



Minutes of the FCoC Club Representatives' Meeting, 10:30am, 9th April 2025, held at Lymm Golf Club.

1. Welcome

Tracy-Anne Clancy welcomed everyone to Lymm Golf Club. Holt Flower Club was welcomed to their first meeting with FCoC. The meeting today will be followed by the Area Lunch following which Kate Russell is the guest speaker.

2. Apologies, minutes of previous meeting & correspondence

Present were Tracey-Anne Clancy and Jean Jones, FCoC Chairman's office, Vanessa Lees FCoC Secretary, Royal Cheshire County Show leader Sylvia Bower, *The Flower Arranger* officer Catherine Bower, Judges' representative Pam Fleming-Williams, Demonstrators' representative Beryl Cotton, and Education representative Pam Mosedale.

Representatives attended from Ashton Hayes and Tarvin Flower Club, The Bramall Hall Club, Chester Flower Club, Disley and district Flower Club, Eddisbury and Sandiway Flower Club, Elworth Flower Club, Goostrey Flower Club, Hale Barns Flower Club, Handbridge Flower Club, Holt Flower Club, Hoylake Flower Club, Knutsford Floral Design Club, 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, Rural Chester Flower Club, Sale Flower Club, Stockport Afternoon Flower Club, Tarporley Flower Club, Upton-by-Chester Flower Club, and Wilmslow Guild Floral Design Club.

Apologies were received from Janet Schofield FCoC Chairman National Liaison, and Judy Gratton FCoC young person's representative. Apologies were also received from Heald Green and Leek Flower Clubs.

The minutes of the previous meeting were accepted as a true record and signed.

3. Updates from the Chairman's Office

Administrative Update – Tracy-Anne Clancy

Spring has sprung! The common thread between all of us is our love of flowers and how wonderful it is at the moment to see nature rewarding us with blossom and spring flowers once again.

Since our last meeting, we have welcomed Holt Flower Club to Flower Clubs of Cheshire, transferring from Mercia & North Wales Area. Plans are progressing well for an Area Social Day on the 14th of July (save the date) and congratulations to both Beryl Cotton, for organising the recent Demonstrators' Symposium, and to Dawn Weaver for demonstrating at the same event (and receiving a standing ovation). Well done on flying the Cheshire flag!

Competition season is fast approaching with Harrogate and Malvern Spring shows being in April and May. There is also an opportunity to compete at the British Iris Society Late Spring Open Show at Plumley on 27th April, plus our own Cheshire Show at Tabley in June. If you haven't entered yet and need a little bit of advice or gentle persuasion, please ask – we're here to help. Also, don't





forget the 'big one' – our National Show is at Gloucester Cathedral on 19th, 20th September. Wishing all our competitors every success.

Importantly, please ensure that you have either renewed your insurance or joined the 'umbrella' Area cover. Club Risk Assessments must be up to date and regularly reviewed and correctly implemented. Club outings are covered by the umbrella insurance policy; coach travel is covered because the Club has very brief responsibility for the event. The coach will either collect people from a car park or bus stop – covered by other insurance policies. Once aboard, the coach company is responsible. Once at the destination, the venue's insurance is in place. Happy arranging everyone – enjoy your flowers. Please remember to send photos of activities to be included in the newsletter.

Pastoral Update – Jean Jones

The recent deaths of two NAFAS members were noted. Elizabeth Gidman, National Associate of Honour and member of Berks, Bucks and Oxon Area, and our own June Bibby from Wirral Flower Club who has died after over 50 years of NAFAS membership.

A lot of work has been going on behind the scenes since we last met. Vanessa Lees, Anne Walton and I have been working on a Safeguarding Policy for The Flower Clubs of Cheshire. This is now ready to be offered for approval by the Leadership Team and subsequently to all clubs. More details will emerge shortly.

On a lighter note, it has been an absolute pleasure to visit two clubs to meet committees and members and to witness first-hand the fantastic organisations we have in Cheshire.

I was made very welcome at Chester Flower Club back in January. This club has a lovely light and airy venue with good parking and is easy to find. The committee organised a lovely afternoon and the demonstrator, Jaqui Owen, was clearly quite at home. I thoroughly enjoyed Jaqui's demonstration and would highly recommend her.

In February I was able to give a very short talk to Knutsford Floral Design Club after their AGM to outline some of the work the Leadership Team. It was also helpful to talk with Dorothy Monks about the club's very impressive competition entries. There are several reasons for the success of these competitions, but I feel that much of it is due to the inspiration that is Dorothy! The highlight of the visit had to be the demonstration by Ian Lloyd.

These two clubs have set the bar high! So, where to next? Elworth on Monday 17th March to see Gemma Cutler!

The Pastoral Chairmanship is not all about visiting clubs and meeting the wonderful members, it is about supporting the Leadership Team, helping with decision making, writing necessary documents and offering a listening ear. If you would like help with anything or to share a problem, I hope you know where I am. You know what they say about a problem! Best wishes Jean.

National Liaison Update – Tracy-Anne Clancy for Janet Schofield

The next National Advisory Council meeting (NAC) is scheduled for 22nd April. Since the last NAC, a Finance Manager (Helen Lund) has been appointed to work four days per week. The backlog of outstanding work has been reduced significantly. Recruitment of a new CEO will commence in due course. I recently represented Cheshire at the Buddy Group meeting (akin to our Cluster meetings) which was chaired by Mala Williams. A very helpful meeting for sharing ideas and concerns with other Areas, but nothing of note to report. (Mala has since resigned as a Trustee for personal reasons.)



