**NORTH EAST AREA OF NAFAS**

 **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 11 NOVEMBER 2023**

**at Stockton on the Forest Village Hall, nr York commencing at 11am**

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| **Present:**President: Mrs. Janet Ratcliffe |
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| Chairman: Mrs. Sheila Drybrough1st Vice-Chairman: Mrs. Rita Braithwaite2nd Vice Chairman: Mrs. Mary HolmesSecretary: Mrs. Ann SimpsonTreasurer: Mrs. Sue GuilliattProjects Officer: Mrs. Joan O’BrienDemonstrators’ Representative: Mrs. Sue SpencerJudges’ Representative: Mrs. Janet HaytonSpeakers’ Representative: Mrs. Rita BraithwaiteArea Webmaster: Mr Peter MathersDeputy Demonstrators’ Representative: Mrs. Catherine GledhillDeputy Education Representative: Mrs. Christine HinchcliffeDeputy Judges’ Representative: Mrs. Joyce HearnshawArea Historian: Mr Tony Cleaver | **NAFAS Special Associates of Honour**Mrs. Janet HaytonMrs. Pat Daley**NAFAS Associates of Honour**Mrs. Pat MartinMrs. Norma DobneyMr Tony Cleaver**Associates of Honour at Area Level**Mrs. Shirley CleggMrs. Sue SpencerMrs. Joan O’BrienMrs. Janet Ratcliffe  |

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35 members representing 22 Clubs plus 51 members not representing a club attended the meeting.

**23/01 CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME – MRS SHEILA DRYBROUGH**

Good morning, everyone and welcome to the North East Area 2023 AGM.

Thank you all for coming and hope that you will have a good day and that your journey was not too eventful.

I would like to thank North Ferriby Flower Club for their beautiful flower arrangements at the entrance to the Hall and the Top Table - they are quite stunning.

I would also like to thank Tony, Peter and Christine for providing the teas and coffee for us to today, it is greatly appreciated by everyone.

I feel very fortunate in this role, as the previous Chairman, Janet, had to cope with a very different situation from myself and other Chairmen. I cannot believe my first year has passed so quickly and that we are able to enjoy each others company again and plan events for our Members.

I am working with a great team and I look forward to our meetings and the support that I receive from them.

I would now like to invite Janet Ratcliffe, our Area President, to Chair the meeting today.

**23/02** **PRESIDENT – MRS JANET RATCLIFFE,**

Welcome to the 65th Annual General Meeting of the North East Area of NAFAS.

**23/03** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** had been received from Louise Nettleton, Pauline Morley, Lynn Naylor, Geraldine Carter, Ann Harding, Judy Watker, Hazel Bell, Vanessa Wellock, Elizabeth Tinker, Sue Maddocks, Jenny Freeman and the following clubs Halifax, New Dimensions, Baildon, Embsay with Eastby, Whitby and East Ardsley

**23/04 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2022 at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, Wakefield have been circulated to all clubs via email and post.

Lesley Dalton (Knaresborough) proposed the adoption of the minutes, seconded by Pat Daley (Yorkshire).

**23/05 MATTER’S ARISING**

Nothing to report.

**23/06 AREA CHAIRMAN’S REPORT – MRS SHEILA DRYBROUGH**

After taking on the role of Chairman, my first duties were a delight, as I attended Christmas Demonstrations at three Flower Clubs. At one club the demonstrator told us that she was going to take her National Demonstrators test the following year in 2023. I do know that she passed her test as I was able to attend the National Test in March.

This started off the lovely feeling around Christmas time apart from knowing that I would soon have to write my first Newsletter and Chair a Council meeting Via Zoom. Once I started writing the Newsletter it was not as hard as I thought it would be and my thanks go to two friends, Joyce Hearnshaw and Pat Hawthornthwaite, who have been happy to proof read all my work for the Area.

My first Executive Committee meeting was held at Wetherby on the 6th December. A calendar of events was underway for the coming year and we ended the meeting by exchanging cards, gifts and Christmas wishes, looking forward to the coming year. The Exec meetings were held via zoom in February and August and the rest of the monthly meetings were held in person in Wetherby.

The Council meeting in January went well but if you could have seen me, you would have laughed. I was having problems with my broadband and the service being cut off so I felt that my computer needed to be as close to the modem as possible. I was sitting in the spare bedroom with the computer perched on two suitcases, a box of Duplo and some books instead of a desk!! Since then, my broadband is much better as the service engineer has been to sort out the problem so I don’t think I will be as worried this next year.

