

54th Annual General Meeting
Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane, Frodsham.
3rd October, 2024.

1. Welcome and introductions

Tracy-Anne Clancy (TAC), Flower Clubs of Cheshire administrative chairman and treasurer, welcomed everyone to the meeting. She thanked Dorothy Monks for arranging the welcome flowers and the team of helpers working in the kitchen.

TAC introduced those seated at the top-table: Janet Schofield (JS), Flower Clubs of Cheshire chairman's office national liaison; Louise Jones (LJ), Flower Clubs of Cheshire chairman's office pastoral lead; Vanessa Lees (VL), Flower Clubs of Cheshire Secretary; assisted by the minutes secretary. Also at the top-table was seated Beryl Cotton (BC) who was invited to Chair the meeting.

2. Attendance

The following Clubs were represented¹: Ashton Hayes and Tarvin Flower Club, Chester Flower Club, Disley and district Flower Club, Eddisbury and Sandiway Flower Club, Frodsham and district Flower Club, Goostrey Flower Club, Hale Barns Flower Club, Handbridge Flower Club, Hoylake Flower Club, Knutsford Floral Design Club, Leek Floral Art Society, Lymm Floral Art Group, Macclesfield Flower Club, Mid-Cheshire Flower Club, Neston Flower Society, Nether Alderley Flower Club, New Brighton Flower Arrangement Society, Prestbury Flower Club, Romiley Flower Club, Rural Chester Flower Club, Sale Flower Club, Stockport Afternoon Flower Club, Tarporley Flower Club, Upton-by-Chester Flower Club, Wilmslow Guild Floral Design Club, Winwick Flower Club, Wirral Flower Club, and Wistaston and district Flower Club.

Apologies were received from Sharon Nolan, retiring Education representative, and from Heald Green Flower Club. Other individuals who sent apologies were: Marilyn Baker, Shirley Baulkwill, Gill Davies, Sue Davis, Susan Smith and Anne Watson.

3, 4. Minutes of the meeting of 5th October, 2023

The minutes were proposed by Disley, seconded by Goostrey, and passed by all present without amendment. They were signed as a true record of events.

5. Matters Arising

Sharon Nolan wrote to the Secretary and raised a point regarding the progress of the NAFAS qualification. (Page 14, minutes 2023.) She states that the NAFAS courses are still quite a long way from being registered with Ofqual.

¹ It should be noted that Tunstall and District Flower Club have resigned from the Area.

6. Chairman's Office

6.i Administrative – Tracy-Anne Clancy

What an incredibly positive and productive year we have enjoyed!

It is extremely rewarding to look back and appreciate what we have achieved in just one year. The year started with our Area, along with Flowers North West, supporting the NAFAS HQ publicity stand at the Interflora World Cup in Manchester. It was a great opportunity to network with like-minded people and enrol some trainee demonstrators in the process! Thank you to everyone who volunteered their time to help set up, sell cards and magazines, demonstrate and chat to the general public. October saw the appointment of 'Cheshire's own' Nicky Wylie as National Chairman of NAFAS at the October AGM. After our AGM, the demonstration, 'One for the Money', by Cherie Nummy was thoroughly enjoyable – a very upbeat and entertaining afternoon to kick-start our year.

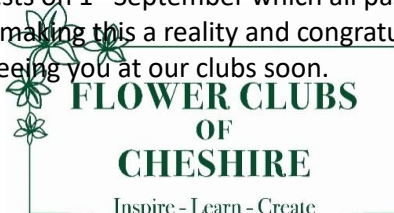
Successfully changing our name to 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire' this year and refreshing all our publicity materials and website was a definite highlight. We have held four in-person Club Representative Forums during the year, at which we also enjoyed a very entertaining talk by Kathleen Williams, about creating paper flowers (Frodsham in January), hosted our Area Associates of Honour for lunch in April (Lymm Golf Club) and learned about judging at RHS shows, courtesy of Pip Bensley at our July meeting (Woodford). We also slim-lined our meetings calendar (thank you Vanessa Lees) and now have one Leadership Team – a great combination of all the knowledge and expertise that we hold collectively, supporting one team. Several of our Clubs celebrated significant Anniversaries in 2023/24 and we offer them our warmest congratulations. Notably, Neston Flower Society celebrated their 65th Anniversary with a demonstration by Catharine Baines followed by an informal lunch. Lily Cluster Group members were invited as was Louise who represented the Cheshire Area in her Pastoral capacity. A lovely event and memory. Eddisbury and Sandiway also celebrated their 65th Anniversary with an Afternoon Tea at Abbeywood. Knutsford reached their 55th Emerald anniversary and pushed the boat out with an Afternoon Tea at Abbeywood followed by a demonstration by Mark Entwistle. Tracy-Anne was invited to represent Cheshire Area at both events and the Knutsford Lord Mayor also attended with his wife. Mark also brought Hale Barns' Golden 50th Anniversary year to a close with a stunning demonstration at Altrincham Little Theatre. It's wonderful that so many clubs have been in action for so long, bringing the fun of flowers to each new generation. One of our annual Area highlights is our floral competitive show in the 'Theatre of Flowers' at the Royal Cheshire County Show. It was a fantastic showcase of our collective talents; not only in organising such a wonderful show but also to be able to appreciate the creativity and fabulous floral design talents of our members. Thank you to everyone who organised, entered, supported and created and congratulations to all our prize winners, especially to those who had never entered before.

Many of our members have competed at various other Floral Shows this year including Harrogate, Malvern, Chelsea, Nantwich, Anglesey, Shrewsbury, and Southport. Congratulations and well done everyone – so proud of you. Just one word – 'FABULOUS'.

Cheshire was also asked to stage the photo-shoot for the Winter 2024 edition of the Flower Arranger magazine, providing us with another opportunity to showcase what Flower Clubs of Cheshire can achieve. All our disciplines (Judges, Demonstrators and Education) held refresher days and workshops, including three foam-free workshops for members. We pass on our grateful thanks to Sue Clissold (our Judges' Representative until April when she moved to Scotland with her family) for all her passionate support for Area and organising some excellent and informative events. [Personal Note: Yes Sue – we now love Ps&Es!]. Grateful thanks to Pam Fleming-Williams for filling in at short notice – very much appreciated.

