



SUMMER
2024

RURAL DISPATCH

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE
OF THE YOUNG FARMERS'
CLUBS OF ULSTER



YFCU MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE MACHINERY HANDLING COMPETITION AT THE 2024 BALMORAL SHOW, PICTURED WITH YFCU PRESIDENT RICHARD BEATTIE, WILLIAM RICHMOND AND PETER VERHOEVEN FROM CAFRE AND JOHNSTON GILPIN & CO REPRESENTATIVES.

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Clubs of Ulster



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SAY HELLO TO OUR PRESIDENTIAL TEAM

We are an organisation run by young people for young people. Each year at our Annual General Meeting, representatives are elected to form the Presidential Team and these six individuals work to deliver our mission, vision and strategic aims, whilst ensuring the voices of our members are heard.



PRESIDENT:
RICHARD BEATTIE
(FINVOY YFC)



DEPUTY PRESIDENT:
KRISTINA FLEMING
(BALLYWALTER YFC)



VICE PRESIDENT:
MATTHEW LIVINGSTONE
(COLLONE YFC)



VICE PRESIDENT:
RACHEL SMITH
(MOYCRAIG YFC)



VICE PRESIDENT:
JOYCE ALLEN
(MONEYMORE YFC)



VICE PRESIDENT:
NATALIE BURROWS
(CAPPAGH YFC)

PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

I am honoured to be writing my first article for our Rural Dispatch magazine and wish to acknowledge the depth of gratitude I have for everyone who elected me as President of the YFCU.

My interest in Young Farmers stemmed from a young age, with both my parents and grandparents involved in the organisation. I joined my local club Finvoy YFC in 2007 and have been heavily involved ever since, where I enjoy meeting new people across the province and abroad. One of my highlights of being in the YFCU has to be participating in the Arts Festival competition at multiple venues and performing at Arts Festival Gala. This is something I would encourage all members to take part in. It has been one of the defining moments of my time in young farmers.

I also love the exchange programme that the YFCU offer and was fortunate to be selected for the 2011 Junior Exchange where I travelled to Sweden. It was an incredible experience and allowed me to meet new members from other clubs and counties across Northern Ireland. To all YFCU members, if this interests you, I highly encourage you to consider taking part as it is one of my fondest memories. Following on from Sweden I've travelled to France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland representing Young Farmers through AERA Agri trips and Rural Youth Europe Autumn seminars. YFCU is where I discovered my passion for travel, and I've since travelled a lot around Europe on various farm and study tours. By far, my favourite trip is skiing, it is an active holiday and I always look forward to having a trip booked. I studied an undergraduate degree in Agriculture at the Harper Adams University in England, and I can honestly say that going on the travel exchange trips with the YFCU made the move away from home to England much easier. After my four years at University, I progressed to studying a postgraduate degree in Ruminant Nutrition and this has led me to my full time job today as a Ruminant Sales Representative for Chestnutt Feeds.

Within Finvoy YFC, I have held the positions of Club Leader and Club Secretary and played the role of County Treasurer and County Chairperson at a stage. I was honoured to be the Chairperson of our YFCU AERA committee and enjoyed playing a part in the transition of our Agri Conference and representing YFCU on the Ulster Farmers' Union Next Generation committee.



Before being elected as President of the YFCU in April 2024, I held the role of Vice President for three years and Deputy President for one year. As I look to the future in my new role, one of my main aims is to give something back to our fantastic organisation so that future generations can get the same out of it that I have. This year, my chosen theme is 'FUN'. I created an acronym that stands for Friendships, Unites, Next Generation. YFCU is such a fun and vibrant association and I want to showcase that to as many people as possible in my time as President. I also aim to give all office bearers greater support through training and safeguarding resources. It takes a team of amazing people to run this organisation. I want to thank all club and county office bearers, committee chairpersons, presidential team members and Headquarters staff for everything that they do. Our Cultivating Young Leaders programme was rolled out this year and it was great to see young people building their confidence through different activities. I cannot wait to see this programme develop further and encourage more members to get involved.

My first few months of being President of the YFCU have flown in and some of the highlights so far have been attending the One Act and Rose Bowl competitions where I saw the amazing talents of our members on stage. I was delighted to attend the Northern Ireland Farmers' Choir Spring Concert where I was entertained by an incredibly talented group of people and noted that some choristers were past members of our organisation. Our much-anticipated executive weekend was held in May 2024 where we travelled to the East Coast Adventure Centre in Rostrevor. Whilst we discussed board governance,

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we also enjoyed a BBQ that evening and getting to know each other better, sharing our thoughts and ideas for the year ahead. Balmoral Show did not disappoint. Not only was the weather great but we had a fun-filled four days and members outdid themselves between competitions and events. We welcomed a new stand layout and redeveloped programme where the Presidential team and central committees introduced themselves to our funders and sponsors. I take this opportunity to once again thank Kristina, Matthew, Rachel, Joyce and Natalie for all their help over the four days and getting stuck in. I also thank Laura Patterson for leading our Balmoral Show sub-committee and Assistant Events Manager Hayley Sloan for organising such a brilliant week of events.

We are celebrating our 95th anniversary this year and I look forward to marking this occasion with a special event on Saturday 25th January 2025 in Corick House Hotel, Clogher. I ask you all to save the date and look forward to celebrating with both past and present members.

To conclude, thank you again for your overwhelming support and well wishes that I have received upon appointment to this role. I look forward to what lies ahead and believe that I can make a positive impact as we navigate the challenges and opportunities in our rural youth communities.

Richard Beattie

YFCU President





SILAGE SAFETY

Reminder to farmers and contractors

- Plan the work to minimise the risks
- Ensure all vehicles and machinery is well maintained and all dangerous parts of machinery are guarded
- Only competent drivers should be allowed to operate machinery during silage season and the carrying of passengers should be avoided
- Never use a mobile phone when driving
- Take regular breaks – fatigue causes incidents
- No child under the age of 13 should ever be carried in the cab of any machine involved in making silage
- Be particularly careful when working near overhead power lines

For more information on how to keep yourself and your family safe during silage season please visit the HSENI website at:

www.hсени.gov.uk/topic/agriculture

STOP AND THINK

SAFE

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

Q&A WITH DEPUTY PRESIDENT



Kristina Fleming steps into her new role as Deputy President of the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster!

Kristina Fleming (Ballywalter YFC) accepted the role of Deputy President of the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) following her election at the Annual General Meeting which was held on Saturday 20th April 2024 in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh.

Our Marketing and Communications Executive, Rachel, caught up with Kristina to see how she has settled into her new role and find out a bit more about her journey with the YFCU!

Whilst the YFCU plays a huge role in your life, tell us a little bit about what you do outside of this role?

I currently hold the position of Agency Manager at the NFU Mourneview Agency where I oversee regulatory requirements for the Agency, assist customers with their insurance needs and manage and develop the team. I am also an officer with Magherahamlet Girls Brigade and have been since September 2023, after moving from the GB I grew up in after getting married. I really enjoy this because it provides a supportive environment where girls can form lasting friendships and become part of a close-knit community.

You have been a loyal member of the YFCU for over sixteen years now, can you tell us a bit about how you got involved all those years ago?

It was really all down to my Mum and Dad, to be honest. Believe it or not, I actually never wanted to join the Young Farmers. I thought it was all about tractors and cows, but how wrong was I? I decided to go along to Ballywalter YFC one Friday evening in September 2008 after my parents encouraged me to give it a go. It was the first night back after the Summer break and it turned out to be one of the best decisions I made and I am still a valued member sixteen years on.

As you are adapting to the role of Deputy President of the YFCU, can you tell us anything about your plans for the year ahead and what you hope to achieve in this role?

Being the largest rural youth organisation in Northern Ireland, the YFCU are always adapting to keep up with the intake of members. I feel that it is very important for the YFCU to continue to move with the everchanging times and generations. As the new Deputy President, I want to ensure that I connect with all members across Northern Ireland, including potential new members, by always having something to offer them and remain focused on our core values. I was one of the Vice President's last year, along with Shannen Vance, Matthew Livingstone and Rachel Smith. I now work very closely with our new President Richard Beattie and the rest of the Presidential team going forward to exploit new opportunities for the YFCU and grow the membership of our organisation.

What would you say to a younger YFCU member who aspires to be a part of the Presidential Team one day?

Being brought up in a rural community, I understand the prospects that YFCU brings to young people and the people who become lifelong friends from being involved in the organisation. My piece of advice to young people who are inspired to take up my role one day is to continue to dream boldly, work diligently and always remain grounded in the values instilled within you. I would tell young people that their journey has only just begun, and the world eagerly awaits the mark that they will make upon it. I'd continue to tell them to grasp every opportunity that the YFCU has to offer as they won't get opportunities like it anywhere else".

Tell us more about these opportunities, how do young people get involved in them?

The YFCU HQ organise competitions and events all year round for young people to take part in and they include agriculture, sports, arts and much more. As well as competitions, we have different programmes available that can include incredible travel opportunities and award programmes including the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. I like to think I'm an advocate for promoting education and mentorship opportunities. One of my aims in this role as Deputy President is to help young people develop the skills and knowledge that they need to succeed in the industry that they wish to pursue. By addressing the challenges that they come upon, together we can support the next generation of Young Farmers.



BALMORAL REPORT AND RUAS

What did the YFCU get up to at the 2024 Balmoral Show?

