

THE CHESHIRE AREA OF NAFAS

Minutes of 51st Annual General Virtual Meeting Thursday 28th October 2021

OFFICERS PRESENT: Louise Jones, Chairman. Tracy-Anne Clancy, Area Treasurer. Morag McCord, Area Secretary. Janet Schofield, Area Support Officer. Gill Davies, Area support officer. Shiona Fosh, Minutes Secretary.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** : Sharon Nolan Area Education Rep, Dorothy Irvin National and Area AOH, Judy Gratton Area Junior Liaison Officer, Sue Jackson AOH, Nicky Wylie AOH, The Bramall Hall FC and Heswall FC.
2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (October 2019): The Chairman signed the Minutes of the previous meeting as a true and correct record of the meeting.

Proposed by Tracy-Anne Clancy seconded by Chris Middleton, Disley and district FC.

3. **AMENDMENTS:** No amendments

3a. **MATTERS ARISING:** None

4. AREA CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS : Louise Jones

The Area Team has been very active over the last twelve months and have run a number of events. In summary we have held eleven online demonstrations, six online talks on gardening and flower arranging subjects and a choice of three different wreath workshops.

Appreciate all cannot go on to online demonstrations but we are slowly coming out of lockdown, and it is lovely to hear of clubs meeting up in and enjoying being together again. As we move into Autumn many of the clubs are holding their first demonstrations in 17 months. It may be not quite as it was but how lovely to get together again and enjoy our love of flowers.

We have held floral fashion workshops towards our Floral Fashion Show.

Also, despite the situation we managed to have a Virtual Cheshire Show with competitors from across the world and then later on the summer we were able to take part in the face-to-face Cheshire show with some flower exhibits and pictures of the winning exhibits at the Virtual Cheshire Show.

Congratulations to Margaret Delany for the Best in Show award. We also exhibited at and attended Arley Garden Festival and at RHS Tatton.

We have also held our Floral Fashion Show - and what a show it was! The creativity within our area is outstanding! A huge thank you to Janet Schofield and Mark Entwistle our Creative Directors and Tracy-Ann Clancy for organising the event.

Janet Schofield has started our Competitive Support Group which has been very successful. With many of the members taking part in the virtual shows and some taking part in RHS Tatton and Arley Garden Festival.

In the midst of all this our AOH, Beryl Cotton, passed Instructors and Adjudicators tests – Well Done!! After a long delay, Carol Baker, Colette Dunkley and Louise Jones passed the Area Judges Test. Sharon Nolan and passed her OCN/NAFAS Teacher Training Certificate.

Looking back over the year your Area Committees have been working very hard and I thank them for all their time and commitment to our Area.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT - Morag McCord

- a) Area has had 5 CAN team meetings and 4 CAN Reps Forums and 1 AGM over the past year all virtual and well attended.
- b) Minutes and all relevant information regarding NAFAS have been sent to Area officers and Reps, Club Chairmen and AOHs by email.
- c) Correspondence received from HQ, clubs and requests via the website have been dealt with.
- d) My sincere thanks to Shiona Fosh, our Area Minute Secretary for the great job she has done with the minutes.
- e) It has helped greatly sending the reports to you all prior to the meetings to enable the smooth running of them, giving members more time to ask questions.
- f) Please keep me up to date with your club circumstances to enable information to be received quickly and keep your members updated and involved.

6. PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT - Tracy-Anne Clancy

I have pleasure in presenting the financial statements for the Cheshire Area of NAFAS for the year 1 August 2020 to 31st July 2021. An Income and Expenditure Statement and a Balance Sheet have been prepared (copies have been distributed separately).

Overview:

Closing balances on bank accounts as at 31st July 2021 are as follows:

F&GP Current Account £2,640

F&GP Savings Account £39,697

JDS&E Current Account £8,211

Flower Arranger Current Account £2,831

For a second year running, the finances of The Cheshire Area of NAFAS have been impacted by restrictions and lockdowns necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Although some events were able to take place in the summer of 2021, it was not possible to hold normal regular meetings or engage in the usual activities for the majority of the year. Cheshire Area resorted to Zoom to continue operations as far as possible, albeit in a virtual world.

The headlines are as follows:

- Our main source of income is from Affiliation Fees, paid by Clubs to Area on behalf of their members. Recognising that some clubs had not been able to collect subscriptions from their members, were unable to state how many members they had, had returned subscriptions to their members, had no funds available, Area requested that Clubs simply paid 50% of the amount paid the previous year. This was in order to ensure we retained our 'Affiliated to NAFAS' status and also to support Area with ongoing facility costs. Timing of payments was flexible to accommodate Clubs as far as possible. 41 Clubs made a payment to Area which totalled £10,638. A proportion (equivalent to the same ratio as for 2019/20) was paid to HQ which totalled £7,887. The net amount for the year for Cheshire Area was £2,751.
- Our reported loss for the year (after interest) is £5,897. However, this was 'managed' and was not as a result of poor financial control. It was agreed that Area would utilise savings to support Clubs and members as far as possible, by providing a variety of Zoom sessions. These are discussed in more detail in the CAN Events Report.

