

B4RN[®]

Volunteering with B4RN

An Introduction

WHY B4RN?

Community benefit society

As a community benefit society, we are not in the business of chasing unnecessary profits. We set our rates at a level which covers our costs and enables us to operate as a sustainable business. Any surplus we make beyond this must be invested back into B4RN communities.

Future proof

Every B4RN connection is an FTTP (Fibre to the Property) connection. This means that each property has a dedicated fibre running directly to it. Not only does this allow us to deliver some of the fastest internet in the country today, but in addition the speed of the connection is only limited by the technology at either end of the fibre, which is easily upgraded.

Resilient and sustainable network

We understand the challenges of building a fibre optic network in rural areas - we've been doing it since 2012. We don't use telegraph poles, instead our network is built underground. This is harder to do, and costs more to build, but it means that our network is much more resilient, especially during high winds and storms and has a lower impact for all our rural communities.

The whole community

We build with a community to every property that wants a connection - not just the easy to reach ones, provided we can obtain permission to reach it. We also support the community by providing free service to Primary Schools and other community assets.

HOW B4RN WORKS

B4RN is built on community spirit - we couldn't do this without you.

At B4RN we work hand-in-hand with rural communities to design, plan and build a full fibre network. We then deliver some of the fastest internet service in the country (1,000Mbps) to every customer on the network at a low cost. We've been doing this for the last ten years, and we're proud to have 10,000 rural properties currently taking service.

We can only do this thanks to the generosity of our landowners and to the hard work and dedication of our amazing volunteers, who are willing to invest so much of their time and energy to deliver significant and lasting benefit to their wider community.

B4RN volunteers participate in a wide range of activities, from planning and walking routes, agreeing wayleaves, encouraging sign-up and investment, digging trenches, coordinating site work between volunteers, contractors and landowners, laying duct, installing chambers, helping to connect customers... and of course feeding the B4RN troops (none of this would be possible without tea and cake).

Volunteering at B4RN is open to everyone and our volunteers are from all walks of life - a good volunteer group has a wide variety of skills and experience. No prior experience is necessary, and where specific skills are required we provide a range of training. B4RN volunteers gain a wide range of new skills and experience as the project develops.

Come along and connect your community.

Michael Lee

CEO B4RN



VOLUNTEER GROUPS

Each volunteer group is different and develops their own ways of working. Most successful volunteer groups have a combination of people who are willing to take on the following roles - sometimes these roles are spread over large groups, sometimes they are focussed on a few key individuals. What is important is that you get involved with the roles and activities that interest you.

Project Lead

Brings the team together. A passionate, resilient individual who can inspire a community to complete their B4RN project.

Media and publicity

Write and publish updates for local newsletters, manage local social media and find innovative ways to promote B4RN sign up.

CRM interface

Work with the B4RN Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database and keep accurate and up to date records of property statuses.

Mapping

Help plan the routes with local landowners.

Wayleaves

Communicate with landowners and agree wayleave permissions for B4RN to cross their land.

Leaflets

Coordinate the delivery of leaflets and newsletters.

Investment

Encourage investment in B4RN by way of shares and apply for grants to support the project build cost.

Contractor support

Move materials, run out ducts, label ducting and preparing it ready for fibre. Help to blow fibre. Act as local liaison for contractors.

Connections coordinator

Work with the B4RN connections team to develop and implement the plan to ensure all gardens are dug and house kits are fitted.

Property assessors

Help homeowners find the best place to install the network to their homes or premises.

Garden diggers

Dig gardens to the required depth and reinstate them as if they have never been touched.

House kit fitters

Trained to fit house kits for properties across the project.

Technical advice

Support local residents with setting up new VoIP telephones and extending the Wi-Fi across the properties.

Provisions

Keep the tea and cake flowing!

PROJECT PHASES

Phase 1: Desktop

1 month

Potential projects are identified and taken through an initial viability assessment. This includes a review of the project boundary and scope, the number and distribution of properties within the project, how the project will link into our existing network, current broadband provision, eligibility for government voucher funding and any major hazards and existing infrastructure.

Phase 2: Feasibility

3 months

Potential projects are reviewed in more detail to assess their viability. We develop a **network plan** and we work with local volunteers to;

- Establish a group of **volunteers** willing to drive the project forwards;
- Assess sufficient **demand** in the community;
- Estimate the project **cost**;
- Create a plan of how fund the project;
- Establish who all the major landowners are and the likelihood of securing **wayleaves**.

Phase 3: Development

6 months

Project plans are fully developed to get the project ready for build. **Wayleaves** are confirmed across the whole project, **demand** is confirmed using the number of customers who have signed up on Get B4RN, and the final **network plan** is checked and costed. At the end of this phase the project **finances** will be signed off, ensuring that the build cost is fully met through expected voucher income, grants and share pledges.