We were delighted to return to stand B36 at the Royal Ulster Agricultural Society's (RUAS) 155th Balmoral Show at the Eikon Exhibition Centre from Wednesday 15th May to Saturday 18th May 2024.

The YFCU delivered a busy programme of events and competitions across the four days, welcoming members, sponsors and visitors to the stand to find out more about our organisation.

YFCU President Richard Beattie hosted a 'Vision For The Future' event, where 20+ sponsors and guests joined the Presidential Team for a cup of tea and discussion on the future plans for the YFCU. The Travel Committee held an information session where members had the opportunity to find out about the different travel exchange experiences and our Presidential Team held a 'Blindfold Dash' to encourage young people to come forward and chat to our members. Then the Wellbeing & Development committee launched their 'Cuppa & A Catch Up' campaign where they shared branded coasters to encourage everyone to have a 'catch up' with their friend and get confident in speaking out about their mental health.

YFCU Moo, our very own mascot, also made an appearance on several occasions at the Show where young people enjoyed getting a photo with her to share on their social media to win a hamper of goodies from Dale Farm. This was a great initiative and the winner was awarded with her prize on Monday 3rd June 2024.



BALMORAL SUCCESS

SPECIAL YFCU OFFER

Still celebrating **Balmoral success?**

We're celebrating that **over 30 Young Farmers** became RUAS members at this year's Show with an **exclusive offer!**

For **ONLY £20** you can access*:

- Admission to the **Royal Ulster Winter Fair** and **Beef & Lamb Championships**
- **Reduced entry fees** for both Shows
- Opportunities to **lead support** for the agri-food industry

Find out more and join today
www.ruas.org.uk

*Special offer available until 31 August 2024



#RoyalUlsterAgriculturalSociety

CENTRAL COMMITTEES



WELLBEING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Lauren takes the lead role of the YFCU Wellbeing & Development Committee

Lauren Vance, a social worker for adults with learning disabilities, is the Chairperson of our Wellbeing & Development Committee and a member of Trillick & District YFC.

Lauren was voted on as Vice Chairperson of the committee in May 2023 and was promoted to Chairperson in April 2024 at the YFCU AGM. The committee was awarded a grant from the Reta Lila Howard Foundation in 2020 which allowed them to train ambassadors and provide a mental health talk to YFCU clubs, they have delivered a talk to almost every club in the last three years.

Lauren said that her plans as Chairperson are to "revitalise our mental health talk and provide a further module focusing on grief. We hope to collaborate with a charity and gain further knowledge on a prime area of concern that was raised by our members in our annual survey. This survey asked members what areas they are currently struggling with, which is how the committee decides what to focus on. We strive to be member-led and want to continue this initiative".

If you would like to find out more about our Wellbeing & Development Committee, please visit our website at <https://www.yfcu.org/yfcu-committees>.



TRAVEL COMMITTEE

Natalie Burrows has plans to travel far with the YFCU

Member of Cappagh YFC and one of our YFCU Vice Presidents, twenty-four-year-old Natalie Burrows from Omagh is the Chairperson of our Travel committee.

Natalie first joined the committee in 2023 and was elected as Vice Chairperson before taking up the role of Chairperson in April 2024. Over the past nine years, Natalie has hosted many exchange delegates and held the position of County Tyrone Travel Coordinator.

The committee are hosting six exchange delegates this August, from across Europe and Canada. Natalie explained that "hosting is a fantastic opportunity for our members to learn about different cultures and organisations, as well as being able to showcase what the YFCU and Northern Ireland have to offer".

We are delighted that Ulster are hosting the new '5 Nations Conference' in October 2024, this is the second time the event has happened. Natalie would encourage lots of members to attend the conference as it will open many opportunities for the young people attending and show them what the YFCU has to offer. Natalie said that she is "really interested in providing YFCU members with more prospects to travel to new places with a group of like-minded individuals, without having the fear of leaving home to travel alone". She continued, "our main goal at the moment is to offer a trip for a group of members, reintroducing our junior exchange programme".

To find out what our Travel committee has to offer, visit our website at <https://www.yfcu.org/yfcu-committees> or speak to Natalie.



PROGRAMME & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Laura Patterson speaks about her plans for the Programme & Development Committee within YFCU

Childcare worker Laura Patterson is someone who loves to get out and about and is always kept busy with YFCU activities. Laura has been on our Programme & Development Committee since 2018, representing County Antrim. Throughout her time, she has contributed to ensuring that competitions within the YFCU calendar are relevant to the grassroots members. Laura explained, "I have sat on the committee under many chairpersons gaining thorough knowledge and just last year I was nominated as Vice Chairperson, supporting both the Chairperson and staff at Headquarters". Beginning her journey as a grassroots member, Laura was delighted to be nominated as Chairperson of the Programme & Development Committee (P&D) at the YFCU AGM in April 2024. She remarked, "to be trusted in this role is an honour, and I will strive to ensure this committee continues to go from strength to strength".

Within the P&D committee, there are three representatives from each county who represent the views and contribute feedback of competitions and events, from their counties. Laura explained, "our role as YFCU members in the committee is to consider all views brought forward and ensure that we are putting in place, the most logistical and efficient competitions for our members. This said, we have a very close relationship with the team at Headquarters". Planning for the year ahead, Laura said the committee has welcomed many new members so they will be going back to basics and evaluating their aims and purpose, so that they can reap all opportunities available to them. "One of the areas that we hope to delve deeper into, is how we can support the clubs that are less active when it comes to participating in competitions and representing themselves at events", Laura encourages those who are interested to learn more about the Programme & Development Committee and their plans for the future, to visit our website at <https://www.yfcu.org/yfcu-committees> or speak to Laura.



AERA COMMITTEE

Farmer Mitchell is steering the YFCU AERA Committee in the right direction

Full time farmer and dog lover, Mitchell Park, is the Chairperson of our Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA) Committee. Having sat on the committee since 2020, Mitchell was delighted to be elected as the Chairperson in April 2024. Remarking on his new role Mitchell said "I believe the committee really gives me the opportunity to exploit our pledge of "Better Farmers, Better Countrymen and Better Citizens". The AERA committee successfully arranges agricultural trips and conferences and industry visits.

The committee aim to build on their knowledge this year by inviting guest speakers to their meetings so that they can learn more about what they need to do as a group to support YFCU members. Mitchell explained that "one of our aims is to improve the Silage Assessment competition so that members can get more out of it. We also want to increase participation in the Fencing competition which has diminished in partaking numbers over the last couple of years. Fencing is a skill that any farmer wishes to have so I want to look at how we can make this more accessible and appealing to members and we'll do this by identifying the barriers that are stopping them from entering".

If you would like to learn more about our Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs committee, simply speak to Mitchell or check out our website at <https://www.yfcu.org/yfcu-committees> where you will find more information.



CALLUM CARTY - APPRENTICE ENGINEER - CONTRACTS (EAST)

Callum joined NSM on 13th November 2023 as an Apprentice Engineer. In addition to working for the company four days a week, Callum spends one day at Northern Regional College. When we caught up with Callum, he had settled in well and told us the following:

"I have settled in well in my first few months as an Apprentice Engineer here at Northstone. I have been working on several projects, namely the West Bank Road Lighting and City Quays Gardens schemes. Being on-site daily enables me to establish a firm understanding of the construction, as you can see the work being conducted step by step. The best part about being in an apprenticeship is that the aspects on site (e.g. planning and setting out) link up and tie in with the modules incorporated in my studies such as Digital Construction, Surveying and Mathematics."

ADAM NESBITT - APPRENTICE MECHANICAL ENGINEER - BALLYMENA QUARRY

Adam joined NSM on 31st July 2023 as an Apprentice Mechanical Engineer. In addition to working for the company four days a week, Adam spends one day at Northern Regional College. When we caught up with Adam, he had settled in well and told us the following:

"Over my first six months at Northstone, I feel like I have settled into the company and got myself into a working routine. Over this time, I have learned a lot about the wide range of maintenance tasks I have been involved in, whether using welding equipment or fault finding. My skills have increased, and I hope this will continue as there is always something challenging around the corner. The school/work balance can be a lot of work, but the assignments and exams are spread out to help get the best out of both. Over the next year, I hope to increase my knowledge and continue to learn."



EOGHAN O'NEILL - APPRENTICE ENGINEER - CONTRACTS (EAST)

Eoghan joined NSM on 31st July 2023 as an Apprentice Engineer. In addition to working for the company four days a week, Eoghan spends one day at Belfast Met. When we caught up with Eoghan he had settled in well and told us the following:

"I have been involved in various surfacing schemes in Glengormley, Lisburn Road and Balmoral Avenue. I am currently involved in the public realm scheme in Portaferry, where I am keeping track of material usage, marking out, setting out, supervising surfacing squads and assisting with the general duties of an Engineer. The apprenticeship is excellent, and I enjoy working on-site and gaining highly valuable experience whilst balancing my studies. I have settled in well and found that everyone within the company is extremely helpful and wants me to succeed. I look forward to the future and highly recommend an apprenticeship."