Income for Cheshire Area in 2020/21 was £2,751. This was expensed on 'Facilities' (£2,825) as follows:

- Website Updates (for Clubs) £1,223
- Internet & Cookie Costs £236
- Zoom Licences £283
- Storage Charges £903
- Insurance £180

The following activities, totalling £3,482 were provided for all affiliated members during lockdown, via Zoom and were expensed from Area's prior years' savings:

- Zoom Talks £630
- Demonstrations £2,384
- Subsidised Workshops £468

Once again, the RCCS planned for June was cancelled. However, it was decided that the Flower Competitions would continue but as a virtual show. Entry was free. Costs incurred for this virtual event included; judging fees £50, printing and posting of certificates amounting to £296 and publication of all entries on the Area website £260. Total for the virtual RCCS was £606.

As restrictions started to lift, it was possible for Cheshire Area to exhibit at three events; Arley Garden Festival, RHS Tatton and RCCS at the end of July. The net costs per event are as follows:

- Arley Garden Festival £97 (net cost)
- RHS Tatton £928 (net cost) (refer to separate report)
- RCCS £364 (signage & expenses)

Area supported Clubs by offering a payment of £25 per Club for those willing to support National Flower Arranging Day in May. A total of £225 was paid out to support Clubs. This is included within 'Other Events & Miscellaneous'.

Also included within 'Other Events & Miscellaneous' is the purchase and acquisition of two sets of display boards (second hand). The large set of boards, costing £390, was used at the 'in person' RCCS held on 31st July (see separate report) to display enlarged photographs of all the winning entries from the virtual show. The second set of display boards was acquired from a local disbanded organisation. A donation of £50 was made to their chosen charity – St Roccas Hospice.

CHESHIRE AREA OF NAFAS		
for the year ended 31st July 2021		
ACCUMULATED FUND	20/2021	19/2020
	£	£
Balance at 1st August 2020	58,398	64,412
Profit / Loss for the Year	- 5,897	- 6,014

Balance at 31st July 2021	52,501	58,398
Represented by:		
Stock	712	712
Prepayments	792	-
F&GP Saver Account	39,697	26,892
F&GP Current Account	2,640	25,060
JDS&E Current Account	8,211	8,211
Flower Arranger Current Account	2,831	4,329
Cash in Hand	216	218
<i>Current Assets</i>	55,100	65,423
<i>Less Current Liabilities</i>		
Accruals Flower Arranger	- 1,203	- 2,811
Accruals Other	- 1,396	- 4,213
Net Current Assets	52,501	58,398

Question/comments: Pat Wood: Banks are charging fees for cheques, but not the Co-operative Bank. Independent Reviewers need a certificate.

Tracy-Ann: Barclays are not charging. HSBC seems to be the only one that is charging. Ruth Sweeny is a qualified reviewer with a certificate. The flower show made a slight profit of £100.

7. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REVIEWER for 2021-2022

Ruth Mc Sweeny was proposed to independently review the finances this year.

Proposed by Tracy-Anne Clancy. Seconded by: Bernard Preston, Elworth F C.

8. ADOPTION OF REPORTS *Proposed by Louise Jones and seconded by Anne Watson.*

9. CONFIRMATION OF AREA CHAIRMAN AND SUPPORT OFFICERS

Louise Jones, Gillian Davies and Janet Schofield.

Proposed by Tracy –Anne Clancy. Seconded by: Diane Smith

10. RE-ELECTION OF SECRETARY Morag McCord

Proposed by Louise Jones. Seconded by: Diane Smith

11. RE-ELECTION OF TREASURER Tracy-Anne Clancy

Proposed by Chris Middleton. Seconded by: Dawn Weaver

12. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTE SECRETARY Shiona Fosh

Proposed by Chris Middleton. Seconded by: Dawn Weaver

13.a) Publicity report - Sally Melvin

Louise Jones is looking forward to gathering a publicity team together and advertising on line.

