



Young Farmers'
Clubs of Ulster



Club Secretary Guide

Congratulations on being appointed Club Secretary!

We have produced this booklet to help you in your role as Club Secretary of your Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) club. This guide aims to refresh the memory of continuing Club Secretaries of the key aspects of the role while also being a good starting point for members taking on the role for the first time.

As the Club Secretary you are a vital member of the leadership team within your club, and by taking this role on you obviously have a big interest in your club and want to see it thrive.

In order to take your club up a gear or maintain its success you will need to be organised, committed, have the ability and time to take on multiple tasks at any given time. Record keeping is vital, and you will need to be particular when it comes to updating information and filing. You'll also be key in communication with members and

your Club and County Office Bearers. Skills such as written communication, dealing with correspondence and taking or reading minutes are a small but important part of your role. You will be encouraging members to participate and get behind the club as a team.

What you do as Club Secretary will ensure that your club remains strong and active within your community and the wider YFCU organisation; not only in your time in the role, but for years to come.



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Key items for the role of Club Secretary

Item	Where to find it
Lever arch folders	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
Minute book / A4 notebook	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
Printer & ink cartridge	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
Roll book	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
Letter headed paper	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
USB pen	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
Laptop / tablet	Outgoing Club Secretary, club and/or purchase
Envelopes & Stamps	Outgoing Club Secretary and/or purchase
YFCU Competition Handbook	YFCU Head Quarters (HQ) / outgoing Club Secretary / YFCU Website
Help and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outgoing Club Secretary or other past and present Club Office Bearers• County and Central Officials• YFCU HQ

Official part of club meetings

Each club should hold at least eight regular business meetings at a place agreed by the majority of the members during the period September to April, preferably between the hours of 7:30pm and 10:30pm.

Club programmes should include a balance of educational, training, cultural and social activities, in line with YFCU targets. Guidance on targets is available from Head Quarters (HQ) and Central Officials.

When organising your programme with your Committee you should appoint a Chairperson for the meeting. This is a member of the Committee who will organise the meeting along the Club Leader and yourself.

As Club Secretary it is your job to carry out the following tasks:

Before meetings:

- Draw up the agenda with the Club Leader.
- Check or book the venue for the meeting.
- Summarise lengthy correspondence.
- Liaise with the Chairperson of the meeting to ensure guests have been invited and arrangements have been made for the necessary equipment, supper, etc.

During meetings:

Note: Use prompt sheet below for Chairperson as a guideline for the meeting

- Arrive in good time with your paperwork and necessary equipment to conduct the meeting.
- Together with the Chairperson of the meeting, ensure that everyone is welcomed and agenda followed.
- Read the pledge:

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“I promise to do my duty to be punctual and regular in attendance, to support all activities to the best of my ability. Help and encourage others, so that as members of the YFCU we may become better farmers, better country men and better citizens.”

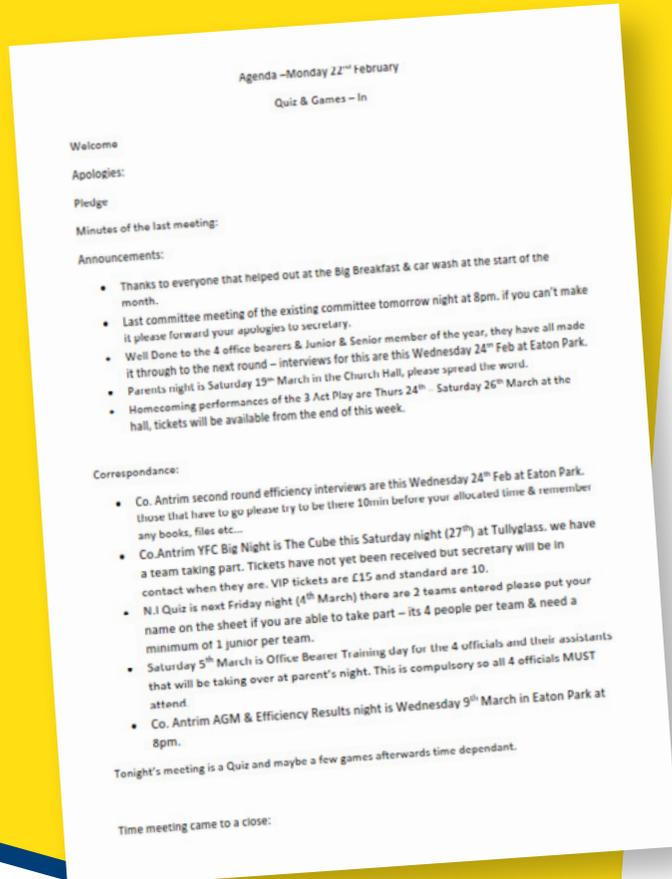
- Circulate a sign in sheet / roll call for those present and apologise for those who have said that they will be absent. A list of your members can be obtained from HQ.
- Read the minutes loud and clear (if they have not been circulated) and when they are adopted obtain the Chairperson’s signature on them.
- Is there any business arising from minutes of previous club meeting.
- Read announcements.
- Read all correspondence and summarise if necessary.