Thank you and adieu also to Sharon Nolan, our current Education Representative and someone who has been on the Leadership Team in one role or another for at least 12 years. Your knowledge, passion and support has been unparalleled, even allowing us to take over your home in July for the Flower Arranger photo-shoot. We are very grateful for everything you have done for the Area including representing us on various HQ initiatives. Thank you, Sharon, – we will miss you (and your intermittent Wi-Fi!). We welcome Pam Mosedale officially to the team, having shadowed Sharon for the last year.

Flower Clubs of Cheshire offered training for prospective Area demonstrators during the year. We were able to enter all five candidates for their tests on 1st September which all passed. A huge thank you to everyone involved, particularly Beryl Cotton, in making this a reality and congratulations to our new Area demonstrators. We look forward to seeing you at our clubs soon.



We are currently progressing umbrella insurance for all our Flower Clubs of Cheshire and are looking at a payment system to ensure members, belonging to multiple flower clubs, only pay their affiliation fees once. Sadly, we have lost some of our members this year, but we will remember them. We give thanks for the love and joy that they have brought into our lives and their work for their clubs and Area.

Finally, this will be Louise Jones' final meeting as part of the Leadership Team having been elected as 2nd Vice Chair in 2018 and serving for six years in total, four years as Chairman. No-one could have anticipated the difficult circumstances which she had to negotiate in 2020 when required to step up to the position of Chair in the middle of a pandemic! Thank you very much Louise. Your knowledge, expertise, creativity and friendship will be missed by the team – but we know where you are! Wishing you lots of happy times with flowers in the future.

In conclusion, thank you everyone, for all your support and friendship this year. Looking forward to another successful year of 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire'.

TAC added to her report by inviting a round of applause to celebrate everything Flower Clubs of Cheshire represents.

She briefly listed the recent achievements: a new name, many significant Club anniversaries celebrated (for which certificates will be issued later), design talent demonstrated in our shows, and the photo-shoot for the winter magazine. She specifically thanked Pam Mosedale for her photographs of the County Show. TAC stressed that having teaching days and tests in Cheshire keeps us up-to-date. Sharon Nolan has stepped down as Education Representative and a present of garden vouchers was accepted on her behalf by Merrin Shaw.

Umbrella insurance policy is now in place. This enables all affiliated clubs to join from their next renewal giving a considerable cost saving.

Those members who had died during the past year were not listed by name. Their contribution was marked by a round of applause.

BC warmly thanked TAC for her commitment to Flower Clubs of Cheshire and introduced LJ.

6.ii Pastoral – Louise Jones

It's a cold autumnal day outside as I sit and write my sixth and final AGM report. So much has happened in the last six years, much that we could never have expected or anticipated. During my first two years as second Vice Chairman, the team and I had fun running a number of events for the Area –thank you, ladies. Then I remember the AGM online during lockdown when I explained to those present, that Chris Gibbons had, sadly for us, moved to Spain, and therefore would not be taking over as Area Chairman and I would be moving from second Vice Chairman to Area Chairman. I was very apprehensive. I started by asking for you to accept and back me with a new structure during my tenure as your chairman to help in the running of our area.

The previous Area structure had 45 officers, now it is greatly reduced. I thank you for your enthusiasm and vision as we introduced the new structure and looked at new ways of working within the Area.

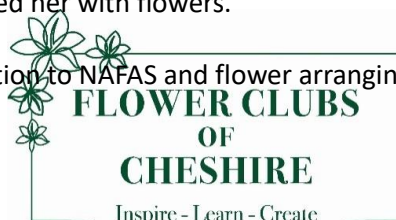
I'm not much of a reflective person by nature, but I realise that sometimes to move forward we have to look back. We see what's happened, where we've been, and whether and if it has been worthwhile.

It seems almost a lifetime ago when we wondered whether we would ever get back to normality after the pandemic. This year in particular, I feel sad that we may lose some clubs, but at the same time, many other clubs are thriving and growing, and Area is buzzing with new ideas. There's so much to be thankful for, particularly with our five new area demonstrators. As a result of the involvement we had in the judges' test, national judges' test, and the national demonstrators' tests, notwithstanding the work done at the Interflora™ World Cup in Manchester, so much has been achieved by Flower Clubs of Cheshire.

I have enjoyed my final year as pastoral chairman, responsible for supporting clubs over the year. There are quite a lot of younger people now joining clubs. I have seen many clubs throughout our Area, and it has lovely to meet so many members and join together with them in our shared love of flowers.

LJ concluded by giving thanks for the joy she has had from flowers over many years. She passed the Chairman's brooch to JS who presented her with flowers.

BC and TAC thanked LJ for her dedication to NAFAS and flower arranging.



7. Area Secretary's Report – Vanessa Lees

Since the AGM in 2023, it was resolved by the Area Team that we would no longer meet as a small leadership team, but that all leadership business would be conducted transparently via the complete Area Team. This team includes discipline leads, cluster leads and officers, including our new three-way Chairman's role which was adopted at the last AGM. The reasoning for this was not only to reduce the workload of meetings for the leadership team, but also to introduce a more collaborative, less formal and more open approach to our planning and strategy, in order to try to better meet the needs of our clubs and members across the area.

It was decided that the outcomes of the Area Team meetings would take the form of an action list which would be rolled forward throughout the year to maintain focus on what has yet to be done and to take pride in what had already been achieved and to build on that.

It was also resolved to try to vary the venues for the Club Representatives Forums to try to allow all clubs a meeting reasonably near their home area, as members had requested.

The Cheshire Area of NAFAS (now known as Flower Clubs of Cheshire) Team has met on seven occasions, all on Zoom.

The Club Representatives Forum has met four times, all face to face. At Owley Wood in November 2023, at Frodsham in January 2024, at Lymm in April 2024, and at Woodford in July 2024.

All the Club Representatives Forums were followed by an opportunity for cluster group meetings, as well as a way for the Area Team to engage with the clubs on particular topics such as the change of name to "Flower Clubs of Cheshire" and the re-branding of the Area to make it more relevant. These meetings have proved very fruitful and have provided great networking opportunities as well.

It was a great pleasure to invite and welcome many of our Associates of Honour to lunch after our meeting in Lymm in April. It was wonderful to see them and to celebrate and recognise all their service and commitment to Cheshire Area. This was also a golden opportunity to share with members many of the archived photographs and other souvenirs from Cheshire Area. Janet, Tracy-Anne and Judy worked very hard to create a list of all our previous Area officers. More work has yet to be done to get all our archives into good order, but a great start has been made – thank you all.

