# VKDMR Hotspot Setup Guide

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Version	Date	Changes	Change Author
0.5	10/10/2020	Initial Release for Review	Michael Lanagan
0.6 11/10/2020		Updated Dashboard webservers to reflect new	Michael Lanagan
		servers	
		Added the DMR+ Network String	
		Added update of the password	
		Added configuration backup	
1.0	14/10/2020	Added Title Page	Michael Lanagan
		Added Contents	
		Added Pi-Star update section	
		Added BER section	
		Added Backup of configuration	
		Updated radio setup to use low power	

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#### Introduction

This document is intended to be a simple setup guide to get your Simplex Hotspot up and working on the VKDMR network.

To keep the guide as simple as possible I have omitted the more complicated setup options and additional digital modes that can be setup on the Hotspot. These can be addressed in a further guide.

It is assumed that you already have a DMR radio that can connect and communicate on one of the VKDMR repeaters and you have the capability to program additional channels and talk groups into your DMR radio.

# What is a Hotspot?

A Hotspot is like a mini repeater with a limited range due to the low power output of approximately 10mW. Your handheld connects to the Hotspot using RF and then the hotspot connects to the dashboard over the internet.

A hotspot is useful for areas that don't have easy access to the local DMR repeater.

#### **DMR** Dashboards

There are two VKDMR dashboards, one for public repeaters (<a href="http://rpt2.vkdmr.com/">http://rpt2.vkdmr.com/</a>) and another one for Hotspots (<a href="http://http://hot2.vkdmr.com/">http://hot2.vkdmr.com/</a>). Once your Hotspot is setup correctly it will show up on the Hotspot dashboard against your callsign - see below.

182 VK4MOT Brispane (30)	2020180	505	MMDVM
183 VK4MWL Brisbane, QG62nk (30)	505129101 5	505 3804	MMDVM
194 VIVANIDO Nahrunda Qld	ENERG13 E 2000 0/6	EDE 2004	MANDY/M

#### **DMR ID**

This document assumes that you already have a working DMR radio and DMR ID.

The Hotspot will use your existing DMR Radio ID. See below extract from the Radio ID FAQ page.

"Hotspots: \*\*\*\* MMDVM, DV4MINI, openSPOT, DVMEGA, and all other hotspot type devices do NOT require a separate ID, use an existing ID only, check the hotspot tab on your account dashboard, do NOT request an ID for them \*\*\*\*

If you own more then one hotspot, use your personal ID number and add a 2 digit suffix, example: Radio ID 3020111, use 302011101, 302011102, ect.

NEVER operate multiple hotspot within range of each other on the same frequency even with different ID's. This will create serious network issues in most cases.

Hotspots do not require repeater ID's." - Reference - https://www.radioid.net/fag#!

If you are not sure of you DMR ID you can look it up at https://database.radioid.net/database/search#!

# **Hotspot Frequency**

There are two frequencies allocated in the 70cm Band for Internet Gateways (Reference "WIA Amateur Band Plans"). Choose one of these frequencies.

439.125MHz & 439.150MHz

# Hotspot Talk Groups

The Hotspot only "listens" to certain talk groups that you configure in the configuration webpage.

As a starting point I suggest configuring the following talk groups: -

- 5 time slot 1/all repeaters
- 505 time slot 2/all VK repeaters
- 3084 time slot 2/all QLD repeaters

The following option string is added to the DMR configuration on the configuration web page that is explained later in the document.

StartRef=4000;RelinkTime=15;UserLink=1;TS2\_1=505;TS2\_2=3804;TS1\_1=5

Up to 5 talk groups can be configured using this option string.

# Hotspot Hardware

There are several different Hotspots on the market. This document covers the Jumbospot MMDVM Hotspot which uses the following components.

- 1. Raspberry Pi Zero W (Single Board Computer that runs Linux)
- 2. Jumbospot MMDVM board (Multi Mode Digital Voice Modem UHF Radio Board)
- 3. OLED Display (Usually supplied with the MMDVM board)
- 4. Metal Case
- 5. UHF Antenna
- 6. Micro USB Power Supply
- 7. 16GB MicroSD memory card
- 8. Dual row header pins

These parts can be sourced separately or purchased as a kit.

