



**CHESHIRE AREA OF NAFAS 53<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**5<sup>th</sup> October, 2023, 11:00am**  
**Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham WA6 7QN**

**Minutes**

**1. Welcome and introductions**

Welcome – Louise Jones welcomed all to the meeting.

Louise read out the names and clubs of those members who had died in the previous year and invited a round of applause for them which was warmly supported. Louise introduced Nicky Wylie and welcomed her as national chairman: she was elected the previous day at NAFAS AGM. The AGM was held online enabling many to attend. At the end of the AGM there is a conversation between Nicky and the immediate past chair of NAFAS. This is available at <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-d&q=nafas+agm+2023#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:ee4f4ca9,vid:wySx-CE6JVw,st:0>

Louise welcomed Beryl Cotton, previous president of Cheshire Area, to chair the meeting.

Beryl thanked Group 2000 who had designed the welcome and stage flowers as a parting gift to Area. Beryl expressed sadness because Group 2000 are folding<sup>1</sup>.

**2. Apologies for absence**

Morag McCord gave apologies from Sue Jackson AOH, Janet Phillimore AOH, Janet Schofield: Area Support Officer, Sharon Nolan: Area Education Representative, Judy Gratton: Young People's Liaison Officer, Carol Baker: joint Chair Area Show, Judith Butterworth, Nether Alderley Flower Club, Winwick Flower Club, and Wistaston and District Flower Club.

**3. Minutes**

**4. Amendments**

The citation for Jean Jones as support officer for CAN was inserted at section 11a.

The amended minutes of the 52<sup>nd</sup> AGM were proposed by Lymm, seconded by Leek – passed nem con.

**5. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising not otherwise covered by the agenda.

**6. Area Chairman's Remarks & Cheshire Area Report – Louise Jones**

It's that time of year when we reflect on the events of the last year.

We were asked to host the National Judges Tests in our Area and we were more than happy to help. A big 'Thank You' to Janet Schofield and the team for helping to arrange this event – the team had to prepare the rooms and transport the Northern Ireland contingent from the airport. Thank you also to all those who kindly arranged exhibits for the candidates to judge for their test. The National judges committee were very thankful for all our hard work.

We have been running workshops throughout this year in venues around the Area. Many thanks to Sharon Nolan for organising these and many thanks to those clubs who have hosted one of these events. This has meant that our members do not have to travel as far to attend workshops.

There are further plans for developing training and education for our Area – watch this space!

Earlier on this year, Beryl Cotton organised the Demonstrators Pre-National Assessment and the National Demonstrators Tests, held in Frodsham. It was a lovely two days and many thanks to all those who attended and supported the candidates. Also, thanks to the Cheshire team, in particular Tracy-Anne Clancy and Janet Schofield, for arranging the logistics on the day, which was no mean feat and for those who helped with teas, and raffle tickets etc.

Our Congratulations go to Dawn Weaver from our Area on becoming a National Demonstrator – Well Done! Sadly, this year we did not have a presence at RHS Tatton. This was for several reasons, but we felt it wasn't in the Area's best interest.

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<sup>1</sup>See also the Rose Cluster report.

Our Area Show at Royal Cheshire County Show (RCCS) was a great success. Thank You to Sylvia Bower and Carol Baker for taking over from Gill Davies and Joan Wilkinson. It was lovely event for our Area. Also, thanks to the Cheshire Area Team.

Your Leadership Team has met on a regular basis throughout the year. Also thank you to the CAN (Cheshire Area of NAFAS) team for all their hard work and support to the Area.

Sadly, we have lost some of our members this year. We give thanks for the love and joy that they have brought into our lives and their work for their clubs and Area.

Thank you and goodbye to Janet Schofield who is stepping down as a Support Officer. Janet very kindly offered to come 'on board' to help for a year during lockdown and stayed for three years. Thank you to Janet for her representation on the National Strategy Team and her work for Area on the Competitors Support Group and many other projects.

We also say thank you and goodbye to Morag McCord, our Area Secretary, she has done so much work – much of which is unseen. She has been in this role for 8 years! We will miss you!

We are still looking for members to join our team. I am aware that many of you are concerned about the number of committee meetings they may have to attend; can I please assure everyone that we have reduced the number of committees considerably compared with the structure we had pre-Covid.

If you think you could help in any way, please speak to one of the team. We have several vacancies. We cannot run the Area without people to help so please think about how you could help.

Finally, I would like to add my personal thanks to the Leadership Team for all their hard work and support.

So, onward and upward to another year of Friendship and Flowers! We have had a good year, the highlights of which were the Demonstrators tests and the RCCS. CAN moves from strength to strength.

#### **7. Area Secretary's Report – Morag McCord**

Since the AGM in 2022 we have had the following meetings:

Leadership – 12 meetings: 10 zoom and two face to face.

CAN Team – six meetings: five zoom and one face to face at Plumley.

Club Reps Forums – four meetings: two zoom and two face to face at Frodsham.

Without a doubt, the face-to-face meetings were very successful, and we had positive ideas from them. The leadership team has considered several of the ideas suggested and some are in practice already.

Minutes and all relevant information received regarding NAFAS has been sent out to Area Officers and Representatives, Club Contacts and Associates of Honour by email.

It is important to keep the secretary up to date with any changes in the club circumstances to enable information to be relayed and to keep members updated and involved.

