

\*\*\*\*\*



# Home Counties AREA NEWS Autumn 2025



\*\*\*\*\*

## A Message from our Chairman Anne Mcpherson

It has been a busy time over recent months since taking on the role of Area Chairman. Early in the year, with the support of the Area Officers and Representatives, we drew up plans for 2025-26. This is aimed at providing opportunities for our members to come together to enjoy and learn about floral art and design and to provide support for the Home Counties Clubs.



What we did not plan for was the announcement from the NAFAS Board of Trustees in April of their intention to increase the affiliation fee that each member pays to £10 in 2026. As a result of considerable opposition to this from our Area, and the majority of the other Areas the £10 fee is now on hold.

New proposals on how the membership could be organised differently have recently been published in a consultation paper. Information about what this might involve has been sent out to all our clubs.

There is to be a meeting of the 21 Area Chairmen with the NAFAS Board to discuss the implications of the proposals on 10<sup>th</sup> November at Leamington Spa. Area Chairmen are being invited to bring other ideas and initiatives to the meeting. Our recent Area Club Day provided an opportunity for discussion and to hear views on the potential problems some of the proposed changes might cause.

Moving on from 'Crisis Management' I am pleased to announce there were 27 entries to the Virtual Competition 'Aspects of Summer'. The winning designs can be viewed on the Home Counties Facebook page. Prize winners will receive their award certificate

from their club Chairman at a club meeting so everyone at the club can celebrate their success.

Rekha Naidoo and Fiona Harrison worked together on ideas for designing a beautiful floral exhibit for the Area Class titled 'Natures' Challenge' for the National Show at Gloucester Cathedral. It did not receive an award but was much admired by those attending the event. Linda O'Toole, Clophill & District Flower Club, was awarded a Commended for her exquisite rendering of a Jewel in the individual class 'Floral Filigree'. Congratulations to Linda for her success in achieving this award.

At the September Area Club Day, Club Officers shared information on different aspects of running a Flower Club, such as different pricing for subscriptions, visitor fees and other fundraising efforts to cover costs. There were lots of interesting ideas about what methods worked well in attracting new members and making a club enjoyable for everyone. It included tips on different approaches to common issues such as encouraging members to join the committee and alternative ways in which committees could work.

On 28<sup>th</sup> October we are holding another of our popular **Education Fun Days** at the Marford Memorial Hall in Wheathampstead. This one with the title 'Fun with Foliage' will provide an opportunity to learn about different types of leaf manipulation led by Gill McGregor. Details have been sent to the clubs on how to book a place.

**The Area AGM and Lunch**, followed by a demonstration by Delyth Price with the title 'A Winter Wonderland' will be at Wheathampstead on the 19<sup>th</sup> November. I should be in a position to give an account of the changes being considered for the re-organisation of NAFAS at the AGM.

Looking forward to 2026, there are a number of events planned starting with a **second Virtual Competition in February 2026 'Nature in Winter'**. This will give further opportunities for members to take part in Competition Work. An Area Show is planned for the end of September 2026. It will have the title 'Changing Seasons'. A committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Carolyn Cranswick to undertake the detailed organisation required for the Area Show.

There are **two Members Days planned**, one in April at Wheathampstead and for the other we will possibly return to Broxbourne in November. The Marford Memorial Hall has certain limitations especially when using tables at the AGM and for seating capacity, that needs to be reconsidered.

There are a lot of changes being proposed by the NAFAS Board which are likely to have an impact on the whole organisation down to membership level, over the coming months and into next year. If there is anything that you would like to raise or to ask

about, do feel you can get in touch either directly or through your club Chairman. I hope to see and speak to many of you in person, either when visiting your club or at the events planned for October and November this year.

