



Volunteering  
A labour of Love or fulfilling a  
personal need?



Background of BTCV

What we do

Challenges and what we did about it

European Agenda

What next





## About BTCV

- Independent NGO
- Over 50 years old
- Our Mission
  - “to create a more sustainable future by inspiring people to improve places
- Our Vision
  - “A better environment where people are valued, included and involved





## The Figures

- 628,000 volunteers
- 2225 community groups
- 134 offices throughout UK
- Over 20 other countries
- 720 staff
- 300 key volunteers
- €40m income





# Our Objectives

- Creating a better environment
- Developing and supporting environmentally active citizens
- Improving health and well being
- Increasing People's Life Skills





## Creating a better environment

The directly managed, hands-on element of our work

- Conservation projects
- Environmental Integrity and quality
- Practical Action Teams to improve landscapes
- Halting the loss of biodiversity
- Improving local places
- Tackling Climate change





## Developing and supporting environmentally active citizens

- Advice and support service for existing communities and groups
- Development of New Group
- Project Delivery Service
- Small grant scheme
- Inclusion





## Improving health and well being

- Green Gym providing alternative form of exercise
- Increasing self confidence and belonging
- Healthier environments
- Access to Green space





## Increasing People's Life Skills

- Learning through *doing* is an integral element of all that we do. We also increase life skills through structured learning opportunities
- People and Communities – *improving active citizenship skills*
- Provide Qualifications – *mainly vocational*
- Increase employability – *mainly through Government schemes*
- Assist with professional development – *volunteers, staff and others*







# The Challenges



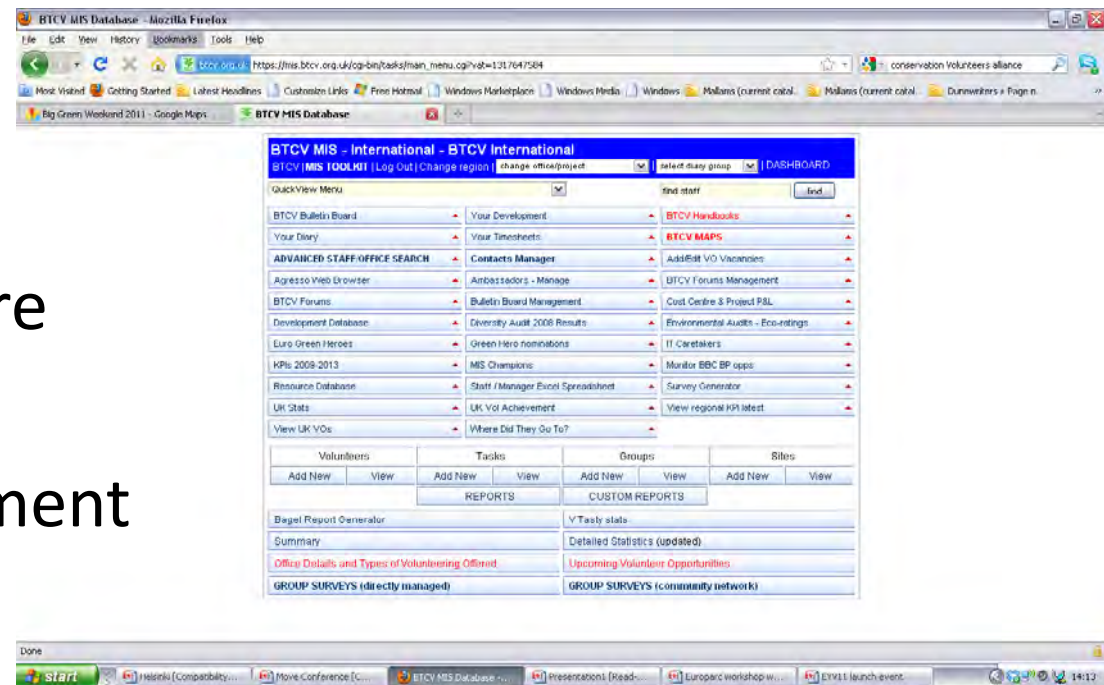
## Providing Evidence

- How do we know we work with 685,000 volunteers
- What is the impact
- How do you know the level of skills
- Why should we fund you