Sadly, Area now has 36 clubs with one more closing soon. Do not hesitate to let Area know if you are struggling and need any help as the Area officers are willing to give advice etc. and assistance if required.

The correspondence I have received from HQ, clubs and requests via website have been dealt with.

My grateful thanks to Eileen Fantom who volunteered to become Minute secretary at the last AGM and has done a great job over the year.

Morag thanked Clubs for sending her their forms and names of officers in a timely fashion in order to keep the website up to date.

As this is my last report, I would like to thank the Leadership Team most sincerely for supporting me over the last few years and I have made some great friends who have put up with my nagging to get forms filled in or reports to be completed. Cheshire Area is a wonderful organisation to be a member of and I send my best wishes to you all.

Louise Jones and Beryl Cotton proposed a vote of thanks to Morag for over 15 years service to the committee as minute secretary and secretary. All members present gave Morag a round of applause.

Morag thanked CAN for the parting gift she received.

#### **8. Presentation of Area Statement of Accounts – Tracy-Anne Clancy**

Tracey-Anne introduced herself as Area Treasurer, also with responsibility for the newsletter:

I have pleasure in presenting the financial statements for the Cheshire Area of NAFAS for the year 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023. An Income and Expenditure Statement (Annex 1) and a Balance Sheet (Annex 2) have been prepared.

## **Bank Overview**

The balances on the accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> July were as follows:

Barclays Bank : Current Account	£2,022 <sup>2</sup>
Barclays Bank: Savings Account	£22,270
Barclays Bank: JDS&E Account	£7,567
Barclays Bank: Flower Arranger Account	£4,624 <sup>3</sup>

The Area Balance Sheet, showing the closing bank balances, is presented at Annex 2

Our reported **profit for the year** (after interest) is **£2,639**. (Refer to Annex 1)

### **Income**

- Thank you to all those Clubs who paid Affiliation Fees, totalling £19,381. This was made up as; 1,760 members paying £4.90 to Cheshire Area and £6.10 towards National Head Office. Your support was very much appreciated.
- Other income received during the year related to specific events, with associated expenditure.

### **Expenditure**

- Affiliation Fees paid to HQ totalled £10,736. This was calculated based on an assumption that Cheshire Area had 1,760 members with the National Rate of £6.10 being applied.
- Facilities expenditure of £3,323 includes:
  - Website Updates £1,587
  - Internet & Cookie Costs £429
  - Zoom Licences £144
  - Storage Charges £1,075
  - Insurance £88
- ‘The Theatre of Flowers’ @ the RCCS cost £4,949 (excluding the cost of the marquee, tables, electricity etc.) Financial support (invoiced) is always provided by Cheshire Agricultural Society (£,1874), along with income from the ‘Sell Off’ of designs and donations from the Children’s Hands-on’ (£673) at the show plus £2,000 budgeted support from Area. This included paying the demonstrators, volunteer travel expenses, new stands, and polo shirts. Additionally, inclusion of all the results and photos on the website cost £227. [Many thanks to Pam Mosedale (Lymm) who voluntarily took all the photos and sent them to Mike Gallagher – great job].
- The CAN team met for one face-to face meeting during the year with the Club Representatives Forum meeting twice (face-to-face) at Frodsham. A buffet lunch and strawberries and cream were provided. The cost of our meetings totalled £764.
- £523 was expended on Publicity / Publications / Trading which included badges, blue forms, diaries and Christmas cards. Income totalled £681 generating a small profit for Area.

### **Events**

- The 2022 AGM workshop and demonstration by Alison Penno was successful financially, generating a surplus overall of £520 which helped to cover the cost of the hall hire for the AGM business meeting.
- The Area also ran three ‘foam-free’ workshop events during the year. Thank you to Sharon and all the tutors for delivering these and to the Clubs for hosting. The aim was to break-even but a net surplus of £193 was realised.
- The Judges Tests were held in Cheshire, with members creating designs to be judged. Out of pocket expenses were paid to those who volunteered. The judge’s refresher day held at Plumley needed to take place and a budgeted shortfall of £300 was planned. In fact, a shortfall of £112 was realised.

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<sup>2</sup> Uncleared cash funds at the statement date totalled £1,850. Had these funds been received in time, then the current account balance would have been £3,872.

<sup>3</sup> Payments are still to be made for both the Autumn & Winter Edition. Had these payments been made then the Flower Arranger current account balance would have been £1,807.

- The National Demonstrators Tests and Pre-Assessments held at Frodsham Community Centre in March were hosted by Cheshire Area. All income and expenditure was managed by Head Office but a small surplus of £98 was achieved on lunches.
- Clubs were encouraged to support National Flower Arranging Day in May and an allowance of £25 per Club was paid by Area towards costs of exhibits and floral arrangements. A total of 19 clubs took part. Expenditure totalled £475.

This concludes the presentation of the Financial Statements; I will be pleased to address any questions at the AGM.

Tracey-Anne spoke at the AGM and highlighted the successes of the past year. She explained that this year, there is a profit of £2639 which has been from affiliation fees and not from trade. CAN is a not-for-profit organisation so this was unexpected; CAN aims to break even. She warmly thanked those who had organised or hosted events. She drew attention to the highly successful area Show at RCCS and added her thanks to those who had already spoken.