One of the changes which was made by me on taking office was to establish a dedicated email address where all area business to and from the Secretary would be dealt with. The reason for this was to keep Area business away from personal email accounts and to enable anyone to take over the mailbox in case of emergency or at change of tenure, leaving a complete email account of what has been sent/received. This has proved highly successful and other officer roles are currently beginning to follow suit.

All documents including minutes, report booklets, and other notices have been circulated to clubs by the Secretary via email. One contact from each club is responsible for circulating news and notices within their club. It has been emphasised how vitally important the rôle of this person is in letting their club officers and members know what is going on in a timely fashion. Where a club contact has been unable for various reasons to do this, an alternative has often been provided. The Secretary is always willing to assist clubs in keeping everyone informed.

Correspondence received from HQ, clubs and requests via website have been dealt with. A new National lists booklet was purchased for every club and has been distributed one free per club. This will be the last printed version which HQ will produce.

Since January 2024, the Secretary has worked to obtain a new Club Officers form from each club immediately after their AGM. Thank you to the many clubs who have been so efficient in returning their forms so that our contact records are completely accurate. To date, only two clubs have not returned their forms.

We also had a drive, working with our website manager, to get an up-to-date club programme on the Area website on each club page. This was 100% successful – well done everyone and keep your programmes coming please! A revision of the website to better reflect our current organisation and to incorporate our new Flower Clubs of Cheshire branding has now been almost completed. Grateful thanks go to Mike Gallagher for his hard work in this and to Sally Melvin for her assistance in helping to identify all the areas which needed to be changed.

We currently have 35 clubs in the Area. Do not hesitate to let us know if you are struggling and need any help as the Area officers are willing to give advice etc. and assistance if required.



My grateful thanks to Eileen Fantom who has been our very efficient Minute Secretary in the past year – she has done a great job.

As this is my first AGM report, I would like to thank all of you for helping and encouraging me in my new role. In particular I would like to thank Tracy-Anne who has given me so much help in finding my feet in this new role. I have appreciated all the kindness and good humour shown to me by all of you, and I am grateful for having the opportunity to meet and work with so many talented and dedicated flower arrangers. It has been a great pleasure to become part of the Flower Clubs of Cheshire family.

VL thanked Morag McCord, previous secretary, for her help in the hand over period. VL stressed that the new arrangements enable the necessary work to be completed properly whilst minimising the number of meetings and changing the way they are conducted. Working with an action list and outcomes listed has helped here. VL concluded by saying it has been huge pleasure to do the job. The membership are kind, respectful and generous. I have been helped, encouraged and welcomed.

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

I have pleasure in presenting the financial statements for Flower Clubs of Cheshire for the year 1st August 2023 to 31st July 2024. 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 31st July were as follows:

Barclays Bank – Current Account	£1,119 ²
Barclays Bank – Savings Account	£22,736
Barclays Bank – JD&E Account	£7,315
Barclays Bank – Flower Arranger Account	£3,212 ³

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

Our reported **deficit for the year** (after interest) is **£265**.⁴

Income

- Thank you to all those Clubs who paid Affiliation Fees, totalling £21,036. This was made up from 1,753 members paying £4.50 to Cheshire Area and £7.50 towards National Head Office. Your support was very much appreciated. £7,918 was the income retained by Area.
- Actual expenditure vs budget was as follows:

		Budget Actual (to date)	
		£	£
Facility Costs (website / storage / licences)	3,500	3,954	
Publicity & Promotions		1,000	898
Cheshire Area Show		2,000	2,660
Meetings		1,000	800
Other		418	375
Total		7,918	8,687

- Un-budgeted interest of £465 was received during the year.

² Uncleared cash funds at the statement date totalled £2,685.09. Had these funds been received in time, then the current account balance would have been £3,804.

³ Payment is still to be made for the Winter Edition which will be approximately £1,350.

⁴Please refer to annex 1

- Other income received during the year related to specific events, with associated expenditure.

Expenditure

- Affiliation Fees paid to HQ totalled £13,118. This was calculated based on a membership of 1,753 members, capitation £7.50.
- Facilities expenditure of £3,954 includes:

	£	
▪ Website Updates	1,754	
▪ Internet & Cookie Costs		684
▪ Zoom Licences	144	
▪ Storage Charges	1,232	
▪ Insurance	140	
- Following the change of name to 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire' the publicity materials and banners were refreshed. The cost including all design costs for the new logo totalled £898.
- 'The Theatre of Flowers' @ the Royal Cheshire County Show cost £5,442 (excluding the cost of the marquee, tables, electricity etc.). Financial support (invoiced) is always provided by Cheshire Agricultural Society (£1,964), along with income from the 'Sell Off' of designs and donations from the Children's Hands-on' (£808) at the show plus £2,000 budgeted support from Area. This included paying the demonstrators, volunteer travel expenses, equipment, and polo shirts. Additionally, inclusion of all the results and photos on the website cost £268. Many thanks to Pam Mosedale (Lymm) who voluntarily took all the photos and sent them to Mike Gallagher – fabulous job.
- The Leadership Team meetings during the year were held via zoom. Since the last AGM, four Club Representatives Forums have been held, venues being Weaverham (Owley Wood), Frodsham, Lymm (Golf Club) and Woodford. At our April meeting, our Associates of Honour were invited for a sit-down buffet lunch. The buffet was also available for members, so they could stay for lunch and a chat. The net cost of our meetings totalled £800.
- £1,099 was expended on Publications and Trading which included badges, blue forms, diaries, calendars and Christmas cards. Income totalled £1,129 generating a small profit for Area.

Events

The budget for the year assumed that all events would break even or achieve a small surplus.

- **Summary**

	£
○ AGM Demonstration	1,158
○ Three Foam Free Workshops	54
○ Judges Refresher Day / Taster Day / P&E Overview	34
○ Demonstrator Refresher	(6)
○ Area Demonstrator Training	(557)
○ Education Refresher / Beginners Classes	(206)
- The 2023 AGM demonstration by Cherie Nummy was successful financially, generating a surplus overall of £1,158 which helped to cover the cost of the hall hire (£275) and other related expenses for the AGM business meeting.
- The Area also ran three 'foam-free' workshop events during the year. Thank you to Sharon, Pam, and all the tutors for delivering these and to the Clubs for hosting.
- Training for new Area Demonstrators commenced during the year with five trainees taking their tests in September 2024. It was agreed that the training would go-ahead with full knowledge that this would need to be subsidised by Area. Total net cost of training was £557. (The Area Tests held on 1st September made a profit of £238.)
- Clubs were encouraged to support National Flower Arranging Day in May. An allowance of £25 per Club was paid by Area towards costs of exhibits and floral arrangements. A total of 15 clubs took part. Expenditure totalled £375.