Letter to The National Chairman and Board of Directors of NAFAS

The following Proposal was made and unanimously agreed at the last Club Representatives Forum held in January 2025:

Proposal: *To write to HQ on behalf of Flower Clubs of Cheshire to encourage HQ to safeguard the future of NAFAS. HQ should look wider for personnel and consider restructuring and re-locating. Proposed by Pam Fleming-Williams, seconded by Joan Wilkinson. Passed by all present.*

In response to this, a letter was sent on 25th March for the attention of the National Chairman and Board of Directors of NAFAS on behalf of all FCoC members¹.

4. Area Secretary's Report – Vanessa Lees

Since our last Club Reps Forum, a number of clubs have held their AGMs. Many have already sent back to me their newly completed Club Officers Forms – thank you so much for your timely response. I know some clubs are still finalising theirs and I look forward to receiving them. It is proving so useful to keep a really up to date note of changes to club officers. I have also had news of some changes to club contact information. I do my best to ensure that the website contacts are all up to date, but please let me know if anything changes in your club. I have also been checking that we have the new programme for every club on their page on the website. To date, I think we have only two missing, so thanks everyone for your response.

Since January, I have been working on a Safeguarding Policy for Flower Clubs of Cheshire. I am beyond grateful to Anne Walton and Jean Jones for their wisdom and persistence with this – I could not have done it without them. We were also very fortunate to have support from Flowers Northeast who shared their expertise with us. I think we now have a workable policy which we feel is ready for adoption and is included under the proposal section. There has been an immense amount of working and reworking of this. This policy relates to Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults². There is further work to do to put together a Safeguarding of Children document for clubs who work regularly with children, and we will also need a Complaints and Allegations against Officers Policy as a supporting document. It is our hope that clubs can adopt an adapted version of the policy suitable for their clubs, and that all club officers have a good understanding of what to do on that hopefully rare occasion when a vulnerable adult is at risk.

We would like to offer a 'drop in' session for any clubs who may want advice on adopting or implementing a Safeguarding Policy. A Zoom session will be arranged shortly after the Club Representatives' Forum.

PROPOSAL to ratify and adopt Safeguarding Policy³.

Proposed by Jean Jones, seconded by Vanessa Lees, passed by all present.

It is very important that all Clubs adopt and implement the policy. Safeguarding ought to be included in the Club risk assessment and the Club committee should be aware of the processes. Jean and Vanessa have arranged a Zoom meeting to address Qs&As. It will also be a forum for sharing ideas about how it will work for each club. Monday, 9th June @ 7pm.

This policy is an ADULT policy (there will be a supplement in the future for children). Each individual Club needs to decide whether or not they need a safeguarding officer. Two people in Area have overall *responsibility* for safeguarding and a *level of awareness* in the Club committee

¹Appendix 1

²This policy is on the FCoC website.

³Appendix 2



and knowledge of the policy is required. We all hope it won't be required but we need to be prepared. It is recommended that Clubs discuss the examples at the end of the policy.

Other policies will be brought forward and help is expected from NAFAS UK.

5. Area Treasurer's Report – Tracy-Anne Clancy

Our financial year runs from 1st August to 31st July.

Financial Overview

Bank balances as at 13th March at Barclays were as follows:

Current Account	£10,532 ⁴
Savings Account	£23,110
JDS&E Account	£7,198
Flower Arranger Account	£4,062 ⁵
Cash to be banked	£224

Flower Arranger Magazine Club Payments

Please be advised that 12 Club cheques for subscriptions to the Flower Arranger magazine were banked and receipted at the post office in November. These have subsequently been 'lost' somewhere between the post office and Barclays clearing centre and not credited to our current account. The total amount is £1,501.50. The affected Clubs have been contacted and the next steps explained to them.

Affiliation Fees 2024/25

All Affiliation Fees for 2024, 25 have now been received from the 35 Clubs of Flower Clubs of Cheshire amounting to £8,299 (equating to a membership of 1,747). In response to a question it was confirmed that 12 people are in more than one flower club.

Thank you for your payments and support.

Budget 2024/25

Our budget for 2024/ 25 is based on the income received from affiliation fees. The actual expenditure incurred to date vs budget is presented below:

	2023, 24	BudgetActual (to date)	
	£	£	£
Facility Costs (website / storage / licences)	3,954	3,500	2,060
Publicity & Promotions	1,273	1,000	0 ⁶
Cheshire Area Show	2,496	2,300	0
Meetings	1,553	1,000	279
Other ⁷		499	398
Total	9,276	8,299	2,737

All other events must either break-even or realise a surplus.

⁴ Included within this balance is £1,425 of payments in respect of the Area Lunch.

⁵ This balance should be £5,564, see explanatory note.

⁶National Flower Arranging Day

⁷ Since the start of the financial year, we have received £374 in interest earned on our Savings Account which is not included in the budget.

The most recent event held has been the Elements & Principles workshop on the 9th March. The financials are presented below:

Income			£
24 Participants @ £25			600.00
Sales Table / Refreshments			49.25
			649.25
Expenditure			
Tutor Fee / Mileage / Materials	205.35		
Hall Hire	99.75		
Expenses / Certificates	79.80		
			384.90
Net Surplus / Deficit			215.10

National Flower Arranging Day

The date for National Flower Arranging day is Friday, 20th June, just before the start of British Flowers week. A decision has been taken by the Leadership Team on how Cheshire will take part in this⁸. The Area budget assumes £25 per Club (£850), to be spent on promoting flower arranging and Cheshire Clubs. It was agreed at the last Forum, that this will still be available for Clubs to claim, if they can provide photographic evidence of something the Club has done to promote our organisation.