13.b) Photography - Pam Mosedale

- During the year October 2020 to September 2021 I have not taking any photographs of Cheshire Area activities for a variety of reasons.
- Photographs from the summer events at Arley, the 1 day Cheshire Show and RHS Tatton Show have been taken by the event leads and the team members. They have been published on the Area's Facebook page.
- Normal photography service has now been resumed

13.c) Flower Arranger - Catherine Bower

Flower Arranger

- 7 clubs did not place an order in 2021, though individuals from 2 of those clubs placed an order. Wilmslow and District club closed
- Many clubs took opportunity to distribute magazines as a way to maintain communication with members. A big thank you to members who helped make it happen
- National Editorial team worked with many Areas to put together photo shoots

The Flower Arranger Awards

- No awards made this year

Accounts

- Copy of Statement sent to Area Treasurer whenever received (payment paid in or out)
 - Balance at end of Area's financial year (July) £2830.66.
- Invoice for Winter edition due mid-October for approximately £1205.
Balance accrued from Promotional Discount and sales of Back copies at shows.
Headquarters give 10 pence per copy, to help promote the Flower Arranger magazine.
Past years, this has included sponsorship of flowers at shows. This has not been possible for past 2 years

2022 Subscriptions

- For the fifth year, 2022 club subscription rates held at £12.80 for 4 editions.
- Order form forwarded to club contacts by Area Secretary mid-July requesting orders to Area Flower Arranging Officer by 12th November.
Duplicate copy sent to CFAO who provided a contact email address.
Contact to Area Flower Arranger officer can be made via: flower.arranger@nafascheshire.org.uk or link on website contact button.

13.d) CAN Events Report – Janet Schofield

When I joined the Area officer's team back in September 2020, I was very keen that Cheshire Area started to participate in online activities as I had seen other clubs, areas and demonstrators do, via Facebook and YouTube.

Being aware how much members were missing their flower fix, we wanted to act quickly.

I proposed an online programme of events and chose to use Zoom rather than Facebook because this enabled the events to be exclusive to Cheshire area and as they are live, more closely follow the 'normal' look and feel of flower club events. It also made the events available to more members - whilst most people now use email and the internet and can thus click on a Zoom link to access an event, there a lot of people that don't use Facebook.

The benefits (as documented in the original proposal) include:

- Paid work for demonstrators/speakers/tutors
- Enables area members to access exclusive top-quality demonstrations and watch talks remotely
- Workshops at discounted prices
- Publicity to raise profile of Cheshire area
- Potential to recruit new members
- Programme could be extended if required
- Online events can easily become subscription (paid) events in the future

The main aim of the events was to demonstrate to clubs that online events work – not all members can attend, but those that can are very appreciative and are delighted to have flowers back in their lives, and more members than you think are capable of joining in.

Demand was so high that I had to double up on demonstrations and add multiple workshops to the original plan.

From November 2020 to May 2021 CAN Online arranged 12 demonstrations, 6 talks, 11 workshops and 2 review sessions, watched by over 300 members of Cheshire Clubs as well as a few special guests!

The feedback received from participants was overwhelming – so many people had missed their flower clubs and they were delighted to have flower club type events back in their lives and were extremely appreciative of our efforts.

As a result of the Can Online events, I was involved with writing the NAFAS Zoom guide and delivered lots of Zoom workshops for individuals, clubs and several NAFAS areas. As a direct result of these sessions, many clubs began to hold their own demonstrations via Zoom, thus meeting one of the original goals of CAN Online Events.

In January we started a weekly hour-long meeting to persuade people to enter the virtual National show – the target was to get 5 new people to compete and we achieved 12! The Competitors Support Group continued to run weekly until early August with members being very successful at both the National Show and Cheshire Show. The group will reconvene shortly and will also try to incorporate a monthly face to face session. Any Cheshire area affiliated member can join – contact canonlineevents@gmail.com for information.

My own club created a new Zoom only membership and gained several new members as a result. Having now restarted in person meetings we continue to 'broadcast' live demonstrations via Zoom for the zoom members and any other people who are unable to attend in person. It has been a pleasure to meet so many people albeit virtually, and I hope to meet many of you in real life as we start to get back to the new normal.

CAN Online Events

4th November Vanessa Wellock Demonstration

10th November Pip Bensley Talk

19th & 26th November & 14th December (2pm & 7pm) Sharon Dower Wreath workshops

20th November Pip Bensley Talk

25th November & 1st December Mark Entwistle demonstrations

10th December Pip Bensley Talk

16th December (2pm & 7.30pm) Dawn Weaver demonstrations

27th January (2pm & 7.30pm) Debbie Davies demonstrations

3rd February Pip Bensley Talk

4th February (2pm & 7pm) & 9th February Alison Cooper Heart workshops

8th & 11th February Jacqui Owen demonstrations

18th February (2pm & 7pm) Debbie Davies Himmeli workshops

23rd February & 17th March Sharon Dower talk

10th & 11th March Sionnedd Hughes demonstrations

Fashion Show Inspiration & Support Sessions

March 18th & 25th Hats with Mark Entwistle

March 14th WAFA Dresses and Accessories with Vinita Khemka live form India

May 19th & 25 Jewellery with Jillian Page

September 5th Support Session with Mark Entwistle

September 19th Face to face support session and catwalk rehearsal

13.e) Royal Cheshire County Show Report – Joan Wilkinson

Following a very last-minute decision by the Cheshire Agricultural Society, a one-day show was held on the showground on Saturday the 31st August. We were invited to take part. We explained to them that we had already held a virtual show and would therefore not be in a position to fill our usual marquee. However, we did say that we would put on a display using enlarged versions of the photographs of all the winners of that virtual show.