Income and expenditure is listed in Annex 1; the balance sheet is Annex 2. Accounts for JDS&E and The Flower Arranger are listed separately.

### **9. Appointment of Independent Reviewer for accounts 2023, 24**

The current independent examiner of the accounts, Mr Nigel Taylor, was proposed.

### **10. Adoption of reports and actions – sections 6-9**

Adoption was proposed by Neston, seconded by Disley. Passed *nem. con.*

### **11. Publicity & Events Reports**

#### **11.i Publicity Report – Tracy-Anne Clancy**

October 2022 saw the launch of the Cheshire Area newsletter for all members of the Cheshire Area.

Although the initial distribution list of circa 40 people was small, this has now grown to several hundred with requests to be added received each month. The aim is to share as much Club, Area and National information as possible, with as many people as possible, to therefore improve communication. It also gives us a platform to celebrate successes at shows and showcase our design talents. Any events and trips can also be publicised to help support clubs more widely. All articles, news, events information can be sent to [treasurer@nafascheshire.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@nafascheshire.org.uk)

The RCCS 'Theatre of Flowers' was an ideal opportunity to promote the Area, Clubs and explain what we have to offer. Goody bags (containing a pre-loved Flower Arranger magazine, free entry ticket to a Club, plus lots of other floral design information) were handed out to interested parties. The opportunity to 'have a go' at the simple table-scape also provided an opportunity to chat to people about floral design. A 'selfie station' was also created in front of the decorated floral rustic stile with several hundred children having their photograph taken there, holding their creations from the 'children's hands-on'. The Cheshire Area publicity board was strategically placed within the camera shot!

Cheshire Area now has a QR code which is used at publicity opportunities. Scanning the code with a phone takes the person directly to our Area website.

Tracey-Anne requested that all Clubs keep her up-to-date regarding their events. She is particularly happy to receive photographs.

## 11.ii Website – Mike Gallagher

Over the last year an increasing number of clubs have submitted content for their own web page. This content provides not only information for their own members, but may help to also attract new ones, especially if the webpage has a warm welcome, up to date content, a list of meetings or calendar of events displaying for example, demonstrators and speakers. These will demonstrate the variety of activities the club offers. To find your club's own webpage go to [www.nafascheshire.org.uk/clubs.htm](http://www.nafascheshire.org.uk/clubs.htm)

### Submitting content and updates for inclusion on your club webpage

Please email me at [website@nafascheshire.org.uk](mailto:website@nafascheshire.org.uk) If there's anything you're not sure of please let me know and I'll do my best to help.

### New – NAFAS Cheshire Area sections

In May and June, the Demonstrators, Teachers, Judges and Speakers sections were further enhanced and more added. There are now links for your club to contact them directly. To access any of the above select the CAN DIRECTORY link on the website.

### New – Flower Clubs with Workshops/Classes

Another new webpage has been created to publicise clubs who hold regular workshops or longer courses in flower arranging for all levels of ability.

### New - "Read All About It"

Members, and potential members, can now view the excellent monthly newsletter online. This very informative CAN publication, with news of interest to all clubs, can be accessed from the homepage. You can also receive it by emailing [newsletter@nafascheshire.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@nafascheshire.org.uk)



### Main Event – The 2023 Cheshire Area Show at the RCCS (Around 125 excellent photos supplied by Pam Mosedale)

The biggest annual website addition. It includes approx. 16 new pages. The show index page includes a list of all the results in each category & there's also links to photos in those categories, Special Awards & Prize-Givings.

Don't take my word for it! Have a cuppa, relax and take a look at your club member's and others' magnificent arrangements. There could be many which give you inspiration for the future!

Access all the above from: [www.nafascheshire.org.uk/royal-cheshire-show-2023.htm](http://www.nafascheshire.org.uk/royal-cheshire-show-2023.htm)

Photograph shows the Best in Show Winner by Jane Tully. NB You can view a larger version on the 'Stark Contrast' Class page: [www.nafascheshire.org.uk/royal-cheshire-show-2023/class-f2/stark-contrast.htm](http://www.nafascheshire.org.uk/royal-cheshire-show-2023/class-f2/stark-contrast.htm)

**All clubs should be alert to the fact that there are "funny forms" being sent. Don't open an email unless you are certain it is authentic.**

## 11.iii Flower Arranger Magazine – Catherine Bower

### Flower Arranger Magazine

Despite further club closure, there was an average of 392 copies ordered per edition. This is a small fall from 404 in 2022. 3 clubs did not place an order in 2023.

### Accounts

Copy of Bank Statement sent to Area Treasurer whenever received from bank (transaction in or out). The account balance at 31<sup>st</sup> July was £4,623.65. Autumn and Winter editions are to be paid from this. 2023 autumn invoice of £1,408.90 due to be taken 31<sup>st</sup> July but taken 2<sup>nd</sup> August. Winter edition due mid-October for similar amount.

### Promotional Discount

The remaining balance in the account has been earned from 'Promotional Discounts and, in past years, the sale of 'pre-loved' and back copies at shows. Headquarters give 10p per copy to help promote the Flower Arranger magazine and cover the cost of postage for additional copies to clubs. At a Zoom meeting on 15.08.2023, Steven Lane announced that the **Promotional Discount would cease from 2024** as he could not show how this was used. AFAOs demonstrated how it was used and was a useful source of income. It is not known if it will continue. In the short term, there is a balance to cover admin costs e.g. postage.