This concludes the presentation of the Financial Statements.

Statement from Area Support Officer (Financial Oversight) – Judy Gratton

"I confirm that I have had sight of the bank statements and the accounts prepared by the Flower Clubs of Cheshire Treasurer (Tracey- Anne Clancy) and confirm that all is in order.
Judy Gratton 23.09.2024"

There were no questions to the Treasurer. BC thanked TAC

9: Appointment of independent reviewer

Nigel Taylor – Proposed TAC; Seconded Tarporey, no dissension, Mr Taylor is appointed.

10: Adoption of Area Committee Reports

The reports were considered en bloc.

Proposed Stockport Afternoon Flower Club, Seconded Eddisbury and Sandiway Flower Club, duly adopted.

11. Publicity & Events Reports

11.i Publicity Report – Tracy-Anne Clancy

Following discussions at the Club Representative Forums in both December and January it was agreed to change our name to 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire' in 2024. It was felt that this title simply stated what we are and would also be more easily understood by the general public. A re-branding exercise of all our publicity materials and website commenced, with the intention to be ready for the Cheshire Show in June. The new logo for 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire' was designed and members had the opportunity to comment and make suggestions. Similarly, the new intended publicity literature was shared at the Club Representatives Forum in April for review and approval prior to sign off and ultimate roll out. The expenditure on our publicity this year has therefore been higher than in previous years.

The Royal Cheshire County Show 'Theatre of Flowers' was an ideal opportunity to promote our new name 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire'. Thank you to Hale Barns Flower Club for staging a stunning publicity area within the marquee, providing us with the opportunity to showcase our new name which explains what we actually do. A countryside 'selfie station' complete with hedgehog, deer and robin was created within the publicity area, with several hundred children having their photograph taken there, holding their creations



from the 'children's hands-on'. Goody bags (containing a pre-loved Flower Arranger magazine plus lots of other floral design information) were handed out to interested parties. The monthly newsletter was published throughout the year, enabling members to be informed about all our activities and share in everything that we have achieved during the year. Thank you for all your contributions. All articles, news, events information can be sent to newsletter@nafascheshire.org.uk The Flower Clubs of Cheshire Newsletter is delivered to 100s including many people out of our area. TAC thanked VL for keeping webpages up to date

11.ii Website – Mike Gallagher

Flower Clubs of Cheshire rebranding

Members had felt for some time that the previous name didn't accurately reflect of the purpose of our organisation. As a result, the website has been rebranded. However, due to the vast number of webpages this is an ongoing process. More details can be found in the February 2024 newsletter accessible from this page: <https://www.nafascheshire.org.uk/area-news.htm>

Flower School of Cheshire – Inspire, Learn and Create

A completely new section/page newly branded. The section draws together existing, previously separate entities, into one easily accessible location. Brand new content will be added over the next few months. <https://www.nafascheshire.org.uk/flower-school.htm>



Main Event – The 2024 Cheshire Area Show at the Royal Cheshire County Show (Around 125 excellent photos supplied by Pam Mosedale)

2024's biggest annual website addition. It includes approx. 16 new pages (one for each class).

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.

Access all the above from:

<https://www.nafascheshire.org.uk/royal-cheshire-county-show-2024.htm>

The photograph shows the Best in Show Winner by Gill Davies, which was first in the 'Wrapped Up' class.

Your Club on the Website

To find your club's own webpage go to www.nafascheshire.org.uk/clubs.htm

If the page is not up to date please send updates to Vanessa Lees, Flower Clubs of Cheshire Secretary: secretary@nafascheshire.org.uk or to me webmaster@nafascheshire.org.uk

11.iii Flower Arranger Magazine – Catherine Bower

Flower Arranger report

- 4 clubs did not place an order for 2024.
- There was an average of 341 copies ordered per edition.
- An additional 26 copies ordered for Winter edition, which Cheshire Area seasonal designs feature.

Accounts

Payments are made to the Area account by cheque, cash or Bank transfer. As of 1st August, 2023, the opening balance is £2817.80; on 31st July, 2024, the closing balance is £3089.80 because the invoice for the Winter edition is due for to be paid. The balance is accrued from a promotional discount: NAFAS headquarters give Area 10p per copy to help promote the *Flower Arranger* magazine at external events. This also assists with postal costs etc..

2025 Subscriptions

- Club orders to Area Flower Arranging Officer by **Saturday 9th November**.
- Order form forwarded to club contacts by Area Secretary mid-July and duplicate September.

Contact to Area *Flower Arranger* officer can be made via: flower.arranger@nafascheshire.org.uk or by using the link on the website contact button.

11.iv Royal Cheshire County Show – Carol Baker / Sylvia Bower

Theatre of Flowers (NAFAS) Royal Cheshire show 2024

The hard work certainly was rewarded. We had a successful show, with 100 exhibits and 57 competitors. The judges commented on the high standard. We adopted a similar layout in the marquee to last year, with a spacious central area and tabled exhibits to the sides. There were some new staging styles and a few colour changes to previously used staging equipment.

We introduced a new class for a team of four exhibit. This was designed to include those who were too afraid to enter on their own, so the team had to consist of two experienced and two complete beginners. Three different Flower clubs entered and a group from Reaseheath College. It was lovely to see the younger students taking part. Hopefully this will encourage them to enter the novice class next time!

The voting for the people's choice proved very popular. Over 4,000 votes were cast by the public visiting the marquee. The team exhibit from Tarporley flower club won.

Flower Clubs of Cheshire had a lovely area with a rural nook. Here the children could go in and have their photo taken with the arrangement they created at the children's hands-on area. Some adults also took advantage of a photo opportunity. Thanks to Hale Barns Flower Club for designing the installation. The children's hands-on proved very popular as usual, and our steward Ruth and helpers were kept very busy on both days helping them make small arrangements to take home.