PEARSE OG FOSTER - APPRENTICE ENGINEER - CONTRACTS (WEST)

Pearse joined NSM on 9 January 2023 as an Apprentice Engineer. In addition to working for the company four days a week, Pearse spends one day at South West College. When we caught up with Pearse, he had settled in well and told us the following:

"I have completed a full year working as an Apprentice Engineer here at Northstone; I'm surrounded by a helpful team who have helped me better understand the construction industry and the duties of an engineer. I'm on the Northwest Greenway project on the Culmore Road in Derry. On-site, I carry out a range of tasks, such as marking out and setting levels, keeping track of coverages, managing materials, and overseeing the day-to-day work being carried out. The apprenticeship scheme has opened many doors and has given me a great opportunity to gain first-hand on-site experience that cannot be taught in a classroom. I can better understand my modules thanks to being on-site and witnessing the project being built."



VICTORIA MINFORD EMBARKS ON THE EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME!



Twenty-six-year-old, Victoria Minford from Holeystone YFC embarked on an experience of a lifetime to Budapest in April 2024, where she represented the YFCU at the Rural Youth Europe Spring Study Seminar. This year, the topic was "Rural Youth: 101" with the aim of addressing and discussing youth work in rural areas, exchanging ideas and knowledge of good practice, creating a tool kit of youth activities for rural community building, and drafting policy recommendations on enhancing rural youth work in Europe.

Victoria explained that "each topic was broken down and presented to us in a simplistic way". There were 35 delegates aged between 18 and 30 that attended from across Europe, including the five nations and Armenia, Latvia, Finland and Spain, hailing from various organisations and backgrounds.

"It was very interesting to listen to the perspective of each of the other members regarding the day-to-day challenges that they face in their home countries. This certainly gave me a greater appreciation of the facilities that we have here in Northern Ireland",



Victoria recalled. "Each day, we had a packed programme of both daytime workshops and evening activities. My personal favourite workshop was based on inclusivity, during which we had to draw a house for an animal, ensuring that its needs were met. We then had to group three animals together and draw one house which met all their needs. Whilst a relatively simple task, it really made me think about others and how we must understand that different people have different needs. I believe this workshop could be well utilised at a club meeting to help members appreciate that we are all different".

Victoria explained that in the evening, there was a range of organised activities, including an international session, at which delegates presented items of food and drink from their home countries and formed discussions around them. There was also time throughout the trip to explore Budapest and Victoria recalled that she was so thankful for



the experience and urged members to grasp every opportunity that comes their way.

UK and Ireland Board Representative for Rural Youth Europe, Fiona O'Leary, said "Victoria was a fantastic ambassador for our organisation and was actively involved during the sessions where she shared ideas around fundraising and led discussions and presentations."

BEEF SUSTAINABILITY for the FUTURE



AUSTRALIAN STUDY TOUR

Matthew Rollason, Agriculture Manager for Dunbia, visited Australia in January 2023 as part of a study tour to gain a greater insight into Australian beef production. He has provided a summary of his trip.

WORKING AS AN Agriculture Manager for meat processor Dunbia, and Hereford breeder in my spare time, means that life pretty much revolves around the beef industry. Back in 2017, I had the chance to work for the Syke's family and their globally successful Mawarra Hereford stud in Victoria, Australia. My three months at Mawarra were incredibly insightful and indeed, life changing for my personal and professional development. But since then, I have been keen to return to Australia, to gain a better understanding of the genetic drivers that influence beef production at a wider industry level. When asked "Why Australia?", there is no doubt in my mind that they are a world-leader in beef production. This is borne out of little reliance on state support, and instead a highly market-focused approach that I believe the UK industry can learn from. With the backing of Dunbia, I set about planning a study tour for January 2023, and was fortunate enough to be awarded funding from The Farmers Club and The Worshipful Company of Farmers to support my travel costs.

After landing in Melbourne, I embarked on a three-week journey that would take me thousands of kilometres across the states of Victoria, Western Australia and New South Wales. The expanse of a country that is approximately 32 times the size of the United Kingdom, was mind blowing, and I saw firsthand how cattle production is driven by varying regional climates and the pressure this puts on trait selection and profitability. Having visited over 30 studs with numerous breeds, I came away convinced that among the most successful were those adopting clear business strategies to their operations. Many of these businesses were highly sensitive to the needs of their market and used a range of data, phenotypic and collaborative tools to achieve their goals. Despite being highly competitive, I could see that data collaboration has become far more commonplace across the sector, in a clear, combined effort for everyone to become more environmentally and economically sustainable.

On reflection, my study tour has given me an entirely new perspective and even deeper respect of this great country, its people and its cattle. It showed me how the stud industry in Australia is changing to become more data-orientated, collaborative and responsive to the market signals of commercial feedlots, processors, retailers and consumers. Given the environmental, political and economic pressures producers face around the world, the importance of working towards a common goal cannot be understated. I look forward to discussing these findings with fellow farmers and cattle breeders, with the ultimate aim of promoting collaboration and data sharing throughout the supply chain. I also plan to use this knowledge in the development of my own herd, by designing a breeding strategy that carefully considers the commercially relevant traits of the future UK beef industry.

“My study tour has given me an entirely new perspective and even deeper respect of this great country, its people and its cattle”

I would like to thank the generous support of my sponsors, family, friends and colleagues for this wonderful travel opportunity, and would encourage other young farmers to embrace similar opportunities when they arise.

Anyone wishing to read my full report, 'Genetic Drivers in the Australian Beef Industry', is welcome to contact me via email: matthew.rollason@dunbia.com



See you next time in next issue of Rural development

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CUPPA & A CATCH UP

YFCU Wellbeing & Development committee launches their 'Cuppa & A Catch Up' campaign at the 2024 Balmoral Show



YFCU President Richard Beattie with Katrina Godfrey (Permanent Secretary at DAERA).

Social Worker and member of Trillick & District YFC, Lauren Vance is the Chairperson of the YFCU Wellbeing & Development committee. With

her experience of working in a crisis team for adults with learning disabilities, Lauren said that her passion for supporting people with their mental health is what pushes her on to excel in her role as Chairperson of the committee.

The committee, which was founded in 2019, following the passing of a much-loved YFCU member, launched their exciting 'Cuppa & A Catch Up' campaign at the Balmoral Show on Saturday 18th May 2024. Lauren



Members Joyce Allen (Moneyreagh YFC) and Rachel Belshaw (Moycraig YFC) with Gail McCullough (Corporate Marketing and Communications Executive at Dale Farm), enjoying a catch up at the Balmoral Show.

explained that the reason behind the campaign was to encourage people to "turn words into actions" and "get the conversation going" about their mental

health. As part of the initiative, the committee prepared coasters and stress cows to hand out to members and sponsors that attended the launch at the Balmoral Show. The coasters came in a set of two and were to encourage people to have a "catch up" with their family and friends and to get confident in discussing matters surrounding mental health. Lauren said that research was carried out about the factors that affect the mental health of YFCU members and stress was the number one trigger for many. Following this, the committee decided to get stress cows with their YFSeesYou logo printed on them to remind people that the YFCU recognises them and is always there, should they need any help or support.

The launch of the campaign was a huge success with members from across Northern Ireland coming along to show their support and hear Lauren speak about the committee. Also in attendance was representatives from funders and supporters of our organisation, including

NFU Mutual, Ulster Farmers Union, Rural Support, Danske Bank and many more. President Richard Beattie thanked everyone for coming along and gave a special mention

to Dale Farm for their support in making the campaign possible and to the Henderson Group and Mulligan's Home Bakery for sponsoring the refreshments.



Lauren Vance (Trillick & District YFC), Matthew Livingstone (Collone YFC) and Natalie Burrows (Cappagh YFC) enjoying the Cuppa & A Catch Up event at the Balmoral Show.



Linzi Kennedy (Collone YFC), Rachel Belshaw (Newtownhamilton YFC), Matthew Livingstone (Collone YFC) and Amy Ritchie (Bleary YFC) enjoying the Cuppa & A Catch Up event at the Balmoral Show.

Lauren says that she has lots of exciting plans for 2024 and the 'Cuppa & A Catch Up' campaign is only the beginning of it. "We are aiming to revitalise our mental health talk"

she continued, "the committee would like to provide a further module that focuses on grief. We plan to collaborate with a charity and gain further knowledge on a prime area of concern that was raised by our members in our annual survey. Our survey asks members what areas they are currently struggling with, which ultimately decides what the committee focuses on. We strive to be member-led and want to continue this initiative".

Our Events and Marketing Manager, Liz Lunn, said that "Lauren is excelling in her new role as Chairperson of the Wellbeing and Development committee and I look forward to seeing all her ideas come together over the months ahead".



John Henning (RUAS President) with YFCU Deputy President Kristina Fleming and President Richard Beattie.

CULTIVATING YOUNG LEADERS

MEMBERS TAKE ACTION THROUGH OUR CULTIVATING YOUNG LEADERS PROGRAMME



YFCU members that completed the Cultivating Young Leaders programme.

We hosted the final session of our unique leadership programme 'Cultivating Young Leaders' which was developed following the success of the programme run by the Scottish Association of Young Farmers' Clubs. The session was held on Friday 19th April 2024 at the Silverbirch Hotel in Omagh, County Tyrone.

Programme Facilitator Heather Wildman explained "this unique opportunity is aimed at helping young people with farm succession, career development and their daily lives. It marks a significant milestone in the YFCU's commitment to the growth and development of their members". This leadership programme is proudly supported by The Thomas Henry Foundation and the Ulster Farmers' Union, it was delivered over two sessions and a further final reflection session. Offering a dynamic and comprehensive curriculum, the programme is designed to cultivate leadership skills among the participants. It covers a diverse



YFCU members listen to participant Lauren Vance as she presents to the audience.

range of modules and includes a variety of practical activities which include developing business and leadership skills, vision and goal setting, cash flows, benchmarking and business plans. Young people should come away from the course feeling more confident in their capacity to excel in their careers, contribute to their communities and lead in the agricultural sector.

