



PRESS RELEASE



GigaMull – Community Broadband Project

A community-led initiative to provide Superfast Broadband for Mull and Iona and other Argyll Isles.

Significant progress has been made since the article in the July edition, in particular with regard to the Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) contract with BT. Readers may be aware that BT is currently installing new fibre optic cables in the north of the island. This will deliver a service to Dervaig, Tobermory, Craignure and Lochdon, by the end of 2016 using a combination of the new fibre optic cable and existing copper telephone wires. Other areas of the island are unlikely to benefit from these works and BT have agreed in discussions with HIE that these areas will be removed from their contract scope, subject to a suitable tender being received by GigaPlus Argyll for the provision of services in these areas. This will now allow GigaPlus Argyll to fill that gap by providing a community-owned, island based, superfast broadband service.

Our project is known as the Argyll Isles Community Broadband Project (AICBP) and will offer superfast broadband to Mull, Iona, Colonsay, Luing, Lismore, Jura, Craignish and parts of Islay. We firmly believe that the project will deliver a transformational change to the islands by giving us all access to superfast broadband, something that is taken for granted in most urban areas of Scotland and the rest of the UK.

We are progressing well with the formation of a company to own and operate the new high speed broadband network (at least 24Mbps); the company will be called **GigaPlus Argyll** and will trade locally as **GigaMull**. It will be an independent, not for profit cooperative and will be managed by a board of directors drawn from across the AICBP area. The company will be an Internet Service Provider (ISP) offering superfast broadband.

The process to appoint a contractor to deliver the work will commence on 6 October with the publication of a pre-qualification questionnaire and then of a tender document to the contractors who respond. The Scottish Government's Community Broadband Scotland programme will provide around three quarters of a million pounds which will cover 89% of the project cost. With this funding comes a requirement for a rigorous procurement process to ensure openness and transparency and to ensure value for money. A contract will be awarded in March 2015.

GigaMull will offer a first class service to residents with a range of competitively priced packages to suit the budgets and needs of our customers. Telephone support will be based on the island backed up by technicians and engineers who will carry

out installations and maintenance work – providing local employment and training opportunities.

The steering group is made up of volunteers drawn from all corners of Mull and Iona with a range of skills and experience and supported by myself and the rest of the MICT board of Directors. To find out who is on the steering group, visit our website www.gigamull.co.uk We are also seeking out new members for the steering group to further strengthen this exciting project so if you would like to contribute please get in touch.

You can also contact us through this website to register your interest. Once we have finalised details of the service packages we will offer, these will be sent out to you as a priority. We hope to start offering connections from April 2015. In the meantime we would suggest that you consider carefully before subscribing to new services from your existing providers as this will lock you into their contract for 18-24 months.

To maintain and increase progress it is hoped that we will soon be able to recruit a full time project manager. This job will be advertised locally in the next few weeks.

Spread the word – GigaMull is coming!

For more information please either visit the website www.gigamull.co.uk or contact Moray Finch Tel. 01680 812905 or mfinch@mict.co.uk

PRESS RELEASE ENDS

18th September 2014

Mull and Iona Community Trust was formed in 1997 and is one of more than 200 Development Trusts across Scotland. They are community controlled for the long term benefit of their neighbourhood. MICT are involved a wide range of services and projects that range from a dementia singing group to a £1m Hydro scheme.

Mull and Iona Community Trust is a company limited by guarantee and is recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue. Registered Office: An Roth Community Enterprise Centre, Craignure, Isle of Mull, PA65 6AY. Registered in Scotland SC172897 Scottish Charity No. SC025995