We created a "U" shaped design with eight tables each with display boards on top holding all the photos of the show. We then put small designs along these tables using covered wreath rings and half spheres filled with flowers. In the centre of the "U" Dorothy Monks created a traditional pedestal using garden plant material arranged in oasis. A board was placed next to this design telling the public that oasis was now not welcomed as a mechanic due to the fact that it isn't biodegradable. In the left-hand corner at the back Carol Baker created a more contemporary pedestal using the new 80% degradable foam and a similar description was placed next to this design. In the right-hand corner Sylvia Bower used a design with just test tubes for the flowers and once again this was explained to the public. A further three pedestals were then put at the front and back of the marquee to fill the space we had. In addition, NAFAS volunteers created four large designs for the President's marquee and, at very short notice, rustled up ten table centres.

The display attracted a lot of interest and a steady flow of viewers filed through the marquee. Louise Jones and Gill manned the publicity stand and gave out a few hundred leaflets telling visitors about Cheshire Area. They also helped with specific enquiries about local clubs and explained how the leaflets would give free entry to visitors.

Gill and I can't wait to be able to hold an actual show next year and although the virtual show was well supported it can't compare to actually seeing the designs in 3D. We shall be holding one virtual show class for that event which will be judged prior to the event and the enlarged photographs put on the display boards giving overseas competitors a chance to once again enter the show.

13.f) Arley Garden Festival Report – Louise Jones

Cheshire Area had a presence at the Arley Garden Festival. We had an exhibit in gold and cream to represent our Golden Anniversary. The team was Louise Jones, Debbie Davies, Shiona Fosh and Eileen Fantom. The team were awarded a Gold Medal.

Floral Demonstrations also took place in the marquee by Sharon Nolan and Debbie Davies.

A huge thanks to the team for all their hard work. It was lovely to talk to the public about our display and hand out free tickets – hopefully, clubs have some visitors.

13.g) RHS Tatton Show Report – Janet Schofield

The 2021 Team was led by Janet Schofield with Gill Davies, Shiona Fosh and Carole Chia.

The design proposal was submitted to the RHS in March and confirmed in April.

Final confirmation that the show would be going ahead was received at the end of May with numerous covid measures in place.

The Team held several preparation meetings prior to two days staging in extreme heat!

Flowers from GBR flowers were excellent but there was an issue with Evolve flowers delivering late and not as specified.

Our Moongate was extremely well received by the public and was constantly photographed. All other moon gates were designed by florists and as such ours stood out as it was a very different style/design. The team worked extremely well together and the less experienced members fully appreciated the opportunity to take part and the experience gained.

The two 'Hats' demonstrations (Wednesday and Saturday afternoons) by Debbie Davies (with Janet Schofield 'modelling') went down well and we created a lot of publicity for Cheshire Area, our Flower Clubs and our Floral Fashion Show. As restrictions were lifted the week of the show, we managed to get area leaflets displayed with the Moongate and publicised these during the dems - these may appear at your club as they claim their free visit.

On Sunday afternoon the scheduled demonstrator cancelled at very short notice (due to vehicle problems) so Julie Pearson and Janet Schofield did a two-hour improvised dem using leftover flowers. This was very much appreciated by the RHS show manager who wrote to thank us and looked forward to working with Cheshire NAFAS at the 2022 show.

The test tubes and leftover sundries purchased and used for the Moongate are now an area asset, currently on loan to Nicky Wylie for the Bramhall Church Flower Festival.

Thank you to the team members who made it such an enjoyable experience, to Debbie Davies and Louise Jones for the fabulous hats demonstrations and to Julie Pearson for improvising so brilliantly! The decorated jars, boxes and hearts provided by flower clubs were very much appreciated, as were the people that stopped to say hello on their visit to the show.

Special thanks to Pam Mosedale for completing the mandatory risk assessment and for her help and guidance with the RHS forms and procedures.

CAN Moongate RHS Tatton 2021

COST SUMMARY

Item	Cost
Flowers & sundries	£ 507.28
Travel	£ 380.25
EXHIBIT TOTAL	£ 887.53
RHS EXHIBIT CONTRIBUTION	£ 500.00
COST TO AREA	£ 387.53
Fees for two demonstrations	£ 300.00
Flowers & sundries	£ 211.69
Travel	£ 153.00
DEMONSTRATIONS TOTAL	£ 664.69
RHS DEM CONTRIBUTION	£ 125.00
COST TO AREA	£ 539.69

TOTAL COST TO AREA	£ 927.22
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13.h) Adoption of Reports (en bloc)

Proposed by: Louise Jones. Seconded by: Colette Dunkley

14. Website – Christine Leigh

Monitoring the website has proved to be a revelation. When I started there were just a handful of clubs using the site to its full potential, now there are only a handful not utilising it in any way.

