

Great Asby Broadband
Community Interest Company

Annual Report – Year ending 31 May 2016

As Chairman of Great Asby Broadband, it is my pleasure to deliver this annual report to our members and subscribers. It relates to the period 1 June 2015 to 31 May 2016 and reports on the company's activities during that period.

Business Model

The business model adopted by the company is one where the organisation focuses on its core purpose (to deliver broadband access to the internet to as many Great Asby households and businesses as possible) and does so in a way that is financially viable but is non-profit making. To that end the company is incorporated as a community interest company. It charges its subscribers a one-off connection fee and a monthly subscription, meets the cost of its regular outgoings, and maintains a capital reserve for the purposes of network maintenance and investing in network development. It does not pay a dividend or any emoluments.

With the introduction of fibre broadband in Great Asby in December 2015 through the Connecting Cumbria superfast broadband programme, the company (which welcomed that development) started to plan for the systematic close-down of its operations and this marked a strategic change to the business model.

Board of Directors

The board of directors has consisted of:

| Name | Office | Appointed | Remuneration |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Miles Mandelson | Chairman | 31 May 2007 | Nil |
| John Bevan | Company Secretary | 31 May 2007 | Nil |
| Elizabeth Parkin | Treasurer | 31 May 2007 | Nil |
| Barbara Allen | Director | 2 Oct 2008 | Nil |
| Andrew Savage | Director | 27 Oct 2102 | Nil |
| Paul Tarney | Director | 27 Oct 2012 | Nil |

Subscribers and Members

Great Asby Broadband continued to recruit new subscribers and members. A small number of subscribers who are resident for less than six months in the year receive a 50% discount on their subscriptions.

| Status | No. at 1 June 2015 | No. at 31 May 2016 | Percent change |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Subscribers | 89 | 51 | -48% |
| of whom part-time | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| Company Members | 35 | 30 | -14% |

The number of subscribers decreased markedly (by 48%) from the previous year as migration from the GAB network to the fibre broadband network took place. The number of members declined somewhat less, by 14%.

The basic subscription has remained at £26 per month. Discounts for part-time residents and hosts of mesh-boxes have continued to be applied. The facility that enables a discounted paid-for permanent connection to holiday accommodation continues.

Financial Status

The Treasurer will present the financial accounts for the year separately. Overall the financial status of the company has remained stable and the company's reserves at year-end remained at a safe level.

As part of the strategic change to its business model, the Board started to operate on the basis of a gradual but systematic winding down of the operation as subscribers began migrating to fibre broadband. The aim was to ensure that sufficient funds were available to sustain the operation until all subscribers had migrated, recognising that increasingly the company would have to draw on its reserves to achieve this aim. By the end of the year under report, the company was already beginning to eat into reserves.

Backhaul Provision

Activity on the network showed a gradual decline as subscribers migrated and stopped using the GAB service. We had adequate backhaul bandwidth available to the network throughout the reporting year and made no changes to the amount purchased. The rate limit applied to individual subscriber connections remained at 18Mbps symmetrical and there have been no adverse issues with performance during the reporting year.

Technical Support

Great Asby Broadband undertakes to provide limited technical support to its subscribers in order to establish and maintain their connection to the internet. A total number of 34 call-outs was logged during the year. We continued to engage The Networking People Ltd (TNP) in the provision of specialist technical support which remained of a good standard.

Message Service

For almost the whole year Great Asby Broadband continued to operate its message service but, with the introduction of the Asby Parish Council website, responsibility for this service was transferred to the Parish Council in May 2016.

Broadband Developments in Cumbria

The past year has seen the further development of broadband issues in Cumbria in which Great Asby Broadband has continued to play its part. With the Parish Council's endorsement, we have represented Asby Parish at the East Cumbria Community Broadband Forum (ECCBF) and at the Cumbria County Council (CCC) Hub Co-ordinators Group. Regular reports on developments are made to Asby Parish Council.

GAB directors continued to work closely with BT, both in monitoring progress with the FttP roll-out and in identifying the needs of outlying properties that are "connectable" but likely to incur considerable excess charges to connect due to their distance from the nearest connection point. In addition GAB has supported subscribers in their efforts to migrate to fibre broadband and escalate cases to BT where orders have encountered undue delays.

Conclusion

The past year has been busy for the company and its directors. They have continued their involvement in the wider initiatives and debates concerning NGA broadband in the county and have striven to take any opportunities that arise to improve the quality of broadband services in Asby Parish now and in the future. With an assured backhaul supply of adequate bandwidth available, performance of the GAB network has generally been sufficient to meet the needs of our subscribers.

With the advent of a commercially delivered superfast broadband service, Great Asby Broadband entered the final stage of its existence during which we have endeavoured to manage the transition so as to maintain service continuity. We have also worked with subscribers and others in outlying properties to try and achieve acceptable and affordable solutions for them.

As ever, I should like to thank the directors of Great Asby Broadband for their valued input and commitment, and our external partners TNP Ltd and the Asby Village Hall Committee for their services and support.

Miles Mandelson
Chairman

8 November 2016

www.gabroadband.net

Annex 1: The company at 31 May 2016

The Board of Directors

Chairman: Miles Mandelson

Company Secretary: John Bevan

Treasurer: Elizabeth Parkin

Director: Barbara Allen

Director: Andrew Savage

Director: Paul Tarney

Webmaster: John Bevan

Local technical support: Miles Mandelson, John Bevan, Andrew Savage

External Partners

Main network host: Asby Village Hall

Backhaul provider: The Networking People Ltd

Specialist technical support provider: The Networking People Ltd

Bank: HSBC plc

Accountants: Brosnans Chartered Accountants Limited