Phase 4: Delivery

6 to 12 months

This is the phase where the project is built and all customers who have requested service are connected. Ducting and fibre is installed by B4RN contractors, the cabinet is landed and B4RN engineers splice the fibres. Volunteers work alongside the B4RN staff to manage the build, providing a point of contact between landowners, contractors, customers and B4RN. Volunteers will update the community on progress and work with the B4RN connections team to ensure gardens are dug and house kits are fitted.

Phase 5: Infill

Once the project delivery is completed volunteers work alongside the B4RN connections team to continue to connect customers who request service. Volunteer roles are still available once the project is built.



PROJECT PHASES

VOLUNTEERS

Desktop

Meet with local B4RN groups in neighbouring parishes.
Join the Facebook group.
Spend time in B4RN projects volunteering to understand and learn from experienced B4RN Volunteers.

Feasibility

Establish volunteer management group.
Attend training sessions.
Identify all local landowners.
Provide local knowledge.
Recommend local contractors.
Identify local grant funding Opportunities.

Promote B4RN by:

- Hosting information events.
- Talking to neighbours.
- Distributing flyers or letters.
- Gathering expressions of interest.

B4RN STAFF

Identify the scope of project.
Identify link to the existing B4RN network.
Identify sources of funding.
Review competition in area.
Review existing service provision.
Assess major hazards.

Present to the community.
Develop a core volunteer management group.
Create Core Route plan.
Create Construction Design Management (CDM) Plan.
Create a finance plan.
Map land ownership for wayleaves.
Confirm all key landowners have been identified.
Identify all key risks.
Agree project funding model.
Government voucher funding approved.
Confirm project is viable.



Development

Attend training sessions.
Liaise with local landowners.
Revise initial mapping plans.
Continue to promote B4RN to expect to achieve 50% take up of the service.
Promote investing in B4RN and hit investment target.
Apply for grant funding.
Assess properties for house kits.
Plan for all properties to get connected.
Gather all wayleaves from landowners across whole project.
Identify local contractors.
Keep your community updated.
Create a Community Dig Team.

Delivery

Attend training events.
Liaise with local landowners and customers on progress of the project.
Provide contractor support.
Update the CRM.
Advise on router placement.
Facilitate garden digs and house kit fitting.
Coordinate with the Connections team for Going Live days.
Provide customer support for change over to VoIP telephone services & extending WI-FI around the property.
Continue to keep your community updated.
Celebrate the success of the project.

Develop CDM plan.
Deliver training modules.
Confirm all land ownership.
Process Wayleaves.
Ensure cabinet agreement in place.
Monitor sign up level.
Support group to achieve investment and funding targets.
Survey and confirm all routes.
Identify and assess all road crossings.
Cost all additional civils works.
Train local contractors.
Submit and process all voucher applications.
Create project plan.
Create contractor work packs.
Plan all street works and any extraordinary works.
Book all major additional works such as road closures.

Building the network

Follow CDM plans.
Plan, manage and inspect contractor works.
Complete all road crossings & major works.
Install all ducting and chambers.
Install the cabinet and power.
Monitor changes to the plan.
Install and splice fibre.
Carry out inspections.
Provide regular reports on progress.
Make the network live and test all routes.
Monitor project costs.

Connecting the network

Ensure all properties gardens and house kits are installed correctly.
Install and splice all house fibre.
Install routers.
Complete contracts with customers.
Properties go live.
Claim and process all Vouchers.
Review the project with the group.

TRAINING

A variety of training sessions are available to ensure that you feel confident fulfilling any role you take on as a volunteer.

Some of this training will be delivered by the Training Officer, some training will be delivered by other members of the B4RN staff, and some will be delivered by experienced volunteers.

Training will either be delivered during a volunteer day at the B4RN offices in Melling, on the ground in your community, or online.

Your first point of contact for any training queries should be your Volunteer Training Officer, however all B4RN staff are very happy to provide support for volunteers. They are experts on designing, building and maintaining the network, so can answer any questions or deal with any concerns you may have.



TRAINING: FEASIBILITY

Introduction to B4RN (1-2 Hr, on site)

Presentation to the community.

Introduction for volunteers (2 Hr, volunteer day, or on site)

An introduction for new volunteers which defines B4RN objectives and expectations, as well as time frames and responsibilities. There is also an introduction to the mapping system, understand how the projects are financed and how we collect customer information and process data.

Setting up a B4RN Group (1 Hr, on site or volunteer day)

Creating an effective group. Set roles and responsibilities, setting up a bank account and a constitution.

Health and Safety introduction (1/2 Hr, on site or volunteer day)

How to stay safe when volunteering with B4RN.

GDPR (1/2 Hr, online)

General Data Protection Regulations (GDP) how to use and keep personal data safe.

Communications (1 Hr, volunteer day)

PR and marketing support, using templates, setting up and using social media, newsletters and identifying local advertising opportunities.

CRM (1 Hr, online)

Accessing and using the CRM.

Identifying Landownership (1 Hr, online on site)

How to identify landowners, create local maps of the area, contact list and an in principle agreement.