With my very Best Wishes

**Anne McPherson**

## ***MEET YOUR AREA FLOWER ARRANGER OFFICER***



***JAYNE HALE***

Since taking on the role of Area Flower Arranger Officer for Home Counties it has been a pleasure to meet so many clubs and members during 2025. I have visited some club demonstrations and met a number of you at area events. I will always be available at an area event, with a supply of current or previous editions of the Flower Arranger for sale.

If you would like me to visit your club at anytime to help promote the Flower Arranger please do contact me. I am also looking for opportunities to contact local colleges who offer Floral Art or Arranging Classes to encourage the students to subscribe at a discount rate to the Flower Arranger and I will of course be promoting membership of any local club at the time too.

I have seen a steady increase for subscriptions across the year as any new member joining your club can subscribe pro-rata at any time during the year. There has also been a return of some old subscribers and the feedback I have for that is the new editorial team of the Flower Arranger are appealing again to members and they are resubscribing. So please encourage new subscribers at any time during the year, don't just wait for the annual invitation.

**The Subscription rate is now available for 2026. It is £17 per member for 4 copies during 2026. I hope you all agree, very good value. A member of the public wishing to subscribe would cost them over £32. Your Flower Arranger Club Officers will have received their letters to confirm your club order, which needs to be returned to me via email or post by Monday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2025. If there are any changes to the details of the Club Flower Arranger Officer too, ie, delivery address, there is also a form to be completed too.**

Contact Details:

Phone; 01438 362265 or 07740 681745

Email; [jayne.hale@hotmail.com](mailto:jayne.hale@hotmail.com)

Postal; 32 Manchester Close, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 4TQ

Home Counties Area of NAFAS

# Education Fun Day

## 'FUN WITH FOLIAGE'

An informative and action-packed day includes competition work using foliage.

**Tuesday 28th October**

**10am – 3.30pm**

**Marford Memorial Hall, Marford Road,  
Wheathampstead AL4 8AY**

(There is easy access and parking)



There will be a variety of activities throughout the day to inform and inspire you and have fun working with others.

**Gill McGregor will be demonstrating Leaf Manipulation Mechanics, Foliage and Containers will be provided.**

Tickets £20 – includes all drinks. Please bring a packed lunch and a mug!

**A notebook and pen would be useful to take notes.**

All members are very welcome, as well as an opportunity for all teachers and judges to refresh their skills.

Tickets are £20 and may be ordered from Celia Thompson  
Area Treasurer [c.thompson@759@btinternet.com](mailto:c.thompson@759@btinternet.com)

## A LOO WITH A VIEW

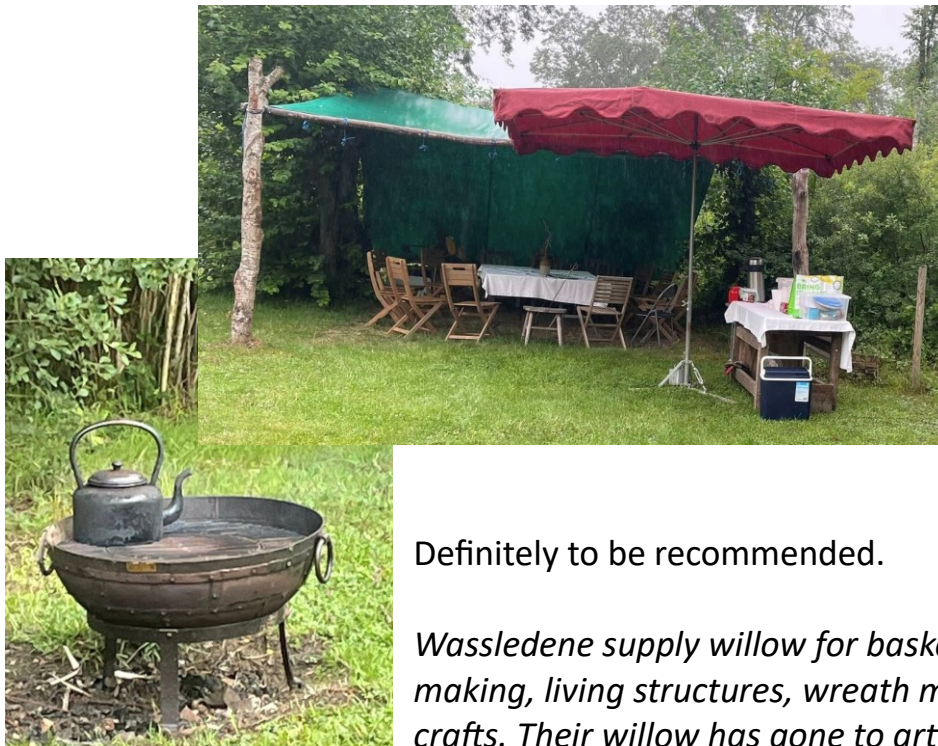
Despite the wet Great British summer's day and the rain tipping down Harpenden Evening Floral Group had a lovely day at Wassledene and didn't let it dampen their spirits.