I cannot claim any credit for this – I think many clubs have just realised, during the pandemic, what a great asset it is.

You can contribute to the site very easily. Mike Gallagher is a charming man and very approachable and helpful. When I put one club in touch with him, he helped them with a redundant website that had been problematic for years.

If you access the website and scroll down the list of clubs, you will see a blue "More details" button. This gives basic information about the club. Next to this is any links the club has to other sites, social media, etc.

You can simply start by sending Mike an email with your current programme, a couple of pictures of your events or a copy of your club newsletter. Many clubs show links to Facebook pages which give lots of information about them. This is a very easy way to pass on your information. One club has links to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and You Tube instruction videos. This is a case study

in what can be done online and I urge you to have a look. I'm not going to tell you which club. Go on the website and scroll down the list of clubs and you will find it about half way down. Take a look. The benefits of highlighting your club on the website are great. I get a real buzz when I get a contact email sent from the site. It means I have an opportunity to direct someone new to my club. Advertising our zoom demonstrations through our newsletter and Facebook page – all on the Cheshire website - resulted in three new members during lockdown, and we all need those. Check out what the area CAN team are doing. See what other clubs are doing. Find new ideas for workshops and demonstrations. Promote your club and stay in the Cheshire Area loop. You will never be more informed.

Mike Gallagher

Email for Mike: mike.gallagher@btinternet.com

- Over the last year an increasing number of clubs have submitted content, flower arrangements, photos, newsletters, diary dates for meetings and demonstrations via zoom or at their venues and some have supplied instructions on how to make specific arrangements. It's all on the website, not only for their own members, but also to share with other Cheshire clubs.
- The website has continued to grow and during the pandemic, the Royal Cheshire County Show 2021 opened its 'marquee' online with a virtual show of 174 entries in total across 10 classes. The largest gallery of photos I've certainly edited and displayed on a single website. You can view all the stunning entries and find out who, and which arrangements, won medals by following the link at the bottom of this report.
- It's not just the County Show that has enhanced the website. After several club members took to the catwalk and modelled their arrangements at the Cheshire Area of NAFAS'S 'absolutely fabulous' Floral Fashion Show, the website has on display just over 60 fabulous photos from the event taken by Pam Mosedale (Lymm Chairman).

Email me with any questions or for advice on how, and what, you can supply for your webpage, at website@nafascheshire.org.uk

Please note that I will reply from a Mike Gallagher email address just in case you think I am 'spam'.

15. NAFAS Report - Louise Jones

Charity Commission information – extracts of a letter sent by National Chairman Kathryn Kerr - On August 23rd we received an email from the Commission that contained the following: The Commission was contacted by a whistle-blower (who will remain un-named) and provided details to the Commission surrounding various concerns this individual had at the Charity. The individual in question raised concerns surrounding the governance of the Charity and believes the trustees are unable to lawfully carry out their roles..... On August 31st we replied to the Commission with a letter explaining how the charity has improved its governance and its internal financial procedures. We attached the following documents to support our case:

- The Governance Review, carried out by Action Planning
- The summary of Governance Recommendations and how we are implementing these
- The latest audited accounts, which make no mention of any governance or financial concerns
- The new Articles of Association
- Trustee Code of Conduct
- Minutes of Board meetings
- Internal Financial Controls Policy

On September 14th we received a closing letter from the Commission that contained the following: Governance ...having reviewed the Charity's trustee Code of Conduct, this demonstrates evidence of good working practices within the Charity. This alongside the various policies in practice at the Charity shows the trustees are acting in the best interest of the Charity.

The trustees have acted proactively in relation to governance by conducting their own independent governance review which has highlighted areas of improvement and reiterates the fact the trustees are acting in the best interest of the Charity. It is evident by improvements made such as the creation of the Charity's new finance team, implementation of a new internal finance policy further demonstrate good working practices by the Charity. Next Steps the Commission had concerns in relation to the whistleblowing report given the concerns surrounding governance and financial controls. Having engaged with the trustees and reviewing, in depth the trustees' response and supporting documentation, the Commission has no further concerns in relation to governance or financial controls at this time.

The Trustees have been involved with a Governance Review and they are working on issues following this. A chance to re-examine our membership structure, bylaws, board role organisation, governance model and our policies.

It has been agreed that Osborn House will be sold. Bids have now been received and we will have further information as soon as there is some news.