Oversight

Please be advised that Judy Gratton has sight of the bank statements and accounts each month to ensure an independent review. Judy has confirmed in writing that she has seen the statements and accounts to date.

Insurance

Please let me know if do not wish to be included within the Area 'umbrella' insurance cover.

6. Representatives' Reports

6.i Judges Report – Pam Fleming-Williams

Area Judges Representatives Meeting Zoom 29/01/2025

18 Areas attended. The Reps were asked to present research on a plant of their choice beginning with the first letter of their name. This was to highlight the need for trainees to be encouraged to find out interesting information for the horticulture section of the training other than just what soil a plant needs. For example the meaning of Latin name, who is it named after, culinary uses, evergreen or deciduous, etc.

Area Reports – some areas are more proactive than others to encourage training. Some Areas receive money from organisations, e.g. RHS, to pay for shows to take place and to include Floral Art.

Procedures for organising modular training and a Test were discussed. These can take place in any order. Advice is to use more than one Instructor to get a wide depth and breadth of knowledge. Zoom could be used, except for the Oral section.

⁸ See sections 8ii and 8iii.



Let the National committee know that you are running a test so that trainee Adjudicators can attend (reduced cost!)

East of England and Devon & Cornwall are running Tests.

Trainee judges are needed. A constant change of personnel is needed to refresh and keep up to date.

The recommended booklist needs updating but only one Judge had replied with suggestions.

Guidance Forms will be revised and put up online for access by qualified judges.

There was discussion on judging fees. Expenses minimum as you should not be out of pocket.

Some shows regard it as an honour to be asked. Judges can look round a show and are often offered a meal.

Use of floral foam: If writing a schedule, it should be made absolutely clear if foam is allowed or not. Oasis are releasing a plant-based foam later this year.

National Comment Cards are available from Headquarters and Areas should produce their own branded cards for Area Judges. The use of individual, already signed, cards should be discouraged.

Tarvin Community Centre is booked for 7th September for a judges training day. Pam Fleming-Williams has approached some people who attended the Elements and Principles Day held in March to take part and consider becoming judges.

Précis of National Judging Committee Minutes 05/02/2025

During the NAC on 13th January, the Chairmen of the Judges, Demonstrators and Speakers Committees met to discuss training Adjudicators and Instructors so that similar procedures might be possible across the disciplines. Fees for National Tests and Training days were also discussed to establish appropriate fees.

National Judges are encouraged to ask an Area Judge to accompany them when judging to help them gain experience.

Schedule for the National Show has been launched. The Chairman stressed the need to have a venue and date for the following National Show in place by September this year.

15 candidates have now paid to take the National Judges Test. Instruction Day planned for 3rd April, focussing on the Oral section. Test to take place in June.

Judges Bulletin to be produced later this Spring.

PROPOSAL for Judges Training 2025, 26.

Proposed by Pam Fleming-Williams, seconded by Tracey-Anne Clancy. Passed by all present.



6.ii Demonstrators Report – Beryl Cotton

Area Demonstrators Report

Several of the demonstrators on the Flower Clubs of Cheshire list attended the Demonstrators Symposium at the Telford Hotel, Spa and Golf Resort, Telford which was held on 28th February through to 2nd March, 2025. They were warmly welcomed as either full delegates or Day Delegates.

Over the weekend there were two workshops by Cherie Nummy and Vanessa Wellock. The main flower demonstration was undertaken by our own Dawn Weaver who delighted everyone's eyes and stimulated our senses with stunning flowers and a stage full of creativity with a new demonstration entitled Forms in Space. Dawn received a well-deserved standing ovation. Delegates were given a block of the new Renewal floral foam from Smithers Oasis to sample along with lots of other goodies from sponsors Smithers Oasis and Flower Vision Birmingham. Presentations were given by Dr Jill Timms, Associate Professor from the University of Surrey on sustainability in the flower world; Liam Beddall, Senior Rose Consultant and Head of Professional Trade Services team at David Austin Roses, along with a presentation on poisonous plants – Deadly, Dangerous and Risky to hold by Lucy Ellis. There was a live auction of demonstrators' containers /stands which was exceedingly well received along with Ready Steady Cut entertainment. (Again several demonstrators on the Cheshire list took part in this evening event). There was an open forum also.

It was a full weekend and hopefully delegates returned home inspired after an enjoyable weekend. The symposium was open to National, Area and Trainee demonstrators.

****Several of the Flower Clubs of Cheshire Demonstrators have made a statement to say they will not accept bookings from Clubs which have disaffiliated from NAFAS.****

National Report

Minutes from the January National Demonstrators committee meeting have been circulated. A summary of the National Demonstrator Tests at Frodsham was given.

Margaret Rumens, Vice Chair is researching venues for a test in 2026 in the South Midlands Area which will hopefully be held the first weekend after Easter with a training session either before Christmas 2025 or in the February 2026 half term. A definite date will be issued asap.

The Demonstrator forms (D Forms) are being updated by Beryl Cotton and Margaret Rumens and it is hoped they will be completed before June. No drastic changes have been made but once completed they will be forwarded to Demonstrator Adjudicators and Instructors ahead of their zoom meeting and then uploaded to the NAFAS website.