The final session was an opportunity for our members to reflect and share their learnings on completion of the course and discuss their future plans and aspirations. It was fitting to have key sponsors, contributors and facilitators in attendance to share their own personal and professional

experiences with our young people at this session including Programme Facilitator Heather Wildman, Tim Martin (The Thomas Henry Foundation), Lynsay Hawkes (Ulster Farmers' Union) and Rodney Brown (Danske Bank).

Our Events and Marketing Manager Liz Lunn commented that "it was an inspiring morning for these young people, and I hope what they have covered in the programme will follow them through their future careers". Addressing the audience, Tim Martin from The Thomas Henry Foundation said, "Don't wait until a door opens for you, go and open it yourself for that's how you will succeed and if you're prepared to learn, then you will go far". He further discussed how the organisation was honoured to sponsor the programme, and he wished the participants all the best in their futures.

Communications Officer for the Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU), Lynsay Hawkes, told the audience about what the UFU offers to people in agriculture, spoke about their membership opportunities and congratulated all the young people on their excellent presentations at the event.

Rodney Brown, Head of Agri-Business at Danske Bank and speaker for the Cultivating Young Leaders programme, told participants that he looks at the partnership between the YFCU and Danske Bank as "an investment as opposed to a sponsorship, because of the opportunities involved for young people" and he applauded everyone for their excellent work in their communities.

YFCU President Richard Beattie thanked The Thomas Henry Foundation and the Ulster Farmers' Union for their invaluable support to enable us to run the programme. We look forward to welcoming the next intake of participants for this programme. Applications will open in the coming months so keep in touch with county secretaries to find out.



YFCU President Richard Beattie presents Rodney Brown (Head of Agri-Business at Danske Bank) with a bottle of wine to say thank you for his help with the programme.



YFCU President Richard Beattie with Rodney Brown (Danske Bank), Heather Wildman (Programme Facilitator), Lynsay Hawkes (Ulster Farmers' Union) and Tim Martin (The Thomas Henry Foundation).

POWERING INCLUSIVE SERVICE



Power NI have been supplying electricity to homes, farms and businesses across Northern Ireland for over 90 years, becoming expertly tuned-in to customers' individual needs and providing a service that's a step ahead. Renowned as a legacy provider, trusted supplier and local employer, Power NI is dedicated to serving Northern Ireland and its vibrant communities.

In celebration of Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) and National Numeracy Day recently, they look at how they can invest in and support the work of various local charities and partnerships, and take pride in ensuring accessibility for all.

Inclusive Customer Care

Gwyneth Compston, (CSR Manager at Power NI) said: "it's been an exciting time for us. We now stand among just nine companies worldwide to have successfully achieved ISO 22458, the esteemed Inclusive Service Kitemark. This ensures the adoption of fair and inclusive practices, helping organisations to understand best practice for customers with additional needs, and in turn, giving customers more confidence in the services they are using. We place a huge focus on our customer care, and we work hard to be more accessible for our customers, so we are delighted to have achieved recognition for it. As the sole electricity supplier to receive this prestigious certification, Power NI has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to delivering an inclusive service for all customers."

Power NI also has long-standing partnerships with organisations such as Age NI, NOW Group, Advice NI and Christians Against Poverty, and are fully committed to caring for those in later life, particularly those with disabilities and long-term illnesses. Gwyneth continued with "Power NI is committed to providing assistance to those customers who require additional support. Some of the services we provide to customers include supplying bills in different formats, depending on their needs, such as braille, large print, or as a talking bill. We also provide doorstep services such as giving us a password or an instruction to knock or speak loudly when NIE Networks meter readers call. If you have a mobility problem, they will allow more time for you to answer the door and customers relying on life-supporting medical equipment can receive priority and timely updates during power cuts."

Building An Accessible Future For Everyone

Power NI staff are familiar with Relay UK, a free service that helps customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, have a speech impairment or anyone who has difficulty when using the phone. Some Power NI staff have also undertaken British and Irish Sign Language lessons and the company plans to expand these initiatives to empower staff and to better communicate with customers with hearing impairments.

Gwyneth said: "Power NI's commitment to accessibility continues to excel and we are delighted to also be Northern Ireland's first electricity supply company to be JAM Card Friendly. The JAM Card, an acronym for 'Just A Minute,' verifies that staff are trained to recognise those who may have communication barriers or hidden disabilities and may require more time and care to attend to their needs. Our staff are continuously undergoing necessary training to upskill and ensure they can provide excellent customer experience. We're also proud that our website is powered by the digital inclusion application, ReachDeck, giving our customers the tools to access information in their required format, making it more accessible for people who may have disabilities, visual impairments, limited digital skills, or non-native speakers. In fact, we're delighted that Power NI is recognised on the Silktide Index as the UK's most accessible utility provider website".

Power NI are delighted to be acknowledged as world-leading caregivers, especially during times of financial strain and personal difficulties faced by our customers. Staff are passionate about clear communication and eliminating jargon and unnecessary detail from their interactions with customers. They have partnerships with both the Plain English and Plain Numbers campaigns, and are continuously improving their letters, bills and other forms of communication to be as straightforward as possible for all customers. Ensuring that their customers receive the highest quality service and can trust staff to have their best interests at heart, is of the upmost importance to Power NI.

Keep up to date with how Power NI is evolving to be more than just your energy supplier, by visiting

www.powerni.co.uk/news/



L-R "William Steele (Director of Customer Solutions), Ashleigh O'Neill (Senior Marketing & Communications Executive), Mike Ellicock (Chief Executive of Plain Numbers) and Gwyneth Compston (CSR Manager)."

CELEBRATIONS AT THE YFCU AGM & CONFERENCE 2024



Brooke Cameron, Stephen McCartney, Elaine Macauley and Rebekah Patterson from Hyperfast NI with YFCU President Richard Beattie.



Past President Stuart Mills with parents David and Glynis, wife Sarah, daughter Alana and sister Kathryn.



YFCU President Richard Beattie with parents Robert and Josephine and fiancé Lynsay Hawkes.



Liniz Stewart (Moneyrea YFC) and Hannah Kirkpatrick (Kilraughts YFC) catching up at the YFCU AGM.

Our Annual General Meeting and Conference was held from Friday 19th to Sunday 21st April 2024 at the Silverbirch Hotel in Omagh, County Tyrone. Proudly sponsored this year by Hyperfast NI, this event brought together members from across Northern Ireland to celebrate their commitment to the goals and values shared within the YFCU.

The opening evening of the AGM and Conference weekend hosted the President's dinner, where YFCU members, staff and special guests, Michael Rolfe and James Kennedy from The Scottish Association of Young Farmers Clubs, came together to celebrate the tenure of Stuart Mills and his achievements. Celebrations continued into the night with a fancy dress disco where people enjoyed dressing up for the 'Bad Shirt Bash' hosted by County Tyrone. The atmosphere was electric as young farmers and friends danced the night away.

On Saturday morning top clubs Holeystone YFC, Collone YFC, Curragh YFC, Cappagh YFC and Ballywalter YFC took to the stage to present for the coveted title 'Club of the Year' in the final stage of the competition, sponsored by Power NI. Each had the opportunity to present a short video, followed by a speech expressing why they deserved to be crowned Power NI Club of the Year. The clubs were then reviewed and questioned by a panel of judges including Kerrieann Mullen (Marketing Executive at Power NI), Brooke Cameron (Fibre Ambassador for Hyperfast NI) and Bob Esler (YFCU Executive Member). The standard was high, and clubs had a nervous wait to hear who would take the title, with the final score being collated and results to be announced as the final award of the day following AGM proceedings.

The 2024 YFCU AGM was officially opened by Stuart Mills, where he gave an overview of his year in the role of YFCU President and then welcomed Stephen McCartney from Hyperfast NI to the stage to give a short speech. Honorary Treasurer Bob Esler presented the financial report for the year and the 2024 / 2025 Presidential Team was announced. Beaming with joy following

the announcement of his new role, YFCU President Richard Beattie took to the stage to discuss his theme of the acronym FUN, which stood for Friendships, Unites and Next Generation. As the meeting ended, Kristina Fleming (newly elected Deputy President) conducted the awards ceremony welcoming members to the spotlight to recognise the outstanding achievements of YFCU members from the preceding year. (See competition round-up for details and results of all competitions presented at AGM)

Hyperfast NI are the proud sponsors of the event

The YFCU were delighted to welcome Hyperfast NI as the principal sponsor for this event and to showcase their ongoing commitment to supporting engaging initiatives for youth in rural areas throughout Northern Ireland. Stephen McCartney (Fibre Ambassador and Events Manager at Hyperfast NI) explained that "Hyperfast NI are home for the delivery of Project Stratum, and we are the largest publicly funded telecommunications infrastructure project of its kind in Northern Ireland. Project Stratum has radically transformed broadband connectivity by extending gigabit capable full fibre broadband infrastructure to approximately 82,000 homes and businesses across Northern Ireland, primarily in rural areas which previously had little or no access to meaningful broadband services. We are committed to supporting rural residents and youth across the province, and we understand the importance of fast, reliable connections in the future of farming communities". Further speaking to Stephen after the AGM, he stated that he was delighted for his colleague Brooke (Fibre Ambassador) to be part of the judging panel for the Club of the Year competition. Brooke said "it was great to hear how the membership of the YFCU is growing".