The farm was really interesting seeing different parts of the hazel and willow wood. They were very informative explaining coppicing. They farm using a rotation system so when they cut down an area, they plant new over 3yrs and 5yrs so they have a constant supply.



The compostable outside toilet was interesting and actually quite invigorating! It was definitely a loo with a view (natural woodland which was beautiful).

We made star wands from willow grown on the farm and had tea, coffee and homemade cakes under the canopy. It was a lovely, enjoyable day.



Definitely to be recommended.

*and crafts people and many more. They grow around 30 different willows and each has its own particular characteristics.*

**Email:** [info@wassledine.co.uk](mailto:info@wassledine.co.uk)

45 Clophill Road, Gravenhurst, Bedford, MK45

# POPPIES ON THE PIER

As a poignant tribute for Remembrance Day, from 5 - 16 November 2025, Southend Pier will be transformed into the UK's largest Remembrance art installation.

From the shore to the pier head, the railings will be lined with over 95,000 hand-crafted knitted and crocheted poppies, donated by people from across the UK and around the world. What began as a small community appeal has grown into a powerful international tribute to remembrance, community spirit, and creativity and an attempt at a Guinness World record.

Thorpe Bay Flower Arranging Group have been playing their part in this project. Many of our members have knitted/crocheted poppies for this appeal which were collected at the club meetings. Several of our members are attending the sewing sessions to attach the poppies onto chains. Some brave members are planning to don boots, coats, hats and gloves and help with the, inevitably chilly, installation on the pier.



Left: Some of the nearly 500 poppies donated by Thorpe Bay Flower Arranging Group.

Right: Thorpe Bay Flower Arranging Groups' poppies are in the Pier store there somewhere!!



What the pier may look like!

Home Counties Area of NAFAS



# AGM, LUNCH And Demonstration

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

**At the Marford Memorial Hall, Marford Road,  
Wheathampstead AL4 8AY**

**Doors Open at 10am**

**AGM at 11am**

***Followed by a Buffet Lunch***

*Tea, coffee and drinks available throughout the day*

**Demonstration by DELYTH PRICE**  
***National Demonstrator***



## **‘A Winter Wonderland’**

Tickets £26 may be ordered through your Club or the Area Treasurer,  
Celia Thompson, [c.thompson759@btinternet.com](mailto:c.thompson759@btinternet.com)

**Please apply no later than by 7th November**

## THE SOCIAL SEASON



Spectrum Designer Group at Runnymede Hall, Benfleet, Essex hosted a great afternoon with a delicious tea served by Spatula and Spoon Catering followed by a Demonstration of the "Social Season", Chelsea, The Edinburgh Festival, Ascot, Glyndebourne and Wimbledon with 5 of their talented demonstrators and members:



Linda Kingcott, Morag Bennett, Irene Bowkett, Terri Potter and Shirley Perkins.

