



Rules

of

Broadband for the Rural North Limited

(A registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014)

Registration number: 31352R

Registered office: Station Yard, Melling, Carnforth LA6 2QY

Rules of “Broadband for the Rural North Limited”

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Rules of Broadband for the Rural North Limited

A Name, number and main objects

1 What is the society's name and number?

- 1.1 The society's name is ***Broadband for the Rural North Limited***.
- 1.2 The society's registered number is **31352R**
- 1.3 The society's registered office is ***Station Yard, Melling, Carnforth LA6 2QY***.

2 What are the society's objects?

- 2.1 The society aims to:
 - 2.1.1 Provide high speed broadband and associated services to domestic and business premises located in the rural United Kingdom, especially those areas which are poorly served.
 - 2.1.2 Be a leading stakeholder in the enablement of complimentary communication technologies such as mobile connectivity in support of the communities we work with, and research and develop their functions and use.
 - 2.1.3 Promote the take up of broadband and associated services, provide assistance and support in enabling consumers to get the best out of their connectivity and devices, and in turn enabling communities access to modern digital services and support platforms.
 - 2.1.3 Provide an opportunity for public-spirited people and organisations to contribute financially to the community, with the expectation of a social dividend, rather than personal financial reward.
 - 2.2 Examples of the ways in which the society may carry out its objects may include:
 - 2.2.1 Building its own high speed broadband network(s) or working with other organisations to assist them to do so;
 - 2.2.2 Providing opportunities for members of the community to be trained in the skills required to build fibre networks and then operate them;
 - 2.2.3 Developing new or existing services to the local community that contribute to the local economy.
 - 2.3 Those objects are carried on for the benefit of the community.
 - 2.4 The society's members may, subject to the registration of a rule amendment by the Financial Conduct Authority, change the society's objects. See rule 30.
-

B Rights of members of the society

3 What types of share are there?

- 3.1 All shares in the society are ordinary shares with a nominal value of one pound each. The 'par' or 'capital' value of shares may be reduced in some circumstances (see rule 15).
- 3.2 The society may issue some shares as designated for a particular purpose. Those shares may carry a risk or return which is different from that for other shares. (see rule 15.5). However, all shares irrespective of their issue will have the same voting rights.

4 What is the minimum shareholding?

- 4.1 Members of the society must have a minimum shareholding of 100 shares.
- 4.2 Members that withdraw all their shares will no longer be members of the society.
- 4.3 A member's debt due to the society will give the society a lien on the member's shares. This debt may be offset against the member's share capital, share interest or loans to the society.

5 What is the maximum shareholding?

- 5.1 A member's total shareholding cannot exceed the maximum the law allows*. But that limit does not apply if the member is an industrial and provident society. *Currently that is £100,000
- 5.2 In rule 5.1, a member's total shareholding includes all shares registered in the member's name, including (for example):
- all shares jointly held with others; and
 - shares held on behalf of others.

6 How to become a member of the society

- 6.1 The directors of the society will, from time to time, set the procedures and forms to be used for applying for shares and for the minimum allowable shareholding under rule 4.1. Those procedures should include the following:
- 6.1.1 The directors will obtain legal advice, to confirm that any proposed financial promotion:
- 6.1.1.1 does not contain any untrue or misleading statement; and
- 6.1.1.2 gives a reasonable and fair description of the risks associated with holding withdrawable shares in this society; and
- 6.1.1.3 complies with any voluntary code or guidance which the society may, from time to time, agree.

- 6.1.2 For this rule, a proposed financial promotion is any document issued by the society to promote the issue of shares (or anything else which might be considered an investment if issued by a company, such as a bond, for example).
- 6.1.3 For this rule a document also includes 'non-real time communications' and 'real time communications' (as described in article 7 of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (Financial Promotion) Order 2005/1529), even if it is not in documentary form.
- 6.2 Members must pay one pound for each share for which they apply.
- 6.3 When shares are issued, the society will provide a share certificate in respect of those shares. At that time a member's details will be entered in to the society's register of members.
- 6.4 The society may operate a share purchase instalments scheme to help potential members to purchase the minimum shareholding. Some legal restrictions may govern the operation of that scheme.
- 6.5 The society will take reasonable steps to verify the identification of members. The society will retain a copy of all documents seen to verify the identity of a member.

7 How do members withdraw their shares?

- 7.1 All shares are withdrawable. When members withdraw shares, the society may at its sole discretion return the money paid for them. Subject to rule 15.1 this does not apply if the society has reduced the capital value of shares (by passing a board resolution, under rule 15.4.1). In that case the society will return only the reduced capital value of the shares.
- 7.2 If shares are withdrawn the society will pay any interest accrued to the date of withdrawal.
- 7.3 Shares may at the sole discretion of the society be withdrawn on 180 days' notice but are subject to the restrictions in rule 7.1. All withdrawals shall be in the order in which the notices are received by the society. Notice, whenever given, does not take effect before the third anniversary of the share being issued.
- 7.4 When members apply to withdraw shares, they will need to
- complete a withdrawal form (as set by the society's directors);
 - comply with any procedures the society's directors may set; and
 - produce evidence of identity (if not previously provided).
- 7.5 From time to time, the society may suspend (or limit) a member's right to withdraw shares.
- 7.6 There is a minimum number of members. The minimum is currently:
- two (if both members are industrial and provident societies) or
 - three (if any member is not an industrial and provident society).

If...

the society has no more than the minimum number of members...

then...

those members can withdraw some of their shares,

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but,

those members cannot withdraw all their shares.

- 7.7 Members may end their membership of the society by withdrawing all their shares. Or, if the right to withdraw is suspended by rule 7.5, members may surrender all their shares. On surrender the directors of the society may (but do not have to) pay some or all of the money paid for the shares.

8 Can a member sell their shares?

- 8.1 A member cannot transfer any of their shares to any other person (subject to clauses 11.2 and 12.9.)

9 What are a member's voting rights?

- 9.1 At the society's annual general meeting (and other general meetings of the society), each member has one vote. Members will have one vote each irrespective of the number of shares they may hold.