YFCU President Richard Beattie thanked Hyperfast NI for their support and financial contribution to our AGM event, highlighting our partnership and future plans as we continue to work together.

EVENTS ROUND UP

HOME MANAGEMENT

The Home Management competition, sponsored by Northern Ireland Pork and Bacon Forum, saw participants work their way through various stages to make it to the final which was held at Dromore High School in February 2024. There was a great, yet intense atmosphere in the kitchen during the finals with the competitors cooking their way to the top spot in front of judge Wendy Gallagher from Causeway Coast Foodie Tours.

Thanks went to the Woman's Institute for their guidance throughout the competition, setting assessment questions and taking the time to attend the final offering valued feedback to members.

Results:

Junior 1st: Sophie McCallister (Lisnamurrigan YFC)

Junior 2nd: Kate Coulter (Ballywalter YFC)

Junior 3rd: Amy Taylor (Ballywalter YFC)

Senior 1st: Rebecca McCormick (Newtownards YFC)

Senior 2nd: Sarah Spence (Bleary YFC)

Senior 2nd: Karen Walker (Collone YFC)



NORTHERN IRELAND QUIZ

YFCU brainiacs assembled in teams at Loughry College on Friday 1st March 2024 to take part in the annual YFCU Northern Ireland Quiz. With 31 teams taking part, members had to test their knowledge to be in with the chance of winning one of the top three places. The quiz consisted of ten rounds covering topics such as general knowledge, movies, music, food and drink, geography, human anatomy, animals, sport and much more.

Results:

1st: Clanabogan YFC

2nd: Kilrea YFC

3rd: Lisnamurrigan YFC



ULSTER YOUNG FARMER

Ulster Young Farmer Competition Celebrates Success

This competition serves as an excellent platform for members of the YFCU to showcase their knowledge of agriculture and farming practices a central competition in the YFCU calendar made possible thanks to the support and sponsorship of Danske Bank. The competition tests members understanding of a range of topics over two initial rounds with the top-scoring members proceeding to the interview stage in the final round with judges. The much-anticipated results of the competition were delivered at the AGM, presented by Rodney Brown (Head of Agribusiness at Danske Bank). Holestone YFC's Jack Stewart was named Senior 'Overall Winner' of our highly acclaimed Ulster Young Farmer competition, also taking a host of section awards, while Grace George (Collone YFC) took the Junior title.

Prize	Name	Club
Ulster Young Farmer Overall Winner	Jack Stewart	Holestone YFC
Ulster Young Farmer 25-30 Winner	Helen Laird	Bleary YFC
Ulster Young Farmer U21 Winner	James Campbell	Curragh YFC
Ulster Young Farmer Junior Winner	Grace George	Collone YFC
Ulster Young Farmer Section Winners		
Countryside Management	Jack Stewart	Holestone YFC
Sheep Section	James Campbell	Curragh YFC
Beef Section	Jack Stewart	Holestone YFC
Pigs & Poultry Section	Jack Stewart	Holestone YFC
Grass Section	Jack Stewart	Holestone YFC
Arable Section	James Campbell	Curragh YFC
Dairy Section	Jack Stewart	Holestone YFC
Farm Safety Section	Lowry McCollum	City of Derry YFC
Innovation Section	James Campbell	Curragh YFC
Finance Section	Rebecca McBratney	Newtownards YFC



MEMBER OF THE YEAR AND TOP OFFICIALS - AGM

Celebrating achievements at the YFCU AGM in April

Our AGM which took place on Saturday 20th April 2024 celebrated the outstanding achievements of individual members who contributed significantly to the growth and success of our organisation throughout the 2023 / 2024 year period. Our Top Official awards (sponsored by United Feeds) are presented to members who were evaluated on their participation within and knowledge of our organisation. Factors such as communication, business systems, profit and loss, social media and recruitment were all considered during the judging process. Member of the year awards (also sponsored by United Feeds) were presented to the junior and senior member who showcased their participation and knowledge also.



Top Official Awards		
Top Leader	Martin Rodgers	Spa YFC
Top Treasurer	Ruth Morrow	Lisnamurrican YFC
Top Secretary	Rebecca Speers	Ahoghill YFC
Top P.R.O	Sarah Ross	Collone YFC
Member of the Year Awards		
Junior Member of the Year	Joanna Caughey	Donaghadee YFC
Senior Member of the Year	Sophie Hawthorne	Collone YFC



CLUB OF THE YEAR

Our most eagerly awaited competition took place just prior to our Annual General Meeting. There were five clubs that made it through to the final of the Club of the Year competition: Holestone YFC, Collone YFC, Curragh YFC, Cappagh YFC and Ballywalter YFC. Sponsored by Power NI, this award is presented to the club that showcases excellent recruitment of volunteers, retention of members and participation in events and competitions across Northern Ireland. Despite the fantastic efforts from all five clubs, it was Holestone YFC that won and received the 'Ann Cameron Cup', presented by Kerrieann Mullan (Marketing Executive at Power NI) at the AGM on Saturday 20th April 2024.

Amy Bennington (Marketing Manager at Power NI) said "congratulations to Holestone YFC on winning the 2024 Club of the Year award. We are so proud to have supported YFCU, not just for the last decade but also as a platinum sponsor and sustainability partner for the organisation."



Holestone YFC are crowned Power NI CLUB OF THE YEAR!

ARTS FESTIVAL GALA

Arts Festival Gala (in association with NFU Mutual Charitable Trust) entertains a sell-out audience at the Millenium Theatre, Londonderry.

Members, sponsors and guests enjoyed getting dressed up for our Arts Festival Gala that took place at the Millennium Forum in Londonderry on Saturday 9th March 2024. This annual competition, generously supported by long-standing sponsor NFU Mutual through the Charitable Trust, showcased five casts from finalist clubs: Kilraughts YFC, Garvagh YFC, Finvoy YFC, Curragh & Kilrea YFC's, and Moneymore YFC. Each group delivered vibrant, engaging and clever self-written and produced dramas, demonstrating their originality and creativity through song, dance, wit, and enthusiasm.

The evening commenced with a VIP reception (sponsored by Chestnutt Animal Feeds) which welcomed supporters and sponsors, past Presidents and office bearers, as well as competition producers. Cool FM radio host, Pete Snodden, compered the

evening by engaging and entertaining the audience between performances, while expert adjudicator Darren Day had the challenging task of selecting the 'Outstanding Performance of the Night'. During the deliberations, Shane McKinney, Head of Agri-Food Technical Support & Delivery, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, addressed the audience speaking on his experience in YFCU as well as highlighting the importance of investing in young people as future leaders and decision-makers within the agricultural sector in Northern Ireland.

The results were announced by YFCU President at the time, Stuart Mills and kindly presented by Leah Crozier (NFU Mutual). Stuart remarked "The high-quality performances tonight were a testament to the months of commitment, effort, and preparation that have gone into making this a tremendous evening of entertainment. We are delighted to bring such a showcase to the Millennium Forum, highlighting the talents and creativity of the YFCU members and providing an opportunity to engage with our supporters, sponsors, and friends".



Outstanding Performance of the Night	Moneymore YFC
NFU Mutual Most Amusing Moments	Holestone YFC
Most Innovative	Moneymore YFC
Most Imaginative	Finvoy YFC
Best Choral Piece	Moneymore YFC
Best Choreography	Kilraughts YFC



SHEEP SHEARING



Members demonstrate their skills at the Sheep Shearing and Wool Handling competition!

Members displayed their skills at the Annual Sheep Shearing and Wool Handling competitions that took place in the Sheep Shearing Pavilion at the Balmoral Show on Wednesday 15th May 2024. The competitions were sponsored by Ulster Wool, The Northern Ireland Sheep Shearers Association (NISSA) and Lister Shearing Equipment Limited. Sheep Shearing consisted of two male sections: Novice and Advanced as well as Wool Handling competition. Competitors sweated it out in a tough contest with fellow club members cheering them on.

Wool Handling

1st: Jessica McConnell

(Holestone YFC)

2nd: Fianna Butler

(Kilraughts YFC)

3rd: Caroline McConnell

(Lylehill YFC)

Male Novice:

1st: Ryan Erskine

(Gleno Valley YFC)

2nd: Samuel Jones

(Lylehill YFC)

3rd: Jamie Bell

(Gleno Valley YFC)

Male Advanced:

1st: Alex Butler

(Kilraughts YFC)

2nd: Matthew Cowan

(Gleno Valley YFC)

3rd: Iain Wilson

(Gleno Valley YFC)

5-A-SIDE FOOTBALL



YFCU holds senior 5-A-Side Football Finals with Gleno Valley YFC winning first prize in both sections!

The YFCU hosted both Men's and Women's 5-A-Side Football competition finals at Balmoral show on Thursday 16th May 2024. Members enthusiastically took to the cattle lawn to compete against each other for a chance to take home a top spot. The county heats took place just a couple of weeks before the finals, with 74 teams participating with the top female and male teams from the heats progressing to the finals. Our thanks to the Irish Football Association (IFA) for their support in refereeing across both county heats and finals with referees John Ewing and Ray Connolly attending the final. Both commented on how impressed they were by the sportsmanship displayed by members throughout the final selecting to present the Fair Play Award to Kilrea YFC and Spa YFC. Overall, the competition was a tremendous success, with YFCU members showing great skill and determination throughout their matches.