The **Flower Arranger bank account was closed on 14.08.2023** with a balance of £3,214.75. A cheque for this amount has been paid into the main Area bank account. Club FA officers and Area list of club contacts notified of this change.

#### **2024 Subscriptions**

2024 reduced price via club subscription is £16 for 4 editions. Club orders to Catherine Bower (Area Flower Arranging Officer) by **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November**. The order form, delivery dates stencil and covering letter was forwarded to club contacts by area Secretary mid-July. A copy sent to CFAO, who provided a contact email address, early September. HQ contact who manages orders and queries from AFAO works part time, usually Monday- Wednesday.

Contact to Area Flower Arranger Officer can be made via: [flower.arranger@nafascheshire.org.uk](mailto:flower.arranger@nafascheshire.org.uk) or link on website contact button.

Catherine thanked her husband, John, for all the assistance he gives her. John was present and thanked her for this.

#### **11.iv RCCS – Carol Baker and Sylvia Bower**

This year was mine and Sylvia's first show as joint chairman. At first it was quite daunting but exciting. However, all the hard work put in by everyone on the committee and other helpers paid off.

We had some new mechanics for staging, which allowed us to change the layout of the marquee, as it allowed us to open up the space and gave visitors and competitors a clear and better view of the exhibits and through to the demonstrations taking place.

Competitors entered 94 exhibits in total and the standard was very high. There were many of the usual faces but also newcomers, both from the Cheshire area but also other areas. The best in show was won by a Mercia and North Wales member who was new to exhibiting.

The judges were very impressed and commented on the high standard achieved by the competitors.

The four demonstrators, Debbie Davies, Louise Jones, Mark Entwistle and Eleanor Griffiths, were well received and their arrangements 'flew off' the sales table before the end of the demonstrations. Kath Williams gave a demonstration with her 'Paper Flowers' followed with some 'hands on' sessions.

'The children's hands on' station was very busy both days and those instructing were kept on their toes and lots of beaming faces taking a small arrangement home. This is important from an educational perspective. Also, the adult 'hands on area was busy. There was a rustic stile displaying flowers from a local grower and people could have a go at arranging some flowers in a glass jar or bottle.

The Theatre of Flowers was a great success and now we can build on this for 2024.

A big thank you to everyone who helped to make it a success. It's teamwork that makes it happen.

Stockport Afternoon Club proposed adoption of the reports in section 11, seconded by Goostrey. Passed *nem. con.*

#### **12. Cluster Reports**

##### **Iris Cluster (Ashton Hayes & Tarvin, Chester, Eddisbury & Sandiway, Frodsham & District, Mid-Cheshire, Rural Chester, Tarporley, Widnes, Winwick)**

Looking back to the first report I wrote for Iris cluster, I was shocked to discover it was October 2021. Where have three years gone to? How the world has changed in those three years, yet the world of flowers moves ever onwards to provide "Flowers, Friendship and Fun" for the active participants of our Clubs.

I am pleased to report that the clubs in Iris Cluster are mostly doing well. Even one, that thought it was on the brink of closure, has had new members and is optimistic for the immediate future. At Eddisbury and Sandiway we have risen from 59 pre-Covid members to a current membership of 80. There is definitely a renewed hope for the survival of Cheshire Flower Clubs.

Earlier this year our Cluster continued to meet via Zoom. Then at long last we were able to meet face to face for the first time at Frodsham. This gave us an opportunity to put names to faces and to cement the relationships that had developed via Zoom. Finally in June 2023 we met as a Cluster at Tarporley Garden Centre. Five people attended with four clubs from the Cluster being represented. (Eddisbury and Sandiway, Mid Cheshire, Tarvin/Ashton Heyes and Tarporley). Apologies were received from three clubs. It was recognised that because of the mileage distance of the cluster (Wirral to Winwick!) it would not be feasible for some clubs to attend but we hope they may join us for future gatherings. It is not yet arranged but we decided to meet again in the Autumn.

All clubs in Iris Cluster continue to face the same issues. One of the biggest being getting new blood onto the Committee and also the problem of knowing how to attract younger members. (All ideas gratefully received!) All those present were pleased that Area are trying to get clarification and transparency from HQ. It is hoped however, that a line can be drawn under past events so that the National Organisation can move forward and support clubs by being a leading light across the Country. Hopefully the success of the National event in Gloucester will help to cement a constructive attitude towards NAFAS and enable the Trustees to build a positive future for the organisation.

Sadly, one of the Iris Cluster Leads, June Shallcross, passed away in August. June was a great believer in promoting the world of flowers in any way possible and was a staunch supporter of the Cluster idea. She was the first to offer support, encouragement and guidance to anyone who requested it and had a wealth of knowledge to impart. Her creativity and passion for flowers was an inspiration to us all.

Although everyone is very busy, I hope we will continue to meet as a Cluster. Hopefully we will have chance to touch base at the Area AGM and have another face-to-face meeting before Christmas. I guess over the dark winter months of January and February we will be back to ZOOM! I look forward to catching up with you all.

### **Peony Cluster (Elworth, Leek, Macclesfield, Nether Alderley, South Cheshire, Tunstall, Wistaston & District)**

The group have met a couple of times over the past twelve months or more and have usually just had a general catch up and "getting to know each other" type discussions. However, the last time we met at Astbury Garden Centre, we decided to try and focus our attention on a more specific topic and at Bernard's suggestion, we talked about "Communication."

