

CASE STUDY

Hostelling Scotland



Wavenet* helps Hostelling Scotland to enhance their communication systems and futureproof against the PSTN switch-off.

About

Hostelling Scotland is a not-for-profit charity providing safe and affordable accommodation in more than 60 sites throughout Scotland. Since 1931, they have offered a warm welcome and expert local knowledge to people travelling from all over the world, allowing them to make the most of their stay, exploring and experiencing the real Scotland.

The Challenge

While some of their smaller, more remote sites are open six to eight months each year, the larger hostels are open 365 days a year. Covering such a large area results in a widely distributed workforce. Naturally, it remains important to have a presence at each of their sites, but they wanted a network that would make it easier for everyone to collaborate and work together more efficiently regardless of location. They also wanted to ensure customers could always speak to a member of staff, even out of season, or after hours.

The main challenge they faced lay within their outdated on-premises communications stack. Not all sites had the same setup, but overall, this comprised of five separate standalone systems, which all had to be managed separately. With only a small IT team looking after this, the burden of time and cost involved in keeping these dated systems operational was



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George Will

IT Manager at Hostelling Scotland



problematic. Some of these systems were reliant on PSTN and ISDN lines, both of which will be impacted by the PSTN switch-off, which is already happening in some parts of the UK, meaning the system's days were numbered.

Adding to the complexity, some of the smaller seasonal hostels had a mixture of communications infrastructure in place, including regular ADSL, satellite connections, and 4G

*The initial engagement was with Daisy, acquired by Wavenet in 2024.

broadband. This meant communication lines were particularly vulnerable to hardware faults. For example, a fan breaking on the hardware could lead to two to three days of downtime while they waited for the part to be ordered and for the engineer to come out and fix it.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the challenges only got worse. The IT team at Hostelling Scotland was forced to build an in-house VoIP server so that employees could stay in touch with each other while working remotely. It was clear that things needed to change.

The Solution

We at Wavenet have worked with Hostelling Scotland as a trusted IT partner for more than 10 years, so when they needed someone to help produce a solution and deliver the required changes, we were the obvious choice. Previously, we have provided phone lines, broadband, mobiles, DDoS services and guest WiFi to their sites, so Hostelling Scotland knew they could rely on us and our expertise to understand and meet their needs. The IT Manager for Hostelling Scotland, George Will, said:



Whenever I've had issues with my broadband or telephone lines, the support from Wavenet has been excellent. It therefore made perfect sense to stick with Wavenet for this project.

George Will

IT Manager at Hostelling Scotland

Our expert consultants were able to come up with a solution that addressed their challenges, while achieving enough cost savings from reduced maintenance and energy usage to become practically cost-neutral. This solution involved introducing RingCentral's cloud-based RingEX and contact centre solutions. George Will, added:



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The Benefits



The difference between the old system and RingCentral is night and day. I tried managing the 'original' on-premises system myself and it was problematic, but now I can go in through the admin portal and easily manage the phone system and contact centre myself, without needing continual support from Wavenet.

George Will

IT Manager at Hostelling Scotland

In fact, the whole team is finding the new solution easy to use, which is reducing George's workload and enabling staff to be more self-sufficient, improving efficiency in the team:



All of our staff embraced it. There wasn't the big learning curve we experienced with the previous system. Truthfully, it required very little training from me, which was a very pleasant surprise. The amount of time saved from this and not having to deal with the telephone system on a regular basis, has been substantial.

George Will

IT Manager at Hostelling Scotland

Additionally, by moving their infrastructure to the cloud, Hostelling Scotland effectively removed vulnerabilities around their hardware, and any delays caused by waiting for parts of maintenance. This resulted in what George describes as:



Much better reliability and resilience within our communications systems.

George Will

IT Manager at Hostelling Scotland


The teams at Hostelling Scotland are now embracing the benefits of hybrid working thanks to their new solution. As an example, their operations team members often work remotely from various hostels which used to mean they were often not available to join meetings or get together, but now they have the freedom to handle all their calls and meetings from their laptop devices with wireless headsets. They're using the new RingCentral RingEX to manage calls and video meetings, allowing them to participate from wherever they are.

Customers have benefitted too, as rather than having to ring the reception of a specific site and hope there is someone available, they can now ring a central contact centre and speak to a member of staff who is equipped to deal with any queries, booking requests or anything else they might need. This is available 24/7, so even if a customer is calling from a different time zone, someone will always be available to help, even if the specific site they're visiting is currently closed. They're even looking to add a new chat function to the website, adding around the clock live web chat to further improve the customer experience.

The Result

Overall, Hostelling Scotland has achieved their objectives by:

- Simplifying their communications infrastructure
- Enabling hybrid working through new video conference systems
- Improving the customer experience through the new contact centre
- Making tangible cost savings on reduced energy use and by eliminating maintenance costs for hardware
- Future-proofing their system against the PSTN switch-off



Ready to make your business tech simpler and smarter?

Talk to us

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