Results

Female Section

1st: Gleno Valley YFC

2nd: Spa YFC

3rd: Glarryford YFC

Male Section

1st: Gleno Valley YFC

2nd: Randalstown YFC

3rd: Kilraughts YFC

FLORAL ART

Floral Art competition was a BLOOMING SUCCESS all round!



The finals of the YFCU Floral Art competition took place at Balmoral Show on the afternoon of Wednesday 15th May 2024, proudly supported once again by Power NI. Competitors put together a display based on the theme of 'Twigs & Twine', showcasing their creativity and flair under the watchful eyes of judge Karen Frew. This competition encourages members to connect with nature as they delicately place flowers, foliage, and other accessories to craft stunning arrangements. YFCU President Richard Beattie was on hand to announce the winners and welcomed Kerriann Mullan from Power NI to present the awards to the prize winners. The floral arrangements were then showcased at the Healthy Horticultural area for the duration of the show.

Results:

12-14 Age Category

- 1st: Ella Dickey (Straid YFC)
- 2nd: Isabella Taylor (Coleraine YFC)
- 3rd: Ava Connolly (Lisbellaw YFC)

14-16 Age Category

- 1st: Jamie Shaw (Finvoy YFC)
- 2nd: Lucy Hawkes (Seskinore YFC)
- 3rd: Jamie Kelly (Spa YFC)

16-18 Age Category

- 1st: Grace George (Collone YFC)
- 2nd: Ruth Bradison (Castlecaulfield YFC)
- 3rd: Megan Ross (Lisnamurrican YFC)

18-21 Age Category

- 1st: Joshua Keys (Seskinore YFC)
- 2nd: Sarah Douglas (Spa YFC)
- 3rd: Alex Lamont (Coleraine YFC)

21-25 Age Category

- 1st: Courtney McMullan (Moycraig YFC)
- 2nd: Cara Millar (Coleraine YFC)
- 3rd: Sarah Spence (Bleary YFC)

25-30 Age Category

- 1st: Rebecca Speers (Ahoghill YFC)
- 2nd: Rachel McCracken (Ballywalter YFC)
- 3rd: Helen Laird (Bleary YFC)

MACHINERY HANDLING



County Antrim secures win in Machinery Handling competition for the second year in a row

We held our Machinery Handling competition on the Cattle Lawn at the Balmoral Show on Thursday 16th May 2024. The competition, which is sponsored by Johnston Gilpin & Co and judged by William Richmond and Peter Verhoeven from the College of Agriculture Food & Rural Enterprise (CAFRE). It drew a large crowd of spectators for some light entertainment and a whole lot of challenges. Each county held their own machinery handling heats where the two highest scoring members came together to make up one team at the final. Points were awarded for successfully making it through the course and following specific health and safety procedures. Teams were however penalised for a variety of reasons, including not complying with safety regulations, touching markers and causing unnecessary damage to the ground. We worked closely with William Richmond and Peter Verhoeven from CAFRE and Johnston Gilpin & Co to the plan the designated course to test competitors' tractor skills and safety knowledge.

Results

1st: County Antrim **2nd:** County Tyrone **3rd:** County Fermanagh

TUG OF WAR



YFCU Tug Of War finals pulls in a huge crowd at the Balmoral Show.

Tug of War is one of the most anticipated competitions in our events calendar with members giving up hours of their time to train ahead of the match. Hosted on the Cattle Lawn at Balmoral Show on Thursday 16th May 2024, this competition is proudly supported by Thompsons Feeding Innovation and consists of three sections: Female, Male Novice and Male Advanced. With an immense crowd of spectators urging the teams on, members were delighted to showcase their strength and compete to the highest standards. YFCU President took the time to thank Barrie Barr for his help in making the competition a success and all the referees and stewards that helped on the evening. Philip Donaldson (Sales Executive at Thompsons) was present to hand out the shields, medals and branded hats to all the winning teams. Richard explained that *“events like this don’t just happen. It is a testament to the hard work of our amazing team at Headquarters and all the volunteers and members that give up their time to help and take part”*.

Results

Female Section

- 1st: Lisnamurrigan YFC
- 2nd: Derg Valley YFC
- 3rd: Trillick & District

Male Novice Section

- 1st: Glarryford YFC
- 2nd: Lisnamurrigan YFC
- 3rd: Moycraig YFC

Male Advanced Section

- 1st: Lisnamurrigan YFC
- 2nd: Trillick & District YFC
- 3rd: Straid YFC

ONE ACT AND THREE ACT



One Act and Three Act Drama Competitions Prove Successful

Across various venues this Spring, we held our One Act and Three Act drama competitions which saw the participation of twelve entries from Moycraig YFC, Cappagh YFC, Trillick & District YFC, Newtownstewart YFC, Seskinore YFC, Annaclone & Magherally YFC, Ballywalter YFC, Randalstown YFC, Lisnamurrigan YFC, Coleraine YFC and Finvoy YFC. These competitions required clubs to produce and perform either one or three acts of a play which were then independently adjudicated from their skills in acting, production, stage presentation, endeavour originality and attainment. It is a fantastic opportunity for members to showcase their immense talent and dedication to our organisation, as they put hours of work into practising ahead of the event and captivate the audiences at the different stages of the competition. The awards ceremony was held on Friday 24th May 2024 at The Royal Hotel in Cookstown where YFCU President Richard Beattie and Lauren Hamilton from NFU Mutual presented the trophies and certificates.

Three Act Results

Most Promising Actress	Grace Wilkinson (Moycraig YFC)
Most Promising Actor	Joshua Kane (Moycraig YFC)
Certificate of Merit for Production	Moycraig YFC
Certificates of Merit for Acting	Will Christie (Moycraig YFC) Alice – Joy Nesbitt (Moycraig YFC) Matthew McLean (Moycraig YFC) Chloe Jamison (Moycraig YFC)

One Act Results

Overall Results	
1st	Cappagh YFC
2nd	Seskinore YFC
3rd	Coleraine YFC
Most Promising Actress	Lynsay Hawkes (Seskinore YFC)
Most Promising Actor	Matthew Wilson (Cappagh YFC)
Best Producer	Natalie Burrows (Cappagh YFC) Matthew Wilson (Cappagh YFC)
Certificate of Merit for production	Moycraig YFC
Best Set	Finvoy YFC
Certificates of Merit for acting	Ivanna Strawbridge (Coleraine YFC) Callum Lamont (Coleraine YFC) Lois McCurdy (Moycraig YFC) Scott Turtle (Lisnamurrigan YFC) Philip Crawford (Seskinore YFC)

CLUB | NEWS



AHOGHILL YFC

Ahoghill YFC travelled to Alister McNeilly's farm outside Antrim for their first club meeting in February 2024. Members thoroughly enjoyed this trip to get an insight into his job and were very impressed with his dairy cattle. They also participated in a club exchange evening with Lisnamurrican YFC where they travelled to Broughshane, did some games with Chris Armstrong from DJNI and finished off with some hot dogs. Congratulations went to Katie Kilpatrick who came fourth place in the 85cm class of the Show Jumping competition. March 2024 saw Ahoghill YFC member Aimee Taylor come first in her age category of the County Antrim Dairy Stock Judging Heats. Rebecca Speers attended the YFCU AGM in April 2024 and received 'Club Secretary of the Year'. Ahoghill YFC held their annual 'Big Breakfast' in the Ahoghill Community Centre where they raised much-needed funds for Tiny Life and Northern Ireland Air Ambulance and had three teams participate in the Belfast City Marathon Relay, raising a total of £2,200.



BLEARY YFC

Blearly YFC attended the County Armagh Apple Challenge on Thursday 15th February 2024, where members enjoyed a game of competitive netball. Members held their first Charity Auction and Dinner which was a huge success and raised over £7000 for the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance! 80 members enjoyed getting dressed up for their first Club Dinner and Awards Night, celebrating successes from throughout the year. Saturday 30th March 2024 saw members travel in their tractors to St Mark's Church in Portadown to help out with their funday. This was a great opportunity to showcase the club within the community. Members were also involved in Lurgan Show and took part in the Belfast City Marathon. As the year ended, plans are in place for the annual Treasure Hunt in July 2024, Charity Tractor Run (in aid of Macmillan) in August 2024 and 95th Anniversary celebrations in March 2025 at Brownlow House, Lurgan.



ANNACLONE AND MAGHERALLY YFC

Annacclone and Magherally YFC held their big night out at The Bannville Hotel in Banbridge with singer, Paul Kelly, entertaining everyone for the evening. There was a celebration when Sarah McKee came first in

Demonstration Presentation finals, Rachel Sands completed her first showjumping competition with YFCU, while Alexander Mitchell, Nicola Mitchell and Samuel McMurray progressed to the finals of the Dairy Stock Judging. The parents' night saw the clubs' One Act cast put on their performance and the junior members performed a play for '80 Years of Annacclone and Magherally YFC' to mark the club's 80th anniversary celebrations. The One Act cast went on to perform in the One Act Drama Festival but despite their fantastic efforts, did not receive any awards on this occasion.