- Co-ordinate competition entries.
- Ask if there is Any other Business (AOB).
- Take notes from the meeting for the minutes.
- Commence club programme activity.
- Vote of thanks proposed and seconded by members (if guests are invited).
- Club meeting closed.
- Ensure building is left tidy, equipment is properly put away and all members have a lift home arranged. Keep in mind a female and male senior member (at least one child protection trained) need to remain until all members have left.

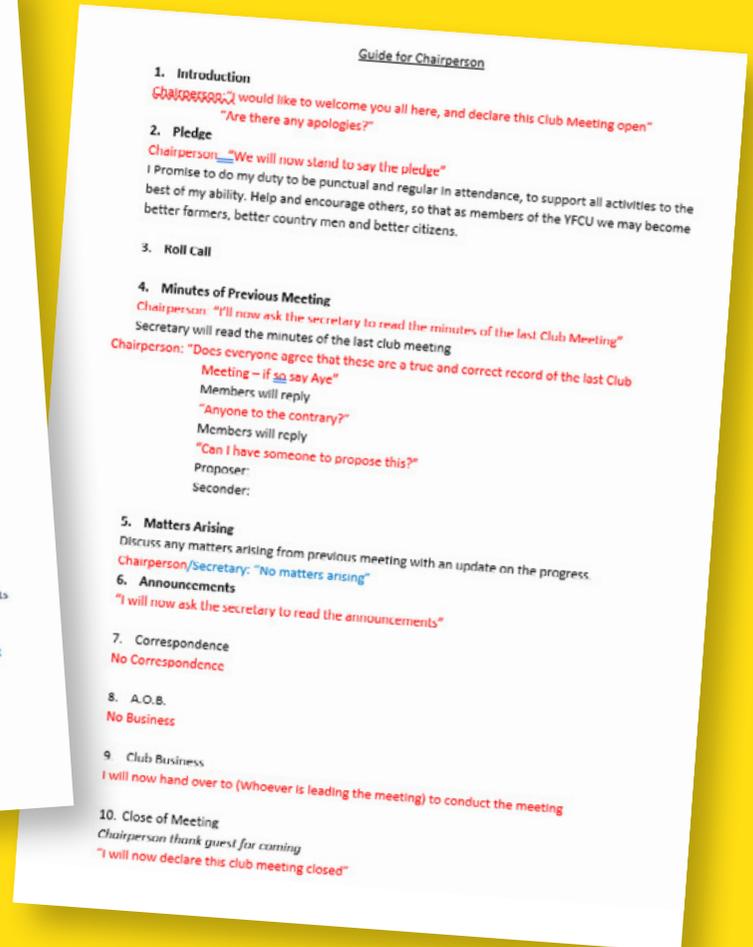
After meetings:

- Write up the minutes ASAP while they are still fresh in your mind.
- Answer correspondence.
- Carry out any actions from the meeting which have been delegated to you.
- Ensure roll book is updated.
- Keep a record of all expenses and notify the Treasurer.

Example of club meeting agenda



Guide /written prompts for Chairperson



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Example of club meeting minutes

Meeting Minutes for Tuesday 26th January

A meeting of YFC was held on Tuesday 26th January meeting at [redacted] at 6.45pm. An apology was received from [redacted]. Minutes of the previous meeting were read agreed & signed.

Announcements:

- 3 Act Practice tomorrow & Thursday night at 7pm at the hall.
- Arts Festival Practice Thursday night at 7.30pm.
- Opening performances of the 3 act play will be this Friday 29th & Saturday 30th January at our club hall. Please come along & invite all friends family etc...
- We are holding the Big Breakfast & Car Wash this year again on Saturday 6th February 8.30 – 11.30am. If you are free to help out please put your name on the sheet as people will be needed to cook, serve, wash dishes. Wash cars etc..

