falls to 5.3 Mbps 4km to the south of the village. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to provide superfast broadband of at least 30m/bps throughout Scotland by 2021, though this is dependent on BT Openreach actually providing the necessary infrastructure by that date.

A proposition for the installation of a much faster, more robust and reliable broadband service was presented to Edderton Community Council by Cameron Warren of CP Wit (www.cpwit.co.uk) on February 7th. A summary of Cameron's presentation is included in this Newsletter, as well as an invitation for interested parties to form a small steering group to gauge interest and, hopefully, set in train the necessary work to install a community broadband service based on radio transmission. This is a good opportunity to equip the whole of Edderton with a much better broadband service. If you are interested to learn more about the proposed project, or would be prepared to join the small steering group, then please do contact Cameron at cameron@cpwit.co.uk - **and without delay!**

Contributions to the Community Newsletter and the Community Website are always welcome and will be gratefully received. They can be sent to me at Sloibcoyle Croft, Edderton, IV19 1LQ. E-mail: tedvenn@uwclub.net. Telephone: 01862 821 750

Ted Venn

EDDERTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Brief summaries of Edderton Community Council meetings can be found on the Community Website - www.edderton.com.

The next meetings are scheduled for March 7th, April 4th and May 2nd

COMMUNITY BROADBAND PROJECT

The Key Points of Cameron's Presentation to Edderton Community Council

Today's Broadband

Each year broadband/internet usage in the UK is increasing by approximately 50%, this is due to a number of reasons such as; increase in media streaming (Netflix, Amazon Video, iPlayer), increase in Smart TV ownership, increase in cloud services (Online file storage, e-mail etc), social media platforms becoming more popular and online applications/forms for tax returns, password applications and farming.

The Problem

Highlands and Islands currently has the second lowest proportion of internet non-users in the UK and some of the population, especially those who are in rural areas, are at risk of digital divide and exclusion. As many members of rural communities are aware, there is sometimes an issue with getting a stable Internet connection and greater speeds of 2 - 5Mbps. This results in several problems for the rural population which include; not being able to access many modern day internet services; businesses can not function effectively, competitively and efficiently; young people can not access key education online resources; and rural communities lose members to more urban area.

Why does this problem exist?

This problem exists because broadband travels down old copper cables that were not designed for what they are being used for now. The further away properties are from an FTTC/exchange the worse the signal. Decent fast fibre speeds can only be achieved if you are within 2km of the FTTC cabinet or exchange. Many properties are connected directly to the exchange, which means that adding extra cabinets is not feasible. The UK is behind in the Internet infrastructure. The cost would be too expensive for BT Openreach to provide every rural house with an acceptable broadband service. There are alternatives such as satellite broadband but they come with their own problems such as high monthly cost £60+ and high latency (inactivity).

The Proposal

The proposal is to setup a Community Broadband Scheme using fixed wireless equipment to first serve people who have none or poor internet connection in the village and then expanding it to cover the whole village shortly after. The service would be open to properties in and around the Edderton area. There would also be the future possibility/option to join other communities to the spread the service over a wider area and gain a greater network connection.

How would it work?

A fast Internet network connection would be installed into a central place in the village. This Internet signal would then be transmitted using line of sight wireless technology to a natural high point in the area and then relayed down to individual houses. Properties would need to install a small receiver on the side of the property to receive the signal. A small black unit would be installed in the property to equip the property with Wi-Fi. If there are specific areas that cannot receive a line of sight signal a relay station can be constructed

to overcome the line of sight issue. A rolling upgrade plan will be created to ensure that none of the equipment reach end of life. Once the system is installed in the property there is the possibility for properties to move their home phone and number over to a VoIP system (Voice over Internet Protocol) and use a VoIP phone provider such as Vonage.

Internet Speed

There are two different definitions of superfast Internet in the UK - Ofcom defines it as 30Mbps or above and the UK government define it as 24Mbps or above. The proposed system will have a initial download speed of 30 - 50 Mbps and once the majority of customers are connected and I am happy the network is stable, properties will be upgraded to a higher speed. Incorporated into the earlier mentioned rolling upgrade plan, the system will move with technology advances and achieve higher speeds.

Will BT forget us?

The simple answer to this is 'technically no'. Currently going through the UK Houses of Parliament there is a new bill called the Digital Economy Bill - this includes something called the USO (Universal Service Obligation). This will mean that any property will have the legal right to access 10Mbps broadband. However BT will most likely plug the rural gap with expensive satellite broadband systems.