10 Can a member hold shares in joint names?

- 10.1 A member may hold any shares in their own name. Or they may hold them jointly (with up to three others).
- 10.2 Suppose a member represents an unincorporated association (perhaps a club or society, for example). The association's shares must be held in the joint names of two or more persons. The association cannot hold shares in its own name (but the holders of its shares may ask the society to note the association's name and address in the society's register of members).
- 10.3 For voting and the payment of interest, the joint holders of a share are one shareholder and one member.
- 10.4 If a member holds a share jointly, the member and the other holders of that share may go to the society's general meetings (and speak at them). But only one of the holders of that share can vote. If the holders of the share cannot agree between them who is to vote, it will be the person named first (in the society's register of members).
- 10.5 Similarly, the society will send correspondence, notices, and the share certificate, only to the person named first (in the society's register of members), unless that person gives the society different, written, instructions.
- 10.6 Similarly, the society will pay interest only to the person named first (in the society's register of members), unless that person gives the society different, written, instructions.
- 10.7 Unless members give the society different, written, instructions, all joint holders of a share must sign an application to withdraw the share.

11 Can children own shares?

- 11.1 Members must be 16 years old, or older.

- 11.2 A person under 16 cannot be a member. But a member can hold shares on behalf of somebody who is under 16. The society has to treat those shares as belonging to that member (and not the child), for the purposes of rule 5.1 (which sets the greatest total value of shares a member can have in their name). Following that person's 16th birthday, they may become a member of the society and those shares can pass on to them.

12 What happens on death, bankruptcy or mental incapacity?

12.1 This rule 12.1 applies on the death of a member holding a share in their own name.

12.1.1 For shareholdings of £5,000 or less:

- If ...
- the member has named a person to take the shares on their death (called the member's nominee),
- and if...
- the shares registered in the member's name have a total value of £5,000 (or less),
- then...

the society will transfer the shares to the member's nominee.

12.1.2 For shareholdings greater than £5,000:

- If ...
- the member has named a person to take the shares on their death (called the member's nominee),
- and if...
- the shares registered in the member's name have a total value of more than £5,000,
- then

the society will transfer the shares to the member's nominee, but only for shares with up to a total value of £5,000. The society will decide which shares transfer to the member's nominee. The member's personal representatives will have to deal with the other remaining shares.

12.1.3 For shareholdings where the nominee is younger than 16 (when they could take the shares):

- If ...
- the member has named a person to take the shares on their death (called the member's nominee),
- and if...
- the member's nominee is younger than 16 (when they could take the shares),
- then...

the society may treat an adult (the member's nominee's mother, father, or guardian, for example) as having the rights of the member's nominee. The society will then transfer the member's shares to them. That adult must undertake to hold the shares on trust for the member's nominee.

12.1.4 For shareholdings where the member has no nominee and the value is £5,000 or less:

- If ...
- the member has NOT named a person to take the shares on their death,
- and if...

- the shares registered in the member's name (and any other interests the member may have with the society) have a total value of £5,000 (or less),
- then...

the society may (at the society's discretion) transfer the shares to the person who seems to have the legal right to them (member's wife, husband, civil partner or children, for example). The society will ask for evidence of their right. The society is unable to transfer the shares to that person if the personal representative has applied for probate or letters of administration.

12.1.5 For shareholdings where the member has no nominee and their personal representatives have applied for probate or letters of administration, and the value is £5,000 or less:

- If ...
- the member has NOT named a person to take the shares on their death, BUT their personal representatives have applied for probate or letters of administration,
- and if...
- the shares registered in the member's name (and any other interests the member may have with the society) have a total value of £5,000 (or less),
- then...

the society will transfer the shares to the member's personal representative. The society must see the probate or letters of administration.

12.1.6 For shareholdings where the member has no nominee and the value is greater than £5,000:

- If ...
- the member has NOT named a person to take the shares on their death,
- and if...
- the shares registered in the member's name have a total value of more than £5,000,
- then...

the society will transfer the shares to the member's personal representative. The society must see the probate or letters of administration.

12.2 After the society has transferred the member's share to their personal representative, the personal representative:

- may apply to withdraw the share;
- may apply to receive any interest that may become due on the share before they withdraw it;
- but cannot exercise any other membership rights for that share.

12.3 Any other person to whom the society transfers a member's shares (under rule 13.1 12.1) will have all the membership rights previously enjoyed by the member.

12.4 This rule 13.4 12.4 applies on the death of a member who held a share jointly with others.

- If...
- the member has not given the society written instructions...
- ...then...
- the society will treat the surviving owner (or owners) as the only (joint) owner of that share.
- If...
- the member has given the society written instructions to do so...
- ...then...

rule 12.1 tells the society who to register in the member's place.

- 12.5 This rule applies to the member's replacement (the person to whom the society transfers the member's shares under rules 12.1 or 12.4). Rules 12.1 and 12.4 do not allow the member's replacement to hold (on their own or jointly, with others) shares with a total value greater than the law allows. See rule 5.1.
- 12.6 After the society receives written proof that a member is bankrupt, the trustee of their estate may apply to withdraw the share. The trustee may also then apply to receive any interest that may become due on the share before they withdraw it. The trustee cannot exercise any other membership rights for that share. This rule 12.6 applies if the share was in the member's sole name.
- 12.7 This rule 12.7 applies when the society receives written proof that a joint holder of a share is bankrupt. The society will then substitute the interest of the trustee of their estate for the name of that joint holder (in the society's register of members). The trustee will be substituted as the last named person (of the joint holders of that share) registered as holding that share. The society will automatically cancel any written instructions that vary the effect of rules 10.5 , 10.6 , or 10.7.
- 12.8 This rule 12.8 applies when a member (or a person claiming through a member) is mentally incapable. The board should treat that individual as mentally incapable when satisfied (after considering medical evidence) that the individual is incapable, through disorder or disability of mind, of managing their own affairs.
- 12.9 When rule 12.8 applies, the board should deal with the individual's donee or deputy if:
- 12.9.1 the individual lacks capacity (as described in the Mental Capacity Act 2005) for the purposes of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014); and
- 12.9.2 there is, for that individual:
- 12.9.2.1 a donee of an enduring power of attorney (as described in the Mental Capacity Act 2005); or
- 12.9.2.2 a donee of a lasting power of attorney (as described in the Mental Capacity Act 2005); or
- 12.9.2.3 a deputy, appointed by the Court of Protection; and
- 12.9.3 that donee, or deputy, has power for that individual for the purposes of the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
- 12.1 In all other cases when rule 12.8 applies, the board may pay, to any person they judge proper, the value of that individual's shares, loans and deposits with the society. But first the board must be satisfied that:
- 12.10.1 no other person has been appointed to administer that individual's property;
- and
- 12.10.2 it is just and expedient to pay that person.

