



Young Farmers'
Clubs of Ulster



Club Leader Guide

Congratulations on being appointed Club Leader!

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

The overall success of the club depends on a good Committee Team; and as the leader of the Committee you should be an example and role model to your fellow Committee and club members.

A good leader will listen well, and it is vital that you communicate with your Committee, keeping them informed and asking for their opinion and assistance.

We also expect you will benefit from advice and assistance from County and Central Officials at some stage during the year so please don't be afraid to ask for help.

What you do as Club Leader 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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Participation and attendance

You are the face of the club to other members, parents and to the local community. It is essential that you set a good example and act as a role model for other members. Therefore you must be prepared to participate and attend as many club meetings and competitions as possible. You cannot try to encourage others to participate if you are not willing to do so yourself.



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.

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

Before meetings:

- Draw up the agenda with the Secretary.
- Check or book the venue for the meeting.
- 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.
- Ensure the meeting is started on time.
- Together with the Chairperson of the meeting, ensure that everyone is welcomed and agenda followed.
- Read the pledge:

“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.”

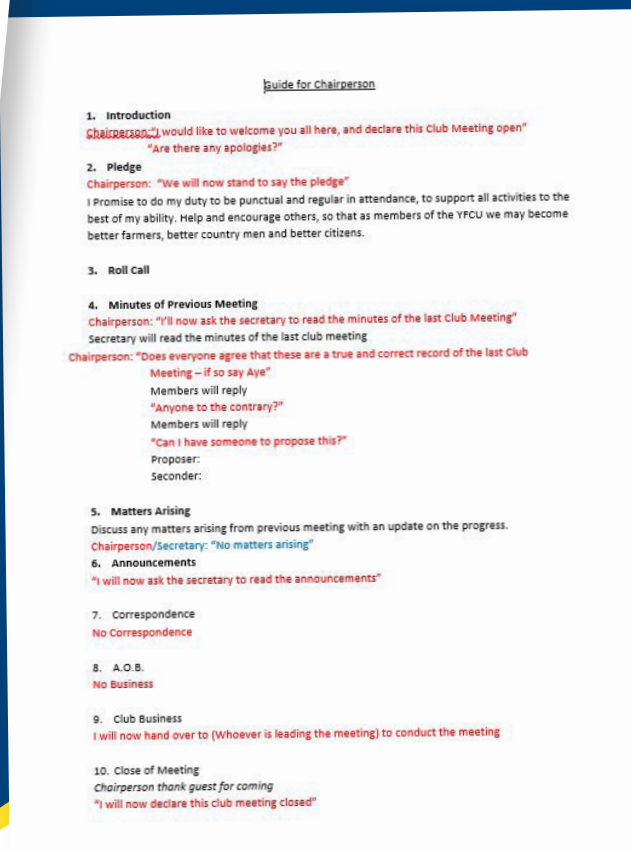
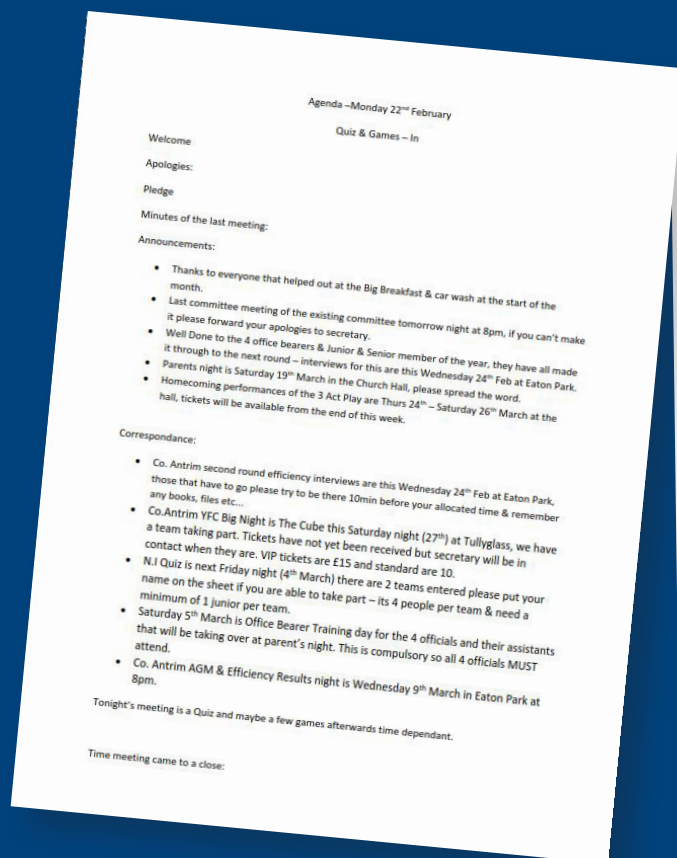
- Ensure the agenda of the meeting is followed (example agenda can be found in the Club Secretary Guide).
- Commence club program activity.
- Vote of thanks proposed and seconded by members (if guests are invited).
- Club meeting closed.
- Ensure building is left tidy, equipment is properly put away 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:

