



Surviving 2021/2022 – Guidelines for Clubs: February 2021

The COVID pandemic has now been going on for a year and we worry about how our clubs and organization will survive, so these guidelines are about what we can all do to keep going in the coming year. **The first point is – if your club is struggling please try not to close during this current crisis.** It doesn't matter if not much happens as long as you keep in touch with members somehow - phone, email, letter. Try to keep things ticking over until you can meet again. Maybe consider suspending the club for 6-12 months.

Affiliation fees

The area has done two things to help on this front:

- The normal due date of 31st March has been extended to 31st May 2021
- Reduced the area affiliation fee to £2, making the total payable £8.10/member

The number of members is based on your membership **just before your AGM**. This may be a significantly reduced this year since opportunities to collect fees in spring 2020 were limited. It is also likely to be lower in 2022. This will impact NAFAS and the BB&O Area. Please refer to the [Affiliation Fees](#) page on the website for how to pay.

Club subscriptions and membership forms

Most clubs have been reviewing their subscription policy for the coming year. For example:

- Some decided not to charge any club subscriptions, but to pay 2021 affiliation fees out of existing funds. In general we recommend this approach should be just for members who paid last year, rather than members who paid nothing last year.
- Some decided to charge a reduced subscription. Again we recommend this policy should apply only to those to members who paid last year.
- Some decided to charge fees as normal.

Whatever approach you adopt you still need to count your members so a membership form is still relevant.

Are you worried about your AGM?

You don't have to have one. You can defer it for up to 6 months or just send out a report and accounts. Several clubs have had successful Zoom AGMs, and in some cases this has attracted more members than a normal AGM.

Are you struggling to get a committee?

Many clubs find this a problem. Members may be scared of what's involved, be unwilling to commit for several years or just feel they have done it all before. A full committee is not necessary as long as there are a few people to collect and pay affiliation fees and to keep up with news from the Area and NAFAS.

Even some large and otherwise successful clubs have struggled in this way, but have found a way of working with a flexible management team. Don't be tied to a constitution that doesn't work – just keep going until you find an approach that works, then you can take it from there. A constitution is not legally binding – it is a framework for the way the club will operate. It is entirely up to you what you put in it. The Area has produced a simple constitution template. Ask if you want help.

Has your membership dropped?

Many clubs were struggling with declining numbers even before COVID, but the situation may be worse now. However the lockdowns have prompted many clubs to adapt in ways which offer opportunities for the future.

Zoom is becoming increasingly popular. Some clubs have taken their first tentative steps with Zoom, initially with just their own members. As confidence and experience improves several clubs are now opening their Zoom meetings to non-members for a small fee, and this is attracting new visitors and members. Even a £2 fee for a meeting can be paid easily using direct transfer. Since the summer one club has had a regular visitor from the East of England who has been more than happy to pay a small fee for a fix of floral demonstrations.

The BB&O and NAFAS websites list people who are prepared to deliver demonstrations and workshops via Zoom. Some of these have their own Zoom account, but if they haven't it is easy and cheap for a club to take out a subscription. It costs c£15/month (less than the cost of hall hire and travel expenses) and can be done on a monthly basis if you don't want to subscribe for a full year. Please ask an Area Officer if you need help and/or refer to [Zoom-Guide-for-Organisers](#).

We know some members are unable/unwilling to join Zoom meetings, but equally some members (and potential new members) are unable/unwilling to attend actual meetings, especially during the winter. A varied programme with some physical meetings (when we are allowed) interspersed with Zoom meetings may well be the way forward, so be flexible and adapt.

Publicity is important, so the more you can open advertise your events and open them to non-members the better chance you have of improving your membership. Please email media@bbandoflowers.org.uk with as much information as you have so we can put this information on the area website.

When and how can your club meet again?

The answer is – we just don't know. We must abide by national and local rules. You can try to make booking but you need to discuss the situation with the demonstrators and teachers regarding contingency planning.

What to do if your club is really in danger of closing

Firstly - **talk to your county representative or one of the area officers**. We need to understand in what way you are particularly struggling so we can try to advise. The opportunities for keeping going will vary, but one option during COVID may be to suspend for a year until we are able to get back to normal.

I am sure you agree, we all need to do what we can to keep NAFAS and flower clubs going.