13 Will members get a windfall if the society converts?

- 13.1 The society may convert itself into a company, amalgamate with another society or company, or transfer its business to another society or company. The society or company (into which the society converts, or with which it amalgamates, or to which it transfers its business) must have objects

similar to those of the society. The procedures and conditions for that are in the Co-Operative Community Benefit Societies Act 2014

- 13.2 Members are not to benefit financially if the society converts, or transfers its business or is wound up (see rule 31.5). The society may make it a condition of membership that members sign a contract with the society prior to becoming a member, in such form as the society's directors require, by which members give up any personal financial benefit from conversion, or transfer, or winding up.

The society may also make it a condition that for any members that were not previously subject to such a contract, that such a contract becomes a condition of their ongoing membership, subject to the agreement of members at an AGM and where relevant, the registration with the Financial Conduct Authority of any related rule amendments.

- 13.3 Members appoint the society's secretary as their attorney (for this purpose only and no other). The society's secretary may sign the contract referred to in rule 13.2 above for members if members do not sign it and return it within 14 days after the society asks them to. That appointment is irrevocable and granted to secure members' obligation in rule 13.2.

14 Will the society pay interest on shares?

- 14.1 The society may use its property and profits only to promote its objects. The society will not pay members any dividend, bonus or other share in profits.
- 14.2 Rule 14.1 does not prevent the society from paying interest on shares. The directors of the society will set the rate of interest (if any). It will be a variable interest rate. Subject to the agreement of members at an AGM, the directors may decide to pay interest to members on their shares by issuing further shares.
- 14.3 The society will not pay a rate of interest that is higher than needed to fund the society's activities. In setting the rate, the society's directors will take particular account of the society's intention to provide an opportunity for public-spirited people and organisations to contribute financially to the community, with the expectation of a social dividend, rather than personal financial reward.
- 14.4 The society will calculate the interest on the money paid for the shares (unless their capital value has been written down under rule 15.4.1). While shares are written down under rule 15.4.1 the society will calculate the interest on that written down value.
- 14.5 Rule 14.1 does not prevent the society from setting aside a reserve fund. The society's directors are to decide how much is to be transferred to the reserve fund. The reserve fund may be used to meet any contingency which affects the society's business. But, before the society can use the reserve fund:
- 14.5.1 the directors have to recommend its use to a general meeting of members; and
 - 14.5.2 the general meeting must approve its use (by a simple majority).
- 14.6 Rule 14.1 does not prevent the society from paying money to support:
- 14.6.1 co-operative development; and
 - 14.6.2 educational purposes; and
 - 14.6.3 charitable purposes.

14.7 The directors may propose payments authorised by rule 14.6. But, before the society can make the payment:

14.7.1 the directors have to recommend it to a general meeting of members; and

14.7.2 the general meeting must approve it (by a simple majority).

14.8 Rule 14.1 does not prevent the society from paying (in good faith):

14.8.1 (at a reasonable and proper rate) for services rendered to the society by any of its employees, officers or members, and reimbursement of their expenses; and

14.8.2 (at a reasonable and proper rate) rent, for premises let to the society by any of its employees or officers.

15 Can members have their shares taken from them?

15.1 The society may reduce the value of shares if the society's liabilities (plus issued share capital) become more than the value of the society's assets. The circumstances in which this may happen are described below (in rules 15.2 to 15.4). Those rules 15.2 to 15.4 also describe the procedures the society must follow to do that.

15.2 Suppose that the society's directors believe that the society's liabilities (plus issued share capital) may be more than the value of the society's assets. The directors then may instruct accountants to report to them. The accountants may be the society's auditors, or they may be independent qualified accountants.

15.3 Suppose that the accountants appointed under rule 15.2 report to the directors that the society's liabilities (plus issued share capital) are more than the value of the society's assets. The directors may then decide to apportion the excess liabilities (or part of them) among the shareholders. When the excess liabilities are apportioned, the total of the excess will be apportioned among the shareholders in proportion to the total nominal value of shares held by each member. The total nominal value, for these purposes, will be taken to be that at the close of business on the date of the apportionment.

15.4 Suppose that the directors resolve to apportion the society's excess liabilities in accordance with rule 15.3. The directors must then resolve either:

15.4.1 That the capital value of each share then in issue is reduced accordingly, but:

15.4.1.1 the society shall not reduce the capital value of any share below zero (that is to say a member will not owe any money to the society); and

15.4.1.2 the society may restore the capital value, by a similar procedure to that described in rules 15.2 to 15.4 (but only where the value of the society's assets is more than the liabilities [plus nominal issued share capital]); and

15.4.1.3 if the society restores the capital value, the society shall not increase it above one pound; and

15.4.1.4 all shares the society may issue later (after the society has reduced the capital value of any shares) are to be issued at par (and for a nominal value of one pound each).