Benefits to the community

The benefits would include:

- (1) A stable superfast Internet connection;*
- (2) Retention of families and businesses;*
- (3) Improved access to information;*
- (4) Easier downloading and submission of documents; e.g. to Crofting Commission, HMRC, etc;*

(5) Greater equality for the rural population;

(6) Distance learning opportunities; and

(7) The possibility of acquiring a BDUK (Broadband Delivery UK) subsidy.

What's Next?

To move the project forward a small group needs to be created to carry out a number of tasks. These tasks would include gauging the community interest, scoping our project area, deciding on the legal structure and operation of the project, be trained in the system and hold a public meeting to showcase the project once the planning is complete. The group would meet every few months or as and when needed. Contact Cameron Warren if you are interested in joining the group. The contact details are cameron@cpwit.co.uk or 01463 896 304.

The First Meeting

This has been arranged for Monday evening, March 20th in the Community Hall, starting at 7.30pm.

WAR MEMORIAL

Over the past couple of months work has been undertaken by stonemason John McLean to renovate the village war memorial. Much of this work has now been completed. All that remains is some additional pointing and the installation of floodlighting. A generous grant from the War Memorials Trust has allowed this work to proceed and in readiness for the centenary next year of the end of the First World War.

The following pictures show how well the restoration has been carried out.





Hopefully it won't be too long before the floodlighting is switched on.

EDDERTON COMMUNITY HALL

The interiors of both the small and large halls have recently been re-painted. Acoustics are to be improved with the installation of a loop system in the large hall and sound-absorbing tiles in both halls. Curtains will replace the blinds in the small meeting hall in an effort to deaden the echoing that makes it difficult to hear people when they are speaking at meetings. Consideration is also being given to improvements to the wall lighting in the main hall, as well as to replace missing ceiling tiles.

Currently all Hall bookings should be made by contacting Sandra Hall on 01862 821 556 or by e-mailing her using sandrahall1943@gmail.com.

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Dear Friends,

'Salvation Moments'

I never ceased to be surprised at the amazing experiences I encounter within my ministry here. Changes often take place that affect our whole way of looking at things. These 'changes' can be life-turning experiences for us. We have them every day but often fail to see their significance. These are what I like to call 'salvation moments'. When visiting the school, you find a child learning a subject who discovers something they never knew existed.

A bereaved family are drawn closer together after years apart. A couple long married and falling into dull routine suddenly discover what they really mean to each other and life. There are of course even more life changing moments in life as when the person with a drink problem finally puts the bottle down. The young person struggling with a drug addiction problem finally manages to conquer it. These are all in the realm of the everyday, but they are also 'salvation moments'. Moments when something amazing happens; when the world to come breaks in to the world as it is! The significant moment of which there is no avoiding. At no other time are we made aware of 'salvation moments' than in Holy Week or at Easter, when Jesus challenged his friends and his critics - the scribes and the Pharisees who refused to recognise him - and, most powerfully, his dying moments on the cross. The post script came however with that first resurrection morning on Easter Day, when we realise that it wasn't all a waste of time for him or for us. Jesus gave his life that we might have life and "have it more abundantly". Jesus did not die, he lives that we might live and know real life, real living and come to know the life that gives life - the life everlasting. We are surrounded by a truly remarkable world, which we too often take for granted. Life is a time of great opportunity and new life is born every day.

I wish you all joy and peace this Eastertide.

Reverend Anthony

Lent & Easter Church Dates For The Diary

Holy Week

Palm Sunday, April 9th

Family Service at Edderton Church at 11am
Family Service at Rosehall Church at 10am and
Creich Church at 11.30am

Maundy Thursday, April 13th - Short Service with Holy Communion in the Upper Room at 6pm at Rosehall Church

Good Friday, April 14th - 'Reflections on the Cross' service of vigil at Creich Parish Church at 7pm

Easter Day, Sunday, April 16th

8am Short Easter Sunrise Celebration to welcome Easter Day by the Kyle at the stone circle, Bonar Bridge

Family Easter Service at Ardgay Church at 11am (we join our friends at Ardgay for a combined service)

Family Service at Rosehall Church at 10am and Creich Church at 11.30am

Please remember if you need the Minister at any time you can phone him or, if you are sick and, would like him to call on you at home or in hospital, he will be pleased to do so.

Rev Anthony Jones
The Manse, Ardgay
Tel: 01863 766 285

revanthonyjones@yahoo.com

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Planning applications and decisions for Edderton are now being displayed on the Community Website. Only brief details are shown, including the planning reference number. More detailed information can be obtained from Highland Council's planning website, using the planning reference number.