I summarized the main points covered in a follow up email for those who weren't able to be with us and thought it might be appropriate to share our thoughts with you all.

- Area have requested that clubs make sure that their contact details on the **Cheshire Area Website** are up to date. This was particularly relevant at the time as Area had a strong presence at The Interflora World Club event in Manchester in 7-9<sup>th</sup> Sept 2023 where a QR code on their stand encouraged visitors to scan the code which took them directly to the Area website where visitors were able to find out about clubs in their area.
- Nether Alderley expressed concerns that details they had supplied hadn't been update on the Cheshire website. Subsequent enquiries revealed that the best way to get details on the website is to contact Mike Gallagher directly at [websitemanager@nafascheshire.org.uk](mailto:websitemanager@nafascheshire.org.uk)
- New members – we all know it isn't easy to attract new members so different methods of communicating with potential target audiences were discussed – a leaflet drop directly to houses was successful to some extent for Elworth – Clubs in the Peony Cluster will consider a leaflet drop to more targeted people/places e.g. florists, churches, libraries, schools, U3A, organisations in their area, mum's groups etc.
- Make sure new members and visitors are welcomed – welcome pack, follow up card/letter- meet and greet at the entrance etc. – consider welcome flowers at the entrance to your venue and then gift them to a charity or local venue afterwards and include a leaflet and programme. Could include a voucher for a free visit. Consider holding an event specifically for new members to help them get to know other members and feel more involved. Get people talking!
- Newsletters help to engage members more – they get people talking – if members are not particularly active, they might realise what they are missing out on if they see photos of good



times! (Not always easy but try to use photos of your younger members!) Put newsletters in public places. Newsletters keep members connected and provide a sense of belonging.

- Similarly, Facebook and other social media – we know not everybody uses it but clubs have been known to get new members because a younger family member has seen a post and told, Mum, Grandma, Auntie etc.
- Publicity – we do what we can for our own clubs and Cheshire Area but we would like to see a much bigger push from HQ – a dedicated publicity officer is needed for both Cheshire Area and at HQ, ANY VOLUNTEERS!!!!
- We would like to see big personalities involved and speaking to audiences outside the NAFAS organisation e.g. on TV and in national publications. Bernard suggests NAFAS insert a flyer into national women's magazines to go on every newsstand! Why not, after all a Naked Wine voucher popped out of our Flower Arranger magazines this autumn!
- HQ already partners with some organisations but it should consider others – to appeal to a different audience e.g. Flowers From the Farm – recently featured on Country File and Gardeners' World on the BBC
- Get People talking – if we do nothing else, we should make our individual clubs the best we possibly can and encourage people to tell others about it – consider VALUE ADDED – flower clubs are more than just about the demonstrators – consider easy access competitions – one flower in a vase – a class for beginners -a photography competition – make it a people's choice to involve spectators more – consider a prize instead of trophy.
- VALUE ADDED could be a revamped sales table – a jigsaw swap – book sales and of course a workshop. Get people moving about, talking to each other about what a great time they've had and more importantly, telling their friends!  
Elworth serve their tea and coffee after the dem but before the raffle is drawn – they find people stay longer and communicate with each other. This is after the demonstrator has been consulted obviously!
- A final thought ...Word of mouth is a good form of communication and free advertising. Communication is two way – we must listen and we must question. If we do not know what is happening, we should ask. Cheshire Area is approachable and will do their best for you so talk to them.

### **Rose Cluster (Goostrey, Group 2000, Hale Barns, Heald Green, Knutsford, Lymm, Sale)**

The representatives from each club in the Rose cluster have met on several occasions during the year, usually at Fryers Garden Centre for coffee and toasted tea-cakes. This has also provided a shopping opportunity!

At the start of the year, Club programmes, events and workshop information was shared so that all our Club members could benefit from attending events at other neighbouring clubs. The meeting of the cluster group also provides the opportunity for: sharing of ideas for demonstrations and events, supporting each other with Area tasks (volunteering at the National Demonstrators tests, Club Reps Forum and AGM with raffle, refreshments, meet and greet), discussing the shortcomings of HO and what we require from them (to be fed back to Area and HO), discussing where our affiliation fees are spent and looking for successors for Area roles.

Additionally, the cluster visited Moorfield Farm Flowers (flower farm in Bramhall) to discuss and plan with them the floral decoration of the publicity area in the Theatre of Flowers and also the talk given at the Club Reps. Forum in July.

Sadly, one of our cluster group clubs, Group 2000, announced its intention to close this year. Formed 25 years ago to bring contemporary work and a hands-on experience to learn new techniques, they have certainly fulfilled the brief. Thank you Group 2000 for your contribution to our floral community. The cluster has provided a great deal of support and friendship for each other during the year and we look forward to continuing in 2023/24.

### **Lily Cluster (Handbridge, Heswall, Hoylake, Neston, New Brighton, Upton-by-Chester, Wirral)**

The cluster hasn't had any formal meetings although we have had informal catch-ups at Frodsham at the last Club Reps meeting. There is quite a bit of informal contact, as we find club reps are members of a



number of clubs across the Wirral.

We continue to make use of the Wirral Flower Clubs' Facebook page for publicity and share our newsletters.