VKDirect has kits available (<a href="https://vkdirect.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=64">https://vkdirect.com.au/index.php?route=product/category&path=64</a>) this is not the cheapest place to purchase, however they are all constructed and tested by VK4NGA (<a href="https://www.facebook.com/vk4nga/">https://www.facebook.com/vk4nga/</a>) who is based on the Sunshine Coast. (I have no connection with VK4NGA and I have not purchased anything from him)

#### Other options are: -

- https://gslcomms.com.au
- Aliexpress
- eBay
- https://core-electronics.com.au/ (Raspberry Pi, Power Supply, SD Card)

#### Raspberry Pi Zero W



There are two versions of the Raspberry Pi Zero W and Raspberry Pi Zero WH. The "W" version does not come with headers and the "WH" version includes headers pre-soldered.

If you get the one with headers already soldered as shown in the photo here you will need snip pins 12,14,16,18 so they do not interfere with the pins from the OLED display.

The MMDVM boards come with 2 sets of 2x5 header pins that can be soldered to the Raspberry Pi, so if you can solder in the pins, I recommend that you buy the Raspberry Pi Zero W as it is cheaper.

#### **MMDVM**



This board provides the RF interface between the Raspberry Pi and your DMR radio.

# Hardware Construction

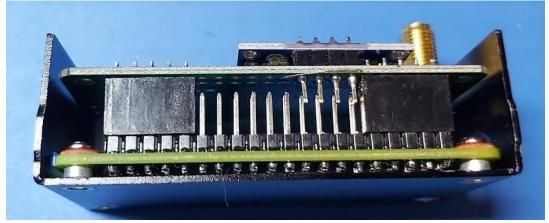
- 1. Solder the 2 sets of 2x5 header pins to the component side of the Raspberry Pi Zero W as required
- 2. Separate the 2 case pieces. Note that one end has an oval hole this must line up with the SDCard slot of the Raspberry Pi



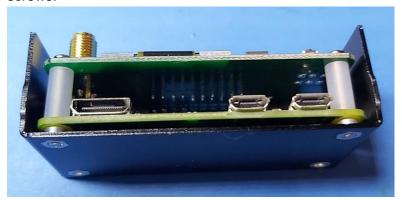
3. Install the Raspberry Pi into the lower case using the 2 short screws next to the header pins. Note the SD Card Slot is on the left in the photo.



4. Install the MMDVM Board by plugging it into the Raspberry Pi. Note that the pins from the OLED are not touching any of the pins on the Raspberry Pi.



5. Use a pair of long nose pliers or tweezers to hold the two plastic spacers while installing the 2 long screws.



6. Align the SMA connector on top of the MMDVM board with the top part of the case and clip the case into place. Note the case should easily clear the connectors on the Raspberry Pi, if it doesn't check that the Raspberry Pi is installed in the correct orientation with the oval hole on the SD Card side of the Raspberry Pi.



7. Screw on the antenna. Don't install the SD Card Yet as we need to install the software onto it.

#### Pi-Star - Software

Pi-Star is the operating system that runs on the Raspberry Pi Zero W, it is a modified linux build that is specifically setup with a number of applications and a configuration webpage.

The Raspberry Pi Zero W connects to the DMR network via your home wireless internet.

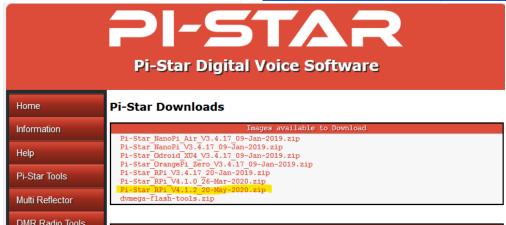
Pi-Star needs to be installed onto the SD Card which is then inserted into the Raspberry Pi.

You will need a USB MicroSD Card reader to complete the next task. The below one is made by Kingston.