15.5 Rules 15.2 to 15.4 may not apply to assets, liabilities and share capital which are designated to specific purposes in accordance with rule 3.2. Shares may be issued on the bases that:

- 15.5.1 they are designated to a specific purpose (under rule 3.2); and
- 15.5.2 the funds for that purpose are treated as separate from the society's other funds.
- 15.6 If shares are issued on those bases (in rules 15.5.1 and 15.5.2), this rule 15.6 applies. The assets, liabilities and share capital for each of those purposes (the Special Purpose Funds) are treated separately from the society's other assets, liabilities and share capital (the General Purpose Funds) in following the procedures in rules 15.2 to 15.4. And the procedures in rules 15.2 to 15.4 do not have to be applied to any of the Special Purpose Funds when they are applied to the General Purpose Funds. Similarly, the procedures in rules 15.2 to 15.4 may be applied to any of the Special Purpose Funds in isolation; they do not have to be applied to any other of the Special Purpose Funds (or the General Purpose Funds) at the same time.
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C Management of the society

16 The directors

16.1 The directors:

- manage the business of the society;
- may (at any board meeting at which there is a quorum) exercise any of the society's powers;
- may delegate any of their powers to a committee (of 2 or more directors);
- may delegate any of their powers to a sole director;
- may appoint any person to act as the agent of the society (and they may authorise that person to delegate their powers).

16.2 The society has a minimum of three directors (see also rule 16.5). Should the number of directors fall below three, then the remaining director(s) have the authority to appoint another/others.

16.3 The directors on the society's board are appointed by members at the annual general meeting. All candidates for a board position must find members to act as a proposer and seconder and then declare their intention to stand for the board 14 days before the annual general meeting. Between annual general meetings, the board may appoint a director either:

- to fill a vacancy; or
- as an additional director.

16.4 Directors appointed by the board must stand down at the end of the next annual general meeting. The members may reappoint them, at that annual general meeting.

16.5 The members may increase the minimum number of directors (by changing rule 16.2, but any such increase would only take effect once an appropriate rule amendment had been registered by the Financial Conduct Authority).

16.6 Directors have to be members of the society and must demonstrate that they have been actively involved in achieving the stated goals of the B4RN project. Directors must be individuals.

16.7 A director, chief executive or secretary cannot be appointed if they are (and must stand down if they become):

- bankrupt; or
- convicted of an offence of dishonesty; or
- convicted of another offence (which, in the board's opinion, makes them unsuitable to hold office); or
- disqualified from acting as a director (under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986); or
- unable to conduct regulated activities on behalf of another organisation because the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) withdraws their approval; or
- unable to conduct regulated activities because the FCA makes a prohibition order against them ; or
- (in the board's opinion) physically or mentally unable to carry out their duties properly.

16.8 Directors must stand down if:

- without good reason and without the board's permission they fail to attend three board meetings in a row;
- the board resolves that they should be removed.

16.9 The society can pay its directors, officers, and managers such as the secretary, but only if the members approve the basis for the payments.

17 Retirement by rotation

17.1 At least one third of the directors appointed by the members must stand down (as well as any directors who must stand down under rule 16.4), at each annual general meeting. The members may reappoint them, at that annual general meeting. If any director is not reappointed, they will stand down at the end of the annual general meeting.

17.2 The directors who stand down, at an annual general meeting, will be those directors who have held office for the longest time (since their appointment, or last reappointment). The chair may decide, by drawing lots, who is to be treated as in office for the longest time, if more than one director was appointed or reappointed on the same day.

18 The secretary

18.1 The board appoints the secretary. The secretary may be a director.

18.2 The board may remove the secretary.

18.3 The secretary is responsible for preparing and sending all required regulatory returns to be made to the Financial Conduct Authority.

19 Co-opted Board members

19.1 The board may co-opt board members.

19.2 The board members co-opted by the board:

- need not be members of the society (but the board may require that they be members of the society);
- may attend board meetings (unless the board decide that they may not);

- may speak at board meetings (unless the board decide that they may not);
- may not vote at board meetings;
- must stand down at the next annual general meeting (but the board may reappoint them).

20 Board meetings

- 20.1 Three directors are a quorum for board meetings (unless the directors decide on a higher number).
- 20.2 Any director may request the secretary to call a board meeting.
- 20.3 The secretary or chair must call a board meeting on request from a director.
- 20.4 All directors must be notified of a meeting in advance.

21 Decisions of the board

- 21.1 The board may make decisions by a majority vote. The chair has a casting vote if votes are equal.
- 21.2 The board may appoint any director to chair board meetings generally, or to chair a particular board meeting.
- 21.3 The board may make any decision signing a written resolution or by receipt of emails, rather than at a board meeting. All directors must provide written agreement to the resolution for it to be effective.
- 21.4 This rule 21.4 applies to rule 21.3. The directors need sign only a copy of the text of the resolution. They do not each have to sign the same piece of paper.

22 Directors' interests

- 22.1 Directors must disclose – to the full board – any material interest they may have in any matter being considered by the board. The director may not then:
- be treated as part of the quorum of the meeting discussing that matter; or
 - vote on that matter.
- 22.2 Directors may disclose their interest by a general notice giving details of their interest in transactions of a particular nature, or with a particular person.
- 22.3 For the purposes of rule 22.1, a director need not disclose an interest:
- that does not conflict with the interests of the society; or
 - that arises out of the director's membership (or proposed membership) of the society; or
 - which – for good reasons – the director does not know about.
- 22.4 For the purposes of rule 22.1, a director must disclose an interest:
- even if it is an indirect interest; or
 - of a person 'connected' with him (see rule 37.2).
- 22.5 Before any meeting of the board, the chair may decide whether a director (other than himself) has a material interest in the matter to be discussed. The chair's ruling is final.

- 22.6 A director who complies with rule 22.1 will not be treated as in breach of any duty of good faith to the society, to the extent that they have made a fair disclosure of their interest.

23 Indemnity for directors

- 23.1 The society may maintain insurance for the benefit of its directors, secretary, auditors and other officers, against liabilities they may incur:
- in the performance of their duties; or
 - in defending themselves (successfully) against any proceedings (criminal or civil) for breach of duty.
- 23.2 The society will indemnify its directors, secretary, auditors and other officers against:
- any liability they may incur in the performance of their duties; and
 - in defending themselves (successfully) against any proceedings (criminal or civil) for breach of duty.

