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FRANCIS EVANS

# Completion of REAL: Regenerating Engagement & Learning within & beyond IofC

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'A fresh expression of the best of lofC knowhow and wisdom' is how Louie Gardiner describes eight 'seed behaviours' that she has co-developed with others in lofC over the last six years. This particular journey started in **Caux** in 2010, Louie's first encounter with lofC. 'I have a place here' was the thought that came to her and she adds 'that's not a feeling I have had very often in my life.'



Two years later, on the terrace at Caux whilst pondering how else she could support the work of lofC, came her decision to embark on a PhD thesis, researching the group behaviours and culture of lofC using the science of complex systems. 'Human beings through their interactions, develop and adopt group behaviours – usually without realising' explains Louie.

'Behaviours consistently repeated by individuals generate recognisable, coherent patterns i.e. the whole group can find itself 'moving as one' without formal structure or central control mechanisms. Flocks of starlings and shoals of fish are examples of these patterns in the natural world. In lofC, individuals living the values consistently through commonly-practiced behaviours helps grow a coherent, recognised, trustworthy community.' She sensed something special and important in lofC was at risk of being lost.

For the last year, Louie has been facilitating and accompanying a group of 11 participants of all ages in a programme of learning and reflection called 'REAL: Regenerating Engagement And Learning within and beyond lofC, starting with myself'. She herself has been supported and accompanied by life-time volunteer, Jean Brown in Australia.

The completion of REAL was celebrated on 16 June at Greencoat Place, when the participants invited the lofC community to share what they had learned. See [video](#).

The evening highlighted the range of transformative experiences and how each participant had brought different elements to the process, some reflecting on a lifetime's experience of lofC and others exploring the principles for the first time. The evening event featured both personal



outcomes and the collective work of the group in refining the seed behaviours, including an additional principle 'Safeguard my own trustworthiness' which was felt to be an essential factor supporting the other behaviours. The outcome is a valuable resource for the whole IofC community that will now be developed further by seven people drawn from the original group. Options include a 'train the trainer' programme and a second phase of REAL in 2017.

*Article by Francis Evans.*

*Video, by Jason Cobham*