TRAINING: DEVELOPMENT

- Introduction to the mapping system** (2 Hr, online on site)
How to access, read and use the mapping system, how to inform B4RN of changes and the next steps.

- Liaising with landowners & wayleaves** (1 Hr, on site)
What is a wayleave, how to finalise plans and get agreement with landowners, how to create maps, and complete the documentation. What happens if someone refuses.

- Funding your B4RN project** (2 hr, on site)
How to become “funder ready”. Overview Gigabit Voucher Funding. Understand the voucher process. How to encourage investment. Obtaining grants and the share process.

- Duct mapping** (2hr onsite)
Interpreting the network maps, spreadsheets and network information and transferring them to an onsite reference Duct Maps.

- Preparing for building the network** (1hr, onsite)
Working with contractors, Planning materials, storage and handling.

- Working safely** (1/2hr on site)
Keeping volunteers safe, Point of Work Risk Assessment (POWRA) forms, Safe digging practice and identifying buried services.

- Assessing properties for B4RN service** (2hr on site)
Taking a look at properties, where to locate the router, the house kit and the garden ducting dig depth, advising customers about the process.

TRAINING: DELIVERY

- Garden digging** (2- 4 hrs onsite)
Understand the B4RN standards for installing duct and safe digging practice, handling of equipment and materials. Making sure we all work safely. Installation of duct to the correct depth and making good.

- House kit installation** (1- 3 hrs Volunteer day or onsite)
Understanding where to locate the router to connect to the house kit, and its position on the property, Practical demonstration of how to install the house kit.

- Introduction to connecting the network** (3 Hr, Classroom)
Understand the fibre blowing process. Learn how to strip, clean, cleave and fuse fibre. Introduction to the connections process.

- Planning going live** (1 hr onsite)
Get to grips with the connections process and planning a going live day. Ensure the correct equipment and contracts are in place. Checking customers are ready and communicating with B4RN connections team and customers.

- Going live day (s)** (onsite)
Working with the Connections Teams, arranging access, communicating with customers, fitting routers and making connections live, checking contracts and supporting customers. Communicating with B4RN connections team and customers in your project.

- Customer after care** (1hr Volunteer day or onsite)
Learning more about VoIP, WiFi, Mesh, B4RN Computer Club and Helpdesk support.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Technical guides

There are a wide range of information packs and technical documents to support your time as a volunteer B4RN. These will be made available to you at different stages of your project.

Volunteer days

These training and information days are held quarterly at the Melling site in Lancashire. Volunteer days are a chance to get hands on and learn about various aspects of B4RN and network with staff, others volunteer groups and volunteers.

Computer club

A weekly group that supports customers, volunteers and communities to help everyone get to grips with a gigabit connection. The drop in meet at 2pm – 4pm on Friday afternoons via Zoom. It is a social get together and there is no question too big or too small.

Volunteer feedback and forum

We have volunteers at the heart of everything we do. We ask for feedback at all stages and find ways to constantly improve.

Volunteer newsletters

This is regular newsletter sent out to all volunteers to keep you up to date with updates on B4RN processes, projects and news.

Volunteer Facebook group

This is useful for all volunteers to find help and advice and support each other in the B4RN journey.

B4RN website: b4rn.org.uk

The website is the place to sign up for B4RN and offers a wide range of information for customers, potential investors and volunteers.

Volunteer contact information

To volunteer with B4RN you will need to complete a simple application form and provide your names, email and contact details.

Policies and procedures

Additionally there is a range of policies and procedures to support you as a volunteer, including the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

Social media links

- Facebook facebook.com/teamb4rn
facebook.com/groups/b4rncomputerclub
- Twitter twitter.com/teamb4rn
- LinkedIn linkedin.com/company/b4rn
- Instagram instagram.com/teamb4rn
- Tik Tok tiktok.com/@teamb4rn

All illustrations are © Irene Sanderson – Artist Volunteer Kirkoswald project

Name:	
Project Name:	
My role:	
I completed the Introduction to Volunteering with B4RN on:	Main point of contact at B4RN is:

CONTACTS



Broadband for the Rural North

Station Yard, Melling, Carnforth, Lancashire, LA6 2QY

info@b4rn.org.uk

01524 555887

Volunteer Support Team

For all Volunteer group and Training & Media support

volunteering@b4rn.org.uk

Community Engagement Officers

Main point of contact at the start of planning your project

Planning & Mapping

The planners prepare the initial maps and engineering detail and make changes

Wayleaves

Please post wayleaves hard copies to:
Station Yard, Melling, Carnforth Lancashire, LA6 2QY

wayleaves@b4rn.org.uk

Build Coordinators & Connections Coordinators

Commission and oversee the contractors to build the B4RN network

Vouchers

All voucher enquires

vouchers@b4rn.org.uk

Shares

sharesregistrar@b4rn.org.uk

Computer Club

itclub@b4rn.org.uk

Technical Support

helpdesk@b4rn.org.uk
01524 238499