24 Audit and accounts

- 24.1 Every year and within the period prescribed by statute, the secretary shall send to the Financial Conduct Authority the annual return, in the form prescribed by the Authority, relating to its affairs for the period required under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 to be included in the return together with:
- 24.1.1 a copy of the report by the auditor on the society's accounts for the period included in the return or with a copy of such other report (if any) as is required by statute for such period; and
- 24.1.2 a copy of each balance sheet made during that period and of the report (if any) of the auditor or other appropriate person on that balance sheet as required by statute.
- 24.2 The members shall vote annually, as allowed by the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, at the Annual General Meeting, to have, when necessary in law, or where the membership require, an audit carried out by a registered auditor, or unaudited accounts, where the conditions for such prevail.
- 24.3 If a full audit or a report is required, a person who is a qualified auditor under the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 shall be appointed.
- 24.4 The qualified or lay auditors, if so appointed, shall not be officers or servants of the society and nor shall they be partners of, or in the employment of, or employ, an officer or servant of the society.
- 24.5 Lay auditors shall be chosen by the board from the general membership and/or others.
- 24.6 If the membership vote for unaudited accounts, the society's Income/Expenditure Ledger shall be scrutinised by the secretary and board members only and signed, as a true record, by the secretary and two board members or such other number as may be required by legislation. An Income/Expenditure report will be prepared to present to the society's members at each Annual General Meeting.
- 24.7 The directors must appoint an auditor within three months after the society is formed.
- 24.8 The directors may appoint an auditor if, for any reason, there is no auditor.

- 24.9 The auditor may not be a person whom the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 prevents from being appointed as an auditor.
- 24.10 The auditor may be removed by the procedure in the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
-

D Meetings of members

25 Attendance and voting in online and hybrid meetings.

- 25 Attendance and voting in online and hybrid meetings.
- 25.1 The Society authorises the holding of meetings, including Annual General Meetings (AGMs), either online, in person, or as a hybrid of both formats.
- 25.2 Notices of meetings shall include details of the format (online, in-person, or hybrid) and provide all necessary information for members to access and participate in the meeting.
- 25.3 The Society shall ensure that reliable technology is used to facilitate online or hybrid meetings. Instructions and support will be provided to members to ensure they can participate fully.
- 25.4 Members may attend meetings online via a designated platform, in person at a specified location, or through a combination of both methods in the case of hybrid meetings.
- 25.5 Measures will be implemented to verify the identity of members attending online to ensure security and proper voting procedures.
- 25.6 Members attending online or in person shall have equal rights to vote on matters as they would in a fully physical meeting. Votes may be cast electronically or by other means as determined by the Society.
- 25.7 The Society shall ensure that voting methods used during online or hybrid meetings are secure, transparent, and verifiable.
- 25.8 The presence of members attending online shall count towards the quorum requirements as specified in the Society's rules.
- 25.9 Minutes and records of online or hybrid meetings shall be kept to the same standard as in-person meetings and shall be made available to members upon request.
- 25.1 In the event of technical difficulties that prevent or disrupt the online participation of members, the meeting may be adjourned or rescheduled at the discretion of the chair.
- 25.11 All procedures for online or hybrid meetings shall comply with relevant laws and regulations governing the Society.

26 The annual general meeting

- 26.1 The society will hold an annual general meeting of its members in each calendar year. The society will hold each annual general meeting 12 months after the previous one, but this need not be on the

anniversary of the previous meeting but must be held within three months before or after that anniversary. The directors will call the annual general meeting.

26.2 The society will hold its first annual general meeting within 15 months after the society is formed (but it need not be in the calendar year in which the society is formed).

26.3 The society will give members (and its auditors) at least 21 clear days' notice of the annual general meeting.

26.4 The business for the annual general meeting will include:

- approval of the minutes of the last annual general meeting (and any more recent special general meeting);
- the directors' report;
- approval of the accounts and auditor's report;
- appointment of auditors;
- election of directors;
- any other business.

27 Special general meetings

27.1 A special general meeting is any general meeting of members, which is not an annual general meeting.

27.2 The directors may decide to call a special general meeting.

27.3 The society will give members (and its auditors) at least 21 clear days' notice in writing of a special general meeting. The only business the society can do at that meeting is that which is identified in the notice.

27.4 The directors must call a special general meeting:

- if the greater of five of the society's members or 10% of the society's membership sign written requests for a special general meeting;
- to be held within six weeks after they receive the requests.

28 Procedure at general meetings

28.1 The quorum for a general meeting is:

- two members; or
- (if the society has more than 20 members) 10% of the society's members up to a maximum of 50 members.

28.2 If there is no quorum when the meeting is due to start, the chair will wait for 30 minutes.

28.3 If there is no quorum after the chair has waited for 30 minutes, the chair must adjourn the meeting. The chair must also adjourn the meeting if the number of members present becomes fewer than the quorum. The directors will decide where and when the society will hold the adjourned meeting.

28.4 The chair may adjourn a meeting when a quorum is present. The chair must adjourn the meeting if the members call for an adjournment.

28.5 If a meeting is adjourned for more than 14 days, the society will give members at least 7 clear days' notice of the adjourned meeting.

- 28.6 The chair of the board, if present, will chair the general meeting. Otherwise, the directors at the meeting will choose a director present to chair that meeting. If only one director is at the meeting, they will chair it. If there is no director at the meeting, the members must choose a member present at the meeting to chair it.
- 28.7 Any director may attend and speak at general meetings.
- 28.8 Members may appoint a proxy to represent them at any general meeting. The society will send the member a suitable form with the formal notice of the meeting. The proxy may vote in the member's place on the member's instructions.