Correspondance:

- Home Management & Ulster Young Farmer competition 2nd round will be this Thursday 28th January at Antrim Grammar School, Cathy has text those that are through – probably leaving the hall at 6pm.
- European Rally Committee are holding a Night at the Races at Tullyglass Hotel on Saturday 30th January, to raise funds for the Rally taking place in August. There will be prizes for best dressed male & female.
- Co.Antrim YFC Big Night is The Cube, please let secretary know if you would like to take part as there are only 4 people in the team, if there are more than 4 volunteers names will be drawn out of a hat.

The meeting took the form of a trip to the Riverside Theatre in Coleraine to see Legally Blonde, cost was £16 each. Everyone learned the 'Bend & Snap' and returned to the hall at 11pm.

Chairperson:

Secretary:

Date:

Committee meetings (Both Committee meetings and the official part of club meetings)

Why have committee meetings?

Any effective organisation needs to hold regular meetings. It is the main method by which any voluntary group or organisation carries out their business. It is therefore crucial that meetings are well run and efficient. It is also important that they are used for reaching decisions and that these decisions are properly recorded and carried out.

When are committee meetings held?

Committee meetings should be held on a regular basis, ideally once a month. This should be on a date that suits the majority of your Committee. As a rule of thumb you should have at least 50% attendance from your Committee.

Before meetings:

- Draw up the agenda with the Chairperson (Club Leader).
- Check or book the venue for the meeting. This can be the club hall or a member's home.

- Email previous meeting minutes to Committee.
- Summarise lengthy correspondence.

A typical example of an agenda is as follows:

Note: This is very similar to club meeting agenda.

Sample Agenda

1. Open meeting
2. Adoption of agenda
3. Minutes of the previous meeting
4. Matters arising from the minutes
5. Correspondence
6. Club business (main items on the agenda)
7. Reports
8. AOB
9. Close meeting

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During meetings:

- Arrive in good time with the paperwork to carry out your role.
- If minutes have not been circulated previously, you will need to read the minutes to the committee. You should have already emailed them however and therefore you can save time by taking them as read. Once the minutes are adopted obtain the Chairperson's signature on them.
- Is there any business arising from previous meeting?
- Circulate a sign in sheet / roll call to those present and apologise for those who have said that they will be absent.
- Read announcements and correspondence and/or summarise if necessary.
- Take notes from the meeting for the minutes (this can be done by assistant).
- Minutes can be typed onto laptop / tablet during the meeting. Good practice is to highlight the actions and who is responsible.
- Make sure all proposals and decisions are recorded.
- Record the names of people assigned responsibilities and/or duties.



Explanation of the above committee meeting agenda items:

1. Open meeting

It is important for the presiding Club Leader to declare the meeting open and welcome members attending so that it is clear when the meeting has commenced.

2. Adoption of agenda

Here the members have a chance to propose the addition of items to the agenda subject to the approval of the Committee. The agenda should be proposed and seconded with the proposer and seconder being recorded in the minutes.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

Minutes should be circulated in advance to give members an opportunity to consider them before they are adopted. The minutes require a proposer and seconder, and this information should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the minutes are adopted.

Minutes should be brief, but must record the attendance at the meeting; any correspondence received; all decisions taken; any actions to be taken; and by whom.

N.B. The minutes only become the official record of the meeting when they are adopted at the next meeting. The minutes should be signed by the Club Leader as the Chairperson of the Committee and stored for safe keeping in an official minute book.

4. Matters arising (from the minutes)

Once the minutes have been adopted the next item should be matters arising from said minutes.

Here anyone who has been given responsibility for carrying out an action point from the previous meeting should update the meeting on their progress. The Chairperson should start by outlining his/her progress on matters they have taken responsibility for and then call on the other individuals or groups to give their updates.

If a matter or report in the minutes is on the agenda for later in the meeting then it should not be discussed under matters arising but deferred until that item comes up for discussion.

N.B. Matters arising is an extremely important part of any meeting as it ensures that decisions taken by previous meetings are properly followed up. If they are not then meetings become a waste of time!

5. Correspondence

Correspondence should be read by the Secretary who should be familiar with the content in advance in order to summarise where possible and save time.