Ted Venn

VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED AT THE MAIL BOX CAFÉ

This café operates whilst the Mobile Post Office is open on Wednesdays between 10.00am and 12.00noon for coffee, tea and biscuits. Helpers are needed to keep this facility open, which provides an excellent opportunity for villagers to get together for a chat, and especially during periods where the regular helpers are away on holiday. Please contact Dawn Smith on 01862 821 326 (or send

an e-mail to oakleasmith14@btinternet.com) if you can provide support to keep this valuable village asset functioning.

Dawn Smith

MOBILE LIBRARY

The Mobile Library visits the Edderton and Ardgay areas every third Wednesday. Items are loaned for three weeks and may be renewed by telephone.

A library ticket also gives free access to the Mobile Library's on-line catalogue, which can be used to reserve items that can be delivered by the Mobile Library. It is also possible to reserve e-books free of charge, so why pay to buy when you can borrow for free?

The library calls at:

Edderton Primary School (0920-1010)
Edderton Community Hall (1015-1100)
Dounie (1135-1155)
Ardvannie (1300-1325)

EDDERTON AND DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB'S ANNUAL LUNCH

On January 27th the Gardening Club members, with partners and friends, met at Luigi's in Dornoch for their annual lunch, enjoying time to chat during a relaxed meal about gardening plans for the coming season, and many other topics as well. Members brought gardening related "Secret Santa" wrapped small gifts, and a lot of thought and originality went into complying with both the challengingly low price limit and the gardening theme. As usual Luigi's staff made us very welcome, and their delicious menu catered for all tastes and appetites.

Patricia Hannah

EDDERTON AND DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

A link to the Gardening Club's Spring Newsletter can be found on the Community Website - www.edderton.com. A number of

events are being arranged for the next few months, and these include:

Monday, March 6th - Quiz Evening

April - A visit to Amat Garden (date dependent on the weather)

Monday, May 1st - Talk on lawn care by Caroline Munro, greenkeeper at Bonar Bridge and Ardgay Golf Club

Sunday, June 11th - A visit to Duncan Street gardens in Thurso.

New members are always welcome.

More information about the Club can be obtained from either:

Patricia - 01863 766 061 and/or pahannah@hotmail.com)

Or from:

Esther - 01862 811 381 and/or esther@bumblebeecottage.me.uk

Patricia Hannah - Secretary

DRAMA GROUP

EDDERTON DRAMA will be presenting **ROB ROY - The Pantomime!** on Friday, March 17th and Saturday March 18th at the Community Hall. Tickets are priced at £6.00 for adults and £3.00 children and students.

This will be another hilarious fun filled show for all the family; full of great songs and with great characters. Tickets will be on sale from Monday, February 20th and can be booked from Sandra on 01862 821 556 or from any drama group member.

Sandra Hall

THE EASTER ROSS DEER MANAGEMENT GROUP

The Group will be meeting in early March to review the progress undertaken by all member Estates, as the hind culling season nears its end. Scottish Natural Heritage worked closely with the Group to set targets for deer numbers within the approved Deer Management Plan.

This management objective has been difficult at times, as hinds do tend to wander across boundaries, from one estate to another. Estate staff have taken the opportunity, whenever possible, to work together to achieve the agreed goals.

Habitat monitoring and improvement continues, with plans for further staff training and continuing professional development. We are keen to be as open as possible in order to demonstrate the complex nature of deer management. There will be opportunities to welcome school parties and we are evaluating a 'Hill to Grill' initiative that spells out every stage of the process of providing venison into the market place.

Please feel free to make contact on any matter of interest or concern via the contacts shown on the Easter Ross Deer Management Group Web Site - www.deermanagement.co.uk.

Gordon Robertson
Secretary and Treasurer to the ERDMG
Mobile. 07825 371 324.
E-mail. sworddale@gmail.com

A WARNING TO BE ALERT TO ON-LINE SCAMS AND HOAXES

For five days in February I was without any broadband connection, though the landline still functioned. A BT Openreach engineer called on the fifth day and after three hours' work traced the fault to within the village's

telephone exchange. Since then broadband has worked; albeit in its usual slow and variable way.

Today (Monday, February 20th), whilst I was putting the finishing touches to this Newsletter, I received a cold call that allegedly came from BT Openreach. As the telephone display indicated an international number, I asked the caller to state where he was calling from, and was told India! Despite the time lag in conversation and the difficulty in following and understanding the caller, it was established that he was following up on the recent broadband fault and wanted to carry out some checks. The caller said that a BT Openreach engineer was working in Edderton's telephone exchange and that the problem that had been experienced was due to faulty BT equipment.