BB and O, North East and Kent Floral Art have tests planned. South Midlands have indicated they would like to commence training early 2026 and Mercia & North Wales are looking to hold another test soon.

The committee will be organising mini demonstrations in the Chapter House and have a stand at the National Competitions at Gloucester in September 2025.

The next Area Demonstrator Reps meeting will be on Zoom on Tuesday, 9th September 2025.

The next Adjudicators and Instructors Zoom meeting will be held on 24th June 2025.

Beryl was thanked warmly for organising the recent symposium in Telford.

6.iii Education Report – Pam Mosedale

1. Elements and Principles Workshop with Jackie Charnock, Sunday 9th March at Tarvin

The aim of the day was for members to gain an overview of the Elements and Principles of Floral Design.

It was a very interactive day with lots of participation in small group activities. Everyone brought a floral design to aid learning and the floral design titles were Spring Splendour and Simple Elegance. Jackie shared her vast experience and knowledge of teaching, demonstrating and judging with the groups of 23 NAFAS members.

We have received some lovely feedback and a few suggestions to improve the next E&P workshop planned for March 2026. There appears to be good demand for this type of workshop from all ability levels.

2. Members' Workshop with Julie Pearson on Sunday 11th May at Tarvin

Julie Pearson, National Teacher from Bolton will be running our next Members' workshop. The designs are inspired by her book 'Floral Design Innovation & Craft'.

There will be a choice of designs using wax bases to create the foundation for the designs and a table setting using a collection of log slices. To reserve a place email education@nafascheshire.org.uk payment by BACS prior to the event is preferred.

3. Masterclass – details to be confirmed

Unfortunately, Gill McGregor will not be hosting our Masterclass and Education Day as previously reported. Finding another teacher is proving difficult because teachers are charging more than they were in the past.

4. Education Day with Vanessa Wellock on Sunday 19th October at Frodsham

Vanessa Wellock, National Demonstrator and National Teacher, will be leading our Education Day on Sunday 19th October. Vanessa will be sharing her knowledge of leaf manipulation and wiring techniques. She will also be inspiring workshop leaders and teachers with some new Christmas designs to share with their students.

5. NAFAS qualification and Ofqual accreditation

The National Education Committee Meeting that took place on Tuesday, 21st January 2025.

Extracts from the minutes:

The rationale behind the discontinuation of the current NAFAS courses is due to the low uptake of these within NAFAS by both teachers and learners. Feedback has been that the courses are too expensive and involve too much administration and paperwork to run.

Many of the Area Chairmen's reports given at the NAC indicated that there was an abundance of teaching and learning taking place at Club and Area level in terms of workshops and leisure courses, but little interest had been shown in longer or more formal qualifications. It is surmised that this may be due to a lack new members coming into NAFAS, meaning that those with an interest in formal learning have already completed one of the legacy NAFAS qualifications. For this reason, the new NAFAS courses will be targeted beyond NAFAS, towards the general public, as well as NAFAS members, with a view to entering into colleges.



Since this meeting took place, Julie Pearson has joined the National Education Committee and will also be attending the Education Strategy Meeting on 25th, 26th March @ Woodford Grange, Leamington Spa.

A national Zoom meeting was held on 11th February with over 30 teachers from around all the NAFAS areas. The meeting was a general discussion about various aspects of teaching flower arranging. The meeting minutes have yet to be circulated.

The elements and principles workshop was well supported and will be repeated next year. The teaching day on 11th May with Julie Pearson still has spaces. Julie will be demonstrating some of the techniques from her recently published book and there will be opportunity to practise some of them.

FCoC is using Tarvin Community Centre because it is relatively cheap. Members' suggestions for teaching days are welcome. In response to a question from the floor Pam said she would consider arranging teaching on days other than Sundays.

Ed day in Oct Vanessa Wellock National teacher all booked in
Forthcoming dates:

Gill McGregor is visiting Tarporley on 3rd June, Wistaston on 4th June, Handbridge on 19th 20th November, and Chester on 21st November demonstrating and running club workshops.

Ioachim Erema is demonstrating on 10th October at Knutsford and holding a workshop on 11th.
To book email treasurer@knutsfordfloraldesign.co.uk.

All Cheshire members are very welcome to attend.

6.iv Young Persons' Representative Report – Judy Gratton

Plans are progressing for Nantwich Show to be held on **Wednesday 30th July 2025**. This will include exhibits from local primary schools. The schedule has been approved by the judge. The overall title is Cheshire Delights and the children's class is Land Art (taking inspiration from Andy Goldsworthy who was born in Cheshire). We will be including activities for children within the Floral Art marquee.

If anyone is interested in running floral activities 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

7. Flower School – Jean Jones / Tracy-Anne Clancy / Judy Gratton



The Flower School of Cheshire has many “offerings” coming up under the large umbrella that embraces education, classes, workshops and much more.

Just have a look at the website and choose Education from the menu to see the range of activities to suit all, from beginners to masterclasses.

If your club is offering classes or workshops and you would like them to be featured on the website or in the newsletter do get in touch with Tracy-Anne.