We started in January looking for a member to take on the role of Photography Representative and it is unfortunate that we have not been able to achieve this as yet. We do live in hope that the role that is vacant will be taken up next year.

I was travelling with Ann Simpson on the train from Chester when we had to make a difficult decision whether to postpone the Education Workshop on the 11th March due to snow starting to fall in Yorkshire. We had very little snow over in Chester but as we got to the outskirts of Huddersfield it was clear we had made the right decision.

The two Education Workshops went ahead, one in June and the second in September. They were both a great success and our thanks go to Vanessa Wellock and Christine Hinchliffe for organising the events. Due to the postponement of the March workshop we had to use a different venue which was the Folk Hall at New Earswick, York. It was decided that next year this venue will be used as there is more room. Just to remind everyone that any member can come to the workshops but there is a limit of 50 members.

The Harrogate Spring Show was held at the end of April and it was lovely to see the competition area with many of our members gaining awards. One new competition class was an imposed class running throughout the show which was open to the colleges, florists and flower arrangers. It was very interesting to watch and see so many different exhibits that have been given the same items to work with. Alison Cockburn, Judy Walker and Liz from New Dimensions displayed the large exhibit depicting John of Gaunt’s speech in Shakespeare’s Richard 11 - the “Sceptred isle” - and it was awarded a bronze award.

I am sure that many clubs celebrated the National Flower Arranging Day in May and hope that their arrangements found good homes.

Our trip to Gloucester was a great success, visiting two gardens as well as the show which was staged in a wonderful Cathedral. Some of our members were prize winners at the show and congratulations go to all who entered and to those who were awarded prizes. They were well deserved as the standard was very high.

Our Area Lunch was held on the 6th September which was the Area’s 65th Anniversary. Ilkley Flower Club came along with some wonderful table arrangements in tall vases - for those who won an arrangement they were delighted that it included the vase!! Rita Braithwaite took lots of pictures at the event and it was lovely to see members really enjoying having time together, getting dressed up and sharing a fabulous lunch. I think many of us appreciate being able to have these events, it is not so long ago, we were not able to meet at all. I am sure you will be able to see this in your own Club events as well.

In January I visited Newby Hall alongside Ann Simpson and Janet Hayton. The meeting was to see if it was possible to hold some competition classes at the Autumn Show which was held in September. We were able to have two classes but the Area had to set the titles, organise the judges and expenses and also the prize money for the winners. Ann Simpson was in charge of sending out the information to members, gathering the names of the entrants and prize winners, and measuring the tables for the competitors.

Newby Hall gave the support and provided the tables and backcloths plus the barrels that were used, they also provided the prize cards and exhibit title cards. Janet Hayton and Joyce Hearnshaw were tasked with thinking of the titles for the competition and Sheila Rodgers was invited to Judge the competition.

We were also able to have everything in one area at the show. The competition area was a good attraction for the visitors to the Show. The workshops which were held on all three days were able to direct people to the information at the media and trading stand.

Karen Trewartha and Gill Rowland from Castleford Flower Club were invited to design a floral display which was next to the trading stand. It was a sumptuous Autumn design with lots of beautiful flowers and textured plant material in it, to hold the visitors interest and attention. My thanks go to everyone who was involved.

Throughout the year I have been able to share in the celebrations with Great Ayton, Acomb, East Keswick, Northallerton and Bingley Flower Clubs. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the Past Chairmans’ Lunch due to having to stay on holiday for an extra day and more recently I have not been able to attend Stokesley and District Flower Club who invited me to their Open Evening which I had to decline due to feeling unwell. I was disappointed that I could not attend but I hope that they had a wonderful time on these occasions.

My thanks go to them all for inviting me and hope you have a good year ahead.

I would also like to thank all the Representatives and their Deputies for all their hard work and commitment to the Area over this past year

Finally, I would like to thank all the Members of the Executive Committee for their hard work and dedication in making sure the events for the Area run smoothly. It is a lovely team to be part of and you are all greatly appreciated by myself and, I am sure, many others.

