



**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**  
**for FY 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012; (with update to August 2012).**

**OVER-VIEW:**

*A year in which VINE continued to use limited funding to deliver and further develop its core resources. Our website has been well used and our discussion forum continues to provide a valued exchange of views on topical issues. Our ever lengthening list of thought provoking 'VINE Seeds' continue to receive many commendations as the thinking persons guide to maintaining the inner spirit. At the time of writing the Executive Group is starting a review of how and where VINE can best direct its energies and resources over the next three years - particularly bearing in mind the austere times and particular challenges in which we find nature conservation.*

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**FINANCE:**

Reference is made to the Treasurers report and audited accounts. Simply to say here that VINE remained solvent throughout the period having undertaken frequent reviews to further reduce costs to a minimum. Because of this we have been able to maintain and further develop our core resources. Two news facilities have been added: PayPal and Good Energy 'affiliate new customer' donations. We have been particularly appreciative of donations made by our Members to our funds. Activities involving direct expenditure (such as gatherings and workshops) will in future depend on self funding, or successful funding bids, from grant giving bodies.

**WEBSITE:**

This facility was managed and updated by Sophie Lake.

- New website pages were added as required and web pages updated periodically.
- Web stats have been presented by Pat Vincent to the EG at intervals; these showed an encouraging level of usage. (E.g. Sept 2011: recorded 2525 unique visitors; and over 14,000 in the whole of 2011; September 2011 hits included 4,635 from Great Britain and 20,003 from the USA. The 6,621 hits from Russia perhaps need further explanation!).
- Twitter and Facebook links are currently being added.
- The website has continued to be efficiently hosted by Darkhouse Multi Media. They have recently changed to running on 100% renewable electricity supplied by Good Energy, helping VINE to meet another of its '10/10' carbon reduction commitments.

## DISCUSSION GROUP:

This forum was managed by Sophie Lake and Bill Grayson.

- Spells of intense activity have occurred on a wide range of topics. Very occasionally it has been quiet!
- The Members 'Voluntary Code of Conduct' guidance for discussions on the forum appeared to be working well with no notable excesses being referred!

## 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's 'VINE Seeds' initiative has continued with writing of further 'guided reflections' intended to be thought provoking, stimulating and challenging. The list of Seeds now stands as shown below.
- The EG has discussed the possibility of making the Seeds available to a wider audience by producing them as 'A5 cards' in an attractively designed 'boxed' set. This proposal is currently out to consultation. (NB. This would replace the earlier proposal for a VINE Book).
  - **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!
  - **Seed No 7 – Pacha Mama.** The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.
  - **Seed No 8 – Naikan.** "To see yourself with your own eyes".
  - **Seed No 9 - Looking Forward by Looking Back.**
  - **Seed No 10 - Imagination and Understanding.** "Something swatable landed on my arm..."
  - **Seed No 11 – Who's your Dada?** "Who are the people that you turn to for inspiration?"
  - **Seed No 12 - Fast Track.** Somebody once said, 'The faster we move, the less we feel'.
  - **Seed No 13 - Growth and Austerity. Or, why put yourself between a rock and a hard place in the first place?**

## LIASION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS:

- A Newsletter was produced and widely circulated in Autumn 2011. Drafting of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Newsletter is underway as a means of maintaining and extending VINE's profile.

- In November 2011 VINE submitted a themed response to the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel Consultation. This summarised submissions received from VINE Members on our Discussion Forum.
- Submissions were made by several VINE individuals in support of concerns expressed by conservation organisations of the National Planning Policy Framework proposals.
- VINE received and circulated responses to our earlier submissions to Defra consultations on the Forestry (and NNRs) Review; and the Environment White Paper.
- VINE research was linked to Natural England's Skills Audit by our NE Rep Judith Hanna.
- Links maintained to ECOS by Sophie Lake and John Bacon.
- Links to Conservation Land Management quarterly magazine by John Bacon.
- The Executive Group Members and VINE Members provided formal and informal links to many organisations.

**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](http://www.vineproject.org.uk/notes_of_meetings.html)

- See EG meeting notes held on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011 and 26<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
- The 2011/12 AGM meeting is to be held on 11th August 2012 at the Dovedale Centre.

**OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:**

- Throughout the period 2008-11 the EG had been developing and implementing our three year 'Vision for VINE'. As this period was coming to an end it was decided that the EG needed to set aside time to consider where VINE should put its limited resources in the 2012-15 period. An EG planning meeting has been arranged either side of the AGM at the Dovedale Centre from 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> August 2012.

For further information and resources please see the Vine website: [www.vineproject.org.uk](http://www.vineproject.org.uk)

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