Hoylake Flower club celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with an afternoon tea at a cafe in Hoylake. Area Chairman Louise Jones was their guest.

The Interflora World Cup in Manchester attracted members from Wirral clubs who enjoyed a trip this special event and some were stewards at the NAFAS stand. Our Area Chairman worked hard demonstrating and manning the stand over the course of the event and she is a Wirral lass and New Brighton member. (Well done Louise).

Sadly our chief news is the closure of Heswall Club who will be having their Farewell Meeting in October. This promises to be quite a night! Last month Heswall kindly made their meeting free to all comers and quite a number of representatives for Wirral Clubs turned up with publicity material and/or invitations to come to their clubs free of charge. We were delighted to see National Demonstrator Lorena Dyer. Earlier in the year Heswall published a chart in their newsletter detailing all the clubs in the Wirral (Chester was included on the chart as it might be appealing to those who didn't want to drive at night). Heswall chairman Janet and Lorena kindly encouraged Heswall members to get their flowery fix elsewhere.

#### **Sunflower Cluster (Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme, Disley & District, Prestbury, Romiley, Stockport, The Bramall Hall, Wilmslow)**

No report.

#### **13. NAFAS Report**

The NAC met on several occasions over zoom with one face to face meeting early in the New Year in Leamington Spa.

A three-year plan is now in place and covers such topics as: delivering the Ofqual application; promoting the National Show; enhancing the provision of National and Area training opportunities of all disciplines; expanding the current collection of National Education Handbooks; collaborating with third party authors to provide a wider range of publications; discussing membership structure; updating website; improving social media; the flower arranger to be wrapped in recyclable material; reviewing and updating NAFAS Policies and Procedures; recruitment policy and induction pack for new trustees and committee members and many more topics.

The biggest event was the National Flower Show at Gloucester Cathedral. Thanks to the Trustees and Kathy Lee for all their hard work in putting this show together. On the first day there was a huge queue halfway up the High Street ready to get into the Cathedral – what a fabulous sight! It was certainly different to other shows. The show was also a success financially, with a surplus of £53,560.

The NAC will continue to meet regularly in the future.

[Since then, there has been the Interflora World Cup – this will be reported at next year's AGM.]

## **14. NAFAS Sub-committee Representative's Reports**

### **14.i Judge's Report – Sue Clissold**

Since the last AGM, I am delighted to say Judges have had a very busy year starting with our first actual National Show since Covid in May at Gloucester Cathedral, which was a resounding success both financially and in the number of entries and visitors. Huge congratulations to all participants, judges and National Judges and Show Committee for the hard work and dedication that went into producing such a superb advert for NAFAS stating that we are back!

The new Competitions Manual was launched at the Show and is now more streamlined and easier to navigate. Arrangements have been made that on the 14<sup>th</sup> October Pam Fleming-Williams is holding a class tutorial at Plumley, to discuss the changes and additions, plus schedule writing, plant ID and comment cards. This is open to anyone and spaces are still available so please contact me for further details. To date, 17 Judges and keen competitors and schedule writers have accepted from Cheshire and other areas.

The Judges' Conference was held at Dromentine in August with over 30 people attending. We were briefed on the alterations/omissions on the new manual as well as judgement on what constitutes a pedestal arrangement.

Still Life exhibits were also analysed.

Both workshops were useful in judging criteria. Plant ID and a period quiz kept everyone working hard but a very enjoyable time.

The Judges refresher day held last October and tutored by Michael Bowyer was very successful. The next one to be organised for 2025 to enable judges to keep their name in the NAFAS list of accredited judges.

Cheshire Area is always willing to encourage new judges so please encourage your members to come forward so that we may put on an Area judges taster day as soon as possible.

Area judges can apply to do the course to become a National Judge after three years, which could happen in 2024 depending on numbers.

### **14.ii Demonstrator's Report – Beryl Cotton**

#### **Area Report**

Information from the National committee has been cascaded to all the Demonstrators on the Cheshire Area List to keep them well informed and up to date. After lockdown, it is good to know that our Cheshire demonstrators are busy again and being invited to our Cheshire flower clubs and beyond to delight our members. A certified demonstrator refresher day was held at Frodsham Community Centre, Frodsham on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023 taken by Beryl Cotton, NAFAS Demonstrator Instructor with a general invitation not only to demonstrators on the Cheshire List but those further afield and anyone interested in training to become an Area Demonstrator. We now have a couple of names of candidates considering training to become an Area Demonstrator. We hope more competent flower arrangers/keen competitors will come forward so that the Area can consider an Area Demonstrator Test next year. We need some new faces to visit our clubs.

Cheshire demonstrators assisted NAFAS at the Interflora World Cup 2023 with promenade demonstrations to promote the Flower Arranger Magazine subscriptions, NAFAS Notelets, books, calendars, Christmas Cards, NAFAS aprons and, of course, membership of our clubs.