The Articles of Association – this has now been completed and have now been filed with Company's House and the Charity Commission. The working party included two Area Chairmen – Chris Brown from Surrey Area and myself. This group is now looking at National Strategy Team have put together a NAFAS Vision, Mission and Values statements which our Area has adopted. The Strategy Team include Janet Schofield one of our Support Officers. A new project with Morrisons (the supermarket). There will be NAFAS flower arrangers doing demonstration in store. This is expected to begin in late spring. Actual stores have not yet confirmed. Clubs will be chosen by geography. First virtual National Show – what a result. There will be a further virtual National Show in 2022 entitled 'Chasing Rainbows'. Face to face National Show at Gloucester Cathedral booked for 2023. Plans are now under way. Work with the Garden Museum in Lambeth - which includes the Constance Spry exhibition. National President Michael Bowyer and National Chairman Kathryn Kerr holding workshops at the Museum. New appointments – WAFSA liaison – Valerie Best RHS liaison – Mig Kimpton Young Peoples Club Liaison – Sarah Boker Travel Contract with ECT has been renewed. Chairman's Challenge - a fun competition designed by the National Chairman – Kathryn Kerr. Thank you to all of those in Cheshire who have put an entry in – keep putting Cheshire on the map!

16. NAFAS Sub Committee Reports

a) Judges Report – Sue Clissold

Judges report for 5th October 2021

Information from National Judging Committee held 16/6/21 as follows

Judges conference at Dromentine now 9-11 September 2022. Open to all judges

Virtual National Show - great success.

Guidance on judging such shows will include

1. Need to give benefit of doubt
2. Judge what is seen using the criteria in the usual way
3. Zoom in to see detail
4. Return to other exhibits to compare
5. Judge the exhibit not the photography

Also limit at only 2 entries per person and possibly change number of classes eg 20 classes with 20 entries in each

Pass marks for Judges tests agreed as Area 60 - 65% and National 70-75%

Mercia and North Wales Area judges tests took place on 26th July with 100% pass rate.

Congratulations to our 3 successful candidates Louise Jones and Collette Dunkley (New Brighton) and Carole Baker (Frodsham and District)

Great credit to Jacquie Charnock and Margaret Rumens for such an excellent result in such difficult times and to the candidates who rose to the challenge.

Candidates needed for National tests to be held in late 2022/3. Area reps asked to put forward names so please contact me for further details. Area judges require three years between Area and National tests.

2 New leaflets now available on NAFAS website. Colour and Texture

Club Chairmen are requested to encourage monthly competitions and to have available on the Sales table copies of the Competitions Manual.

b) Demonstrators Report – Diane Fair

Notes taken from the minutes of the National Demonstrators Virtual Meeting on 15th June 2021

- National Test/Pre-National Assessment arrangements were confirmed for the tests on 7th and 8th September in Gloucester
- 2 Trainee Adjudicators will be re-sitting and 2 Trainee Adjudicators will be sitting their final papers.

I must congratulate Beryl Cotton on passing her final Adjudicators papers

- Also 5 new National Demonstrators

Sarah Fenton, Alison Penny, Cherie Nummy, Kathy Stangaard, Venessa Wellock

- Pre-National 4 successful

Sara Barrow, Julia Loudon, Karine Murray, Linda Seabrook

- D forms are being updated

Symposium 2022

45 places sold and total of 53 attending There will be a poster in the Autumn edition of the Flower Arranger for ticket applications for the Demonstration by Angela Turner on Saturday 23rd April 2022 at 2pm at the Telford Hotel and Golf Resort.

Next meeting is 15th September

Area report

I am delighted to hand over the position of National Demonstrators Rep to Beryl Cotton, I'm very confident that Beryl will continue to uphold this important position and keep our excellent Cheshire Area Demonstrators informed of all National and Area events and offer help and support if needed.

I have offered help with training new demonstrators if I am needed and wish Beryl good luck with this new roll.

I have now retired from demonstrating after 35 years and have removed my name from the National List and can now remove my name from the Demonstrators List in the Cheshire Area List- I shall remain on the Area judges and Teachers Lists.

Questions/comments: Diane Fair: Do not assume you have rebooked your demonstrators without speaking to them personally. Namiye Sianga is not retiring from demonstrating. Ian Lloyd's post to be sent to his mother's address which is on Morag's list.

c) Speakers Report – Kathleen Williams

There has not been a lot of activity regarding speakers as many clubs have only just re-opened and some not until Spring 2022.

Some clubs and Area have enabled members to watch a talk via zoom but we can't wait to be there in person so we can interact with our members.

I hope to be more pro - active to promote speakers, especially for an AGM or a Club social event. I have contacted all the Area Speakers and have discussed some ideas. I have also been in contact with Carol Black, who flew the flag for speakers both at Area level and nationally, she has a wealth of experience and is proving an invaluable support. The Speakers guidelines and other relevant documents are being revised by the National Speakers Committee and as soon as they are available, I will be able to share them with our Area Speakers and put forward a strategy for the future,

d) Educations Report and Chaffinches – Sharon Nolan

- **Affiliated Membership:** The number of affiliated members has reduced to 3. We now need to decide how to proceed with future affiliated membership.

- **Education List:** There are approx. 40 persons in the Area who run workshops and classes, with or without a teaching qualification. It is pleasing to report that several people have successfully completed their NAFAS/OCN level 3 Teaching Certificate over Zoom during lockdown, thus adding to the numbers in the Education Section of the Cheshire Book.

