

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

for the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

OVER-VIEW:

It was a busy period for VINE with the organisation of events and further action on our strategic review.

Consultations with Members in July 2009 and January 2010 helped further develop our review of our objectives and activities. These culminated in February 2010 with a two-day strategy meeting. The resulting paper 'VINE Activities in 2010 - towards our vision for VINE in 2011' has acted as the focus for our recent work. Three successful events were organised in late summer/autumn 2009 in cooperation with other organisations. A research project was launched - 'The Nature of Conservationists' - which we expect to provide valuable data to guide future initiatives. Following a review of the resources available to us we commenced efforts to find a volunteer or seconded fund-raiser/project officer. Our website continued to be updated and our discussion forum had periods of intense activity. Having signed up to the '10/10 campaign' we undertook a review of our activities and communications in an effort to reduce still further our carbon profile.

EXECUTIVE GROUP (EG) MEETINGS and OTHER EVENTS:

Full meeting/event record/reports can be found on the website at:

www.vineproject.org.uk/notes_of_meetings.html

- 5th May 2009 (by telephone conference):
 - The autumn 2008 'objectivities and activities' review paper was ratified in July 2009 and became the focus thereafter for EG business.
 - Research – 'The Nature of Conservationists' Project commenced. Researchers Gabrielle Horup and Cara Roberts had guidance of EG Member Judith Hanna (NE).
 - Project officer/fund raiser proposal was endorsed.
 - Three autumn events planned.
- 25th August 2009:
 - Fordhall Community Farm and Fenn's National Nature Reserve site visits, jointly with IOTA/NE / GAP, considering farm and nature reserve management in a 'green' world.
- 16th September 2009:
 - 3rd AGM held by telephone conference for period April 2008 to March 2009 followed by a short EG meeting. Main business was: election of EG members and changes to the VINE Constitution; final arrangements for the 3 events in the autumn; management of the research project; fund raiser project; strategy implementation review.
- 15th & 16th October 2009:
 - Leadership training event at Hawkwood College. Led by EG Member Philip Goodwin with colleague Tony Page. "Aligning passion and purpose: rediscovering your influence and leadership in nature conservation".
- 21st October 2009:
 - One day conference at SNH's Battleby Conference Centre – "Finding our place: reconnecting with nature in a time of uncertainty". A 'sharing good practice' programme event with SNH and SpeyGrian with our EG Member Joyce Gilbert taking the lead. Full report can be viewed
- 9th/10th February 2010 at Hawkwood College, Glos:

- Two day event - "Towards better targeting of our Strategy" - informed by January 2010 Membership Questionnaire responses. Included:
 - Working together and developing our leadership skills.
 - Business session.
 - Research project session.
 - Ecosystem (services) approach / natural change programme led by Ian Christie, NE Consultant and Visiting Professor, Centre for Environmental Strategy, University of Surrey.
 - VINE communications and PR strategy.

WEBSITE:

This facility was managed and updated by Sophie Lake, assisted by Pat Vincent.

- Website use statistics are supplied periodically by PV.

DISCUSSION GROUP:

This forum was managed by Sophie Lake and Bill Grayson.

- Spells of intense activity on a wide range of topics. At other times it was quiet!
- Discussion group had around 170 to 180 members throughout the period.
- The new Members 'Voluntary Code of Conduct' for discussions on the forum appeared to be working well with no notable excesses being referred!

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:

- The review that commenced at the Hawkwood meeting in August 2008 was endorsed by the Membership in July 2009.
- This was further developed at the February 2010 meeting at Hawkwood College: "Towards better targeting of our Strategy".
- As a result of that meeting, we produced in April 2010, our 'VINE Activities in 2010 Paper as progress towards Our Vision for VINE in 2011'.

LIASION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Direct contacts occurred with:

- NE as grant provider. (Judith H)
- ECOS (Sophie L).
- Conservation Land Management quarterly magazine (John B).
- The Executive Group Members and VINE Members provided informal links too many organisations.
- July 09 – 'Events' and 'Inspirational Leaders course' – flyers sent to senior managers and staff training departments in a large number of nature conservation organisations.

FINANCE:

Reference is made to the Treasurers report and audited accounts. Simply to say here that VINE remained solvent throughout the period. A grant from NE was really appreciated.

Brief update to end September 2010.

- *30th April 2010: preferred EG communication options reviewed and actioned.*
- *April 2010. Proposals for a 'VINE Book' explored.*
- *June 2010: Website: Media player facility added.*
- *June 2010 VINE 'Seeds': started publishing a 'series of guided reflections for people who are passionate about the natural world'.*
- *13th July 2010 EG telephone conference: discussed a 'funding review' paper. This was communicated to members in September 2010.*
- *12th October 2010: AGM for 2009/2010, by telephone conference.*