**23/07 AREA SECRETARIES REPORT – MRS ANN SIMPSON**

We have held 4 Council meetings, one on Zoom and three in person at the Folk Hall, New Earswick. 26 clubs registered to attend the Zoom meeting but I do not have an accurate record of who attended as it is impossible to check everyone on screen. The average of attendance at the meetings held at the Folk Hall was 38 Club members representing 22 Clubs. Club attendance at Council Meetings is decreasing year on year which is disappointing as many Clubs, who never attend, are missing out on important information and news plus the chance to socialise with members from around the Area and voice concerns and opinions.

Sadly, we have lost four clubs during the year leaving us with a total of 53 clubs.

The Executive Committee have continued to meet monthly at St James Church Hall, Wetherby or via Zoom.

We have continued to receive enquiries via the Area Website and I have passed them onto the relevant Club for help and guidance.

The 2023 Information list and the 2023 Judges, Demonstrators, Speakers & Teachers list were published in January.

Thank you to Shirley Clegg & Judith Pickard for proof reading the Minutes and Area lists, plus special thanks to Judith for supervising the signing in at the Council Meetings.

Thank you to all the Club Chairmen and Secretaries who have replied to my many messages and sent feedback and comments.

**23/08 AREA TREASURER’S REPORT – MRS SUE GUILLIATT**

Copies of the accounts were emailed or posted to all Club Chairmen and Secretaries, Honorary Associates and Representatives. We do have a few spare copies available if you would like to collect a copy. Can I ask you to save any questions you may have until I have finished my report.

The accounts are also available on the Area website.

In summary the accounts consist of the following:

Page 1 – Independent Examiners Report

Page 2 - is the income and expenditure for the year to 30 September 2023 and this shows the deficit or surplus on each of the Area Funds.

Page 3 - is the analysis of the assets and liabilities of each of the Area Funds.

Pages 4 to 7 - show the more detailed notes supporting the income and expenditure summarised on page 2.

If we turn to page 2 you will see that overall we had a deficit of £1,160 for the year across all the Area Funds compared to a deficit of £3,238 last year.

As you will also see from Page 2 of this year’s accounts, we actually made a deficit on the General Fund of £1,343 compared to £4,005 last year which is a reduction of two thirds; a deficit of £570 on the Special Fund compared to a surplus of £157 last year and a surplus of £753 on the Education Fund compared to £610 last year.

Page 2 also shows a breakdown of the categories of income and expenditure making up the movement on each fund.

The notes on pages 4 to 7 give a detailed breakdown of various items as referenced.

I think most other items are self-explanatory or explained in a note, but for information, gifts and donations of £145 are the retirement gifts from last year’s AGM; sundry of £95 relates to the purchase of the Sum-up card reader and the Area competitions are the costs of the photographic and Coronation orb competitions.

Page 3 shows the assets and liabilities of the Area.

Prepayments are amounts that are paid in advance of events such as the deposit for the theatre for our international demonstration next year.

Cash and bank figures are what they say.

Accruals and deferred income consist of two categories. Firstly, amounts we have received in advance such as subscriptions for the winter *Flower Arranger* and amounts for future events such as the AGM and the workshops next June. Secondly, for items relating to 2023 for which we had not yet received invoices and are therefore, accrued for in the accounts.

The treatment of all these items is in line with normal accounting practice.

If you turn to page 4 and note 1 you will see that our membership reduced from 2,295 members last year to 2,176 this year a reduction of 119 or 5% across our clubs. More information regarding the profile of our Clubs and their membership is included in the Area Council minutes which are available to everyone on the Area Website, if you do not have a copy.

Note 2 shows the slight profit we made on the trip to the National Show and note 3 the net cost of the flower displays at the Harrogate shows.

Page 5 shows the analysis of Area Officers and Representatives travelling expenses which have reduced from £4,630 last year to £3,611 this year, a reduction of £1,019 or 22%.

Please note these also varie year on year depending on where officers and representatives live and the location of events. This also reflects the measure we announced to reduce these costs such as holding the January Council meeting and some Executive meetings on zoom which also saved the related room hire costs.

Also shown on page 5 are the results for trading and the Area lunch.

Page 6 shows the outcome of the November 2022 AGM which was a £295 deficit. Over the years the number of members attending the AGM has declined and as a result continuing to use the school at Wakefield was no longer cost effective. You will see at note 7 that the costs of room hire, sound and lighting amounted to £932 and this would have exceeded £1,000 this year. The hall we are using today cost £210.

The tickets for the lunch and demonstration last year cost £30 and with all costs increasing we estimated that we would need to charge around £40 per ticket this year to breakeven. By moving here and having a buffet lunch we could reduce the ticket price to £25.