If you would like any help with workshops whether it is tips and hints or in organising the whole session, drop us a line on email.

jmj57@hotmail.co.uk or judy.gratton@live.co.uk for young people’s classes

8. Events / Publicity Update

8.ii Flower Arranger Magazine – Catherine Bower

Flower Arranger 2025 subscriptions and delivery

- Four additional subscriptions notified, with Spring edition sent from Area stock and delivery increased from Summer edition
- Three clubs notified change to delivery arrangements for Summer edition
- Summer edition due for delivery within five working days of 9th April
- If moving home or on holiday during delivery timescale, delivery to a temporary address is OK and revert for following editions

Dates are on slip circulated with order form, with reminder in Area Newsletter. Autumn edition due for delivery 10th July with any change to delivery address or number of subscriptions notified to me by 17th May.

2025 club subscription rate £16.50 for four editions and individual copy or part year £5.40 per magazine

Dates

Summer edition	club order 15 February	delivery 9 April
Autumn edition	club order 17 May	delivery 10 July – will the usual person be away??
Winter edition	club order 16 August	delivery 9 October

NAFAS News

- Notified in Summer 2024, National News page and ‘From the National Chair’ Winter edition, NAFAS News is no longer available in printed form, but available on national web site: www.nafas.org.uk This makes it available to all members and not just those who subscribe to the magazine.



Accounts

- accounts exchanged with Treasurer to confirm BACS

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

8.ii Royal Cheshire County Show – ‘Theatre of Flowers’ – Carol Baker

Work is being done to map out the new layout for the Theatre of Flowers marquee because of the change in orientation this year. Displays at the RCCS will also form Flower Clubs of Cheshire's contribution to National Flower Arranging Day – see 8.iii below. Thanks to Stockport and Romiley who are arranging the publicity corner in the show tent for visitors to enjoy.

Clubs are invited to collect small baskets to bring to the show for arrangements to be sold to visitors.

8.iii Website & Social Media – Tracy-Anne Clancy

- National Flower Arranging Day – it has been decided that Cheshire's 'National' event will be to maximise media and social media coverage of the Theatre of Flowers. The 'National' day has been set for Friday 20th June, two days after the RCCS. It makes more sense to maximise the enormous amount of work, time, effort and skill which goes into our Area Show and to go all out to showcase this across the Area. To stage another event two days later would not only be impractical, but also an inefficient use of all resources, including the time of members who would have to be involved in both events.
 - Individual Clubs are still very much encouraged to do something locally. "Lonely bouquets", which have often been popular, may be done in any way and at any time. Clubs are encouraged to choose a theme and date which is meaningful to them or their local area. As in previous years, if Clubs send photos of what they do they will be sent £25. Send to treasurer@nafascheshire.org.uk
- The website continues to be updated with all the Club programmes for 2025. Please make sure all new information is sent to our website manager Mike Gallagher. We are hugely grateful to Mike Gallagher for all his hard work and continued support. This is the "shop window" of FCoC.
- Flower School of Cheshire is now a 'menu option' with an opportunity for us to clearly offer and advertise classes for all abilities. Clubs / individuals are now sharing details of their classes to be publicised on the website.
- Our Instagram page is [flowerclubsofcheshire](https://www.instagram.com/flowerclubsofcheshire).
- Flower Clubs of Cheshire Facebook page is very active – please keep sharing.

8.iv Area Social Day – Tracy-Anne Clancy

Save the Date! Progress is being made with the planning of an Area Social Day and as this is our Emerald year, we will be celebrating all things 'Cheshire'. Lunch and a series of mini demonstrations will be held on Monday 14th July at Abbeywood Estate & Gardens. There will be plenty of time for chatting and also for exploring the gardens. More details etc. to follow. Huge thank you to the team for the plans so far.

Looking ahead, Nick Grounds is the AGM Demonstrator on 2nd October.

8.v Newsletter – Tracy-Anne Clancy

The March, April newsletter has been issued.

Any Club with information about events to share across the Area can be sent to treasurer@nafascheshire.org.uk for inclusion. Please forward the newsletter on to all Club members.

9. Cluster Updates

Peony – Elworth, Leek, Macclesfield, Nether Alderley, South Cheshire, Wistaston.

Iris – Ashton Hayes & Tarvin, Chester, Eddisbury & Sandiway, Frodsham, Holt, Mid Cheshire, Rural Chester, Tarporley, Widnes, Winwick. Also Handbridge.

Lily – Handbridge, Hoylake, Neston, New Brighton, Upton-by-Chester, Wirral.

Rose – Goostrey, Hale Barns, Heald Green, Knutsford, Lymm, Sale.

Sunflower – Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme, Bramall Hall, Disley, Prestbury, Romiley, Stockport Afternoon, Wilmslow Guild.

Peony Cluster – Jean Jones

The meeting at Owley Wood in January was very well attended by representatives from Flower Clubs in the Peony Cluster. There was plenty of time for a catch up before the meeting. We had good intentions to meet up at Astbury Garden Centre in mid-March but as I write I think this is unlikely to happen as we are all so busy.

We have kept in touch via email and recently heard the good news that Nether Alderley hope to return to our newly refurbished Village Hall after a year in temporary accommodation. Fiona and Shirley are joining us for lunch at Lymm Golf Club in April, so we look forward to catching up there. Bernard Preston sent Elworth Flower Club's Newsletter which is packed with items of interest, plenty of events going on there to keep a level of interest and excitement about the club. Too numerous to mention here but I have picked out two articles that caught my eye:

"Our demonstrator in March is Gemma Cutler. Gemma is a little different. She is enthusiastic, exuberant, theatrical and a lovely, lovely girl. She posts flower arranging demonstrations on YouTube and Instagram and has a large following. Her business is called ColourWheelGarden and she grows her own flowers, as you will see from the pictures Gemma will show. You will love her."



