

## Church of England Flower Arrangers' Association – London Branch Chairman's Report, April 2018 – March 2019

The London Branch has continued to be very prolific over the past year, welcoming almost thirty members to each meeting. After our AGM in March 2018, the following months took us to churches where we had not visited before. We have been treated to some excellent flower demonstrations and additionally, at St John the Apostle's Church, in Whetstone, we were blessed with very nice words and prayers said specifically for all church flower arrangers from The Reverend Lynn Davidson. We were thanked for our time and dedication in making places of worship beautiful for all who attend, adding that our labours 'lifted the spirits' of everyone who walked through the doors and sees the lovely displays.

We have tried to incorporate learning, experimenting or generally asking the membership audience for advice in our meetings which has proved very successful. Recently we have been exploring the use of new commercial types of floral foam, (black and biodegradable), versus the tried and tested version. At our February meeting, Kathy Horton and her team went a stage further and used chicken wire instead of floral foam, all in an attempt to reduce waste and be environmentally friendly.

We were privileged to hold the National AGM in June at St John the Baptist Church, Barnet, where many members from all over the country joined us for the day. The organisation team at St John's were congratulated for a well-executed meeting, delicious food and excellent demonstrator in Anita Linderman, who finished the day in grand style.

We continue our close association with St Paul's Cathedral. A rota of volunteers still maintains the flowers in St Dustan's Chapel. It is nice that all the St Paul's volunteers are thanked by being invited to an annual party enabling them to learn what the different volunteer posts are and do. Sylvia Hinder has stepped down from organising the rota and been replaced by Susan Harper. We thank Sylvia for her many years of devoted service and wish Susan every success in the role. Our work at St Paul's has increased. In addition to providing the Advent Wreath, we have been asked to provide flowers for other dedicated services throughout the year. This has benefitted both CEFAA and St Paul's, we now have a closer working relationship and enjoy the added challenges of the extra requests.

At our next AGM, we are going to suggest to the members that the tenure of the Chairman and Vice Chairman be changed to three years and four years respectively, bringing them in line with the National Officers. This change would come into being in a year where the National Officers do not change. We will also propose that our longstanding Vice Chairman, Kathy Horton, be made an Emeritus Vice Chairman, taking up the role when needed.

As always, I thank all the Committee and branch members for their unwavering support at all times. Let's hope the London Branch continues to grow, learn and flourish as it has been doing over the past few years.

*Carole Harvey, London Branch Chairman*