**Plans and Progress**

*Here you should give as much detail as you can about what your project will do, and how you will do it. This should also include*

*how far you have got with developing any features or outcomes from your project.*

NodeSpiders goal of transforming a standard mailbox, into a *Smart Mailbox,* requires the team to develop both a hardware component, needed to provide feedback and information to a device, and the software component, that will communicate with the device via an app on a mobile phone.

The hardware component is made up of a microcontroller, a temperature and humidity sensor, a switch that is triggered when mail is delivered and a battery pack.

Beginning with the microcontroller, the intention was to source a device that was low in power consumption, in addition to being small enough to fit discretely inside a mailbox, that could turn inputs into a useful action, such as giving notifications to an app.

The team discussed alternative options, such as a Rasberry Pi, however the use of a Rasberry Pi for this application created more complexities, the biggest issue was power consumption. After calculating the required power needed to run the unit, the final choice of going with a microcontroller was made.

Now we have a controller, the controller now needed a process to follow when receiving information from inputs given from the mailbox, inputs of new mail, temperature, and humidity. This required the microcontroller to execute these tasks via a program. To create a suitable and functional program, with limited experience in the team, the strategy was to keep the program simple at first, only taking a single input from a micro switch, that will replicate a mail delivery, get this functional, then implement a temperature and humidity sensor module into the program and controller. The program will be generated using the Arduino language in Arduino IDE, then flashed to the controller via the Arduino IDE.

Now with the plans of the controller and programming taken care of, next is configuring the controller with hardware that will produce and transmit the inputs. For R&D purposes and to save time, the controller and microswitch will be assembled and wired via a breadboard. This use of a breadboard with wire jumpers gave flexibility when adding and testing additional components and made changing pin-in/pinout configuration a straightforward process, as it eliminated the need for soldering. During the early stages of the hardware development, the microcontroller was programmed to take inputs from the switch and sensors, then the data from these was transmitted to a serial monitor. This confirmed the hardware as functional, in addition to the program being operational without any bugs.

Now with the hardware component deemed to operational, the data the controller is collecting needed to be sent to useful home the app could communicate with, rather than the data simply being displayed via serial monitor. To achieve this, additional code in the controller sketch was required.