



THE VINE CONSTITUTION

(Values In Nature and the Environment)

**“COMMUNICATING VISIONS AND VALUES IN NATURE
CONSERVATION.”**

BACKGROUND (not part of the Constitution).

VINE emerged in late 2005 through informal discussions of a few founder members. It is a stand-alone non-profit making project run by volunteers who have extensive experience of practical nature conservation in Britain.

The philosophical basis for nature conservation needs to be kept under review to ensure it is up-to-date and relevant. People coming new to nature conservation need to be provided with opportunities to consider and develop these underpinning values; even long-standing conservationists may benefit from refreshing the beliefs that initially led them into their profession.

VINE functions under the principle that people with an interest in nature will often share a great deal of common ground. VINE does, though, recognise that views in specific areas may differ, sometimes significantly, and that peoples' views may change over time. Indeed, VINE hopes that its work may help the development of diverse thinking and practice. VINE does not promote any single set of views, but wishes to celebrate, through positive discussion, the broad spectrum of thinking, values and emotions generated by engagement in nature conservation.

The concept for VINE was initially developed under the auspices of FACT, the Forum for the Application of Conservation Techniques at a time when FACT became aware of a lack of



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opportunity and facilities for such discussions and debate. This initiative, in common with all other FACT projects, is aimed at helping to deliver effective practical nature conservation. Close links with FACT continue but this constitution gives VINE greater independence to develop according to its members wishes as from 2007 onwards.

Further information about the VINE Project can be viewed on the VINE website at: www.vineproject.org.uk



THE VINE CONSTITUTION

1. MISSION STATEMENT

VINE is a forum for nature conservation professionals, land managers and all people who care about nature. We aim to promote a broad spectrum of ideas, values and emotions generated by people's engagement with nature. We believe that the process of thinking deeply about what we do and why we do it will help conservationists to be more creative and effective in their working lives, but we also celebrate the natural environment for its own intrinsic value.

2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of VINE are:

- To help develop an ethical basis for decision-making that will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and which will complement, scientific approaches.
- To encourage individuals involved with nature to more fully understand and develop their personal motivations.
- To promote ideas and inspirations of an ethical approach to nature that are accessible to everyone.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership of VINE shall be open to all individuals, (including nature conservation professionals, land managers, volunteers and other people), involved in helping to deliver effective practical nature conservation. Corporate membership is an option to be considered in the future.



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4. **MANAGEMENT**

The general management of VINE will be undertaken by an Executive Committee.

- The Committee will be elected by VINE members at an Annual General Meeting (AGM) for a term of three years after which they can be eligible for re-election for further terms of three years. Opportunities should be taken to elect one third of the officers at each AGM. The Committee should comprise representatives of those actively involved in delivering the various 'themes' of the VINE Project. Additional ex-officio members may be asked to attend the Committee if the Committee deems appropriate.
- The Committee will consist of not less than six, and not more than twelve members.
- The quorum for all Committee Meetings shall be at least four members of the Committee personally or virtually present.
- In the event of resignations or departures from the Committee, the vacancies will be advertised by e-mail to all members. The Committee may suggest the Project Themes requiring representation in order to secure proposals from suitable candidates. If more than one nomination is received the membership will be given an opportunity to vote.
- The Committee may establish working groups for time limited periods.
- The Committee will seek to reach decisions by consensus. If this is not possible, decisions will be made by a majority of votes, with the chair having a casting vote.



5. **OFFICERS.**

- The Executive Committee shall elect a Chairman, Vice-Chairman (optional), Secretary and Treasurer. In the absence of the Chair or Vice-Chair at any meeting, another member of the Committee will be voted to preside.
- Other Officers may be appointed or co-opted, as necessary, by the Executive Committee.

6. **ADMINISTRATION.**

- The Executive Committee, through its Chair, will coordinate the work of the Project, the Committee members, any staff and contractors engaged in the management of VINE, and, in delivering the VINE Project.
- The VINE constitution has been drafted by the founder members. The constitution will be reviewed periodically and if there is a need to amend it this will be notified to the members and any responses will be considered by the Committee and recommended to



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- Members at the AGM. In the event that any matter is more urgent an extraordinary AGM will be called.
- The Executive Committee will keep the detailed 'VINE Project Brief' under review. If there is a need to amend the VINE Project Brief this will be notified to the members and any responses will be considered by the Committee. The decision of the Committee will be final.
 - Winding up / dissolution: In the event that sufficient resources to maintain VINE are no longer available, or the need for VINE no longer exists, the Executive Committee may vote to dissolve VINE, subject to honouring any existing legal or financial commitments.



7. FINANCES

- VINE will raise money through appropriate means to finance the activities described in the VINE Project.
- VINE will be non-profit making. In the event of a surplus of income over expenditure in any one financial year, the surplus will be banked and put towards the costs of VINE for the following year. VINE must not incur debts at any time.
- VINE will maintain its own bank accounts. The signature of two members, normally the Treasurer and Chair (or other delegated substitute) of the VINE Executive Committee is required for all payments.
- The Treasurer will be responsible for administering VINE's bank accounts and will provide simple cash based annual accounts for the AGM. The Treasurer will appoint an appropriate person to examine the accounts and an external auditor to sign them off. The financial year will end on 31st March each year. The accounts will be available for inspection by any of the funder's auditors.
- In the event of VINE being dissolved the assets plus the balance of the bank accounts shall, after the clearing of any outstanding debts of VINE, be disbursed to organisation(s) working to deliver similar objectives in nature conservation to those of VINE.

8. MEETINGS

8.1 Annual general meeting (AGM)

- VINE will hold an AGM. This will be held as soon as is reasonable and practicable after the end of the financial year.
- The Secretary of VINE will give all members no less than 21 days notice of the date, time, place and business of the meeting by post or electronic means.



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- The quorum for the AGM shall include at least four members of the Executive Committee.



8.2 Executive Committee meetings

- The Executive Committee is recommended to meet at least 3 times during any calendar year to carry forward the business of VINE. These may be 'virtual' meetings by telephone conference. The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping members informed of business conducted at Executive Committee meetings.

9. LANGUAGE POLICY

VINE will conduct its business in English. However, when the need arises and funding allows significant and published documents may be published in other languages (notably Welsh), or as a minimum, with translations of summary sections.

10. REVIEW

This constitution will be reviewed by the Executive Committee before the end of February 2008 and any changes recommended for approval at the next AGM.



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