- **Workshops and Courses:** No F2F workshops or courses have been run during lockdown. However, plans are in place to run an Education Day shortly. There will also be a 3-day Principles and Elements (Pre-demonstrators) course in 2022 as well as NAFAS Basic Teaching Course.

- **National:** NAFAS is severing its ties with OCN and bringing certificated courses in-house. Development work is underway by the National Committee and courses being released as they are developed.

e) Junior Liaison Report – Judy Gratton

Due to the COVID pandemic restrictions there has been no opportunity to run workshops etc at the local shows.

Jean Jones (CAN team and Wistaston Flower Club) and I had arranged to visit a local primary school to introduce elements of flower arranging as part of their topic on plants. The objective was to explain to the children how to look after cut plant material. Using the principles of design, they will make a simple flower arrangement in a jar using wire mesh to support the plant material.

Unfortunately, the school had to cancel the event as the local authority decided that no visitors were allowed in school due to the increase in COVID cases. The school have agreed that we can visit in the next academic year. I have also approached other local primary schools who have also expressed an interest.

f) Adoption of Reports (en bloc)

Proposed by: Louise Jones. Seconded by: Diane Smith.

17. Election of NAFAS Representatives:

- a] Judges – Sue Clissold
- b] Demonstrators – Beryl Cotton
- c] Speakers – Kathleen Williams
- d] Education – Sharon Nolan
- e] Junior Liaison - Judy Gratton.
- f] Adoption of Representatives (en bloc)

Proposed by Louise Jones. Seconded by: Diane Smith

18. Clusters

The Rose Cluster had a review meeting on the 15th October to formulate our concerns which we feel should be brought to the attention of the AGM for discussion.

1. Area Structure

The pandemic has had a profound effect on all of us with regard to the clubs and the Cheshire Area and we recognise we have had to learn new ways to communicate and to organise our work accordingly. During this time our Area Chairman was suddenly without a First and Second Chair. An emergency plan was formulated and the CAN leadership team, CAN team and Club Rep Forums were formed with the addition of clubs being put in clusters with a cluster coordinator (who are part of the CAN team).

Many of us were under the impression that this was an emergency measure which would be discussed over the subsequent year and then voted on at a Club Forum meeting and agreed at the AGM.

We have had a year to make this emergency structure work to ensure the security of the Area but as far as we can see a regular time table for meetings etc, and the cancellation of the last Club Reps Forum meeting has left many feeling that their voice has not been heard. We are concerned about the future of the Area and feel it is essential to have a Leadership Team that represents the different types of clubs that make up the Cheshire Area and are elected as our representatives on the Leadership Team.

There has been continued tension between whether the Area is acting on behalf of the clubs and their members or promoting events at a financial cost to the Areas funds to take us out into the wider community.

We do not want to get into a “blame game” situation i.e. “it’s the clubs fault” or “it’s the Areas fault” but we want a sensible dialogue about where the future structure of the Area is heading with the correct procedures in place to ensure consultation between all parties. We are very much aware that we are all volunteers, including the leadership team and accept that serving on any committee is a huge commitment but we do it because we love our clubs and our flowers and want to secure their future.

2. Affiliation Fees

Many clubs still do not know how many members they will have in the future and they are struggling to get a committee together and feel tremendous financial pressures with dwindling finances as a result of at least a year of non-activity. Along with this they are having to deal with raising costs on hall hire, demonstrators’ fees and expenses, flowers, insurance, sanitizing etc. They are working hard to ensure their Club survives and we strongly feel the Area should support us with either an Affiliation Fee holiday OR at least ask for only £1 per member. This will assist Clubs and the opportunity to try and get back on track.

We are aware that numbers of Clubs are having to close or considering closure. Without Clubs there will be no Area.

3. Cheshire Area and promotions

Concerns have been raised regarding floral businesses promoting themselves under the NAFAS umbrella on social media and the Cheshire Areas website. We would appreciate clarification on what is considered to be acceptable/appropriate.

4. Clusters

The Rose Cluster has met via Zoom on a regular basis and all the chairs in the Cluster have found them very valuable. It has given us the forum to share ideas, raise concerns, give each other support and we feel that they should continue in any future structure.

Questions/comments: Kathleen Williams: When are the job descriptions for the Cluster groups going to be sorted out?

Louise Jones: They are on the list to be sorted out.

Some clubs found the clusters groups useful but others did not mainly due to the distance between the clubs.

Louise Jones: The clubs could be redistributed to be nearer to one another.

19. AOB

Questions/comments:

Sue Clissold: National President, Michael Bowyer, has been provisionally booked for the Cheshire area on 28th June 2022, clubs could hire him while he is up here.

Kathleen Williams: How are we to connect Area with the grass root membership?
What about Affiliation fees?

