

[Return to Area Groups News](#) [Index to other public pages](#) [MERG Home page](#)**There are 1453 days 08:02 since the next Virtual Area Group Meeting (10:00 BST on 12th May 2020)**

## MERG Virtual Area Group

### Email

To send us an email, [use the MERG Area Group contact form](#)  
For **MERG** members, you might also like to look at our [area group forum](#).

### Area Group Coordinator

Allan Geekie M5173 - email address: [vag@merg.org.uk](mailto:vag@merg.org.uk)

### How It Works

This group now uses Zoom to conduct a group meeting from member's homes or workplaces. It was formed in October 2018 to assess the usefulness of video conferencing technology.

The calls last one hour and to participate, members need a mobile phone, tablet or a PC / Mac with a camera and microphone. Recently we have started to enable members to join by telephone if they have limited broadband facilities.

In order to join the group you need to register at [this link](#). In the Area Groups section, select MERG Virtual Area Group from the drop down list and press the green button with the plus sign.

Calls are scheduled in advance and are held on each Tuesday of each month at 10:00, 12:30 or 18:30 GMT or BST. Topics are agreed in advance.

When it is time to start a call, a voice and video conference is opened up which has thumbnails of each video participant and any shared presentations or desktops. The call leader facilitates the call and the discussions and tries to get through the agenda in the agreed time. Zoom has two views available. The first is the speaker view which selects the video stream from the person speaking. The second is Gallery view which shows streams from all participants.

[This page](#) provides guidance for members on what needs be done to prepare for and join video calls.

Members are participating from:-

- Australia
- Canada
- Iceland
- Ireland
- UK
- USA.

Members can access the presentation material [here](#).

Calls are recorded and stored on MERG TV; the current list of recordings are available, to members, [here](#).

If you would like to try out Zoom, then there is a test meeting service where you are the only participant and you can experiment with the various options available.

<http://zoom.us/test>

This link is available to anybody, not just members of the virtual area group.

## Next Meeting

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## Meeting Schudule

Date	Event	Description	Location	Link
20:00 07-Jun	Monthly Virtual AG meeting		Online Zoom Meeting	

## Past Meeetings

Date	Event	Description	Location	Link
20:00 03-May	Monthly Virtual AG meeting		Online Zoom Meeting	

In April 2020 we carried out a poll of VAG members and the following topics were identified as the most popular: -

- How kits work - a series of calls, each discussing the how one particular kit works - now schuduled
- Types and use of baseboard connectors - covered in Demystifying Components -Wires and Connectors
- Oscilloscopes and logic analysers for hobbyists - being planned as a two part course.
- Using the FCU - a multi part course is being considered including the use of the FCU to configure individual 2nd generation modules.
- Testing boards (use of various pieces of test equipment and the way to go about it) - A Test Gear Buyers Guide is already scheduled; other calls to be added.
- Neater Methods of under board wiring
- Best practice for wiring different bus types
- Layout control buses
- CBUS wiring strategy on a large club O gauge layout - scheduled
- CANPAN wiring
- Servo and Servo Mounts
- Building CANVOUT
- Prusa 3D Printer
- 3D scanners
- Photogrammetry - generating 3D models from multiple photographs

- CBUS Beginners Kit.

Members can view the eralier VAG schedules at the [Old VAG Page](#)

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