29 Voting at general meetings

- 29.1 All members have one vote regardless of how many shares they hold.
- 29.2 All votes will be on a show of hands unless:
- two members; or
 - the chair
- call for a ballot. They may call for a ballot before a vote on a show of hands, or after the vote. If members call for a ballot, they can – if the chair agrees – withdraw the call before the ballot is held. If no ballot is held, the decision on the show of hands is valid.
- 29.3 The chair will decide the procedure for the ballot.
- 29.4 The chair has a casting vote if votes are equal. The chair may also vote as a member (if they are a member).
- 29.5 The directors may decide to call a ballot.
- 29.6 The chair will decide the procedure for the ballot, but the ballot must be held within 30 days of the date on which the directors decide to call it.
- 29.7 If the ballot is on a particular resolution passed by members at a meeting, the directors have 30 days from the date of the meeting to decide whether to call a ballot. If the directors fail to decide to call a ballot within those 30 days, they lose the right to call a ballot.
- 29.8 If the ballot is on a particular resolution passed by members at a meeting, the operation of the resolution is suspended until the decision of the ballot
-

E The constitution of the society

30 Changes to the rules

- 30.1 The society may change its rules:
- with the approval of a resolution passed by a 75% majority (or a simple majority, to change the society's name) of members voting at a general meeting; and
 - subject to registration of the amendments by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Broadband for the Rural North Ltd, Registration number 31352R. Registered Office: Station Yard, Melling, Carnforth LA6 2QY

- 30.2 The chair has no casting vote on resolutions that need a 75% majority.
- 30.3 A resolution to alter or amend rule 2 (the society's objects), rule 14 (interest on shares), rule 13 (conversion of the society), rule 31 (winding up) and this rule shall not be passed if 10% or more of members present or represented at a general meeting and who vote on the resolution vote against it.

31 Winding up the society

- 31.1 The society may be wound up in accordance with the provisions of the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
- 31.2 If the society is wound up, members may not withdraw any of their shares until all the society's liabilities are paid (or provided for) in full.
- 31.3 If the society is wound up, the society will use the funds available (after all liabilities are paid - or provided for - in full) to pay to members any money due to them on the withdrawal of their shares.
- 31.4 Supposing the society is wound up with insufficient funds to pay, in full, all money due to all shareholders (for the withdrawal of their shares). The society will then pay members a dividend of less than 100 pence for every pound due to them (for the withdrawal of all their shares). The society will pay the same rate of dividend to all shareholders. (Where there are "special purpose" shareholders in addition to "general purpose" shareholders, under rules 15.5 and 15.6 the dividend for "special purpose" shareholders will be calculated separately and will be the same for all "special purpose" shareholders).
- 31.5 There may be a surplus if the society is wound up with enough funds to pay, in full, all money due to members, for the withdrawal of all their shares. Then:
- 31.5.1 members will not, under any circumstances, have any right to any payment out of the surplus.
- 31.5.2 the society will pay the surplus to another organisation with similar purposes to the society's (and whose members will have no right to any surplus on its winding up or conversion), or to a charity. The directors will choose the organisation or charity.

32 Restriction on use

- 32.1 Pursuant to regulations made under section 1 of the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2003
- 32.1.1 all of the society's assets are subject to a restriction on their use.
- 32.1.2 the society must not use or deal with its assets except—
- 32.1.2.1 where the use or dealing is, directly or indirectly, for a purpose that is for the benefit of the community;
- 32.1.2.2 to pay a member of the society the value of his withdrawable share capital or interest on such capital;
- 32.1.2.3 to make a payment pursuant to section 24 (proceedings on death of nominator), 25 (provision for intestacy) or 26 (payments in respect of mentally incapable persons) of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965;

- 32.1.2.4 to make a payment in accordance with the rules of the society to trustees of the property of bankrupt members or, in Scotland, members whose estate has been sequestrated;
- 32.1.2.5 where the society is to be dissolved or wound up, to pay its creditors; or
- 32.1.2.6 to transfer its assets to one or more of the following:
 - 32.1.2.6.1 a prescribed community benefit society whose assets have been made subject to a restriction on use and which will apply that restriction to any assets so transferred;
 - 32.1.2.6.2 a community interest company;
 - 32.1.2.6.3 a registered social landlord which has a restriction on the use of its assets which is equivalent to a restriction on use and which will apply that restriction to any assets so transferred;
 - 32.1.2.6.4 a charity (including a community benefit society that is a charity); or
 - 32.1.2.6.5 a body, established in Northern Ireland or a State other than the United Kingdom, that is equivalent to any of those persons.
- 32.1.3 any expression used in this rule which is defined for the purposes of regulations made under section 1 of the 2003 Act shall have the meaning given by those regulations

33 Powers

- 33.1 To carry out the society's objects, the society may:
 - 33.1.1 acquire assets and property which, in the directors' opinion, may benefit the society's objects;
 - 33.1.2 set up subsidiary companies, societies and other organisations;
 - 33.1.3 take and hold shares, memberships, stock, debentures and other interests in other companies, societies and other organisations for the society and others;
 - 33.1.4 buy, lease, hire, rent and own any real or personal property (tangible and intangible) of any description which, in the directors' opinion, is appropriate for the needs of the society's objects;
 - 33.1.5 make arrangements with any government or authority (local, municipal, national or international) that, in the directors' opinion, is appropriate for the society's objects;
 - 33.1.6 invest the society's funds in such property and investments as the directors may consider appropriate, and subject to any applicable legal restrictions;
 - 33.1.7 carry on any other activity which, in the directors' opinion, may benefit the society's objects;
 - 33.1.8 act as agent;
 - 33.1.9 act as trustee;
 - 33.1.10 give or procure guarantees and indemnities for the payment of money or for the performance of obligations by any person (even where the society receives no direct or indirect financial benefit);
 - 33.1.11 make or procure grants, gifts, donations and investments of a social nature;
 - 33.1.12 take mortgages, charges, liens and other security to secure obligations of others to the society;
 - 33.1.13 borrow money and accept credit and grant mortgages, charges, liens and other security to secure the society's obligations, but

- 33.1.13.1 the society may not carry on a deposit taking business (within the meaning of FSMA); and
- 33.1.13.2 where:
 - 33.1.13.2.1 the loan is unsecured, and
 - 33.1.13.2.2 the lender is not itself authorised under FSMA,
- 33.1.13.3 the society will not pay a rate of interest that is higher than the society needs to fund its activities; in setting the rate, the directors will take particular account of the society's intention to provide an opportunity for other public-spirited people and organisations to contribute financially to the community, with the expectation of a social dividend, rather than personal financial reward;
- 33.1.14 provide and procure services such as giving advice in relation to financial and non-financial facilities for people, undertakings and businesses of all kinds.
- 33.1.15 create, make, draw, accept, endorse, execute, issue, discount, buy, sell, negotiate and deal in bills, notes, bills of lading, warrants, coupons, debentures and other negotiable or transferable instruments;
- 33.1.16 do such other things that the directors regard as incidental or conducive to the pursuit of the society's objects and the exercise of the society's express and implied powers.
- 33.2 Registration of a society or its rules under the Co-Operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 does not give any permission for a society to carry on financial services as regulated by FSMA. Any society which wishes to carry on such activities must seek advice and make an authorisation application to the FCA under FSMA. Carrying on such activities without authorisation from the FCA under FSMA may lead to prosecution.
- 33.3 The society's borrowing limit is £10,000,000.
- 33.4 Rules 2 and 33 should be interpreted in the broadest way possible and not to limit or restrict the society's objects. Each object should be read as an independent main object

