



8 February 2015

## **ORMSARY NEXT SCOTTISH COMMUNITY TO RECEIVE MOBILE COVERAGE WITH VODAFONE RURAL SURE SIGNAL PROGRAMME #ROSS100**

- Vodafone UK lights up Argyll and Bute not-spot with reliable 3G coverage for the first time
- Ormsary is the latest Scottish community to be connected in Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal programme
- The ROSS unit is already taking an average of 70 mobile calls and supporting 3,000 data sessions a day
- Part of approximately £2 billion Vodafone is spending on its UK network and services

Vodafone UK has announced the beautiful, coastal community of Ormsary (Argyll and Bute) as the latest community in a rural mobile not-spot location to receive 3G coverage with Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal programme.

Ormsary has until now suffered from unreliable mobile coverage. The Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal (ROSS) programme uses Vodafone's innovative Sure Signal technology, to bring high quality 3G voice services and much needed access to the internet via mobile devices to communities in some of the UK's most beautiful or remote areas.

The ROSS programme is a national initiative by Vodafone UK to provide reliable mobile access to up to 100 rural communities in mobile not-spot locations. Launched in July 2014, with support from local MPs, councils and rural action groups, the programme received an overwhelming response, with six communities now live across Scotland, from Walls in the Shetland Islands to the Isle of Whithorn in the south.

Mobile connectivity plays a vital role in keeping communities in touch and helps support local economies. However, rural and remote locations often miss out on advantages provided by modern communication tools, due to the complexity of delivering network coverage. This can be because of the geography of the area or difficulties with planning permissions in places of outstanding natural beauty. The ROSS programme uses innovative 'femtocell' technology to provide an alternative solution to bring 3G mobile access in locations where it isn't possible for networks to provide coverage through traditional means.

### **Vodafone UK**

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### **Vodafone UK Media Relations**

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As part of the ROSS programme, Vodafone teams have now surveyed 100 communities. The surveys included physical ground assessments by Vodafone engineers as well as detailed fixed broadband speed checks. The teams have also drawn up plans for viable communities to illustrate where the equipment will be sited. The process saw some of the initial communities having their implementation postponed until their community broadband speeds and availability have improved.

*Jorge Fernandes, Vodafone UK Chief Technology Officer, said: "I am delighted that Ormsary has joined our Rural Open Sure Signal programme. Mobile connectivity is an essential service for communities and businesses to thrive in today's digital world and support local economies. As part of the Rural Open Sure Signal programme, we are committed to investing in our network to provide access even in remote locations where it is otherwise almost impossible to reach. The number of calls and data sessions the unit is supporting every day, on an island where there was marginal coverage previously, shows the significant benefit the technology is making to members of the community. I am excited to see the transformation for Ormsary and other communities which have been successful for this pioneering programme."*

Brendan O'Hara, MP for Argyll and Bute said: *"I'm absolutely delighted that Ormsary and the surrounding area will now benefit from Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal programme. So many of the social and economic problems we face in Argyll & Bute are due to lack of connectivity; so the introduction of a reliable 3G service for both mobile and internet in our rural communities is very welcome indeed."*

Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute said: *"I am very pleased that Ormsary has been successful in securing a Sure Signal service which will massively improve communication and accessibility. Rural communities must not be left behind by the digital revolution and Vodafone's commitment to these areas and this development is vital and welcome."*

Mary Semple, Chairperson, Chair for Ormsary Community Hall said: *"Society today means that we all like to keep in touch, but we live in an area with no mobile reception available for a number of miles. Our local hall in Ormsary plays a vital role in our fragile community. The Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal means peace of mind for the volunteer leaders of Brownie/Guide groups or Cub/Scout groups who can travel over fifteen miles to use the Hall and now are able to make contact with parents of the children and vice versa should an emergency arise. It also means we will have to confiscate all mobile phones on our Quiz night evenings!"*

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# news release



Barbara Cutler, Village Champion for Ormsary commented: *"We've had increased interest in using our community hall now that it has mobile phone coverage. Youngsters love the fact that their phones now work when out and about in the community and parents feel more relaxed knowing that everyone can stay in contact."*

As well as using Rural Open Sure Signal to plug rural "not-spots", Vodafone is spending around £2 billion on its network and services across the country. This includes the provision of HD (High Definition) Voice technology on its 3G network and the extension of its 4G coverage to 752 cities and towns and thousands of smaller communities across the UK.

Further communities will be announced over the few months. For more information on the programme, visit [www.vodafone.co.uk/rural](http://www.vodafone.co.uk/rural).

## For more information please contact

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## Notes to editors:

- Launch event photos available on request.

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