Page 6 also shows the outcome of the Judges Refresher Day and the Demonstrators and Speakers Refresher Day.

Page 7 shows the movement on the Education Fund and a summary of the movement on each of the Area Funds.

All of which I hope is self-explanatory. Any questions on this year’s accounts?

There were no questions.

Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Irmgard Hawkins (East Keswick) and seconded by Stuart Trewartha (Castleford).

**23/09 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS OF ACCOUNTS**

A question was asked at last year’s Area AGM if the Area obtained a second quote for this service, the answer was that we did not and we agreed to discuss at the next Area Executive meeting.

This we did despite the AGM approving the reappointment.

The Area Executive did discuss this at our next meeting and I reported the following to the January 2023 Council meeting as follows:

History

When I took over as Treasurer at North Ferriby Flower club (some 20+ years ago) we needed an independent examiner of the accounts. The then chairman asked one of her neighbours to do this and he agreed.

It turned out that Chris was the Finance Director of a UK multi-national listed company. When he took early retirement, he decided he needed something to do so set up Remington’s and had both private and corporate clients. He continued to examine the accounts of North Ferriby Flower Club.

When I became Area Treasurer, we needed to appoint an Independent Examiner and with the agreement of the Area Executive at the time we appointed Remington’s who carried this out for 7 years.

When Chris decided, the time had come to fully retire he transferred his business to Botterills.

For those of you who are not aware I was an Associate Director at Ernst & Young who I worked for for 35 years before I retired. As a result, I know a significant number of accountants in the area many of who I worked with as colleagues or clients. Many others I know by reputation.

This would make it very difficult for me to find an alternative that was not potentially a conflict of interest.

I worked on the basis that if Remington’s were happy to transfer the business to Botterills that was good enough for me and the Area Executive agreed.

I want to put on record that I had no prior interaction with Botterills either professionally or personally and there is no conflict of interest as I understand the person who asked the original question about a second quote asked after the AGM if we have a conflicts of interest policy.

Following our meeting on Tuesday the Executive recommend the reappointment of Gareth Botterill FCCA as the Area’s Independent Examiner.

Rosemary Weir (Pennine Borders) proposed the appointment of Botterell & Co seconded by Eva Shuttleworth (Northallerton).

2**3/10 PROJECTS OFFICER’S REPORT – MRS JOAN O’BRIEN**

The AGM in November 2022 was held at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School in Wakefield. It was so good to be able to meet in person once again. Following lunch, we were entertained by Vanessa Wellock and Alex Gracey with their floral demonstration entitled ‘It Takes Two’.

The Area sojourn to the National Show in May 2023 in Gloucester Cathedral, was a resounding success. We travelled by luxury coach, calling at Hidcote Manor on the way down and at Painswick Rococo Gardens on the return journey. We stayed at the St. Pierre Hotel in Chepstow, a beautiful hotel surrounded by gardens and a golf course. Gloucester Cathedral was a beautiful backdrop for the various exhibits and designs. It was a joy to walk around the Cathedral listening to the wide range of memorable and emotional music whilst looking at the creative designs produced by the talented members of NAFAS, including those from our Area.

The 65th Anniversary Lunch was held at The Pavilions of Harrogate in September 2023. Seventy-nine people attended, looking resplendent in their outfits on a beautiful sunny day. The venue was spacious, light and airy and the food was yummy. Ilkley Flower Club designed the beautiful table arrangements and Sheila Drybrough made the delicious celebratory cake. After lunch Don Witton gave an informative talk on various species of plants and flowers.

**23/11 OFFICERS & REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS**

The reports had been circulated to all clubs before the meeting and there were no questions.

**23/12 NATIONAL COUNCIL REPORT – MRS SHEILA DRYBROUGH**

I attended the National Advisory Council meeting in person at Leamington Spa on the 16th and 17th January and a further three meetings which were held via Zoom.

The Board of Directors continue to have monthly meetings which continue to be held virtually.

Katherine Kear completed her term of office as Chairman at the National AGM in October and was sincerely thanked for all her work. Nicky Wylie is now the New National Chairman.

Katherine Kear and Peter Mathers completed their term of office on the Board of Trustees at this meeting and have been replaced by Joan Magee and Elizabeth Gordon. Peter Mathers was also thanked for all his hard work and dedication.

