

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
for the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011.

OVER-VIEW:

Despite financial strictures it was a constructive period for VINE. Our document "VINE Activities in 2010" was used to prioritise our work. These included development of our existing resources, our website and discussion forum, and new initiatives of our VINE 'Seeds', publishing of our research reports in ECOS and a start on working up a proposal for a VINE 'Book'.

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

- April / May 2010:
 - Consulted on options for holding discussions between the (geographically widely spread) EG Members. Preferences agreed and incorporated into future liaison.
 - Consulted on a proposal to incorporate a 'media' player facility on the VINE website. Agreed with funding allocated.
- June 2010:
 - Proposal to hold a VINE 'webinar discussion' was progressed using Tim Kemp's facility. Held on 30th June. Unfortunately organisation's fire-walls prevented some people joining.
- 22nd July 2010:
 - This telephone conference discussed and ratified proposals set out in a 'Funding review' document circulated during June and early July. Funding grants were expected to become hard to secure so this review looked at ways to keep core costs to a minimum, along with ways of finding new sources of funding.
- 12th October 2010:
 - 4th AGM held by telephone conference for period April 2009 to March 2010 followed by a short EG meeting. Main business was: Chair and Treasurer's reports, discussion of finances, website and discussion forum updates, VINE seeds, VINE Book proposal, Research project publication and publicity, webinar trial, election of EG members and appointment of auditor.
- November 2010 to February 2011:
 - Worked with Cara Roberts and Gabrielle Horup to achieve completion and publication of their research projects. (See below).
- 13th March 2011:
 - 2nd trial webinar using Natural England's Global Crossing system led by Judith Hanna on the topic of 'developing the concept of cultural services'.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:

- As a result of our meeting in February 2010 "Towards better targeting of our Strategy" we produced in April our 'VINE Activities in 2010 Paper' as progress towards Our Vision for VINE in 2011'.

FINANCE:

Reference is made to the Treasurers report and audited accounts. Simply to say here that VINE remained solvent throughout the period having undertaken a review in June and July to reduce core costs to a minimum. Activities involving direct expenditure (such as gatherings and workshops) have been curtailed

and future activity will depend on successful funding bids to grant giving bodies. Despite this we have been able to maintain and develop our key resources.

WEBSITE:

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

- New website pages were added as required, including an audio recordings facility. Web pages updated periodically.

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!

RESEARCH REPORTS:

- Cara Roberts and Gabrielle Horup completed their research and submitted their MSc's. They then wrote a summary of their research which was published in ECOS Magazine, Issue 31 (3/4) Winter 2010 ppgs 2 -14 under the title: *The nature of nature conservationists – feeling the spirit or toeing the line?* Research has since been described as '*expressing the soul of the nature conservation movement*'. We are so grateful to VINE Members who contributed to their research.

VINE 'SEEDS':

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has". Margaret Mead.

- Tim Kemp and Peter Phillipson committed to writing some 'guided reflections' intended to be thought provoking, stimulating and challenging. The following 'seeds' have been produced to date:
 - **Seed No 1 - Hero's journey.** "*Intelligent fear is the root of true courage*" Ronald Higgins.
 - **Seed No 2 - Social proof.** "*The moral development of a civilisation is measured by the breadth of its sense of community*" Anatol Rapaport, cited in Thomas Homer-Dixon, 'The Ingenuity Gap' (2000).
 - **Seed No 3 - Dreambeds.** "*The Earth was small, light blue and so touchingly alone ...our home that must be defended like a holy relic*". Aleksei Leonov, Russian cosmonaut on seeing the Earth from space.
 - **Seed No 4 - The elephant in the room.** *Assumptions are the termites of relationships.* Henry Winkler.
 - **Seed No 5 - Breaking habits - applying new behaviours.** "*When you are through changing you are through*" Bruce Barton. "*The only man I know who behaves sensibly is my tailor; he takes my measurements anew each time he sees me. The rest go on with their old measurements and expect me to fit them.*" George Bernard Shaw.
 - **Seed No 6 - Triangles.** A Christmas party special ... with deeper meaning!

VINE BOOK:

- A proposal to produce a VINE 'Book' led to a draft format being produced in the autumn /winter of 2010/11. Consultations on the contents, production and funding options are on-going.

LIASION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

Direct contacts occurred with:

- NE as grant provider. (Judith H)
- ECOS (Sophie L and John B).
- Conservation Land Management quarterly magazine (John B).
- The Executive Group Members and VINE Members provided informal links to many organisations.
- The Research article in ECOS was used to publicise the work of VINE amongst many organisations.

- In autumn 2010 we submitted a response to Defra's Environment White Paper and attended their Birmingham Workshop in November.
- In February 2011 we readied a response on the Public Bodies (disposal of assets) Bill and Defra's 'Consultation on the future of the public forest estate' and by implication the NNR estate! This consultation was later withdrawn by Government.