## Setting up the MicroSD Card

1. Download the latest version for Pi-Star "Pi-Star\_RPi\_V4.1.2\_20-May-2020.zip" at the time of writing.

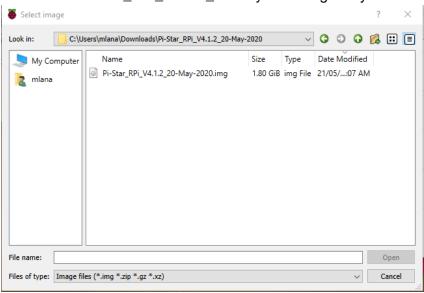


- 2. Unzip the Pi-Star\_RPi\_V4.1.2\_20-May-2020.zip file. Take note of the location of the "Pi-Star\_RPi\_V4.1.2\_20-May-2020.img" file
- 3. Download "Raspberry Pi Imager for Windows" from https://www.raspberrypi.org/downloads/

4. Install the "Raspberry Pi Imager for Windows" application and run it.



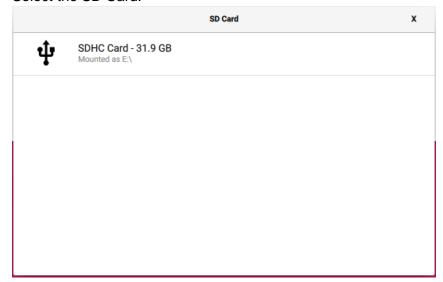
- 5. Click on "Choose OS", scroll to the bottom and select "Use custom"
- 6. Locate the "Pi-Star\_RPi\_V4.1.2\_20-May-2020.img" file you extracted in step 2 and select it.



- 7. Plug the MicroSD Card into the card reader and plug the card reader into the computer
- 8. Click "Choose SD C ...."



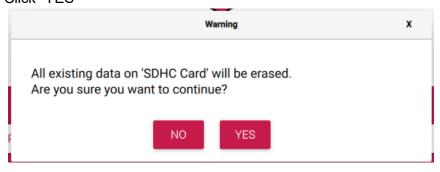
#### 9. Select the SD Card.



#### 10. Click "WRITE"



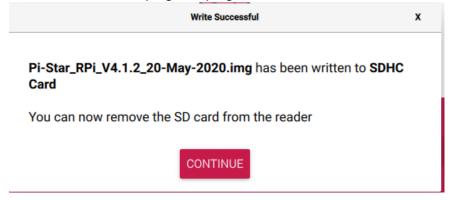
#### 11. Click "YES"



12. Wait until the image is finished writing and verifying to the MicroSD Card

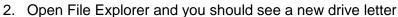


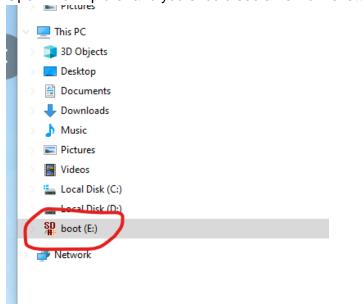
13. Click continue and unplug and plug the SD Card reader from the computer



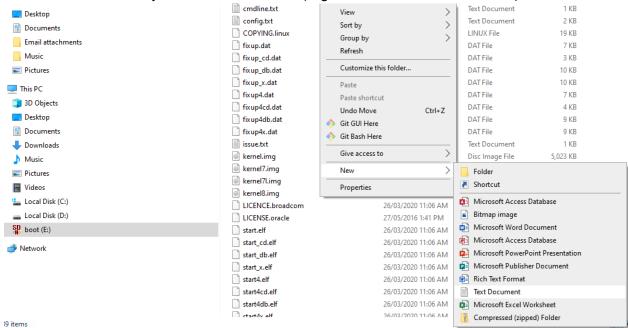
## WiFi Configuration

1. Insert the MicroSD card into the card reader and connect to the USB port of the computer

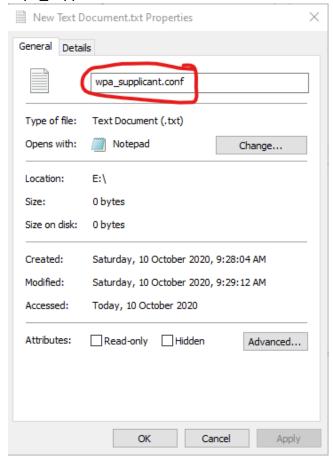




3. Within the root directory create a new text file (Right click New>Text Document)



4. Right click on the new file and select properties. Change the name of the file to "wpa\_supplicant.conf" and click "OK"