## LOCKS AND WATER LEVELS

Like many flower clubs, Stoneycroft does not meet in August. However, we usually organise a trip either to an interesting garden or have afternoon tea in a nice location such as the golf club. This year we decided to take our ladies for an afternoon outing on the Grand Union Canal.

The Grand Union Canal stretches from London to Birmingham, passing through Hemel Hempstead. A charity called the Waterways Experience run entirely by volunteers is based at Nash Mills on the south side of the town.

The boat we travelled on was called Sheldrake3 and can take up to 40 people which includes a volunteer crew of four. This is a lovely accessible boat with large panoramic windows and a retracting roof. As it was a warm sunny day, all were open as we glided through this beautiful rural section of the canal and under the M25 motorway. Each table seating a group of 4 ladies has an illustrated map showing exactly whereabouts you are on the journey, and what particular points of interest to look out for.

We were encouraged to take part in helping at the locks as the water levels were either emptied or filled to allow us to proceed. Being school holidays quite a few children were stationed at the locks to watch the boats going through.



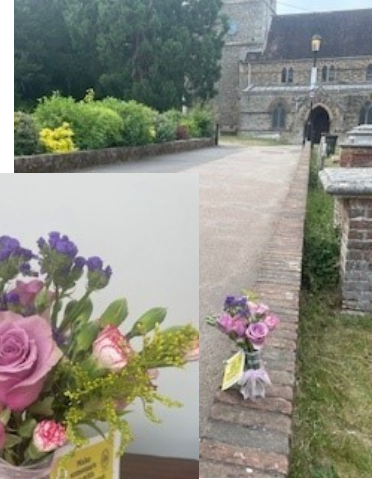
We made tea and served cakes and of course included the crew in our refreshments. Everyone felt it was the most relaxing afternoon with the bonus of having the opportunity to chat with each other, which is not always possible at a club meeting. We did so appreciate having the peace and tranquility afforded to our group as well as the interest of the canal bank and the countryside we passed through.



## CHEARING UP SOMEONE'S DAY WITH A LONELY BOUQUET

Harpenden Evening Floral group embraced the spirit of NAFAS' National Flower Arranging Day on Friday 20th June by leaving Lonely Bouquets around the area to brighten up their finder's day and hope that people may be interested in joining their club.

The weather was extremely hot so some members distributed their flowers in jam jars in water to prevent the flowers wilting. Chrissy Dicks left her jar of flowers in the grounds of St Nicholas' Church. Initially she stood by and watched as numerous people walked past it, being otherwise occupied on their phones or oblivious to their surroundings, so not wanting it to be disregarded she moved it to another area. When she returned 20 minutes later she found that it had a new home.



Anne Hill made two arrangements and left one by the Henry Moore statue near the war memorial and also gave her second one to a couple sitting on a bench near the Salvation Army Hall. She spoke to the couple who were absolutely delighted to receive it.



Pat Walker left hers on a bench and Mhairi de Kort left hers in the Bowers Parade community garden.



Chrissy prepared NAFAS labels to attach to each bouquet so that the finder could

see the details of the club's next meeting and scan the QR code to access the NAFAS website. The club hope that they put a smile on the face of whoever found them.



Helen Manuel, the club's Chairman said "The club is only too happy to do lovely things such as this to cheer up someone's day with the wonderful gift of beautiful flowers".

# GREEN FEST

Early in the year I was approached by the Events Manager for Broxbourne Borough Council to ask if Home Counties would be interested in taking part in an event called 'The Green Fest' to be held in Cedar Park in Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. We had met earlier over a year ago on an experimental course for Crafts linked to Flower Arranging at Capel Manor College. It turned out that this event was linked to 'The Great Big Green Week' which is the UK's biggest celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. It was an opportunity to display the different ways in which floral designs can be constructed and displayed using sustainable methods. We had a separate table to display these on and show to the public what can be done without floral foam.