# What did we do

- Developed a Management Information system
- Ensured all staff were part of the process
- Continued development





## What did we do

- Developed research
  - Green Gym and health
  - Impact –
  - Financial social return on Investment
- Told peoples stories though case studies and awards





How environmental volunteering with BTCV is changing lives and attitudes. Research demonstrates that volunteering with BTCV changes attitudes and behaviours across a broad range of environmental and social issues.

- **Seven out of ten volunteers increased the amount of waste they recycled and gave advice to others**
- **about being environmentally friendly as a result of volunteering with BTCV**
- **Volunteering is an overwhelmingly positive experience for young people**
- Nine out of ten young volunteers said they learnt something new, and 98% said they wanted to do it again.
- **Environmental volunteering is an ideal way to encourage active integration**
- Socially disadvantaged groups BTCV works with include young people at risk, people with health problems,
- travellers and homeless people.

- **‘Volunteering can improve physical health and mental wellbeing’ (Scottish Executive)**
- In the last ten years, BTCV has established 95 Green Gyms™ in the UK. Over 10,000 people have worked on
- improving some 2,500 green spaces.
- **Volunteering allows people who are out of paid work to make a contribution to society**
- **Last year, nearly 8,000 people received training through our Employment Programme, and almost 2,000 of these went into full-time work. This resulted in:**
  - Increased earnings = £20m
  - Reduced benefits = £5m
- **Investing in BTCV gives a cost-effective social return**
- A five-year BTCV programme benefiting over 900,000 people in deprived areas saw:
  - Reduced crime
  - Improved leisure
  - Increased employment



## What did we do

- Developed health programme Green Gym to access new budgets
- Worked with university to record the health improvements on people





What is happening in  
Europe on Volunteering?



- 2011 is European Year of Volunteering
- 3 strands
  - European task Force
  - Alliance of NGOs
  - European Parliament working Group
- Many conferences –
- 2 key documents



# EYV 2011 Alliance

## • Alliance Steering Group



## Wider Alliance





## Important documents

- Communication from the Commission –realised on Monday
- P.A.V.E from the Alliance



- They will set the parameters for volunteering for the next 10 years
- They may help to remove barriers
- Improve quality
- Reduce bad practice and exploitation
- Show the value of volunteering
- Get more people involved
- Help with further funding?



# Conservation Volunteers Alliance CVA

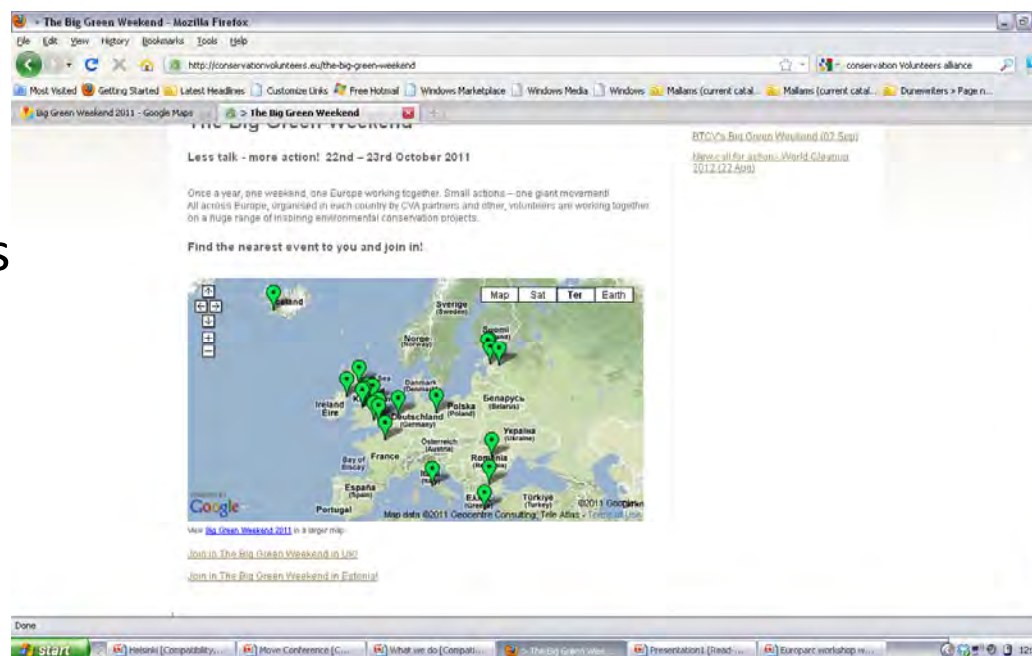
- Network of European organisations involved in Environmental volunteering
- Small new network with member organisations running the activities
- Objectives:
  - Raise profile and advocate on behalf of environmental volunteering
  - Carry out research
  - Develop Europe wide activities
  - Develop and promote quality standards