6. Club business (main items on the agenda)

The Secretary, in consultation with the Club Leader, should decide this section of the agenda. This item on the agenda should deal with the organising of club events and general club business. If not, a sole item 'Club Business' will appear on the agenda and the items agreed on the adoption of the agenda.

7. Reports

- 7.1 At this point of the meeting the Treasurer should give a detailed update on the financial status of the Committee including the profit and loss on events. This is a requirement on all clubs and a copy of the report should be signed and attached to meeting minutes.
- 7.2 The Club Public Relations Officer (PRO) should also report on any publicity the club has received since the last meeting.

8. AOB

Any Other Business (AOB) provides members with an opportunity to raise brief points. If a member has a major issue which they want discussed, they should propose the issue at the start of the meeting (when the agenda is being adopted) so the issue is added to the agenda.

If the Club Leader considers a point raised under AOB as an important but non-urgent matter that will take some time, you should suggest that the issue be added to the agenda for the next meeting rather than spending a lot of time on the issue at the end of the current meeting.

In general it is a sign of a poorly planned meeting if a lot of matters are being raised under AOB. A long AOB is one of the main reasons why meetings drag on.

9. Close of meeting

The meeting should be officially declared closed at the end and members thanked for their contribution.

After meetings:

- Write up the minutes ASAP while they are still fresh in your mind.
- Answer correspondence.
- Carry out any actions from the meeting which have been delegated to you and notify any members who apologised of any assigned actions.
- Ensure roll book is updated.



Meeting minutes

Accurate minutes are central to the smooth running of the club. There is no need for a Club Secretary to record every little detail that went on at the meeting, instead a record should be taken of each item discussed; proposers and seconders, where necessary any decisions taken; and the people or groups responsible for the actions to be noted.

Criteria for taking minutes:

- Write in note form at the meeting or type onto laptop / tablet.
- Ensure that all decisions taken are recorded.
- If unsure of any information, decisions or who is to carryout actions, ask for it to be repeated or clarified.
- Note all tasks to be undertaken and who has responsibility for each task and by when they are to be carried out, if relevant.
- Do not be afraid to ask the Chairperson to slow down the pace of the meeting if you feel you are finding it difficult to keep up with your notes.

- Remember that you are also a key leader in your club so it is important that you give your opinion on points being discussed. You are a participant in the meeting as well as the person recording the minutes.

Criteria for writing minutes:

- Minutes should be clear and to the point.
- Minutes should be an accurate account of what happened at the last meeting.
- Avoid long-winded type essay accounts.
- Record names of those that proposed and seconded all decisions and reports.
- The layout should correspond to the layout of the agenda.
- The minutes should be written up and placed into the Official Minute Book as soon as possible after the meeting where they are agreed. It is good practice to keep a soft copy in your Club Secretary file for your own knowledge.

Example Committee meeting minutes

Minutes of the meeting of The Glens YFC Committee
September 29th, 2018 in The Glens YFC Hall.

1. Introduction

The Chairperson declared the meeting opened at 8.30pm, and welcomed members attending the meeting.

2. Attendance

White - Club Leader; B. Greene - PRO; C. Black - Treasurer; F O'Malley - Club Secretary; D. Brown. S McNeil - Assistant Secretary; T Bailey - Assistant Treasurer; W Willis - Committee; R Armstrong – Committee

3. Apologies

E Grey - Assistant Club Leader

4. Adoption of agenda

As circulated

Proposed: B. Greene

Seconded: D. Brown

5. Minutes of previous meeting

Agreed as circulated

Proposed: C. Black

Seconded: B Greene

6. Matters arising

The Treasurer reported that the outstanding sponsorship monies as highlighted at the last meeting had now been forwarded to the County Executive.

7. Correspondence

Letter from Mary Murphy, Head of Training and Development, re: Club Officer Training. The fee has been set at £xx and indicating a closing date of September 10th for return of booking forms. The Chairperson asked all Officers to make a special effort to attend. It was agreed that Officers would indicate at the next County Officers meeting whether or not they would be attending.

- 7.1 Letter from AIB representative, Mr. Hugh Rich, thanking the club for their hospitality at the recent dinner dance.

8. Club business (main items on the agenda)

8.1 Club Fundraiser

A detailed discussion took place on ideas for a County Fundraiser. Following various suggestions it was agreed to hold a race night in October. The Club Secretary will check the availability of the Town Hall on Friday nights during October the Treasurer will source quotes for printing of race-cards and tickets. The details will be finalised at the upcoming County Sub-Committee meeting after which details will be forwarded to clubs.