Elworth Flower Club "have had to change the date of Jonathan Moseley's demonstration from June 16th to June 23rd. Jonathan had a contract with a major county show, and they changed the date and for financial reasons. Jonathan had to comply and couldn't make the 16th. We need your help to assess how many will come: -

If you are a MEMBER and you are coming – please tell Christine.



If you are a Member and are NOT coming – please tell Christine.

If you are coming as a visitor, please tell us.

For Members there will be no charge of course, but we expect more visitors than usual, and we will be making a small extra charge. If we know this information, we can better assess the numbers who wish to come and allow us to arrange the Hall most conveniently for all.”

For more information contact Bernard

Best wishes to all from Jean and the Peony Cluster.

Iris Cluster – Anne Walton

Iris Cluster Coffee Meeting 22.2.25

Seven of us met for coffee at The Lounge Oakmere on Thursday 22nd Feb 2025. We represented 4 clubs from the Cluster including Holt, the new club joining Flower Clubs of Cheshire. Other clubs had sent apologies and/or their written thoughts. With it being half term week a number of people were on Grandparent duty.

Inevitably discussions went over some ground covered previously as the same issues keep arising. However, where we discussed an issue we tried to offer and share ideas with the result that we had a very positive and enjoyable coffee session.

Club memberships seem to range between 30-80 people. Hall facilities are varied with some clubs still having to prepare and tidy the halls themselves. Sometimes this is the Chairman on her own which is not ideal.

Areas of Discussion

National Flower Arranging Day

As requested by NAFAS HQ, Flower Clubs of Cheshire will be doing a large display to attract more press interest⁹. Flowers and items from the Cheshire Show will be used as the Day falls at the end of Cheshire Show week on Friday 20th June. However, some clubs within Iris Cluster will acknowledge the day at Club level. Having persuaded more members to take part over the years it is a pity to lose the momentum. It was generally acknowledged that the event did not lead to hordes of visitors/new members coming to the clubs but it is worth doing to “brighten someone’s day”. Mid Cheshire will probably do something in the Autumn to tie in with their Diamond anniversary. Holt participate in “Holt in Bloom”.

Ideas for the day

Posies left on benches/letter boxes

The Lonely Bouquet

Friendly Flowers

A basket of flowers to anyone in the village over 100.

⁹See sections 8ii, and 8iii.



Raising Money Some clubs need to raise money for their own use and/or for Charity donations.

Ideas for Raising Money

Raffles are a good source of income both at meetings and on the coach on visits.

Trips can make good money.

Varying items on the sales table depending on the season. Ask for unwanted gifts. Don't just have flower items. e.g. shortbread etc

Workshops can make a profit

Scarf sale: members donate a scarf and can buy another for a pound

Jigsaw sale: members donate one and can buy another for a pound. One club just does a Jigsaw Swap without charge. Helps to get members moving around the room and talking to each other

Ashton Hayes and Tarvin sell "snowdrops in the green" 20 bulbs for £1.20 (that sounds like a really lovely village activity!)

Book stall

Plant sales

Card sales

Open Day

Pop up Shop

It was acknowledged that for some members, attending Flower Club is their only outing, and they may not have money to spare

How to Encourage Participation in Competitions

Most clubs in the Cluster experience low entries to competitions and some have not held a competition for a long time. Many members simply enjoy an afternoon/evening out to meet up with friends, have some refreshment and watch a demonstration. Even very capable flower arrangers are reluctant to enter Club Competitions. Clubs would appreciate a list of themes.

Forthcoming events:

23rd July at 1pm Jane Pugh is coming to Owley Wood. A visit to David Ryland's Garden next year is possible. Details will be shared on newsletter in due course.

Ideas

Hold a workshop the day before the dem and ask all participants to enter their designs in the club competition

Give everyone who enters a "prize" e.g. a small bar of chocolate

Offer free entry/ give a strip of raffle tickets if they bring a competition piece

Hold a novice competition

Give out mechanics for a design (e.g. a Cracker) to members as an encouragement to enter the competition.

How are Programmes put together?

Clubs seem to meet for 10 or 11 sessions a year. Generally a demonstrator will be booked for most sessions but some clubs are struggling financially to maintain this. Clubs that are financially viable are able to book well in advance (now booking for 2027) as they know they have the finances to cover the expenses. Committees are exploring ways of cutting down costs.



Ideas

Hold a "members night/afternoon" when club members become the demonstrators. (Mid Cheshire find this very successful)

Leading on from the above....Take a theme.....if members are not confident in making an arrangement and talking then split up the task e.g. Eddisbury and Sandiway took their Blue Sapphire theme. 6 people read from a script as three people worked designs up on the stage connected to different aspect of the talk. (Three designs were also made earlier so there were six to raffle off)

A member with an interesting story (e.g. about a trip of a lifetime) may be able to talk at a members lunch/AGM rather than get a demonstrator in

At the AGM hold a Quiz, or have a charity speaker, or enjoy "Delicious Desserts" etc.

Members lunch once a year in addition to the monthly meetings. Could have stalls at this.

Workshops planned into programme.

Some Clubs hold a special "Open Meeting" with a more expensive demonstrator charging for tickets (Cheaper for members than visitors).

One club holds 7 meetings charging £50 for the year with additional charges for trips etc and a free AGM.