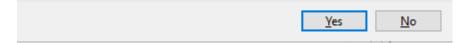
5. Click "Yes" to the warning message

Rename

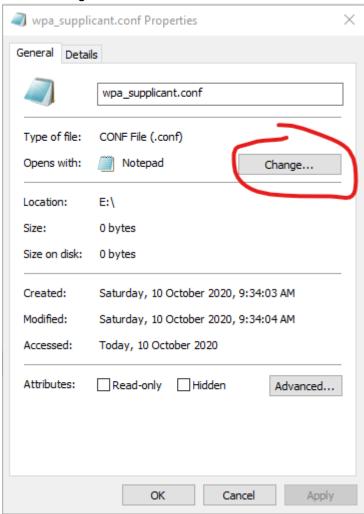


If you change a file name extension, the file might become unusable.

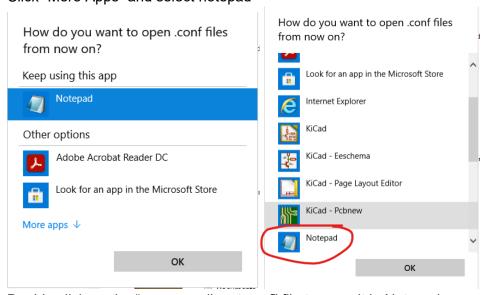
Are you sure you want to change it?



- 6. Right click on the "wpa\_supplicant.conf" file and select "Properties"
- 7. Click "Change"



8. Click "More Apps" and select notepad

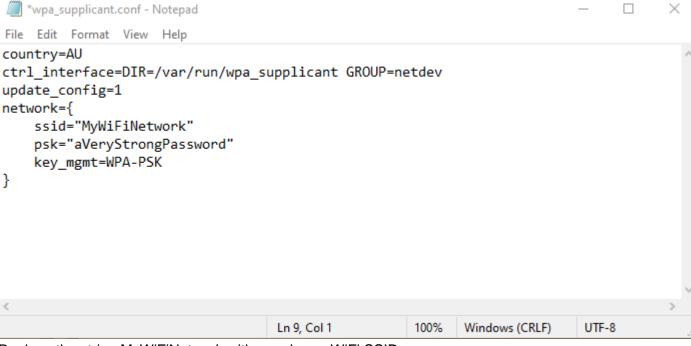


9. Double click on the "wpa supplicant.conf" file to open it in Notepad

10. Cut and paste in the following text into the Notepad window

```
country=AU
ctrl_interface=DIR=/var/run/wpa_supplicant GROUP=netdev
update_config=1
network={
        ssid="MyWiFiNetwork"
        psk="aVeryStrongPassword"
        key_mgmt=WPA-PSK
}
```

11. It should look like this after step 10



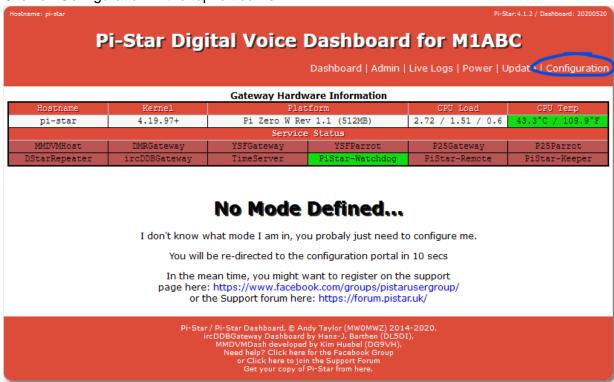
- 12. Replace the string MyWiFiNetwork with your home WiFi SSID
- 13. Replace the string aVeryStrongPassword with you home WiFi password
- 14. Close Notepad and click Save to save the file
- 15. Remove the MicroSD card from the reader and install it into the Raspberry Pi. It will be almost flush with the case when installed correctly.