#### **National Report**

The National Demonstrators Committee have held three zoom committee meetings throughout the year. The committee are James Burnside, Delyth Price, Lucy Ellis and Vanessa Wellock led by Chair Beryl Cotton

A day of guidance and advice for National Candidates and pre national assessment candidates was held at Frodsham Community Centre in January. This was followed by the National tests on 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at Frodsham Community Centre, Cheshire and the National committee were very appreciative for the help and support from members of the Cheshire Area over the two days. Three candidates were successful in passing their national test, which included Dawn Weaver from Cheshire Area, Julia Loudon SAFAS and

Northumberland and Durham Area along with Sara Barrow, Flowers Northwest. Several well-known Cheshire members took their pre national assessment (not a qualification). Following the tests there was a zoom guidance meeting for all pre national candidates led by the Senior Adjudicator. In June the Demonstrator Adjudicators and Instructors met on zoom and had a very constructive meeting. Amongst many Agenda items, several amendments to the "D" forms (guidance forms) were discussed which the committee considered at their meeting the following day. Any Revisions to the D forms will be circulated to Area Representatives in due course.

The National Committee produced a Spring Bulletin and a Stepping up to become an Area Demonstrator leaflet which has been distributed via the Area Representatives.

Beryl ended with an appeal for all clubs to encourage new demonstrators to come forward.

#### **14.iii Education Report – Sharon Nolan**

Since the AGM in September 2022, we had an excellent Education Day in October 2022 with a National Teacher, Julie Pearson, who provided a number of solutions for mechanics supporting foam-free creativity for tutors to pass on to their students. The next Education Day will be in October 2023 with a National Teacher, Dawn Weaver.

Following the theme of foam-free creativity, we have held three very successful workshops for members, hosted by clubs across the Area; Nether Alderley in January 2023 with tutor Pam Fleming-Williams, Tarvin in February 2023 with tutor Eleanor Griffiths, and Disley in March 2023 with me as tutor. There is a workshop in September 2023 at Lymm, for which I am again tutor. So far, we have ensured that there has been no duplication of the foam-free designs.

Two events are planned for March 2024, hosted by Eddisbury and Sandiway, and May 2024, hosted again by Tarvin. More information in due course.

I am very grateful to the clubs which have volunteered to host these events; they cannot take place without this support. It is disappointing that more clubs have not volunteered to do so. Hosting costs the club nothing and provides an opportunity to for fund-raising on the day.

On a national level, work continues to agree certification through Ofqual. Meanwhile plans are underway to teach the certificated modules prior to this agreement being reached. Any modules completed will then be taken into account in the final certification process. One piece of work required in the coming year is to agree how the Cheshire Area should support, or not, the teaching of the certificated modules.

#### **14.iv Young People's Liaison Report – Judy Gratton**

Following my illness towards the end of 2022 it has been fabulous to return to my "flowery world".

Prior to being ill I had been working with a class teacher of 8 to 9 year-olds. He wanted them to make a natural Christmas door wreath to take home. We decided that they would make a willow frame to be decorated with ivy, holly and other long lasting foliage.

Unfortunately, I was unable to assist with the actual lesson. He let me know that the children had a fabulous time, with some very creative designs made entirely out of fresh plant material.

I submitted an article to Cheshire Area of NAFAS Newsletter for an Easter flower arrangement. This was aimed towards young people to have fun with a foam free arrangement using a simple container decorated to their choice and using bunch of supermarket flowers together with garden foliage.

In April 2023, Jean Jones and I attended a Beeston Young Farmers meeting. The members participate in various craft activities, including flower arranging, as part of their annual Rally. We discussed how to select and care for the plant material, basic design shapes, using a variety of mechanics and interpretation of competition titles. We were grateful to Margaret Baldini from Eddisbury and Sandiway Flower Club for the introduction and all her help in preparing the event.

Nantwich Show took place in July 2023. Two primary schools were invited to compete in their own class "Cast a Spell". Calveley Primary Academy decorated their containers and included long lasting plant material and foliage. Baldwins Gate Early Years presented us with an array of magic wands! The entries were judged by Mrs Sionedd Hughes who commented that a lot of thought had gone into them and she was impressed

with the creativity of the young people. In addition, we ran a “hands on” flower arranging for children, which was enjoyed as much by the adults!

If anyone is interested in running something similar for their own local schools or children’s out of school activities please do get in touch. Judy Gratton 07506022709 or email [judy.gratton@live.co.uk](mailto:judy.gratton@live.co.uk)

Brammall Hall Club proposed adoption of the reports in sections 13 and 14, seconded by Chester. Passed *nem. con.*

## **15. Election to Area Rôles**

**Area Chairman** – no nominations received.

The committee proposes that the rôle is split, the rationale for which was the information gleaned at the Club Representatives’ meeting in April, 2023. There are three facets to the leadership: National Executive Committee, CAN administration, and pastoral work with individual clubs. Splitting the position of Chairman has made it more attractive.

**CAN Leadership Team I: National Liaison Representative** – Janet Schofield has been nominated.

Janet has worked with HQ in the past and knows many of the relevant people. She is an existing CAN Area Support Officer.

**CAN Leadership Team II: County Convenor** – Tracey-Anne Clancy has been nominated.

This would not interfere with Tracey-Anne’s rôle as treasurer and would complement her rôle as publicity officer. She would be supported by the secretary and the minutes secretary. She would appreciate if someone came forward to be assistant treasurer.

**CAN Leadership Team III: Pastoral Care** – Louise Jones has been nominated.

At the last AGM Louise Jones was re-elected area chairman for a third year – an extension of the usual two year term. She is happy to continue in this part of her previous rôle of Chairman.

Questions were invited.

Gill Davis (Lymm) asked if this might cause a problem with deciding in the overall direction of CAN. Tracey-Anne and Louise said that they expected that a team approach might bring in more ideas.