We had the pleasure of four demonstrators over the two show days. Julie Pearson (Chelsea Gold Medal winner), and Alison Cooper on Tuesday and Eleanor Griffiths (also a Chelsea Gold Medal winner) and Mark Entwistle on Wednesday. Their gorgeous arrangements were sold, and proceeds reimbursed to the show. Thanks go to Eleanor Griffiths who arranged the pedestals in the President's marquee and Jenny Williams and Maureen Hermon, who made the table flowers. Jenny also demonstrated leaf manipulation to individuals. There was a lovely, friendly atmosphere in the marquee on set up days and show days. It is always good to meet up with friends old and new and enjoy the flowers. We have had good feedback from competitors and the public.

Finally, a big thank you to the Cheshire Show organisers and office staff for their support, also the committee members and the set-up helpers for their hard work. Altogether a successful show.

Carol and Sylvia intend to make 2025 their last show as joint Presidents. With this in mind, they need volunteers to shadow them next year. They are happy to remain on the committee subsequently in order to share their experience of the Show. If no-one steps up to be the organiser there will be no Theatre of Flowers at the Royal Cheshire County Show.



11v. Flower School of Cheshire – Jean Jones

2024 has seen The Flower School of Cheshire grow from the seed of an idea to a blossoming project. In April we had our first official workshop for members and visitors for Macclesfield and The Flower School Team took “the show on the road” to both the Cheshire and the Nantwich Show.

A workshop for Disley Flower Club took place in September and plans are in progress for Skill Days for members, a master class for more experienced arrangers, follow on sessions of the very successful Principles and Elements of Design class and more leisure classes. All of these events will be organised under the umbrella of The Flower School of Cheshire.

Adoption of Publicity and Events reports

The reports were considered en bloc.

Proposed Chester Flower Club, Seconded Neston Flower Society, duly adopted.

12. Cluster Reports

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

Only two clubs responded to the proposed coffee and chat session in August so we decided to cancel it because everyone was so busy. All the clubs seem content and are progressing well. None have contacted the Cluster Leads to get ideas/ request support. Individual clubs have special celebrations this year and all have a rich programme of events. Hopefully we can catch up at the AGM and try to arrange another coffee and chat.

Thanks for engaging

Peony Cluster⁵ (Elworth, Leek, Macclesfield, Nether Alderley, South Cheshire, Wistaston & District)

Peony Cluster had an excellent meeting following the Club Representative Forum in April at Lymm. Ideas were exchanged and Elworth kindly shared their newsletter which was full of good ideas for us to try. Nantwich Show was a great success this year and many members attended.

The Cluster will meet today at lunch-time.

Rose Cluster (Goostrey, Hale Barns, Heald Green, Knutsford, Lymm, Sale)

Rose Cluster has met on several occasions during the year, usually at Fryers Garden Centre for coffee and toasted tea cakes! The friendship, support and camaraderie has been invaluable as we can all share our concerns, news, events, club programmes and celebrations with each other.

During the year, Rose Cluster were proud to congratulate Hale Barns on their Golden Anniversary celebrations and Knutsford on their Emerald Anniversary. Members of our Clubs were also invited to share in a visit to David Ryland’s Garden in July, organised by Hale Barns.

Lymm hosted the first foam-free workshop of the year in September and members of the Cluster clubs are welcome to attend the Lymm workshops during the year. Members of Rose cluster clubs helped out with raffle, meet and greet and refreshments at both the January and April Club Representative’s Forum – thank you ladies.

TAC expressed a personal thank you to Cluster members for supporting her.

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

Cluster representatives met at Gordale on February 15th. It was a very buoyant meeting, and a lot of information was shared. Clubs in Lily Cluster have had a very busy year.

Wirral Flower Club have enjoyed a Spring Flower Workshop, Easter Lunch, Trip to Dorothy Clive Garden and Flower Exhibition. These were all open to members from other clubs in the cluster. The Neston Flower Society paid a visit to Woolerton Old Hall Garden.

The cluster has also supported Wirral Flower Club’s exhibition of Floral Arrangements & Crafts entitled ‘World of Books’ at the United Reform Church, Telegraph Road, Heswall on 27th and 28th September.

Members from the club have worked hard for months to produce goods for the event. This exhibition is

⁵Tunstall and district club, previously in this Cluster, has resigned from Flower Clubs of Cheshire.

open to all comers, and it is hoped that it will encourage new members. There will be a number of designs of various sizes and types in the show depicting the title. There will also be a sale of work and crafted items as well as refreshments and a raffle. This is a big undertaking for Wirral and they are to be congratulated – we are sure it will be a great success.

Hoylake's "Celebration of Spring" event took place on March 19th. It was hoped that it would encourage more members to be hands on arrangers. The club opened early to facilitate a workshop: a preparation session where members could produce an exhibit entitled "Celebrating Spring". Exhibits could also be brought to the Club ready-made. There were sections for novices and more experienced arrangers. NAFAS area judge Carol Baker kindly agreed to judge.

After the formal judging, but before competitors' names were revealed, everyone had the chance to vote for their choice of winner. Carol Baker spoke about the overall quality of the entries. She was very encouraging in her remarks and produced a variety of rosettes for exhibitors. Certificates and chocolate bunnies were awarded to winners! The committee found a beautiful old silver trophy, that hadn't been used since the last century, to award to the winner of the popular vote.

Neston Flower Society staged an enormously successful show: "Flowers Galore" celebrating flowers in Neston for their Blue Sapphire Anniversary on June 1st. A tremendous amount of hard work went into the event and there was a big push in cluster clubs to alert members to this. Neston also entertained members from cluster clubs to a delightful celebratory lunch at their June meeting and it turned into an impromptu cluster meeting.

We continue to share newsletters within the cluster and aim to hold our next meeting in the early Autumn so that we can look at programmes which clubs have provided following their AGM.

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

The Sunflower Cluster has only met a few times over the last year, we have mainly taken the opportunity to get together at Club Representative Forums. We have been able to discuss many of the challenges that we are all facing such as the issue over the Affiliation fees, National Flower Arranging Day and the subject of Insurance for the Club. Our findings and suggestions have been passed back to the Area Committee.

In July members of the cluster were pleased to be able to assist in welcoming everyone to our area of Cheshire to the Club Representatives Forum which was held at Woodford Memorial Hall.

In the future, I will arrange a meeting of the Sunflower Cluster in order to discuss any points that arise from the AGM which are affecting our clubs. We will then be able to feed back our collective views to the Area Committee.