16. Plugin the power to the Raspberry Pi and turn it on

# Pi-Star Configuration

- 1. The Raspbery Pi takes approximately 5 minutes to boot after power on
- 2. Once booted you should be able to click on this link <a href="http://pi-star/admin/">http://pi-star/admin/</a> and you will be prompted for a username and password
- 3. Enter the user name: pi-star and password: raspberry
- 4. Click on Configuration in the top left corner



5. Configure the Control Software section as below and click "Apply Changes"

Control Software			
Setting Value			
Controller Software:	ODStarRepeater   MMDVMHost (DV-Mega Minimum Firmware 3.07 Required)		
Controller Mode:	Simplex Node ODuplex Repeater (or Half-Duplex on Hotspots)		
Apply Changes			

- 6. Configure the General Configuration section as below and click "Apply Changes" (**note it takes a** little while for the page to refresh and restart the services before you can continue)
  - a. Callsign
  - b. Frequency (439.125MHz or 439.150MHz)
  - Your Latitude, Longitude, Town, Grid Location
     (Find your Coordinates and Grid with this website <a href="https://www.qrz.com/gridmapper">https://www.qrz.com/gridmapper</a>)
  - d. Change URL to "Auto"
  - e. Change the Radio/Modem Type to "STM32-DVM / MMDVM\_HS Raspberry Pi Hat (GPIO)"
  - f. Change the APRS host to "queensland.aprs2.net"
  - g. Change the timezone to "Australia/Brisbane"
- 7. After applying the configuration the services will restart and you will now see the MMDVMHost Configuration section. Update the below settings and apply changes.
  - a. Turn on "DMR Mode"
  - b. Change the MMDVM Display to "OLED Type 3"
- 8. After applying the changes there will be a new option in the General Configuration section, "CCS7/DMR ID:" enter you DMR ID and apply changes

- 9. After the services restart configure the following options in the "DMR Configuration" section and apply changes.
  - a. DMR Master "DMR+ IPSC2-VKHOTSPOT"
  - b. Add the following string to DMR+ Network "StartRef=4000;RelinkTime=15;UserLink=1;TS2 1=505;TS2 2=3804;TS1 1=5"
  - c. DMR ESSID: change the drop down to "01"
- 10. Open the VKDMR Hotspot Dashboard <a href="http://hot2.vkdmr.com/">http://hot2.vkdmr.com/</a> and search for your callsign you should see some like this

182 VK4MOT Brisb	ane (30)   5050180		505	MMDVM
183 VK4MWL Brisb	ane, QG62nk 505129101	5	505 3804	MMDVM
194 VIVANIDD Nahru	unda Qld	E 2000 0/6	E0E 2004	MANADA /MA

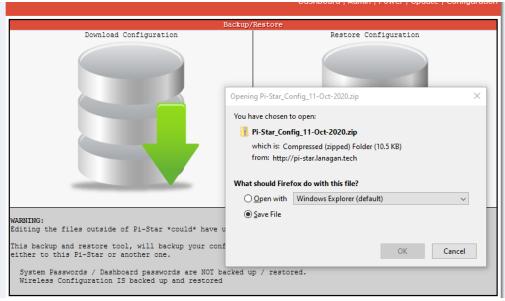
11. Update the admin password on your Pi-Star



- 12. Create a back of the configuration
  - a. At the top of the configuration page click



b. Click on Download Configuration and save the file to a safe location



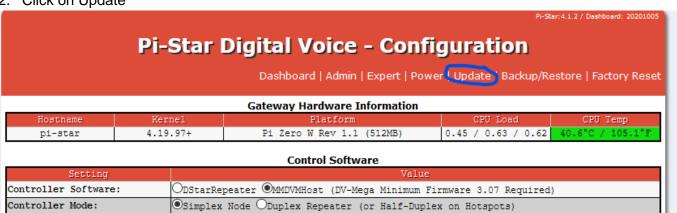
13. Complete a Pi-Star Update described below.

# Pi-Star Updates

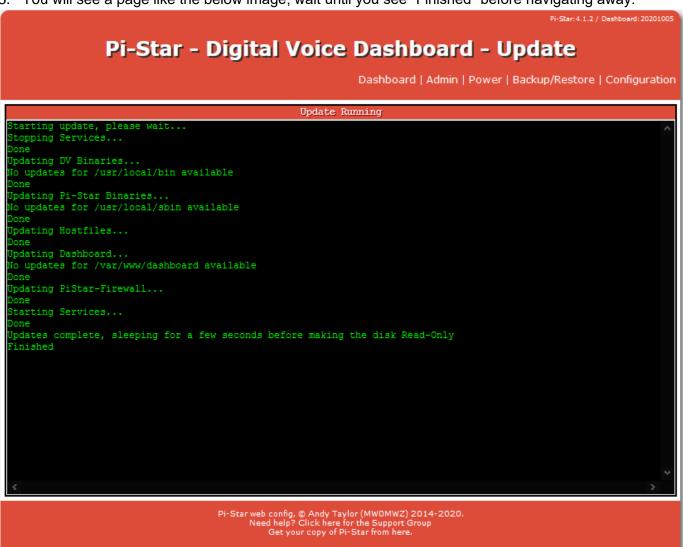
From time to time you will need to complete an update on the Pi-Star.

