

Council Meeting at Svanholm, Denmark

July 7th – 9th 2006

Council members: Mari Hollander, Andy Langford, Achim Ecker,
Inci Gokmen,

Staff members: Jonathan Dawson, Ina Meyer-Stoll, Kasimir Reichmuth,

Issues:

1. **Preparation for the GA, including Financial overview (Ina):** Agenda GA, Who does what at the GA? Preparation of working groups and open space
2. **Council elections!** Who stands for re-election?
3. **Review of 2006 work programme**
4. Preparation for **office transition** in 2007??? And new staff team for 2008?
5. **New GEN-Europe Material:** New poster; newsletter; translated leaflets: Spanish, German, Italian, Croatian, Greek, French, Turkish, Finnish (almost)
6. **Proposal** to add “**international understanding**” (Völkerverständigung) to the official statutes.
7. **Approval of a new full member** and brief look on **membership development**
8. **Development fields for GEN-E**
9. **Report from the GEN board.**

1.) **Logistical preparation for the GA**

Responsibilities for the GA were cleared, the agenda updated and we agreed to the idea to integrate working groups in the open space frame. Andy is holding the open space. Jonathan, Bo from Svanholm and Andy are preparing the workshop on Monday, 10.7.06

Financial overview of 2005 and first half of 2006 was presented and accepted by the council.

2.) **Council election:**

All council members are willing to continue their service, Mari Hollander will take a sabbatical in 2007 and is not sure if she is available in this period. Although Andy Langford does not live permanently in an ecovillage we agree that it is reasonable to continue his service in the council.

Occurring questions: Does the council represent the ecovillage movement? Is it balanced enough concerning geographical spread, youth, smaller scale EV, grassroots movement?

Discussed questions:

Do we want to keep 5 council members? Feels like a good balance, not too big not too small, represents some kind of diversity. Agreement to continue with 5.

Should we change the period of time for council members being elected?

Council members are open to be elected for three years – needs to be discussed more.

3.) Review of 2006 work programme

- Logical framework

We reviewed the framework for 2006 which represents the work programme for GEN-E. It looks good apart from the promotion of the Twin villages programme. Jacques at Epidaure still has plans to promote more North-South exchanges, however these have not yet materialised.

Questions:

How could we strengthen the field of advocacy within GEN-E?

Who joins Jonathan on a subcommittee to identify and prepare a list of advocacy activities? ANDY! And it is suggested to the members of the GA to join the committee.

Finding areas where GEN-E could communicate with policy makers,
This could also be supported financially by GEN-E

The aspect of research is missing in the list of GEN-E activities. Should be listed for 2007!

Connect with the European Permaculture association –

In May 07 there is a meeting in Bristol on Bioregional development, either national or international (Jonathan, Schumacher society)

4.) Office transition:

Suggestion to have the main office in Germany as long as there is no adequate European alternative concerning charity status. Suggestion to offer special work areas to other ecovillages.

5.) Print materials:

New poster: will be given for free to full members and sold for about 5 Euros

Translation of the leaflet:

Now we have: Greek, German, Italian, Croatian, Spanish, English already printed

Ready are: French, Turkish, Finnish

Open: Russian?

We still have about 800 blank leaflets left: they will be used to print French leaflets for the Festiforum.

Costs to print new leaflets: 3000: 600 Euros or 5000 = 820 €

We go for 5000 and staff is deciding which languages to produce.

6.) Proposal to add the aim “international understanding” to the GEN-Europe statutes

As GEN-Europe is often active with people from different countries it would be easy and even a support for our charity status of the association, if the members decide to have the term „international understanding“ actively mentioned in the official statutes of GEN-E.

The council agrees to the

Decision to bring a Proposal for the GA to change our statutes to add “international understanding” to the aims and goals of the association of GEN-Europe e.V.

7.) New Member and membership development:

The Austrian community Viverde applies for full membership, they are 11 people living permanently on the site.

Decision: to accept Viverde as a full member! Welcome!

Membership development:

The development to gain more full members is very slow – but also organic. The continuity of full members is high. This is different with supportive members, the motivation to pay the dues is low, more than half have not paid yet the fees for 2006. We receive about 12 – 15 new supportive members each year, the fluctuation is much higher. Ina will remind all members who have not paid their fees yet to do so and she will clear the list if members do not respond to requests to pay their fees after one year.

To make it easier for people from countries of East Europe the council took a Decision to offer 50 % travel refunds to members from Eastern Europe from now on.

8.) Development fields:

Brainstorm how and where to invest more energy and money in the future:

- Turkey, traditional villages, how to empower women more?
- Promoting Ecovillage network activities
- Support projects in Eastern Europe, and Eco Regions
- Building bridges with other networks specially by music, songs and other cultural initiatives
- Peace and Permaculture in Palestine
- Planning Templates – Learn from Co-housing projects, they have been more successful (Ithaca and The Village f. ex.) to get building permissions
- Supporting community building in Europe (Forum, EDE short version)
- Leaky barrel/Basket – support local economy, local food production, invest some research to where the money is spent and what could be produced or done locally (example Damanhur) and create local businesses.
- Footprint Analysis – promote more and use for advocacy, could be a research field for more advocacy for GEN-E.
- Next GEN, more youth activities promoting
- Publish educational material on the web, fund earning activity

9.) Report from the GEN board. Jonathan described recent developments on the Board, including the recent establishment of NextGEN and their up-coming planning meeting in Mexico. He also explained that Ross and Hildur had recently made a grant to GEN of around €30,000 and that this had been allocated among various activities that will be happening over the next year, including a Board meeting, likely to be in Thailand in February; new GEN audio-visual materials; and regional meetings in the Americas and Asia.