Bernard Preston: Congratulations to Morrisons in have demonstrations at their shop. Can you explain the CAN? What is the benefit of being a charity?

Tracy-Ann Clancy: Explained in detail the new structure of Cheshire Area and why it came about. It is to be reviewed after 12 months and tweaked and then a constitution will be drawn up.

TEAM STRUCTURES AND MEETINGS (CAN)

Background

Up to October 2020, the Cheshire Area of NAFAS was structured as follows:

Officers – comprising the following positions; President, Chairman, 1st Vice Chair, 2nd Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer

Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP) – comprising the Officers plus Club representatives and leads in other Area disciplines (Publicity, Photography, RCCS, Trading) and minutes secretary

Judges, Demonstrators, Speakers & Education Committee (JDS&E) – chaired by the 1st Vice Chair including the representative of each of the four disciplines plus Junior Liaison, Treasurer, secretary plus support as required

Social Committee – chaired by 2nd Vice Chair.

Council

At the AGM in October 2020, the current Chair (having completed her two- year tenure) stepped down and following the resignation of the 1st Vice Chair, the 2nd Vice Chair agreed to step up to the position of Chair. There had been no nominations from Clubs for the position of 2nd Vice. The positions of 1st Vice and 2nd Vice Chair were (and still are) vacant with no nominees being put forward.

New Way of Working

Taking cognisance of a number of factors: unfilled vacancies (no Vice Chairs), pandemic, working via Zoom, a new flatter and more efficient structure was required immediately. The format, outlined below is being trialled for 12-18 months from October 2020. The new 'Way of Working' will be reviewed by April 2022 and if agreed / adopted then the Constitution will be reviewed accordingly.

The new structure has two Meeting Groups (previously four):

CAN Leadership Team (formerly Officers) comprises President, Chairman, 2 Support Officers, Secretary & Treasurer.

CAN Team comprises the Leadership Team (as above) plus representatives in respect of Judges, Demonstrators, Speakers and Education, Junior Liaison, Photography, Publicity Lead (vacant), Cheshire Show representative, RHS co-ordinator plus 5 Club representatives.

Benefits of the revised Way of Working

- All CAN Team members have an enhanced opportunity to make suggestions, hear and contribute to all Area discussions across all disciplines - first hand
- Limited repetition (all discussed at the CAN Team Meeting)
- Time spent in number of different meetings minimised
- Consistency of approach
- CAN Team Members can experience first-hand all aspects of the running of Area at CAN Team meetings (rather than previously having to serve on several committees for a minimum of 4 years). This is ideal for anyone wishing to assume a future Leadership role.
- Proposals can be submitted to the CAN Team by any Club member who has an idea
- Any Club member can offer to organise an event for Area (without having to be a committee member for several years)
- Any Club member can volunteer to support the running of an Area Event (this would be a one-off activity and does not result in a committee role)

New Name for Council

'Council' meetings still take place and follow the same format, but the name has changed to 'Club Representatives Forum'. It is now a self-explanatory meeting title, reflective of who the meeting is for i.e. The Club Representatives. Each Club can elect a representative(s) to attend these meetings – it doesn't always have to be the Club Chair.

Louise Jones: Cheshire Area is not a charity and stopping one can be very difficult. Will ask National what they think is good about having a charity status. Tracy-Anne recommended that small societies should join as it is so much work.

Pam Fleming-Williams: Why was there nothing on the website for the Area Education Day? What is happening to Area's List on the website? Update on the selling of Osborne House?

Pam Mosedale: Photos from the day are going on the website.

Janet Schofield: That they are working on a website 'Account Directory'.

Louise Jones: Bids are in for Osborne House and negotiations are on the move.

Tracy-Anne Clancy:

- Tracy-Anne is the contact point for: Blue forms, Diaries, Badges, Christmas cards.
- Email Tracy-Anne to order the above and they will be posted out.
- Happy to accept BACS payments for the Flower Arranger magazine and goods.
- Collecting data from the clubs. A simple form will be sent out to be filled in.
- Affiliation fees £4:50 per member, 9p per week. If the clubs have trouble paying fees, then a personal conversation could be had with Tracy-Ann to come to an agreement.

Pam Fleming-Williams: What are the costs for Area each year?

Tracy-Anne Clancy: £8,000.

There was a discussion about the affiliation fees. A conclusion was not reached.

It was decided that another meeting should be arranged.

Chris Middleton: Asked how the other clubs were doing?

Frodsham Afternoon Flower Club was closing because of lack of volunteers for the Committee.

Diane Smith: Ellesmere Port maybe closing because of fewer membership and low income.

20. DATE OF NEXT AGM : Thursday 29 September 2022

Frodsham Community Centre, Fluin Lane FRODSHAM

Area Chairman, Louise Jones, thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the AGM meeting, giving plenty of ideas for future discussion.

Meeting finished at 8:50 pm

Signed

Date