- Review the success of the meeting with other Officials.
- Carry out any actions from the meeting which have been delegated to you.

Club Leader Guide

Example of Club meeting agenda and written prompts for Chairperson



Committee 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.

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

Before the meeting:

Setting the Agenda

A set agenda should be drawn up for each meeting by the Secretary and Club Leader and then circulated via the Secretary to all Committee members.



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

Ordinary meeting procedure:

The items on any agenda should be:

1. Open meeting

It is important for the Chairperson 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.
- 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 Chairperson 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.

Effective meetings

The purpose of any meeting is to make decisions. While it is important to have a proper discussion to ensure all avenues are explored before a decision is reached, it is good practice to avoid lengthy, heated or irrelevant debates. It is the role of the Chairperson to lead discussions and direct the conversation, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak and ask questions while also keeping the meeting from running on. Meetings should be as brief as possible as, if they drag on and become boring, members may not continue to turn up.

Problems with meetings:

- Meetings starting late.
 - Meetings dragging on too long.
 - Too many or not enough meetings being held.
- Ensuring that none of the above happen is mainly the responsibility of the Club Leader with the Secretary having a major role in the planning and recording of the meeting.
- ### After the meeting:
- After each meeting the Club Leader should review the above list to ensure that none of these things are happening at meetings they are running.
- It is also a good idea for the Chairperson to ask for feedback on the meeting from members on a one-to-one basis.
- If you are having some difficulties with meetings then you should consult your predecessor, another Club Leader from a neighbouring club, County Chairperson or Central Officials.
- Lots of talking but no decisions.
 - Members not following up on decisions or tasks.
 - Long-winded and repetitive contributions.
 - The same individuals talking all the time.
 - More than one person talking at the same time - poor control.
 - Meetings being poorly planned i.e. no agenda or the agenda not being adhered to.

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.
- Make sure your Club Secretary has 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.

During the AGM:

- Introduce and thank the Chairperson for giving up their time to conduct the AGM. If you are handing over your role the Chairperson will ask the new Club Leader to give closing remarks.

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 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.



Child protection and first aid

As Club Leader it is your responsibility to ensure that the club has sufficient members trained in child protection and first aid. You should review the certificates of current trained members and work out if they need to take a refresher course, or if you need to train other members.

It is good practice to train the Club Leader, Secretary, Treasurer and PRO along with some assistants. This will ensure that there are child

protection and first aid trained members at all club meetings. You should encourage the relevant members to get trained up before they commence their role.

If you are unsure who is currently trained within your club please contact HQ who will be able to give you an up to date list, as well as advising you on the dates of upcoming training sessions.



How to deal with situations that may arise

During your role there could be various situations that may arise. Below are some example situations and how to deal with them. However, if you need more advice please contact the County Chairperson, Central Officials or HQ staff.