34 Registered Office

- 34.1 The society's registered office is the address given – for that purpose – to the Financial Conduct Authority.
- 34.2 The society's directors may change the address of the registered office. Any change to the address of the registered office must be registered by the Financial Conduct Authority.

35 Notices

- 35.1 Notices by post
 - 35.1.1 The society may post formal notices to members at the address recorded in the society's register of members.
 - 35.1.2 The society may assume – for all purposes – that members receive formal notices two working days after the society posts them.
- 35.2 Notices by email

35.2.1 The society may send formal notices to members by email, but only if:

35.2.1.1 the society has a current consent, from that member, to receive notices by email: and

35.2.1.2 that member has provided an email address for the purpose.

35.2.2 The society may assume - for all purposes - that members receive formal notices one working day after the society posts them, but only if:

35.2.2.1 the society keeps a copy of the email which shows:

35.2.2.1.1 all documents attached to the email; and

35.2.2.1.2 the time and date the society sent the email; and

35.2.2.1.3 the email address to which the email was sent; and

35.2.2.2 the society does not receive a response to suggest that the member's email address was no longer current.

35.3 Notices on websites

35.3.1 The society may send formal notices to members by posting them on a website, but only if:

35.3.1.1 the society has a current consent from that member to receive notices by posting them on a website; and

35.3.1.2 the society sends that member a notice to tell them:

35.3.1.2.1 that the document is available on the website; and

35.3.1.2.2 the address of the website; and

35.3.1.2.3 any password they may need to view the document or download it; and

35.3.1.2.4 they may request a paper copy of the document - at no extra charge - with details how to do that; and

35.3.1.3 the society keeps the document available on the website for three months or longer (from any date the society sends the notice).

35.3.2 The society may assume - for all purposes - that members receive formal documents:

35.3.2.1 one working day after they receive the notice about how to view or download them on the website; or, if later

35.3.2.2 one working day after the society first posts the document on the website.

35.4 Definitions

35.4.1 'Formal notices' and 'notices' are phrases used interchangeably in this rule 36 to refer to all documents and notices a society may send to its members where there is a legal or regulatory requirement to do so.

35.4.2 This rule 35 does not allow the society to deliver a document by post, email or website where the law requires the delivery to be by other means.

35.4.3 In this rule 35, Saturday, Sunday and public holidays are not working days.

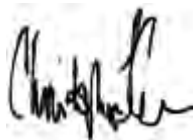
35.4.4 The references to emails and websites are intended to include other electronic communication methods adopted after the society adopts these rules.

36 What words mean – definitions

- 36.1 Member. A member of the society can be an individual; a maximum of four individuals joining in a single membership; held in the name of a society, trust, partnership or organisation; or holding membership on behalf of someone else.
- 36.2 In rules 13.2 and 13.3, the word ‘contract’ includes a declaration of trust and a deed.
- 36.3 In rule 22.4, the word ‘connected’ is used in the same sense in which it is used in ss.252-255 Companies Act 2006.
- 36.4 In rule 23.2, the phrase ‘breach of duty’ includes (for example), negligence, default, breach of trust or misfeasance.
- 36.5 In rule 31.2, the expression ‘if the society is wound up’ is used to mean ‘from the commencement of the winding up’. The phrase ‘commencement of the winding up’ is used in the same sense as it is used in the Insolvency Act 1986.
- 36.6 In rules 14.8.2, the word ‘officers’ includes the society’s directors and secretary.
- 36.7 The age restrictions in rule 11 apply to members only if they are individuals.
- 36.8 In rule 13.3, the appointment of the society’s secretary as the members’ attorney is an appointment of the person from time to time holding that office.
- 36.8.1 References to (any provision of) an Act of Parliament are treated as referring to:
- 36.8.2 it as amended (whether before today or later) and
- 36.9 any provision which replaces it (unchanged or amended) after today.
- 36.10 Where these rules make reference to the Financial Conduct Authority, FCA, they include reference to the statutory successor, authority or body carrying on the relevant function.
- 36.11 A reference to any legislation or legislative provision shall include all subordinate legislation made under it from time to time, and is a reference to such primary or subordinate legislation as amended, extended or re-enacted from time to time.

Rule changes history

- 13th January 2016 change to rule 17.8 (directors)
- 10th October 2017 change to rule 2.1.1 (society’s aims - geographic area)
- 10th October 2017 change to rule 29.1 (quorum)
- 28th November 2024 full revision of rules.



31/01/2025

Christopher Carr, Chair of B4RN Board of Directors



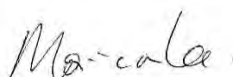
Michael Lee, Director

03/02//2025



Thomas Rigg, Director

03/02//2025



31/01/2025

Monica Lee, Director and Company Secretary.

Complete Rule Amendment form

Society Name: Broadband for the Rural North Limited

Society Num: 31352 R

Use this form to register a complete rule change for a society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (2014 Act) (except credit unions); or for societies registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 (1969 Act). A complete amendment means a whole new set of rules is registered in place of an existing rule book.

To register a complete amendment of rules we need:

- this completed form
- one signed copy of the society's rules (or two copies where not submitting electronically)
- a marked up version of the rules tracking changes made to the model, if you are using a set of model rules
- a completed [Statutory Declaration form](#).

Please note that this form, including any details provided on the form, will be made available to the public through the Mutuels Public Register: <https://mutuals.fca.org.uk>. Our privacy notice explains how and why we use personal data: <https://www.fca.org.uk/privacy>.