Encouraging New Members

All the clubs work hard to encourage new members, but it continues to be a struggle. Also, as ever, there is a reluctance to join the Committee. Clubs are hanging on because Committee members are loyal to the Club and to the Chairman and continue to give support even though many of them would like to step down. Committee numbers seem to be between nine and 13 people. A Committee "WhatsApp" group is aiding communication at several clubs.

Ideas to promote the Club

Keep members informed and up to date. Email all members the week before a dem and encourage them to bring along a visitor.

Have business cards/flyers printed that offer a free visit.

Mail drop in the area the meeting is held. Flyers in libraries, local shops, Area newsletters etc.

Use Social media especially Facebook.

Local Press. (Mid Cheshire and Eddisbury and Sandiway recently submitted a joint piece to the Northwich Guardian which was printed)

AOB

Sadly, the old questions "What does NAFAS do for me?" "Where do my Subs Go?" continue to be raised. Chairmen have to deal with this. Ann Schuberth (Tarporley) has kindly agreed to share a poster she provided for her members outlining the benefits of NAFAS membership. There is very little quibble about the money paid to Area but there continues to be unease about the money that goes to HQ. Chairmen try to give a positive spin but find it hard to do so with conviction!

Action from FCoC Leadership Team meeting: In answer to this, it has been agreed that a 'crib sheet' will be put together by the Chairman's office, setting out all the benefits of being affiliated to NAFAS, so that club chairmen and others can help foster a more positive response from members about HQ and NAFAS as an organisation.

Many thanks to you all for your support of Iris Cluster. It is good to share our thoughts and ideas.

Although the same issues continue to be raised it is useful to appreciate that all clubs/committees/chairman share the same concerns.

We are not alone. We are in this together!!



Best wishes to you all

Anne Walton, Iris Cluster Lead, Chairman Eddisbury and Sandiway Flower Club

Lily Cluster – Colette Dunkley

New Brighton had 26 visitors last night, very promising.

Rose Cluster – Tracy-Anne Clancy

The Rose Cluster continues to share information, ideas and supports events within the cluster. Lymm Floral Art Group welcomed members of Knutsford to their recent Spring workshop with Dawn Weaver. Thank you also to the Rose Cluster members for their assistance with the Area lunch preparations and flowers.

The British Iris Society are holding their late Spring Open Show on Sunday April 27th at Plumley Village Hall. Members of Knutsford Floral Design Club will be supporting the event, plus a series of demonstrations being undertaken by Flower Clubs of Cheshire. A competition schedule is available for anyone interested in competing.

An Open Demonstration and Workshop by Ioachim Erema is also being organised by Knutsford Floral Design Club on Friday and Saturday 10th, 11th October at Chelford Village Hall. Details to follow.

Unfortunately, one of the cluster Clubs, Hale Barns, will be closing at the end of the year. Despite many discussions and offers of support, it was decided by the membership that the Club will sadly be closing, due to no new committee members coming forward to fill the positions. The final dinner and demonstration will be held in December.

Hale Barns will be closing at the end of the year.

Sunflower Cluster – David Mason

No written report

10. Proposals

See sections 4, and 6i above, appendices 2, and 3.

11. AOB – there was no other business.

At 11:41 Tracey-Anne Clancy closed the meeting. She thanked to those who set up, arranged table flowers and helped with catering.

Date of next Club Representatives Forum: Thursday, 24th July at Five Villages Hall, Chester

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 1.



(Affiliated to National Association of Flower Arrangement Societies)

25th March 2025

Future of NAFAS – Time to Restructure?

FAO The National Chairman and Board of Directors of NAFAS

At our last Club Representatives meeting, news of Steven Lane's retirement at the end of this year was announced. An update was also provided regarding the Finance Manager vacancy and other staffing changes at Head Office. On behalf of the membership of Flower Clubs of Cheshire, it was agreed, following a discussion, that a letter be sent to the National Chairman and Board of Directors of NAFAS, questioning the current staffing structure of the Association, investing some of our funds into supporting key roles, whether there are plans for a strategic review of the future of the Association, including considering relocation outside of the expensive City Centre of London.

- The role of a new CEO – should this be a more holistic role? Concern was expressed that our current CEO seems to be 'thinly spread'. We felt the future role of a CEO should be a more outward looking role, focussing on promoting NAFAS and networking with similar organisations to maximise our presence. It was felt that the role be supported by an experienced senior finance professional.
- The role of Finance Manager – should this be 'upgraded'? The management of the finances of the organisation including; monthly reporting vs budget, quarterly forecasts during the year, budgeting, preparation of the business plan, challenging & managing individual budgets, reviewing the cost structure of the organisation, liaison with the investment managers, liaison with auditors and filing accounts would all typically be within a job description of a Finance Director rather than a CEO. There would still obviously be the necessity for transactional processing to be undertaken, but current accounting software packages have significantly reduced the workload in this area. Flower Clubs of Cheshire suggest that the finance role within the organisation be re-considered.
- As discussed at the NAC, Flower Clubs of Cheshire would welcome an increased marketing / social media / website presence.
- Flower Clubs of Cheshire are fully supportive of the future of NAFAS but feel that the time has come to restructure to protect and enhance our future. With a declining membership, the answer to balancing the books doesn't only lie with aiming for a higher income stream or hoping income from new initiatives will plug the gaps. We strongly suggest a comprehensive strategic review of the cost structure of the organisation (all aspects) by an experienced senior finance professional, should also be a matter of priority. With the current lease on the London office having approximately only two years left, maybe now is the time to start considering moving out of Central London. It was also agreed that spending some of the 'investment' on enhancing key roles should be considered as a priority by the Directors. The membership feels that whilst we wish to safeguard our future by having funds in the bank, some of that needs to be expended now for the benefit of the current membership and not just saving it – for what?