I, David Mason, as Cluster leader would like to thank everyone in the Sunflower Cluster for your input and involvement in all that we have done over this last year.

The Cluster will meet at lunch-time after the AGM.

13. NAFAS Report – Janet Schofield

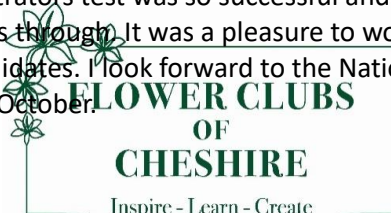
On behalf of Flower Clubs of Cheshire, I have attended NAC meetings both in person and via Zoom and have attended 'buddy group' meetings with fellow Area Chairmen and our trustee Mala Williams.

All meetings are an opportunity to gather information from Head Office, the Board of Trustees and other Area Chairmen, as well as sharing what we are doing in Cheshire. Through contacts made at these meetings, Cheshire has had the opportunity to do the *Flower Arranger* magazine Christmas photo-shoot (in July) and to send four arrangers to Westminster Abbey for the Battle of Britain memorial Service on September 14th. Both these events give us the opportunity to showcase our talented arrangers and to publicise our Area.

We continue to support NAFAS by providing information in a timely and appropriate manner, voting on amendments as and when required, and voicing the views and opinions of Cheshire members.

It has been a pleasure to attend club anniversary celebrations and I look forward to attending other club meetings when I can.

I was delighted that the Area demonstrators test was so successful and commend Beryl Cotton for all her hard work in getting all five candidates through. It was a pleasure to work backstage at both the mock test and the actual test alongside the candidates. I look forward to the National pre-Assessments and Tests being held at Frodsham at the end of October.



The NAFAS Virtual AGM will be taking place on Wednesday 16th October 2024 at 10.30am. Due to this once again being a virtual meeting, arrangements have been made to hold a live webinar during the afternoon of the 16th October which will enable any member to post questions in the chat room for response by the Board of Directors and Steven Lane, CEO. If anyone is unable to attend the webinar and may have a question, please email vanessa@nafas.org.uk by Friday 4th October. She will ensure that any questions are answered during the live event. Nearer the time, a Zoom link to the AGM and details of how to join the webinar will be posted on the NAFAS website – www.nafas.org.uk. If you have anything that you would like raised or at the NAC, buddy group or with head office, or have any questions about NAFAS and how it works, please get in touch.

I am looking forward to attending the NAFAS National Show in Gloucester next year. There will be an Area class, so if you would like to represent 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire' please let us know.

There will be another National Show in 2027 – please suggest any potential venues in the North of England.

The members from Cheshire who arranged flowers in Westminster Abbey for the Battle of Britain service were invited forward. Carol Baker, Louise Jones, and Debbie Davis received an order of service as a memento. Carol Chia who, also arranged flowers at the Abbey that day, will have her memento sent to her. The group were thanked by BC. Cheshire members have been to the Abbey in the past – long may it continue.

14. Representatives' Reports

14.i Judges' Report – Pam Fleming-Williams

November 2023

The Judges' Representative, Sue Clissold, hosted a Refresher Day on 14th October 2023, tutored by me, on the additions and alterations to the Competitions Manual. 18 people attended. Plant Identification and Comment Card writing were also covered.

The National Committee reported that the Judges' Conference held in Northern Ireland was very successful. Topics covered included Pedestals, Still Life, Period work and Botanicals, as well as a useful open forum at the close of the conference.

Joan McGee had finished her term of office as the Chairman of the National Committee and was succeeded by Alan Beatty.

January 2024

Current Area Judges had been approached for interest in sitting the National Test. One judge from Cheshire expressed an interest in the next National Test.

A Judges' Taster Day had been planned for April to address concerns about the lack of Area Judges' tests. Neighbouring Areas were encouraged to get together to raise enough participants to make a course viable. Zoom tutorials were discussed. It was recommended that Areas should encourage Clubs to hold club competitions to be judged orally by a qualified judge, for people to gain experience and have a grasp of the Elements and Principles of design.



April 2024

The Judges' Taster Day held on 7th April with 27 participants was very successful. Tutored by Jackie Charnock in the morning, covering Elements and Principles, and Margaret Rumens in the afternoon, covering training. Questions had been raised about Area Judges gaining experience after qualifying. Sue Clissold stated that all judges are happy to be accompanied (having checked with the Show Committee). It was up to the Area judges to contact those judges advertised on any show schedule and just ask. A list of smaller shows was being compiled in conjunction with Education.

July 2024

Having taken over from Sue at this point, there was little to report. Anyone interested in Zoom judges training could contact Wessex & Jersey who were holding sessions, working up to a test in 2026.

A Judges' Refresher Day is planned for 2025.

The next National Show will take place in Gloucester Cathedral on 19th, 20th September 2025. The next WAFA Show will take place in Australia in 2027.

14.ii Demonstrators' Report – Beryl Cotton

Area Report

Training for Area Demonstrator Tests commenced on 25th February with practical days on 24th March, and 7th April led by Beryl Cotton, NAFAS Demonstrators Instructor. The mock test was held on 30th June and the Adjudicator was Kate Kerr from Scotland who also taught the final instruction session. A final practice day was held on 4th August. A day on principles and elements of design led by Sharon Nolan was held on 2nd June and a further zoom meeting took place on the same topic by BC. All practical sessions took place at Tarvin Community Centre which proved to be an ideal venue.

The Area Demonstrator Tests took place at Tarvin Community Centre on Sunday, 1st September 2024, with James Burnside, Senior Adjudicator, and Alan Beatty, to a capacity audience of 100.

I am delighted to report that all five candidates were successful in qualifying as Area Demonstrators. They all received certificates and Area demonstrators' badges along with a 3-year planner sent by Tracy Anne Clancy.

A huge thanks to Sharon Nolan who has given support throughout the training and to the Flower Clubs of Cheshire volunteers who assisted at the mock test and Area Test by welcoming the candidates, serving refreshments, timekeeper and plant identification. Both days ran like a well-oiled clock. I offer my grateful thanks to Tracy Anne Clancy for selling all the tickets, Janet Schofield, who led the Stage Stewards, and to everyone who assisted in whatever way – including the audience who smiled and laughed at all the right times to encourage the candidates. The candidates were: Tracy Davies, Clare Downing, Jane Tully, Marina Ashton and Sarah Tomlinson. Their journey now begins. A list of email addresses was provided at the Area Tests, and they will soon be listed on the Cheshire website under the Demonstrators section.