The update will update various operating system and Pi-Star application components.

- 1. Navigate to http://pi-star/admin/configure.php and enter your user "pi-star" and password
- 2. Click on Update



3. You will see a page like the below image, wait until you see "Finished" before navigating away.



# Radio Configuration

You will need to configure an additional channel and associated talkgroups in your codeplug and download to the DMR radio. This new channel will use the TX/ RX Frequency that you configured on the Hotspot configuration page. (439.125MHz or 439.150MHz)

Important: Set you radio to low power before transmitting on your Hotspot frequency as they are usually close by and can be overdriven by high power causing intermodulation or potentially damage to your Hotspot.

Once this is configured select your hotspot channel and TalkGroup 9990 (Parrot) and do a test transmission.

You should see information light up on the display of the hotspot and hear your voice back from the parrot.

You will also see info in the Hotspot Dashboard while you are transmitting.



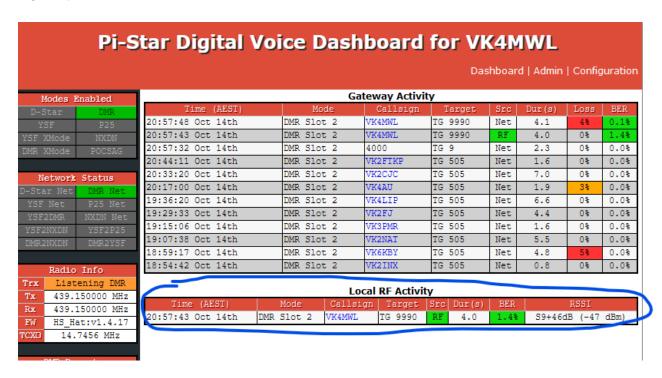
# Bit Error Rate (BER)

DMR is digital radio and encodes your voice as ones and zeros over RF. Bit Error Rate or BER is the ratio of bit errors to total bits sent.

High BER indicates that the Hotspot (or any repeater) is not receiving your signal correctly.

In the case of Hotspots they use cheap transmitter chips and sometimes need a frequency offset to be setup to correct high BER.

To see the BER of your transmissions access the Pi-Star dashboard <a href="http://pi-star/">http://pi-star/</a> and look for your call sign in the "Local RF Activity" section. (You may need to do a test transmission to the parrot to generate a log entry)



If you are experiencing higher than 1% BER you can adjust the frequency offsets in the expert configuration pages.

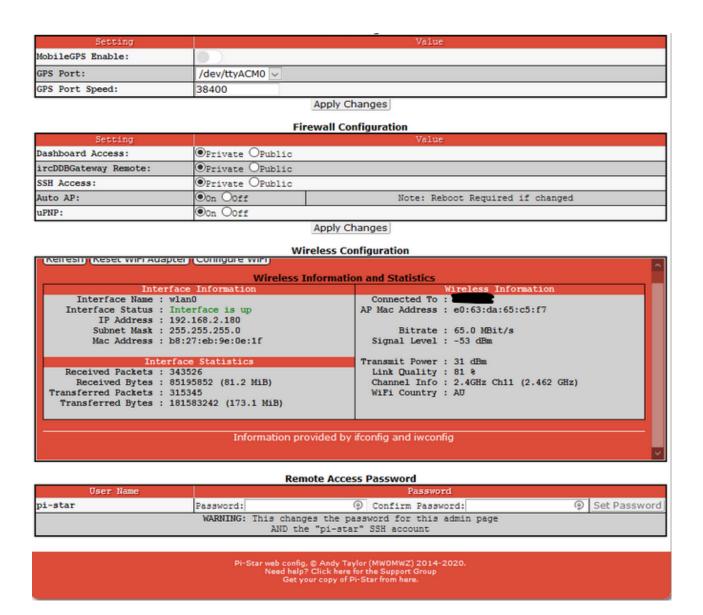
- 1. Leave the Dashboard open and open another browser tab or window using this link <a href="http://pi-star/admin/expert/edit">http://pi-star/admin/expert/edit</a> mmdvmhost.php
- 2. Scroll down the page to the "Modem" section and locate "RXOffset"
- 3. Adjust the offsets in +/-100 step offsets and test using the TG 9990 parrot
- 4. Monitor the BER in the dashboard and adjusting in increments of +/-50 the +/-10 to reduce the BER below 1%