# Big Green Weekend

- 21-23 October 2011
- 32 projects in 10 different countries so far
- Going for impact in media
- Message is much of Europe's nature is managed by volunteers
- Google map locates all the projects
- Others welcome to join
- Will happen again next year



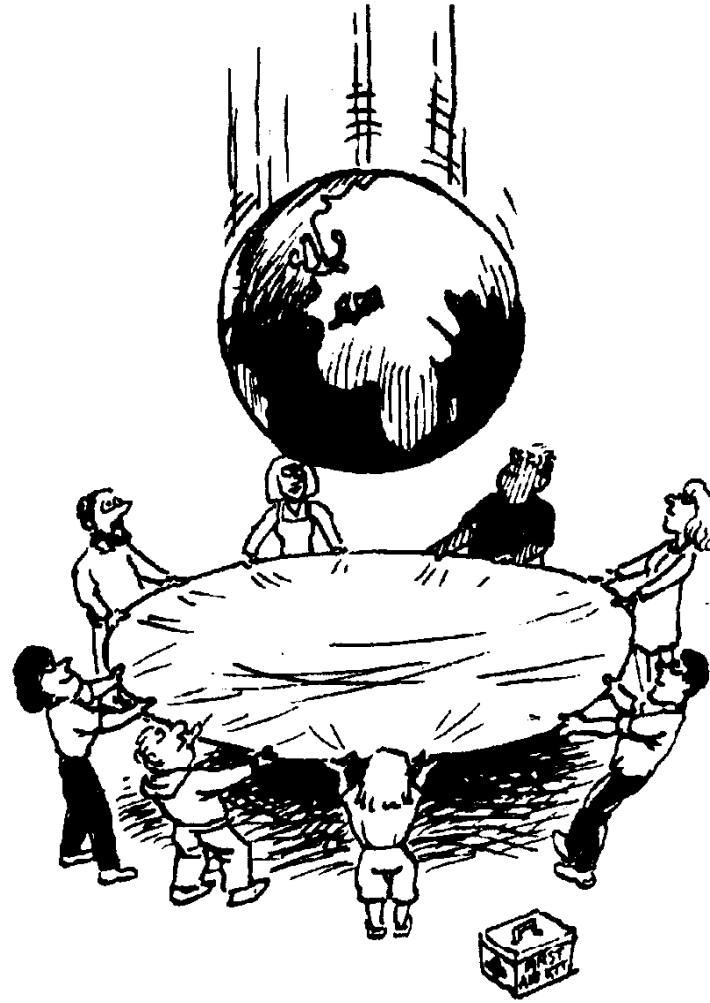


A whole lot going on





The European  
Year of Volunteering



*Work together for the future of the planet.*