BALLYWALTER YFC

The spring period was a very busy time for Ballywalter YFC, starting with Amy Taylor and Kate Coulter travelling to Dromore High School to compete in the Northern Ireland finals of the YFCU Home Management competition, where Kate came

second and Amy third in the 12-14 age category. The County AGM was a successful night for Ballywalter YFC, with five members receiving awards in the 'Down To The Future' competition and the club was awarded 'County Club of the Year'. The beginning of April 2024 saw 40 members take part in Dairy Stock Judging which went very well with nine members placing and getting through to the Northern Ireland finals. On Friday 5th April 2024, members held their annual Parents' Night in Ballywalter Church Hall where guests enjoyed watching sketches and listening to public speaking from junior members, followed by prize giving and refreshments. The One Act competition was held in Rathfriland YFC hall on Monday 22nd April 2024 where the junior members worked hard to put on a great show for everyone that came along. Three teams from Ballywalter YFC geared themselves up for the Belfast Marathon and managed to raise an amazing £6332 for Chest, Heart and Stroke NI.



CAPPAGH YFC

Cappagh YFC celebrated winning the YFCU One Act drama competition with their sketch of 'Cappagh Care Centre' and were delighted when Harry and Jack Beattie placed first in their respective age categories at the County Tyrone Dairy Stock Judging heats which secured their place in the finals in July 2024. Club Leader Natalie Burrows came first in 'Senior Member of the Year', was elected

as one of the four YFCU Vice Presidents and Chairperson of the YFCU Travel committee at the AGM in April 2024. A successful 'Big Breakfast' was held, where the club raised over £2300 for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice and SANDS charities, with a further £800 raised when Natalie Burrows took part in the Belfast City Marathon.

CLUB | NEWS



CLANABOGAN YFC

Clanabogan YFC held their second leg exchange with Dungiven YFC which involved a night of Bingo Loco and Clanabogan's annual club quiz which saw 21 teams come along to support the event. The club continued supporting other quizzes when they attended the County Tyrone quiz, Trillick & District YFC's quiz night and the Northern Ireland Quiz at Loughry College in

Cookstown, winning first place at every event. Karen Walker from Collone YFC came down to give Clanabogan YFC members a talk on mental health, and everybody enjoyed listening to what she had to say. Members were recognised at the Efficiency Awards which were held at The Cedar Country Hotel in Omagh. Lucy-Jo McFarland came third in 'Top Club PRO' and Chloe Alexander coming third in 'Top Club Leader'. A highlight for Clanabogan this year was launching our new club tops which were kindly sponsored by four local businesses: Strathroy Dairies, Armstrong Memorials, AW Ennis and Drumlish Farm Machinery. An evening at Lakeland Karting was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone to mark the end of the year, but celebrations continued when club member and Vice President Naomi McCrea tied the knot with Alistair at The Valley Hotel in Fivemiletown and her fellow YFC members greeted her with a guard of honour at the Church.



COLERAINE YFC

February saw Coleraine YFC host a Boys' and Girls' night where the girls did Boogie Bounce and the boys went Bowling. The Efficiency Dinner then

took place where Coleraine YFC won 'Clubs' Club', Club PRO Francesca Boyd took second place and Pinta Princess Alex Lamont placed third. Members enjoyed a trip to Dale Farm for a tour of the Dromona Site, and Caitlin Weatherup took to the arena for the showjumping competition where she completed the 65cm challenge and received second place. The Hope Centre visited the club hall to give members an insight into what they do and how the food bank helps the community. A successful quiz was held in Coleraine Bowling Club where they managed to raise £600 for Cancer Research. The travelling supper took place at the residences of the McClelland, Smyth and Lamont families and they held a very successful Parents' Night. April saw dairy stock judging take place with Charlie Millar receiving first place in the 12-14 age category, Max Watson placing second in the 16-18 category and Ivanna Strawbridge placing fourth in the 18-21 section. The One-Act drama cast performed 'Labour pains' at Ballymoney High School, where they placed 3rd overall with Ivanna Strawbridge and Callum Lamont receiving Certificates of Merit for Acting. April finished with the tractor handling where Andrew Moore placed 3rd. May saw both girls' and boys' football teams compete in the Balmoral football heats; unfortunately, neither were placed. May also saw the Balmoral show take place, where several girls competed in the floral art finals: Isabella Taylor placed 2nd in 12-14, Alex Lamont placed 3rd in 18-21 and Cara Millar placed 2nd in 21-25.



CLOGHER VALLEY YFC

Clogher Valley YFC saw fifteen enthusiastic members participate in the Dairy Stock Judging and Silage Assessment County Heats with Harry Liggett, Kyle Robinson, Sam Maxwell, Matthew Maxwell and Claire Allen placed in the top four of their respective age categories, making it through to the finals. Members also attended the Beef & Sheep

Stock Judging County Heats with Lauren Smyth coming second in her age category making it through to the finals of the competition. The club were delighted to provide the BBQ and refreshments at this event which was held in Clogher Valley Livestock Producers Mart on Tuesday 4th June 2024. They now look forward to the Clogher Valley Show, which is being held on Wednesday 31st July 2024, and followed by their Hooley in Johnston's Bar and Venue that evening.



COLLONE YFC

Collone YFC has had a busy few months, with members taking part in a wide variety of YFCU competitions, including dairy stock judging, silage assessment, Tractor Handling, Build it and Football, with many placings in these competitions achieved. This year at the Balmoral Show, members

represented the club in many different sections with Steven Wilson taking part in the Sheep Shearing and Grace George coming first in the Floral Art finals. The Boys' football team narrowly missed out on a placing, being eliminated in a penalty shootout. Tug of war for County Armagh was well represented with a male and female team pulling for Collone and Sarah Ross representing on the County Armagh Ladies team. Leader Harry Chambers represented the club in the tractor handling competition, alongside a fellow Bleary member. It was a tough contest but a great experience. Looking towards their 80th Anniversary, Collone is preparing for an 80-mile cycle as one of their fundraising efforts for their chosen charity 'Brainwaves NI'. The annual tractor run in August will also take place before their biggest night of the year - the 'Collone YFC BBQ'.



CRUMLIN YFC

February 2024 saw members of Crumlin YFC enjoy a mental health talk finishing with some pancakes and their exciting return of the exchange with

Castlecaulfield YFC. A great night was had by all members who enjoyed learning the ropes in line dancing and jiving. There were representatives of the club who took part in the NI Quiz and attended the Dairy Nutrition information night (hosted by FC Dairy Nutrition). Ceará-Louise Lemon participated in the Boxing Competition and members went along to show their support. Achievements were celebrated with Grace Cotton receiving third place in the County PRO efficiency competition, Emma Knox and Kimberley Johnston coming first in their age groups at Dairy Stock Judging and Harvey Johnston placing third. Crumlin YFC Secretary Emma Knox was appointed the Vice Chair of the Wellbeing & Development Committee at the YFCU AGM in April 2024. Emma Knox, along with Grace Cotton, Laura Murray, Clark Irvine and Ben Hennessy participated in the Belfast Marathon Relay, completing the 26.2 mile course.

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CURRAGH YFC

Curragh YFC celebrated its 81st Anniversary in February 2024 with a dinner and prize giving, honouring the hard work and dedication of members and showcasing the achievements from throughout the year. They received awards for 'Best Club Leader', 'Best Club Secretary', 'Best Treasurer' and 'Overall Best Club' at the County Londonderry Efficiency Dinner & Prize Giving. A visit was made to McKees Butchers in Maghera where everyone got some insight into what goes on behind the scenes. To bring the year to an end, Curragh headed to K-Karting in Kilrea for their last meeting and had fun showing off their skills around the tracks.



DONAGHADEE YFC

Donaghadee YFC enjoyed a busy few months with a games night, a trip to Prison Island in Belfast for the Club Leader surprise and attending the County Quiz in Gourley's, Ballygowan. At the County Down AGM, two members progressed to the final of the 'Down To The Future' competition of 'Treasurer of the Year' and 'Junior Member of the Year'. A bingo night went down a treat with cash prizes up for grabs and a dinner with plenty of tasty food. Members participated in the County Heats of the Dairy Stock Judging and Build It competitions and two junior members went along to the County Junior Weekend which was held in May 2024 in Newcastle. The club also held its Annual Quiz Night which was greatly supported by the local community and they then finished off their winter programme with a trip to Ganaway Activity Centre completing their obstacle course.



DERG VALLEY YFC

Derg Valley YFC held their annual quiz in the Derg Arms in aid of Northern Ireland Air Ambulance in February 2024, and later handed over £2,500 to the charity. Members also attended the Efficiency Awards where they were delighted to receive the Matthewsons Cup for 'Club's Club' and Jill Waugh received third place in County Tyrone for top PRO. As part of their Spring programme, they enjoyed going on a travelling feast, go-karting, attending a mental health talk and visiting the local Police Station for an insightful tour. Their Ladies' team came second in the Tug Of War competition at the Balmoral Show and their Men's team took part in the Novice section. The club will now put all their work into the Omagh Show Dance which is being held in Lola's at the Silverbirch Hotel in Omagh on Saturday 6th July 2024.



FINVOY YFC

Finvoy YFC had a very successful Arts Festival as they achieved 'Most Imaginative Theme' after performing on stage at the Millennium Forum, Londonderry and had further drama success when they won 'Best Set' in the One Act competition. They celebrated the achievements of club members and said thank you to the outgoing committee at their annual Parents' Night and celebrated again when member Jamie Shaw attended Balmoral Show and won first place in his age category in the finals of the Floral Art competition. One of the highlights of the year of Finvoy YFC was supporting Richard Beattie during his election for YFCU President. Members recalled that Richard has been a very faithful member of the club and held the roles of Leader and Secretary.