Societies may find it helpful to read Chapter 3 of our guidance on our registration function under the 2014 Act before completing this form: <https://www.handbook.fca.org.uk/handbook/RFC CBS>

All societies are registered meeting one of two conditions for registration. These are that the society is either:

- a bona fide co-operative society ('co-operative society'); or
- are conducting business for the benefit of the community ('community benefit society').

We must maintain arrangements that are designed to enable us to determine whether a society is complying with the 2014 Act. One way we do this is by requiring societies to complete the questions in the next section of this form when submitting a rule amendment.

You must answer the questions set out in in the next section of this form, depending on which condition for registration you meet.

If you are not sure which of these two conditions for registration applies to you, please read chapters 4 and 5 of our guidance [here](#).

3.1 Condition for Registration

- ☐ Co-operative society
- ☒ Community Benefits society

Community benefit societies must answer the following questions in relation to the financial year covered by this return.

3B.1 What is the business of the society?

For example, do you provide social housing, run an amateur sports club etc.

Building a high-speed optical fibre broadband network in isolated/socially deprived rural communities.
Aiding similar community driven networks to be built elsewhere.

3B.2 Please describe the benefits to the community the society?

Here we are looking to see what the benefits to the community are. Community can be said to be the community at large. For example, do you relieve poverty or homelessness by providing social housing.

Provision of a high speed broadband service,
Reduction of social isolation and increased communication opportunities,
Local employment and increased economic viability,
Opportunities for members of the community to engage and be trained in skills required to build optical fibre broadband networks.

3B.3 Please describe how the society's business delivered these benefits?

The business of the society must be conducted for the benefit of the community. Please describe how the society's business (as described in answer to question 3B.1) provides benefit to the community.

The community is directly involved in bringing the network to their and their neighbours' premises, installing it and passing on the skills to the next community

3B.4 Did the society work with a specific community, and if so, please describe it here?

For instance, were the society's activities confined to a specific location; or to a specific group of people? Please note that in serving the needs of any defined community, the society should not inhibit the benefit to the community at large.

The network was instigated in the rural north west of England, and has expanded steadily since then, moving from community to community.

3B.5 What did the society do with any surplus or profit?

For instance, did you pay a dividend to members (and if so, on what basis); did money get reinvested in the business; put into reserves; used for some other purpose?

5% interest was paid to our members. Other monies were reinvested in the business.' .

3B.6 Please state any significant commercial arrangements that the society has, or had, with any other organisation that could create, or be perceived as creating, a conflict of interest.

Please tell us how you ensured that any such conflict of interest did not prevent the society from acting for the benefit of the community.

None

3B.7 Please state any close links which any of the directors has with any society, company or authority.

'Close links' includes any directorships or senior positions held by directors of the society in other organisations.

Christopher Carr: Member, Bay Learning Trust; Trustee, Burton & Rigby Foundation; Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire.

Monica Lee: Trustee, Cawthorne's Education Foundation.

Peter Hearne: Director, Vitreus Investments Ltd; Director and Secretary, Fusionic Limited.

Ivan Sedgwick: Chairman, The Travellers Club, 106 Pall Mall, London; Trustee and Member of Council of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland; St. Pancras Church Lands Trust.

Michael Lee: None

Tom Rigg: None

Caroline Raynor: None

Provision required by the Act	Number of the rule(s) covering this E.g. '2.3-2.7'
The society's name	1.1
The objects of the society	2.1-2.4
Place of the society's registered office, to which all communications and notices may be addressed	1.3; 34
The terms of admission of the members, including any society or company investing funds in the society under the provisions of the Act	3-15
The method of holding meetings, the scale and right of voting, and the method of making, altering or rescinding rules	25-29
The appointment and removal of a committee (by whatever name) and of managers or other officers and their respective powers and remuneration	16-23

The maximum amount of the interest in the shares of the society which may be held by any member otherwise than by virtue of section 24(2) of the Act

14

Whether the society may contract loans or receive moneys on deposit subject to the provisions of this Act from members or others, and if so under what conditions, under what security, and to what limits of amount

32-33

Whether any or all shares are transferable, and provision for the form of transfer and registration of shares, and for the consent of the committee to transfer or registration
Whether any or all shares are withdrawable, and provision for the method of withdrawal and for payment of the balance due on them on withdrawing from the society

7-8

Provision for the audit of accounts in accordance with Part 7 of the Act

24

Whether members may withdraw from the society and if so how, and provision for the claims of the representatives of deceased members and of the trustees of the property of bankrupt members (or, in Scotland, members whose estates have been sequestrated), and for the payment of nominees

7; 12

The way in which the society's profits are to be applied

33

If the society is to have a common seal, provision for its custody and use

n/a

Whether any part of the society's funds may be invested, and if so by what authority and in what way

33

5.1 Please confirm the rules have been signed by 3 members and the secretary (4 signatures in total)

☒ The rules contain the required signatures

5.2 Please confirm either:

- ☒ Model rules have not been used.
- ☐ Model rules have been used without amendment
- ☐ An amended set of model rules have been used, and a marked up copy detailing the changes made to the model is included with the application.

6.1 Please confirm you have completed and are submitting a Statutory Declaration along with this application form.

☒ Completed Statutory Declaration enclosed

Statutory declaration

Use this form to provide a statutory declaration accompanying a rule change.

An officer of the society must complete this section:

Name	Dr Monica Lee
Role	BHRN Company Secretary.

I do solemnly and sincerely declare that the amendment of rules complies with the legislative requirements and has been duly made by the society in the manner provided in its rules for the making, altering or rescinding of rules.

I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing it to be true, and by the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act 1835.

Signature	Monica Lee											
Date	0	3	0	2	2	0	2	5				

This was declared before me, a:

Solicitor ☒

Commissioner for oaths ☐

Notary Public ☐

Justice of the Peace ☐

Name	DAVID JAMES SYKES											
Declared at:	6 FENTON STREET LANCASTER LA1 1TE											
Signature	DJS											
Date	0	3	0	2	2	0	2	5				