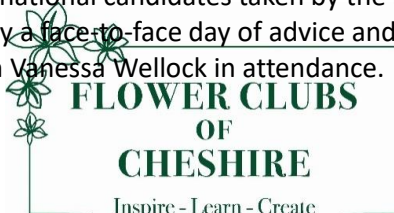
Flower Clubs of Cheshire will assist the National demonstrators committee at the pre national assessments and National Tests to be held at Frodsham Community Centre on 30th and 31st October 2024. Tickets are available from Vanessa Keys at NAFAS. Another great opportunity for you to enjoy an interesting couple of days and especially our club programme secretaries. Hope to see you there!

National Report

The National Demonstrators committee consists of myself as Chair, Margaret Rumens Vice Chair, Lucy Ellis, Delyth Price, Vanessa Wellock and Cherie Nummy and we have met three times on zoom since the last National AGM. We have a new committee umbrella Elizabeth Gordon.

A Christmas bulletin designed by Margaret Rumens with input from the whole committee proved to be an effective way of keeping in touch with our demonstrators.

A zoom meeting was held for our pre national candidates taken by the members of the ND committee along with Alan Beatty. This was followed by a face-to-face day of advice and guidance held in August 2024 led by James Burnside and Beryl Cotton with Vanessa Wellock in attendance. 11 out of the 12 of the pre national



assessment & National test candidates were able to attend this action-packed day and they were all full of enthusiasm.

The tests take place at the end of October, 2024, at Frodsham Community Centre, Cheshire. We wish all the candidates the very best of luck.

Alan Beatty and James Burnside qualified as NAFAS Demonstrator Instructors. Congratulations to both. We also have new faces coming forward to commence training as Adjudicators.

Several NAFAS Areas are holding training and tests for Area Demonstrators. Tests have already taken place in East of England & Cheshire. SAFAS, Dorset and Guernsey, Berks, Bucks and Oxon Area, and Wessex and Jersey Area Tests will soon follow. Other Areas are starting training.

Work on the Demonstrator Guidance Forms is taking place undertaken by Margaret Rumens and Beryl Cotton correcting outdated terminology. Vanessa Keys is reformatting the literature. This tedious job takes time and is ongoing.

We held an Area Demonstrator Representatives zoom meeting in September.

The Demonstrator Symposium will be held from 28th February, to 2nd March, 2025 at the Telford Golf and Spa Hotel. There is something for ALL demonstrators, National, Area, or trainees. There is a choice to attend either the full weekend with workshops led by Vanessa Wellock and Cherie Nummy, or one day attendance. On Saturday afternoon the demonstration is open to ALL NAFAS members, by ticket, when we can sit back and enjoy National Demonstrator Dawn Weaver.

Plans are well ahead for the mini demonstrations and manning a stand at the 2025 National Show returning to Gloucester Cathedral.

As always, it's been a busy and fruitful year for our NAFAS Demonstrators.

BC personally congratulated the new demonstrators. She thanked TAC and JS who led the team of helpers at the events.

Tickets are available for the pre-national assessments.

All demonstrators are invited to the symposium in Telford 2025. Of particular interest will be Saturday, 1st March, when Dawn Weaver demonstrates at Telford. This demonstration is open to all members.

14.iii Education Report – Sharon Nolan / Pam Mosedale

Flower School of Cheshire

During the past year we have held the four events for members from the Flower Clubs of Cheshire:

Education Day – for Area Teachers

We had an excellent and well attended Education Day in October, tutored by National Teacher Dawn Weaver at Tarvin. Traditionally, Education days are tutored by a National Teacher, providing ideas for tutors to pass on to their students. We realise that we must also provide information and training, to help teachers hone their teaching skills.

Members' Workshops – for members at all levels of ability

- Our March workshop was hosted by Eddisbury and Sandiway Club at Owley Wood near Weaverham and led Alison Cooper with two unusual foam free designs.
- Our May workshop was hosted by Ashton Hayes and Tarvin at Tarvin Community Centre and led by Mark Entwistle with two very interesting foam free designs.
- We have focused on foam free for the past couple of years and clearly demonstrated the versatility of other forms of mechanics. Lots of members are now experimenting with wires, test tubes, sand, pin holders etc., and there have been a significant move away from using floral foam by members.
- Our April event was all about Elements and Principles (E&P), held at Plumley and led by Jackie Charnock. By popular demand from members, we will be holding more of these E&P events in the coming years.

Forthcoming events

2024

20th October Education Day at Frodsham – for anyone wishing to become a teacher and for existing teachers.

2025

9th March – Members' Day at Tarvin – Elements and Principles of design with Jackie Charnock.

11th May – Members' Day at Tarvin – traditional and contemporary design with Julie Pearson.

18th Oct – Master Class for experienced designers at Plumley – with Gill McGregor.

19th Oct – Education Day at Frodsham – with Gill McGregor.

NAFAS National

Teachers' Conference

- The NAFAS Teachers' Conference was held in Leamington Spa in July and three Cheshire Teachers attended.

NAFAS certificated courses

- A very small number of our members have expressed an interest in finding out more the new NAFAS certificated courses. Currently we are not in a position to progress the courses for a number of reasons.
- We are gaining feedback and insights from a couple of NAFAS Areas who are piloting a course.
- Longer term, it may be preferable to work with colleges in Cheshire. They have experience and infrastructure which may make the whole process smoother and more cost effective for students.

Sharon Nolan has almost completed the handing over of education responsibilities to Pam Mosedale⁶. Pam addressed the meeting. NAFAS needs more teachers at all levels, especially national. There is a great interest in taking up floristry at present. Members have requested Es & Ps teaching so this has been arranged.

The teaching day on 20th October is open to all interested in teaching. It is priced only £5 to encourage as many as possible to attend.