One of our requests was to have some form of cover. There is no guarantee of dry weather in the UK even in June. The idea of demonstrating flower arranging under the open sky with the possibility of rain pelting down was not an attractive option.

We also negotiated funding for the flowers which was agreed with the proviso that we gave them way. At which point bureaucracy kicked in along with avoidance of risk. Celia Thompson our Area Treasurer was asked to send a copy of our Public Liability Insurance along with the bank account details to receive the money for flowers and foliage.

Come the big day Marina Sweatman the Area Secretary and I made our way across the county early on a Sunday morning for a target set up time of 7am-8am. There were stewards overseeing a tortuous route across the park that included bumping across uneven grassy ground to reach the open sided marquee. We soon discovered that we were two of only a very few souls who had obeyed the instructions. The majority seemed to turn up around 9-10am. However, we appreciated the floral prep time.

Hoddesdon Floral Art Club Chairman and officers provided support. They are the nearest club to the park and had written information about the club and could speak to individuals who might be interested in becoming members.



Decorated recycled jam jars that small children and young people could use to make arrangements with a little help on the day, proved to be very popular. There was a lot of admiration for the flower baskets with the lady Mayoress putting in a request for a red colour scheme. It was presented to her later in the afternoon with official photos being taken of the occasion.

An enjoyable day despite the early start.

**Anne McPherson**

## OUT AND ABOUT WITH SOUTH STEVENAGE FLOWER CLUB

South Stevenage Flower Club kicked off their summer programme of events in May with a trip to Beth Chatto Gardens in Essex. Thanks to the local WI, who organised the visit and offered us their unsold places, we were able to enjoy a wonderful day out to these inspiring gardens. The extensive plant centre with many unusual varieties also proved to be another highlight of the visit and no-one left empty handed!

In June, we held our annual coffee morning, hosted by Dee Hatt, and this was followed in August by our annual garden party, hosted by Club President, Miriam Hill, in her extensive garden. In previous years, we have literally had to hold down the gazebo, which was in danger of being blown away by strong winds and torrential downpours but, this year, the weather was absolutely perfect. Members had made a delicious selection of cakes for us all to enjoy, there was a raffle, a plant stall, a botanical-themed quiz and an array of garden games available for anyone who fancied picking up a croquet mallet. Thank you Dee and Miriam for being such welcoming hostesses.

One of the highlights of this year, in late August, was a visit to Highgrove Gardens, in Gloucestershire, the home of His Majesty The King. It was a very long day, but the sun was shining and the gardens were absolutely enchanting. Our 90-minute guided tour was followed by a delicious two-course lunch in the Highgrove restaurant before we boarded the coach for the long drive home.



Highgrove was certainly a hard act to follow but, in September, we were given the opportunity to visit Rochfords International Rose Trials in Hertford. Kerry Austen, Head Gardener and Rosarian, had been the guest speaker at our Club AGM back in January, where she gave a very interesting and informative presentation about how the rose trials work. Kerry very kindly invited us all to visit to see this for ourselves and, at the end of our visit, she invited us all to

pick a bucket full of roses each to take home. The roses were simply gorgeous and everyone had a fabulous day and created some beautiful arrangements with the blooms they collected. We very much hope for a return visit next summer.

As this year's schedule of events draws to a close, we still have our Christmas lunch to look forward to in December as well as the area events to support during the autumn. 2025 has been an excellent year, helped, of course, by the exceptional summer we have all enjoyed

and, while the weather cannot be guaranteed we can guarantee another busy year full of events and activities for our members to enjoy in 2026.

**Christine Speirs**

## A Busy Year for Thorpe Bay



Besides all our work preparing poppies for the Remembrance installation June saw the team out at St Augustine's Church Thorpe Bay Summer Fair. The sun shone and we raised an amazing £296 profit from the sale of plants, floral decorated horseshoes, floral hand embroidered keyrings, our spare Platinum



Anniversary pens and flower arrangements in saucers (we had broken the cups!).