On the 8th March I travelled by train with Ann Simpson to the National Demonstrators test being held on the 9th March. The room was full so the competitors were well supported by applause and smiles and we saw some excellent demonstrations.

It is wonderful to announce that the National Show in Gloucester was a great success in many ways. It was able to show case the talents of Exhibitors, Demonstrators’, Speakers, Judges and Education elements that go towards being able to see the splendour of what was on offer at the show.

It was also a financial success, the show made a surplus of £53,563 and 3,653 people visited the show. The profit from the show will go towards reducing the deficit that NAFAS still has. This is very good news and was not achieved without a lot of really hard work by all those who were involved in putting the show on.

The National Speakers’ Test was held on the 3rd August at Stockton-on-the-Forest in York. It was a really good day with the six candidates giving very different talks. It was very well attended and everyone really supported all the candidates with five passing their test. Many congratulations to them all but especially to one of our members, Peter Mathers. Four candidates were also taking their adjudicators and instructors final paper on the same day and were placed at the back of the room where no one was allowed to speak to them throughout the day. All were successful, one being Rita Braithwaite who I would also like to congratulate. My thanks also go to Tony Cleaver and those who helped with the catering, and anyone else who made the day possible.

NAFAS Enterprises are looking much better than last year with the Flower Arranger Magazine Area sales up, but a significant retail drop compared to the same period last year.

Costs have been reduced and the operating profit is £11.342 compared to a deficit of just over £11k for 2022.

It was felt by the finance team at NAFAS that it is in a much better place due to the procedures and checks that are now in place.

For more information you could visit the National Website of NAFAS and the North East Area Website pages

[www.nafas.org.uk](http://www.nafas.org.uk)

www.flowersnortheast.org

**23/13 ELECTION OF AREA OFFICERS**

**Projects Officer**

Joan O’Brien is nominated by New Dimensions Floral Design Group and seconded by Pennine Borders Flower Club.

There were no other nominees.

**Area Treasurer**

Sue Guilliatt is nominated by The Yorkshire Flower Club and seconded by Spen Valley Flower Club

There were no other nominees.

**Area Secretary**

Ann Simpson is nominated by New Earswick Flower Club and seconded by Acomb Flower Guild.

There were no other nominees.

**23/14 *FLOWER ARRANGER* AWARD**

Mary Holmes reported that it has been a close competition this year, with The Yorkshire Flower Club and Baildon Flower Club a close second. Mary presented the award and a cheque for £25 to Castleford Flower Club who had recorded the largest increase in sales over the last year.

**23/15 RETIREMENT & APPOINTMENT OF AREA REPRESENTATIVES**

**Education Representative**

Vanessa Wellock has completed her term of office. Annette Ackroyd accepted a gift on her behalf.

Janet Ratcliffe presented the Education Representatives badge to Dawn Meakin.

**Judges Representative**

Janet Hayton has completed her term of office and Janet Ratcliffe presented a gift.

Janet Ratcliffe presented the Judges Representative Badge to Joyce Hearnshaw.

**23/16 ANY QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE AGM BUSINESS**

No questions were asked.

**23/17** **DATE OF THE NEXT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Saturday 16 November 2024 at The Folk Hall, New Earswick, York

The meeting closed at 11:45am

Sheila Drybrough thanked Janet Ratcliffe for chairing the meeting.

After the closure of the official meeting Sheila Drybrough announced next year’s programme and arrangements for lunch.

After lunch a demonstration by Jo Purdy ‘The Lost Gardens of Heligan’ was enjoyed by everyone.

**NEXT YEAR’S PROGRAMME**

January 13 Area Council Meeting via Zoom

March 16 Education Workshop at the Folk Hall, New Earswick,, York

April 20 Area Council Meeting at the Folk Hall, New Earswick, York

April 25-28 Harrogate Spring Show at the Great Yorkshire Show Ground

June 8 Demonstration by Francine Thomas at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre, York

June 10 & 11 Workshops with Francine Thomas at the Folk Hall, New Earswick, York

July 20 Area Council Meeting at the Folk Hall, New Earswick, York

July 26-28 National Presidents’ Weekend ‘Highland Fling’ at the Golden Jubilee Hotel, Clydebank, Glasgow

September 13-15 Harrogate Autumn Show at Newby Hall

September 21 Education Workshop at the Folk Hall, New Earswick, York

November 16 Area Council Meeting & Area AGM at the Folk Hall, New Earswick, York