14.iv Young Persons' Representative Report – Judy Gratton

In December 2023 two workshops were completed in a local primary school. Early years (aged 3 – 5) decorated a mini silver birch wreath ring to hang in a Christmas tree. Details of how to make these was included in the Cheshire Area Newsletter. Children in Year 4 (aged 8 – 9) made a door wreath, binding Cornus twigs together and then threaded through foliage. The wreaths were decorated with seasonal items. Nantwich Show took place on Wednesday 31st July 2024 and included the Floral Art section. Within the Floral Art marquee, we ran drop-in hands-on sessions for our younger visitors to create their own flower arrangement, paper flowers and card making; these proved very popular. Five year-groups from three primary schools took part in a competition to design an Olympic medal. Each class was judged separately and the winners were awarded a rosette. Every child who entered received a highly commended award card. We had some of our younger visitors come to see how they had done! When the children returned to school in September, each school had an achievement assembly, where the awards were presented. Photographs have been published on the schools Facebook pages.

Adoption of sub-committee reports.

The reports were considered en bloc.

Proposed Tarporey Flower Club, Seconded Frodsham and district Flower Club, duly adopted.

15. Election of Area Representatives

Chairman's office:

Administrative – TAC is happy to continue for a second year;

Pastoral – Jean Jones will replace LJ;

National – JS is happy to continue for a second year.

Secretary – Vanessa Lees.

⁶The citation for Pam Mosedale, new education representative, is to be found at Annex 3.

Treasurer – TAC will continue this year. She will be shadowed by Judy Gratton this year and Judy will take over as treasurer in 2025.

Minute secretary – Eileen Fantom.

Support officers – Jean Jones, Judy Gratton.

The meeting agreed to elect the officers en bloc by show of hands.

From the Chair, BC appealed for more people to come forward to join the team. This plea was seconded by TAC.

16. Election of NAFAS Representatives

Judges' Representative – Pam Fleming-Williams.

Demonstrators' Representative – Beryl Cotton.

Education Representative – Pam Mosedale.

Young Persons' Representative – Judy Gratton.

Flower Arranger rep – Catherine Bower.

Candidates proposed by Romiley, Seconded by Disley. Duly elected by show of hands.

17. Invitation to become the first President of Flower Clubs of Cheshire

Dorothy Irvin has been invited to serve for one year. She was previously a president of Cheshire Area.

Dorothy was presented with flowers. Dorothy addressed the meeting. She said it had been a wonderful surprise to be invited back to the fold as first president of Flower Clubs of Cheshire. She was present at the inaugural meeting in 1972 of Sale Club, before there was a Cheshire Area.

She warmly thanked team for getting the county through the difficulties brought about by the Covid pandemic.

18. Any Other Business

i. The Constitution has been revised⁷. The rôle of Chairman has been divided into the triumvirate of the Chairman's Office, the description of team rôles has been updated⁸, and the new constitution also incorporates the Flower Clubs of Cheshire brand. This reflects the decisions taken at the 2023 AGM, and at Club Representatives' meetings over the past 18 months.

The new constitution was circulated to delegates before the meeting. The AGM ratified the new constitution by show of hands. There were no questions.

ii. Anniversary certificates were presented by Dorothy Irvin – President.

Clubs celebrating in 2024 & 2023:

Hoylake Flower Club – 70; Eddisbury and Sandiway Flower Club – 65; Neston Flower Society – 65; Bramhall and Cheadle Hulme Flower Club – 65; Chester Flower Club – 65; Wilmslow Guild Floral Design Club – 65; Knutsford Floral Design Club – 55; Hale Barns Flower Club – 50; The Bramall Hall Club – 15 years respectively.

iii. Written questions to the secretary were received and relevant to Matters Arising.

iv. Social Events. Pat Murphy (Knutsford Floral Design Club, and Tarporley Flower Club) asked about social events. VL replied that many people have asked for social events and there is a lunch planned in April at Lymm. There is no immediate plan to reform the social committee. Each event would be arranged by a separate team. This spreads the work throughout the Area.

⁷The Constitution may be viewed on the website.

⁸Appendix B of the Constitution.

v. Disaffiliation. TAC reported for information that Tunstall and district flower club have disaffiliated from Flower Clubs of Cheshire.

vi. Blue Forms remain a matter of debate. Steven Lane (CEO NAFAS) was approached by LJ at Southport Flower Show and there is now a team in place led by Flower Clubs of Cheshire representatives to try and solve this matter.

vii. People who are members of more than one Club remain keen to only pay once to Area and once to NAFAS. Clubs have compiled a lists of people, but they do not tally, so Clubs will not be asked to administer this. Individuals who are in multiple Clubs should be asked to contact TAC who will receive their monies for Area and NAFAS herself. They will then receive proof of payment to show to the Club treasurers. This is a Flower Clubs of Cheshire initiative and does not apply in other Areas.

Questions were asked.

In response to Disley and district Flower Club, TAC confirmed that the usual forms would be used. She reiterated that each individual member has the onus. In response to Stockport Afternoon Flower Club, TAC confirmed that this is for Flower Clubs of Cheshire and NAFAS fees. Neston Flower Society thought that the system might not be easy to administer. TAC stressed that the membership fee of Club should be kept separate from Area and NAFAS on the books.

This is a prospective initiative and applies with immediate effect. TAC will send affiliation fees to HQ as late as possible to allow people time to make their arrangements.

19. Date of next AGM 2nd October, 2025.

BC thanked the committee and everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 12:25pm.

The next Club Representatives meeting is 5th December in Grappenhall. It was suggested that lunch might follow at Ram's Head.

Annex 1

Annex 2

Annex 3

Education Representative – Pam Mosedale

- I have over 30 years' experience within the corporate Learning and Development environment. I've held senior management roles leading UK wide people development teams within British Gas, National Grid and The Co-operative Group including leadership and management development, supplier contract management, online learning, apprentice programmes, investors in people re-accreditation, and training centre management.
- My relevant qualifications include MSc in HRD, Diploma in Coaching, MBTI, Certificate in Training & Development, Assessor Awards D32, D33, D34 and D36 (yes that long ago!).
- I am former Director and Fellow of the British Institute of Learning & Development and Member of Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development
- I am a former regional and national judge for the Government's National Training Awards, and a winner of National and Regional National Training Awards. These awards placed great emphasis on evaluation – the impact on the learner, the team and organisational benefits of the training.
- I have been a member of Lymm Floral Art Group for over 10 years – past Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Programme Secretary and currently Membership Secretary
- Since retirement, my hobbies and interests include flower arranging, upholstery, soft furnishing, photography, trying to keep fit, and eating and drinking too much.
- I come originally from a mixed farm in Herefordshire and I moved to Lymm in the early 1980's. I have been married to Tom for 40 years and we have 2 sons.