In August 43 members enjoyed a fabulous afternoon in the glorious garden belonging to our secretary, Linda Ford, sharing lots of tea, cakes, chatter and precious time together. A raffle at



the event gained a further £70 to aid the ever-increasing costs of running our group.



**Sylvia Kittle**

# VIRTUAL COMPETITION RESULTS

## “ASPECTS OF SUMMER”

### *Congratulations*



1<sup>ST</sup> Nicky Olden, Clophill & District Flower Club  
(pictured left)

2<sup>nd</sup> Celia Thompson, Clophill & District Flower Club


3<sup>rd</sup> Mavis Norris, South Stevenage Flower Club  
Very Highly Commended, Sue Calver, South Stevenage Flower Club

Commended, Joan Palmer, Clophill & District Flower Club

Commended, Barbara Rycroft, Canvey Floral Art Club


34

*With Thanks to all the 27 Competitors who submitted entries and we hope many more will take part in the next competition in February*

Come and celebrate with us  
Leigh-on-Sea's Platinum  
Anniversary 

 AN AFTERNOON TEA FOLLOWED BY  
DEMONSTRATION BY NATIONAL DEMONSTRATOR  
DAVID THOMPSON, ASSISTED BY LINDA KINGCOTT  
ENTITLED

HOCUS POCUS



RUNNYMEDE HALL, THUNDERSLEY, SS7 1TF

DOORS OPEN AT 12.00 NOON ON THE 31ST OF OCTOBER WITH STALLS  
TO ENJOY AND AN AFTERNOON TEA SERVED AT 1.00  
TICKETS £23.00 (MEMBERS) £25.00 (NON MEMBERS)

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – 2025/26

(N) = National Demonstrator (A) = Area Demonstrator  
FB = Facebook WS = Website I = Instagram

- 15<sup>th</sup> October** Hitchin Flower Club 7 pm for 7.30 pm **FB**  
**Elizabeth Robertson: Rich and Decadent.** Church House, Hitchin  
SG5 1HP Enquiries: [jennystutley308@btinternet.com](mailto:jennystutley308@btinternet.com)
- 21<sup>st</sup> October** South Stevenage Flower Club. 7.15 for 7.30 pm **WS FB**  
**Wendy Goodliff: Inspired by Nature** Community Arts Centre,  
Roaring Meg Retail Park, London Road, Stevenage SG1 1XN.  
Enquiries: [southstevenageflowerclub@yahoo.com](mailto:southstevenageflowerclub@yahoo.com)  
<https://southstevenageflowerclub.org/>
- 23<sup>rd</sup> October** Hertford Flower Club. 2 for 2.15pm **FB**  
**Daphne Grant: Have Containers will Travel.** Sele Farm  
Community Centre, 25 Perret Gardens, Hertford SG14 2LW  
Enquiries: [franwallis@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:franwallis@hotmail.co.uk)
- 23<sup>rd</sup> October** Harpenden Evening Floral Group 7.15 for 7.30 pm **FB I**  
**Morag Bennett: There are Fairies at the Bottom of my Garden**  
All Saints Church Hall, Station Road, Harpenden AL5 4UU  
Enquiries: [harpdeneveningfloralgroup@outlook.com](mailto:harpdeneveningfloralgroup@outlook.com)  
Visitors £8, tea, coffee and biscuits £1
- 31<sup>st</sup> October** Leigh Floral Group. **70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event. OPEN  
DEMONSTRATION: David Thompson (N) &  
Linda Kingcott (A).** See Advertisement for details  
Enquiries: [karenjcobb@hotmail.com](mailto:karenjcobb@hotmail.com)
- 1st November** Designer 3 Group. **Workshop with Graham King**  
Leverstock Green Village Hall, HP3 8QG just off M1, J8  
9.30 for 10 am start to 3.30 pm  
Enquiries: [daphne.grant20@gmail.com](mailto:daphne.grant20@gmail.com) Visitors £35
- 5<sup>th</sup> November** Welwyn Floral Group. 2 pm **Jackie Page: Connections**  
Welwyn Civic Centre, Prospect Place, Welwyn AL6 9ER  
Enquiries: [joycefurssedonn7@virginmedia.com](mailto:joycefurssedonn7@virginmedia.com)
- 14<sup>th</sup> November** Canvey Floral Art Club. 6.30 for 8 pm **David Wright:  
The Twelve Days of Christmas.** Runnymede Hall, Kiln Rd,  
Thundersley SS7 1TF Members £20 Guests £22
- 14<sup>th</sup> November** Thorpe Bay Floral Arrangement Group 2 pm for 2.30 pm **FB**  
**Elaine Boobier: Then and Now**  
St Augustine's Church Hall, Johnstone Road, Thorpe Bay,  
Essex SS1 3HX Enquiries: [thorpebayflowers@gmail.com](mailto:thorpebayflowers@gmail.com)
- 18<sup>th</sup> November** South Stevenage FC. Details as October  
**Lorraine Saunders: Let's Celebrate**

