

NAS SW REGION

AGM 2023

Annual Report

This year has seen Covid restrictions lifted with both county and more local countryside, horticultural and flower shows resuming. As a committee, we were sad not to be able to provide a stand at the Cornwall County Show, on behalf of the national office, but it coincided with the NAS AGM at Leamington Spa, attended by your Chair and your Regional Representative. We also do not have a representative from Cornwall on the committee, which makes it tricky to enlist the help of Cornish allotmenters to help each day. We would be pleased if an individual member from Cornwall would volunteer to join the committee, or one of the Cornish associations/societies could propose a member to join the committee. Meetings are always held on Zoom, meaning that they can be attended from the comfort of your home. Despite this, we have had a stand at a number of shows and the show organisers have appreciated this. Good contacts have been made and the National Allotment Society has been promoted strongly in our region. As I write this report we have 395 members in the region: 131 individual, 27 life, 176 association/society, 5 landowners and 56 local council. Do let us know in good time of shows in your area that you would propose that we attend.

Our Regional Representative has attended Management Committee meetings in Corby on behalf of the region and we are grateful to him for all the travelling that this entails. His attendance means that the NAS members in the south-west have a voice in the way that things are managed and are consulted on any policy changes. It also keeps us up-to-date with all new developments. He and our Regional Mentor continue to be very busy with issues and with helping to set-up new sites or enabling societies to go self-managed.

Winter online talks continued from October 2022 to February 2023. Whilst never as good as face-to-face meetings, it has made “meetings” possible in such a large region. There will never be an ideal venue that does not involve some members having to travel very long miles! During last winter we enjoyed talks from Dr Deborah Burn, our national Research & Development Officer, a keen allotmenteer herself, from Rod Weston who taught us the fundamentals of composting and from Michael French who introduced us to Grounded Community, a charitable organisation who have set up growing projects and a community café. All the talks were really appreciated and Helen Cunningham, our speaker at tonight’s AGM, will launch this season’s series. Do let us know if there is something, allotment-related that you would like to hear about that would be of interest to others and we shall try to find a speaker. We already have two more speakers lined up, but there is room for a fourth in this series before the ground begins to warm and we can start on the next round of sowing and planting. Following the success of the partnership between Devon Wildlife Trust and NAS SW, contact has been made with Dorset Wildlife Trust and another partnership has

been formed with a joint award scheme in development. One of our forthcoming speakers will be Mitch Perkins, Dorset Wildlife Trust's Rewilding Officer.

On behalf of the National Allotment Society, the SW regional committee thanks all our members for their continued interest in the society and the benefits it has to offer. As I conclude this report, I must pay tribute to the outgoing committee comprising Lynda Clarke (Chair), Deirdre Griffiths (Secretary), Mark Joynes/Marcus Knight (Treasurer), Allan Cavill (Mentor), Mark Joynes (Regional Representative), Neil Birrell, Peter Clarke and Rowan Pym.

Lynda Clarke

Chair, on behalf of the committee