- *Office Bearer not carrying out their duties*
 - Speak to the Secretary, Club President or other Committee member and approach the Office Bearer together.
 - Talk to the Club Official and ask if something is wrong.
 - Offer help from Assistant .
 - Seek help from Committee.
- *Member's behaviour*
 - Speak to the Secretary, Club President or other Committee member and approach the Office Bearer together.
 - If problem continues take it to Committee.
 - Speak with parent or guardian if the member is under 18.
- *Your guest speaker at a club meeting does not appear and cannot be contacted. What do you do? And how do you avoid this happening in the future?*
 - Have a games, quiz or bingo night prepared as a backup and ready to use at short notice.
 - Confirm all the details in advance with the guest speaker e.g. date, time and where the meeting is being held, what they might need to bring, length of meeting and number likely to be in attendance.
 - Check they can still attend at least 1 week prior to the meeting to ensure they are able to come and know what to bring / do.

Long-term recruitment

YFCU needs a constant supply of new leaders and new members to take up Office Bearer roles.

Throughout your time in office, you should actively seek to recruit members for Office Bearer roles. You should observe how members behave before, during and after club events and competitions, how they represent the club and assess if you think they have the skillset, motivation and commitment required for an Office Bearer role.

Not all members will have all the skills required for certain roles, however with help and encouragement from you and the Club Committee and the passion and drive from the member, these skills can be developed.

How to monitor your club?

When you start your role, you should create a plan for the club during your time. Then you should monitor the progress of the club in line with your plan. Your aim should be to leave the club in a better position than when you took over.

To do this, you can receive participation numbers from HQ to monitor the participation of your club members. You can compare these to previous years and you should set goals / targets to improve this. You should also monitor the number of new and returning members to your club and strive to retain or improve on this as a club.

The club activity is not just based on competitions therefore you should record how many attend social events and take part on exchange, etc. (Refer to President's Award Guidelines).

Points of contact

Remember that you are not alone in your role. There are many past and present members who are, or have been, in your position and will offer you support and guidance. Some examples include:

- Previous Club Leader
- County Chairperson, Secretary and the County Committee
- Presidential Team
- YFCU HQ staff
- Neighbouring Club Leaders
- Past members

Information Folder

It is not essential for a Club Leader to keep an information folder, however it is good practice to keep 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 Leader Guide
- Club programme
- Accident forms
- Club Committee details and contact numbers
- YFCU policy and procedures
- Copies of all child protection and first aid certificates
- Any information regarding club events that may be necessary to pass on
- Committee meeting agendas and minutes
- Club meeting backup
- Deeds or information relating to club hall whether owned or rented

This folder is an excellent starting point for any new Club Leader to follow in your footsteps and will ensure consistency and good leadership within the club.

Recognition of the role of Club Leader

The role of Club Leader is a very important yet demanding role. The YFCU recognises the vast amount of work and responsibility associated with the role of Club Leader by awarding the **Harper Adams Trophy** to the best Club Leader in Northern Ireland each year.

Club Leaders are interviewed at club level and their ability to be a leader and commitment to the role is judged. If successful, Club Leaders are invited to County level judging and then the top Club Leader from each County progresses to the Northern Ireland finals with the winners being announced at the YFCU AGM and Conference.

Therefore endeavour to be organised, committed, maintain good records and communicate effectively with members of your Club and County Office Bearers.

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

Handover

It is good practice to spend some time with the incoming Club Leader to brief them on the role. Talk them through this booklet and familiarise them with your approach to managing and running the club. You should have already used your assistant throughout the year and they should be already familiar with the role. However, it is worthwhile spending time training incoming Club Leaders before they take over so they know what they must do and will promote your club to ensure its future success.



James Purcell from
Dungiven YFC was
awarded 'Top Club
Leader' & the Harper
Adams Trophy in 2018
by YFCU President
James Speers.





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