- 19<sup>th</sup> November** Hitchin FC. Details as October. **Louisa Rigden: Ho! Ho! Ho!**
- 19<sup>th</sup> November** **Area AGM and Lunch**  
**Delyth Price (N): ‘Winter Wonderland’** see ad for details
- 20<sup>th</sup> November** Harpenden Evening Floral Group **OPEN DEMONSTRATION**  
**Lorena Dyer: Sleighbells, Slippers and Sparkle**  
Katherine Warington School, Lower Luton Road, Harpenden  
AL5 5FH. 7 for 7.30 pm Tickets in advance include fizz, soft drinks  
and nibbles. Enquiries as October.
- 12<sup>th</sup> December** Thorpe Bay FAG. Details as November  
**Nick Grounds (N): Jingle a Partridge with Tinsel.**
- 2026**
- 12<sup>th</sup> January** **Extraordinary Council meeting** 11am the Pavilion, Ottway Walk,  
Welwyn AL6 9AT To review and discuss the outcome from the  
NAC meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2025 prior to the National  
Advisory Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2026.
- 13<sup>th</sup> February** Thorpe Bay FAG. Details as November  
**Sonthaya Rose: Love is in the Air**
- 17<sup>th</sup> February** South Stevenage FC. Details as October  
**Elaine Boobier: My Life in Flowers**
- 26<sup>th</sup> February** Harpenden EFG. 7.15 for 7.30 pm  
**Peter Bodnar and Stefan Carolan: 2 Botanicals.**  
All Saints Church Hall – details as October
- 10<sup>th</sup> March** **Area Council Meeting.** 11 am  
The Pavilion, Ottway Walk, Welwyn AL6 9AS
- 13<sup>th</sup> March** Thorpe Bay FAG. Details as November  
**Peter Bodnar and Stefan Carolan: 2 Botanicals**
- 17<sup>th</sup> March** South Stevenage FC. Details as October  
**Naomi Wells: Miss Cullimore**
- 10<sup>th</sup> April** Thorpe Bay FAG. Details as November **Sylvia Kittle: Let’s Party**
- 21<sup>st</sup> April** South Stevenage FC. Details as October  
**Rekha Naidoo: Inspirations of India**
- 23<sup>rd</sup> April** Harpenden Evening Floral Group. **Catherine Holness:**  
**Afternoon Tea.** All Saints Church Hall, Details as October

## ***FORWARD PLANNING***

### **WAF A AUSTRALIA: LAND OF CONTRASTS**

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> to Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2027. Sydney Olympic Park Precinct

You can sign up to a newsletter from rs ECT TRAVEL on their webpage: [ecttravel.com](http://ecttravel.com)