8.2 Public Speaking

The Chairperson reminded people that the County had prioritised the public speaking competition for this year he asked all clubs to ensure that they had participants in the competition this year.

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9. Reports

- 9.1 Treasurer's report
Club bank current account balance is £400.
This month's outgoings included ...
Income included ...
Club fundraiser made ...
Profit and loss on each of the following events is ...

9. PRO update

Club PRO updates members of recent press articles on previous and upcoming events.

10. AOB

D Brown informed the meeting that Moycraig Club would be holding a table quiz on September 1st in the parish hall in Bushmills and he asked club members to support the event.

11. Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 10.05 pm. The next club Committee meeting will be in the club on 28th October at 8.00pm.

The meeting closed at	10.05pm
Next meeting will be held in:	Club hall
Date:	28th October 2018
Time	8:00pm
Chairperson's Signature:	
Date:	29/09/2018

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a very important meeting for the club as it is at this meeting that the Office Bearers for the incoming year are elected. Your club AGM should be scheduled as an 'In Meeting' in January on the club's programme and a member of the Executive Committee must chair the AGM.

Before the AGM:

- Read the documents: "Conducting Your Club Annual General Meeting", and the appropriate section of the YFCU policy document "Procedures for electing YFCU Officials and the Recruitment and Registration of Volunteers and Trainers" which are available on the YFCU website or from HQ staff.
- At a Committee meeting at least two months prior to the AGM the Committee should discuss the office bearer roles and nominate / suggest / contact those who would be good candidates to hold the office bearer roles.
- Agree the date and venue of the AGM with the Club Committee (date must be between 1 January and 28 February).
- Inform HQ of the date of the meeting as soon as possible, with at least one months' notice.
- Discuss with the Club Committee regarding an invitation to an Executive Committee member to conduct your AGM. Make sure the Executive member is informed of the date, time and place of the meeting in advance and are given a copy of the agenda.
- Consider asking the catering officer to arrange a special supper for the evening.
- Produce a report for the AGM detailing the Club's year.
- Make sure you have received the appropriate AGM pack from HQ.
- Ensure that notepaper, pencils, ballot papers and a copy of the YFCU Memorandum and Articles of Association are available for the Chairperson on the night of the meeting.
- Agree the agenda for the AGM.

Pointers for the Club Secretary report:

- Have copies available for everyone to take home to parents, etc.
- It should be a complete chronological account of the year (subdivided by month) containing:
 - Activities
 - Notable events
 - Successes and achievements
 - Acknowledge losses and disappointments (without labouring the point)
 - Offer thanks to others on the club's behalf

During the AGM:

- Ensure to take accurate minutes of the AGM (You can use your laptop / tablet).
- Thank the Chairperson for giving up their time to conduct the AGM.

After the AGM:

- Ensure Officials have completed all relevant paperwork and the YFCU AGM Form is completed and given to the AGM Chairperson, together with the Club Secretary's report and Treasurer's report, to pass on to HQ.
- Support the new Office Bearers on the build up to them taking office.

Example AGM agenda:

- Welcome members to the AGM
- Confirm housekeeping (for example voting arrangements)
- Minutes of the last AGM
- Business arising from minutes
- Apologies
- Correspondence
- Club Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- Election of Club Officials:

Thank outgoing Office Bearers for all their hard work during the past year and elect the following by asking nominations and approval by majority vote for:

- President
- Vice President(s)
- Club Leader and Assistant Club Leader
- Club Secretary and Assistant Secretary
- Club Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer
- Public Relations Officer and Assistant PRO
- Auditor
- Education and Library Board Grant Application Co-ordinator
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Co-ordinator
- UFU Representative
- Junior Co-coordinator / Senior Leader (if applicable)
- Any additional posts (as advised by the outgoing Club Leader / Club Secretary)
- AOB
- Thank outgoing Officials, confirm date of changeover and welcome new Officials
- Invite closing comments by Club Leader
- Thank members for their participation, attendance and wish them a safe journey home.



Administration

What you need to be an effective administrator:

- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of club members Club, County and Central Officials, and YFCU HQ, and the names and responsibilities of staff.
- List of the clubs in the County and in the Association.
- Knowledge of recent history of the club, what worked well, what didn't, etc. What events were successful, which events weren't?
- A good knowledge of YFCU structures, at Club, County and Central Level.
- Knowledge of the objectives of the organisation and how these can be achieved.