After no further questions this constitutional change was proposed by Tarporley, seconded by Romiley, passed *nem. con.* Janet Schofield, Tracey-Anne Clancy and Louise Jones duly elected.

**Area Secretary** – Vanessa Lees has been nominated.

Vanessa is a member of Lymm Floral Art Club and is currently their programme secretary. She started flower arranging at Church in St Mary’s Lymm. Her professional background is in administration where accuracy was paramount. She is well versed in GDPR and comfortable with social media. She will be an asset to the team.

Proposed by Disley, seconded by Romiley, passed *nem. Con.*

**Area Treasurer** – Tracey-Anne Clancy is happy to continue.

Proposed by Upton-by-Chester, seconded by Lymm, passed *nem. con.*

**Minutes Secretary** – Eileen Fantom is happy to continue.

**Support Officer** – Jean Jones is happy to continue.

Proposed by Eddisbury and Sandiway, seconded by Elworth, passed *nem. Con.*

## **16. Election of NAFAS Representatives:**

Judges’ Representative – Sue Clissold, Demonstrators’ Representative – Beryl Cotton, Education Representative – Sharon Nolan, and Young People’s Representative – Judy Gratton are all happy to continue.

Proposed by Stockport, seconded by Leek, passed *nem. con.*

During this year, Pam Mosedale will be shadowing Sharon Nolan. Pam has 30 years teaching experience and may wish to take over as education representative in the future.

## **17. AOB**

### **Associate of Honour**

Louise Jones read the following citation in support of Pam Fleming-Williams as an Area Associate of Honour.

Pam Fleming-Williams

A short resume of Pam's work at Area and at National level include -

Leading a team in Christmas 2005 to decorate an area of Tatton House.

As a Judge she became Area Judges Rep in 2006 for some 13 years - helping and supporting judges in our area.

In 2011 - Pam joined the National Judges Committee in 2011 and took over as their Chair in 2014. She was also the National Competitions Officer in 2019.

Back in Area in 2015 she took over from Ann Williams as the Show Team Chair for the then Cheshire Show for several years.

Pam expressed her surprise and gratitude for the honour.

### **Questions to Nicky Wylie, NAFAS National Chairman**

[nicky@nafas.org.uk](mailto:nicky@nafas.org.uk) [Chairman@nafas.org.uk](mailto:Chairman@nafas.org.uk)

Tracey-Anne Clancy: Affiliation Fees.

This was a subject of much debate at the Club Representatives' meetings this year. What does the HQ money get spent on? It is clear that members do not have enough information.

NW: Accommodation for HQ is the main outgoing. The money from the sale of Osborne House is invested with Rathbones <https://www.rathbones.com/> which yields enough to pay the lease on the current building. This lease is for five years and new premises will then be sought. The running costs of HQ are considerable, approximately £200,000 per annum. £100,000 was borrowed by NAFAS in order to cover expenses during the Covid period. Steven Lave (CEO) is supported by paid staff to run the office, website, manage publicity, and oversee the National facets of our membership without which we would not have national or regional shows, classes or quality control. Members' contributions goes mainly towards staff costs. Recently £10,000 was given by HQ to support the NAFAS stalls at the Interflora World Cup. Memberships are beginning to fall so NAFAS needs to attract younger people of fees will rise.

Barbara Fisher (Hoylake and Neston): What about people who are members of more than one local Club? Every member of every Club pays the same affiliation fee to CAN and NAFAS. Why?

NW: NAFAS has no idea how many members it has. It is not like other national organisations (e.g. Girl Guides or the WI), there is no database. The only way to learn how many individuals are represented by the number of affiliation fees is to introduce a database. The easiest way to do this might be to restructure the whole of NAFAS. This will not be a rapid process.

Tracey-Anne Clancy: What does the CEO do?

NW: Everything! He works hard including on days off if there is a major event. He was officially on leave during the recent Interflora World Cup but was there every day for over eight hours.

Leek Flower Club: Might affiliation fees increase? This year Leek fees have increased by 1/6<sup>th</sup> – is this a national problem?

NW: Possibly. This year the HQ fees have increased after a two year freeze. NAFAS do not know how much money will come in from Clubs until it arrives because there is no record of the number of members.

Barbara Fisher: What is the NAFAS HQ five year plan? How will NAFAS increase its profile?

NW: The problem is that finding out about NAFAS is difficult. It appears low on the list after a standard Google search for “Flower Arranging” (24<sup>th</sup> at time of writing gives a link to a NAFAS book, the first mention – EF). A rebrand or relaunch would cost a lot because artistic advice is expensive. NAFAS needs to consider sponsoring Google advertisements. It is the rôle of HQ to direct people to the correct place. Younger and newer members are keen for education so this is a high priority for HQ. NAFAS courses will soon be registered with Ofqual (the replacement for City and Guilds). If we don’t attract and keep new members, we will fold. The current social media presence is poor. No-one has publicity and social media in their job description. NAFAS HQ needs board members with expertise in business, money, and advertising.

(Some other supplementary questions were asked to clarify the points made by NW the answers for which are included above.)

A ready-reckoner to calculate your flower club fee is available on request from Tracey-Anne Clancy or Louise Jones.

**18. Date of next AGM: 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2024 at Frodsham Community Centre**

Meeting finished at 12.35pm

Signed.....

Date.....