Further info about this process can be found on the webpage <a href="https://amateurradionotes.com/pi-star-notes.htm#tuningber">https://amateurradionotes.com/pi-star-notes.htm#tuningber</a> by Toshen, KE0FHS.

# VKDMR Configuration Page Example

This is a copy of my configuration for reference.

fi .			Pi-Star: 4.1.2 / Dashboard: 20200813	
	Di-Star I	Digital Voice - C	onfiguration	
	PI-Stell	Digital Voice - C	omiguration	
		Dashboard   Admin   Expe	rt   Power   Update   Backup/Restore   Factory Reset	
		Gateway Hardware Inform	ation	
Hostname	Kernel	Platform	CPU Load CPU Temp	
pi-star	4.19.97+	Pi Zero W Rev 1.1 (512M	(B) 0.01 / 0.28 / 0.56 40.1°C / 104.2°F	
"HODDY DO		Control Software	Value	
Setting Controller Software:	OpstarRe	peater @MMDVMHost (DV-Mega Mi	( ) Harrison	
Controller Mode:				
		Apply Changes		
		MMDVMHost Configurati	on	
Setting			Value	
DMR Mode:		RF Hangtime: 20	Net Hangtime: 20	
D-Star Mode:		RF Hangtime: 20	Net Hangtime: 20	
YSP Mode:	(0)	RF Hangtime: 20	Net Hangtime: 20	
P25 Mode:		RF Hangtime: 20	Net Hangtime: 20	
NXDN Mode:		RF Hangtime: 20	Net Hangtime: 20	
YSF2DMR:				
YSF2NXDN:	00			
YSF2P25:	0			
DMR2YSF:	00	Uses	7 prefix on DMRGateway	
DMR2NXDN:	000	Uses	7 prefix on DMRGateway	
POCSAG:	6	PO	CSAG Paging Features	
MMDVM Display Type:	OLED TVD	e 3 V Port: /dev/ttvAMAO V	Nextion Layout: ON7LDS L3 HS V	
		Apply Changes		
		General Configuration		
Setting	(4)	General Configuration	Value	
Hostname:	pi-star	Do not add suffixes such	h as .local	
Node Callsign:	VK4MWL	2	7	
CCS7/DMR ID:			li li	
Radio Frequency:	439.150.0			
Latitude:	-		for North, negative for South)	
Longitude:	Prichago		for East, negative for West)	
Town: Country:	Brisbane, Australia	QGOZIK		
URL:		http://www.grz.com/db/VK4MWL		
Radio/Modem Type:		/M / MMDVM_HS - Raspberry Pi Ha	The state of the s	
Node Type:	Private			
APRS Host:	queensla	queensland.aprs2.net V		
System Time Zone:	Australia/	Australia/Brisbane V		
Dashboard Language:	english_u	english_uk V		
		Apply Changes		
		DMR Configuration		
Setting			Value	
DMR Master:		SC2-VKHOTSPOT		
DMR+ Network:		Options=StartRef=4000;RelinkTime=15;UserLink=1;TS2_1=505;TS2_2=3804;TS1_1		
DMR ESSID:		01 🗸		
DMR Colour Code:	1 ~	1 🔻		
DMR EmbeddedLCOnly:				
DMR DumpTAData:		Apply Changes		



#### **Further Reading**

https://www.pistar.uk/

https://forum.pistar.uk/

https://amateurradionotes.com/pi-star.htm#learningpistar

http://www.lyonscomputer.com.au/ (Lots of info on lots of stuff including DMR. Thanks Glenn VK4PK)