Filing and Keeping Records

Each Club Secretary should maintain a filing system for the club. This system must be clear and concise so that relevant details can be handed over to their successor.

Before setting up a system of record keeping, decide which records need to be kept. Club Secretaries should make a point of reading the YFCU Confidentiality Policy, which sets the parameters for record keeping in the Association.

Documents of a sensitive nature may be forwarded to HQ for safe keeping (ask HQ Staff for details).

Information Folder

It is essential for a Club Secretary to keep a folder of information that you may require in one place so that you can easily access it if necessary.

Items that could be included in your folder could be:

- Copy of Club Secretary Guide
- Club programme
- Blank accident forms
- Blank consent forms
- Club Committee details and contact numbers
- Club member details
- YFCU policy and procedures
- Copies of all child protection and first aid certificates
- Competition entries and scores
- Copies of attendance list at CEO competitions as well as results

- All correspondence sent and received from / by the Club AGM
- Any information regarding club events that may be necessary to pass on
- Committee meeting agendas and minutes
- Club meeting agendas and minutes
- Club meeting backup

Separate folders should be used for:

- Member medical details (e.g. allergies)
- Consent forms

These folders should be locked away but accessible at meetings.

These folders are an excellent starting point for any new Club Secretary to follow in your footsteps and will ensure consistency and good leadership within the club.

Correspondence

As Club Secretary it is your job to write any correspondence on behalf of your club. You also have responsibility for dealing with incoming correspondence and ensuring that items are brought to the attention of the relevant Officials, Committees or clubs.

Incoming correspondence:

- All letters / emails, which the Club Secretary receives, should be filed and brought to the meeting. Check if the correspondence requires urgent attention. If it does you need to bring it to the Chairperson's attention and decide on a course of action.
- All letters / emails should be read in advance and summarised.
- It is recommended that the Chairperson and Club Secretary go through the correspondence before the meeting.
- The correspondence should be read aloud by the Club Secretary when asked by the Chairperson.
- Record decisions taken if matters arise from the correspondence. It is often useful to actually write a note on the correspondence outlining what decision was taken in relation to it.

Writing correspondence:

- Letters and emails should be short concise and to the point.
- Use club headed notepaper if you have it.
- Identify the Committee on whose behalf you are writing.
- Give a contact name and telephone number.
- Keep a copy of all outgoing correspondence.
- Don't be afraid to ask your predecessor, County Officials, YFCU HQ, Office Bearers or Chief Executive officer for help or guidance with a letter, particularly if it is of a sensitive nature.
- Remember if you are writing a letter / email on behalf of the club, the Club Committee should be aware of and approve it.

Recognition of the role of Club Secretary

The role of Club Secretary is a very important yet demanding role. The YFCU recognises the vast amount of work that Club Secretaries have to put in to complete the role by awarding the **'McAlister Prize & Blair Trophy'** to the best Club Secretary in Northern Ireland.

Club Secretaries are interviewed at club level and their ability to be organised and committed along with their record keeping and correspondence is judged. If successful, Club Secretaries are invited to County level judging and then the best from each County reach the Northern Ireland finals with the winners being announced at the YFCU AGM and conference.

Also in recognition of the role, YFCU has teamed up with AQA to award the Club Secretary a certificate for holding the office bearer role. This can look fantastic on any member's university applications or CV's for any future jobs.

So make sure to be organised and committed to maintaining good records and communicate effectively with members of your Club and County Office Bearers.

Don't forget to enjoy the role of Club Secretary and make the most of the opportunity!

Handover

It is good practice to spend some time with the incoming Club Secretary to brief them on the role. Talk them through this booklet and familiarise them with your approach to recording the admin and correspondence for the club. You should have already used your assistant throughout the year and they should be already familiar with the role. Put a selection of previous emails that were sent to HQ and other Club Secretaries on a USB pen for them so they can see what has been sent before. However, it is worthwhile spending time training incoming Club Secretaries before they take over so they know what they must do and will promote your club to ensure its future success.



**Young Farmers'
Clubs of Ulster**

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster
475 Antrim Road
Belfast
BT15 3BD

T: 028 90 370 713

E: info@yfcu.org

www.yfcu.org

Charity Registration No: 100972

Company Registration No: NI 003964 (Northern Ireland)

Registered Office: 50 Bedford Street, Belfast, BT2 7FW