Due to the difficulty in carrying out some of the requested tests, the caller suggested that he should help remotely. This was agreed to and the caller undertook tests and further "corrective" action. Because of the time being taken to undertake these tests and the fact that other incoming calls had been detected, the caller agreed to end the call and phone back in twenty minutes. When he did so, his number was displayed on my phone - 001 215 387 0804. When the tests had been completed, the caller asked how long I had experienced difficulties with broadband, and on stating about five years the caller said that compensation was due and could be made straightaway. The caller seemed to have details of the bank that I used, though he stressed that on no account must I give any details of sort code or account number, as he could lose his job if these were mentioned because all calls were recorded. Once payment had been made he asked me to check that it had been received, which I did - not appreciating that he was still able to view my computer as it was still in remote user mode! The payment did not show up on the on-line bank statement.

The caller said he would try again as it may have gone into another account by mistake! Alarm bells started ringing! How did he know that I had other accounts? My concern was increased when my screen kept changing without any prompting from me. At this point I contacted my own Internet provider (which was not BT), and found that this was likely to be a scam that other customers had experienced. The call from "India" was immediately ended, all computers shut down and all banks alerted. Having noted the call number down, it was possible to trace its source - Philadelphia, USA!

So far, no money has been lost, and the only awkward consequence has been a frozen bank account. However, lessons have been learnt. Firstly, never allow remote access to a computer from a cold caller. Secondly, verify the caller's identity and purpose by phoning the company that he purportedly works for by using a known contact number - and never allow the call to be transferred. Thirdly, be prepared to end an unexpected call straightaway, and especially if the authenticity of the caller raises doubt.

From past experience it seems to me that BT and Yahoo, BT's web-based e-mail service, pose a security risk. In the case of the experience detailed above, it would seem that employees of BT and Yahoo are either selling private information or using private information for their own purposes. Hacking, hoaxes and scams are all too often in the news these days, but it can happen to all of us. The best advice is to be alert, suspicious of unexpected calls and a preparedness to end such calls promptly. Although much time and energy has been lost today, the timely interruption to a normal routine has allowed me to highlight an event that could have succeeded by including details of it in this edition.

Ted Venn

CHRISTMAS DINNER FOR EDDERTON SENIOR CITIZENS

'Twas a cold and stormy night with frequent snow flurries on Friday, January 13th when at 6.00pm the Carnegie Hotel in Tain opened its doors to the Senior Citizens of Edderton.

Following the excellent meal, which was enjoyed by all, a vote of thanks was given by Donald Clarke and a collection made by Lorna for the waitresses who had been working so hard during the evening and had provided us with a very efficient service.

Thanks are extended to all who made the evening such a success, and especially to Lorna Sutherland and Donna Laing for all their hard work prior to the event.

We left the Carnegie, all positively glowing (some more than others!), and thankfully this warm and cheery feeling stayed with us as we travelled the short distance back to Edderton in the snow.

Two very appreciative Wrinklies

OTHER NEWS

Highland Council's scheme to use the Primary School for local elections, rather than the Community Hall, has been abandoned. The Community Council was concerned over the intention to use the school as a polling station and pointed out to Highland Council the many negative factors of the proposal. These included disruption to the school; the inconvenient walk uphill; the lack of sufficient car parking; unsuitable wheelchair access into the school building; and the need to transport the polling booths from storage at the Community Hall to the Primary School.

Efforts to make the main road through Edderton safer are still being pursued, but cutbacks in Highland Council's budget make progress slow - or virtually non-existent. The

measures sought to improve safety and slow down traffic as it passes through Edderton include: a 30mph speed limit; double white lines to prevent any overtaking; and the repair of the "Smiley Face" speed sign on the eastern side of the village.

The junction to Edderton on The Struie Road (B9176) is also a cause for concern. Incidents of northbound vehicles overtaking motorists turning right towards Edderton have been reported. Although this junction is on a blind bend overtaking vehicles have only seen the clear road beyond the bend and have failed to consider that hidden traffic might be slowing down to turn right. It has been suggested to Highland Council that suitable remedies would be better signage and double white lines to stop any overtaking at this point. The response, so far, has been leisurely and ridiculous. From Highland Council's point of view there haven't been enough accidents or injuries to justify any remedial action! A common sense approach that continually assesses risk does not seem to be in use.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday, March 17th and Saturday, March 18th - ROB ROY - The Pantomime! In the Community Hall.

Monday, March 20th - Community Broadband Project Meeting in the Community Hall - 7.30pm

FOR SALE

Four wheels with winter tyres - 215/65 - R16 - 102T - previously used on a Land Rover Freelander Mark I (2005). Any reasonable offer considered. Tel: 01862 821 750

Ted Venn

DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE EDITION

15th May 2017