We would be happy to discuss this further if required and would be willing to support the way forward for the Association.

Kind regards

Chairman's Office On behalf of the Membership of 'Flower Clubs of Cheshire'





Appendix 2.

FLOWER CLUBS OF CHESHIRE PROPOSAL FORM

Name and Club
Jean Jones Pastoral Chairman / Vanessa Lees Area Secretary
Contact email (<i>this is to enable us to send you a response to your proposal</i>)
jmj57@hotmail.co.uk secretary@nafascheshire.org.uk
Contact telephone/mobile number (<i>this is in case we need to clarify any details</i>)
01270522466 / 07795555492
Outline of your proposal: Adoption of Safeguarding Policy
<p>We propose that The Flower Clubs of Cheshire accept the Safeguarding Policy presented for approval as a working document for all Area officers to adhere to for all of their activities associated with Flower Clubs of Cheshire.</p> <p>We also propose that this policy be made available to all clubs who do not already have a Safeguarding Policy to adapt as their own by adding club name and names of designated safeguarding leads.</p> <p>This document is relevant for adults, and it is proposed that an appendix referring to working with children and young people will be added in due course.</p> <p>If this policy is adopted, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Lead will organise a suitable forum available to all clubs to raise awareness of safeguarding vulnerable adults in our clubs and how to implement the policy.</p>
Draft budget
No cost should be incurred for the roll out of the Safeguarding Policy as this can be done via email and website. In terms of meetings to raise awareness of issues surrounding safeguarding, there could be costs if this were done as a face-to-face meeting. It may be necessary to provide a meeting venue and refreshments. An alternative would be a Zoom meeting with small groups of reps at a time. It could also be done after a Club Reps Forum.
How does your proposal encourage new members to our Association or encourage our present membership to participate?
Existing and new members will be made aware that clubs have this policy in place and that matters of safeguarding are important to all clubs. This should reassure members, visitors and potential new members that they will be treated with respect and care.
How does this proposal demonstrate adherence to the NAFAS Values?
<p>1.Promote NAFAS and particularly, Flower Clubs of Cheshire as a caring and safe organisation.</p> <p>2.Aid mental and social wellbeing through awareness of safeguarding concerns.</p>
Any other information
CAN TEAM Agreed/Not Agreed (<i>with reasons</i>)
Agreed. This proposal to be ratified by whole membership at next CRF on 9 th April.
Decision sent to Club/ Individual on (<i>date</i>)
24/03/2025

Appendix 3.

FLOWER CLUBS OF CHESHIRE PROPOSAL FORM

Name and Club														
Pam Fleming-Williams – Judges Representative (Flower Clubs of Cheshire)														
Contact email (<i>this is to enable us to send you a response to your proposal</i>)														
p.fw@btinternet .com														
Contact telephone/mobile number (<i>this is in case we need to clarify any details</i>)														
Outline of your proposal														
Training to be a Judge 2025-26 See below for dates and costings														
Draft budget														
<p>Possible dates:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>September 5/6</td> <td>Introduction – could be taken by PF-W – mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November 1 /2</td> <td>Practical £150 tutor + mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>February 21/22</td> <td>Written £150 tutor + mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>May 16/17</td> <td>Oral £150 tutor + mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July 11/12</td> <td>Mock Test £75 x 2 Adjudicators + mileage + £180 for 14 exhibits</td> </tr> <tr> <td>??</td> <td>Interim Day ?? Could be held at someone's house I could take this/these</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September 12/13</td> <td>Final Test £75 x 2 Adjudicators + mileage + £180 for 14 exhibits</td> </tr> </table> <p>Plus the cost of hiring a hall for 6 complete days - £600 (Plumley or Tarvin are suitable)</p> <p>So you are looking at around £2600 Students to be asked for £25 for each day (not extortionate) x 6 = £300 overall Estimating 8 students = £2400</p> <p>People may drop out along the way so expect not to recoup all expenses.</p>	September 5/6	Introduction – could be taken by PF-W – mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits	November 1 /2	Practical £150 tutor + mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits	February 21/22	Written £150 tutor + mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits	May 16/17	Oral £150 tutor + mileage + £90 for 7 exhibits	July 11/12	Mock Test £75 x 2 Adjudicators + mileage + £180 for 14 exhibits	??	Interim Day ?? Could be held at someone's house I could take this/these	September 12/13	Final Test £75 x 2 Adjudicators + mileage + £180 for 14 exhibits
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September 12/13	Final Test £75 x 2 Adjudicators + mileage + £180 for 14 exhibits													
How does your proposal encourage new members to our Association or encourage our present membership to participate?														
To develop and enhance understanding of floral art and design														
Any other information														
<p>Pauline Foster (Judges Rep) from North Midlands has two people interested. Perhaps we can get some more interest from Cheshire after the Es and Ps day in March. Will obviously advertise the course to North East and North West Areas, maybe Mercia.</p>														
Leadership TEAM Agreed/Not Agreed (<i>with reasons</i>)														
<p>Agreed. Money is available in the JDSE account to underwrite this (if necessary), and the Leadership Team agreed that, similarly to the successful Demonstrators training last year, it is part of our remit within NAFAS to offer high quality training for Judges</p>														
Decision sent to Club/ Individual on (<i>date</i>)														
24 th March 2025														