GARVAGH YFC

Kicking off February 2024, Garvagh YFC members kept active and busy with rehearsals for their Arts Festival performance of "The Future Is Golden", which they performed at Ballymena Academy. Producers Kathleen Cunningham and Louise McFetridge, as well as their accompanists George Campbell playing the drums, Ben Cochrane playing the guitar and Jacqueline Drake playing the piano, helped the cast ensure they looked and sounded great. Members also attended the County Londonderry Efficiency Dinner in February at the Drummond Hotel in Ballykelly. Everyone celebrated with James Millsopp who achieved second place in Club Treasurer of the Year, William McNaugher winning first place in Senior Member of the Year and Ellen McFetridge who got first place in both Club PRO and Junior member of the Year awards. Garvagh YFC Arts Festival cast members pulled on their boiler suits and wellies again and set off to the Millennium Forum in Londonderry, on Saturday 9th March 2024 to compete in the Arts Festival Gala and mark this as one of the highlights of the year. This is a club that has seen lots of achievements from its members with Peter Cunningham, Christopher Black and William McNaugher winning awards in their respective age categories at the Dairy Stock Judging competition. The Annual Big Breakfast and Car Wash took place on Saturday 4th May 2024 in Main Street Church and thanks to McAtamney's for sponsoring the burgers and sausages.

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GLARRYFORD YFC

Glarryford YFC were represented at the YFCU Arts Festival where they showcased their talents on stage while Jessica, Trevor and Thomas participated in the County's Big Night

of Boxing with all three members winning their fights. Joel Dornan received second place for 'Club Treasurer' and James Millar was awarded 'Best Junior Member' at the County Proficiencies. The final meeting of the year was a butcher demonstration, where everybody enjoyed something different. Glarryford YFC were also represented at the County's 5-A-Side football heats and progressed to the finals at Balmoral Show where they went on to win third place. Also at Balmoral Show, Glarryford A team came first in the Men's Novice section in the Tug Of War competition, securing their promotion to the Men's Advanced section next year.



HOLESTONE YFC

Holestone YFC celebrated their 80th anniversary this year, and held a big night in the Galgorm Manor Hotel, Ballymena to mark the occasion. Guest speaker for the evening was YFCU President Richard Beattie. The following day, guests had the privilege to visit the Young Farmers' Hall to collect their party favours which was an oak tree to plant, symbolising great memories shared within the Holestone YFC family. One of the biggest fundraisers of the year was the Big Breakfast which was held on Saturday 23rd March 2024. Thank you to Jenkins Butchers, Fisherwick Farm, Cranswick County Food, Moore's Farms and Mulligans Home Bakery for sponsoring the event. The club handed a cheque of over £10,000 to their chosen charity 'Life Beyond'. The biggest achievement of the year for Holestone YFC was winning the 'Club of the Year' award at the YFCU Annual General Meeting in April 2024. This award recognised the efforts of the club on so many levels and was highly deserved.



KELLS & CONNOR YFC

Kells & Connor YFC had a great start to their Spring programme with their annual Table Quiz which brought lots of support from

members and their parents. Some of the highlights of the programme were hearing a talk from the local PSNI, a trip to We Are Vertigo, a tour of a local farm and participating in the County Heats of the Stock Judging competitions. An evening of singing and dancing was held for their annual Parents' Night which was followed by a raffle, light supper, prize giving, and election of the new committee for the 2024 / 2025 season.



GLENO VALLEY YFC

Gleno Valley YFC organised a very entertaining Parents' Night where members put on performances to showcase their acting

skills and choreography and celebrated their success throughout the year. Seven members attended the YFCU AGM in Omagh and celebrated their prize for "Most Successful Participation in Competitions for ages 18-30" category and congratulated Jamie Bell who was awarded second place in the Ulster Young Farmer competition. An incredible amount of £12,710 was handed over to Brainwaves NI following the Club's fundraising efforts and they hosted their Tom Lyle Memorial Sports Night at Larne Rugby Club for the third year running. Further achievements were celebrated at Balmoral Show where Ryan Erskine, Jamie Bell, Matthew Cowan, Iain Wilson and Steven Wilson all competed in the Sheep Shearing competition and were awarded prizes, while both Gleno Valley Girls A team and Senior Boys team won the 5-A-Side Football Finals.



HILLSBOROUGH YFC

Hillsborough YFC had a very busy Spring programme celebrating their 90th Anniversary. They welcomed some unusual four and eight legged guests to their meeting with a visit from Jurassic Arc Encounters NI. This was thoroughly enjoyed by all members as they got the opportunity to learn about different reptiles and exotic animals. In February, senior members took a trip to Gourleys, Ballygowan for the County Down YFC Quiz Night and they were delighted to come home with second prize. Emma Brow, Izzy Irvine and Reannah McIlroy competed in the show jumping competition at Meadows Equestrian Centre. In March, the club had the pleasure of hosting the return leg of this year's exchange with Annaclone & Magherally YFC, a great opportunity to get to know other club members with entertainment by Embrace Socials, followed by burgers and chips to finish. Members then swapped their boilersuits for tuxedos and dresses in April, as they celebrated their 90th Anniversary with a black-tie dinner at the Burrendale Hotel in Newcastle. Members said how "it was brilliant to see so many past and present members together reminiscing about their fond memories at the club. Thanks to everyone involved in making this night a success". Hillsborough YFC went on to win the Alfa-Laval perpetual shield for Recruitment 2023 at the Annual General Meeting.

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KILLINCHY YFC

Killinchy YFC had an exciting trip to Stormont Parliament Buildings in February, where they were allowed to access the Assembly Chamber and enjoy some refreshments at the end of the tour. They welcomed Bleary YFC to their hall on the shore of the Strangford Lough in County Down on an exchange trip. They enjoyed line dancing activities and remarked on it as a good way of having fun and interacting with the members of the other club. At the end of February 2024, the club held their annual quiz and then in March took a bus trip to Glaslary Farm, where they got to meet the Taylor family and have a tour of the ice cream production line. The annual awards night was a success where pizza was served as refreshments and despite the heavy showers, they enjoyed playing football and rounders at their sports night. To bring the 2023/2024 programme to a close, they headed to the Kingspan Stadium to watch the Ulster vs Benetton game, and senior members enjoyed a meal out to Daft Eddy's in Whiterock.



KILREA YFC

Kilrea YFC enjoyed getting dressed up in February 2024, when they attended County Londonderry's Efficiency Dinner in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly. They celebrated Ellen Alexander's achievement of receiving third place prize for Best Secretary and at the Arts Festival Gala where they joined with Curragh YFC for their production of "A Deadly Good Party". The club's much anticipated Parents' Night was held on Friday 12th April 2024 in the Old Point, Kilrea where everyone celebrated the achievements throughout the club. Seven club members received awards in the Stock Judging heats and thanks went to Michael Stewart for sharing his knowledge and hosting practice sessions. Thanks also went to Robert Sloan for coaching the Girls Tug Of War team, his time and expertise were much appreciated by everyone. To conclude, congratulations go to Ryan Taggart on his fantastic achievement of becoming a Yellow Wellies champion!



KILRAUGHTS YFC

In February 2024, Kilraughts YFC brought their production of 'The Eejits Circus' to the YFCU Arts Festival qualifying for the Arts Festival Gala

which was held on Saturday 9th March 2024 in the Millennium Forum, Londonderry. Hannah Kirkpatrick and Cynthia Currie were thanked for the work that they put into producing the event and Loughguile Credit Union for their kind sponsorship. Members were acknowledged for their hard work at the County Antrim Efficiency awards with Kilraughts YFC getting second place for 'Most Efficient Club', Hannah Kirkpatrick received first place for 'Most Efficient Club Leader' and second place for 'Senior Member of the Year'. Members attended the annual club dinner which was held in the Marine Hotel, Ballycastle and Jack Orr progressed to the finals of the Dairy Stock Judging competition after competing in the County Heats. The boys football team came third in the YFCU 5-A-Side Football final at the Balmoral Show and took part in the Tug of War competition.



LISBELLAW YFC

Lisbellaw YFC received 'Club of the Year' at the County Fermanagh dinner and Stephanie Beacom collected the award for 'Top PRO of the Year'. They were

represented at the county heats of the Dairy Stock Judging competition which saw a lot of their members place in the top four of their respective age categories. At the Balmoral Show Ava Connolly came third in the Floral Art and their Ladies team took part in the 5-A-Side Football Finals. The club's quiz night raised much-needed funds and they recalled how it was great to see supporters from the local community.



LISNAMURRICAN YFC

Members of Lisnamurrican YFC took to the stage in February 2024 to perform their Arts Festival piece, 'The Highest Bidder'. The drama continued

with members taking part in the One Act Competition with their play 'A Bottle of Sherry', raising £363 for TinyLife through this event. Six members trained hard and took part in County Antrim's boxing night and they showcased their talents at their annual Parents' Night which marked the changeover of their club committee. Lisnamurrican YFC have been great supporters of our Tag Rugby, Tug Of War, Dairy Stockjudging and Build It competitions, and supported the launch of the Ballymena Show. They celebrated Ruth Morrow achieving "Best Treasurer in Northern Ireland" at the YFCU AGM and Megan Ross getting third place in the Floral Art competition at the Balmoral Show.

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LYLEHILL YFC

Members of Lylehill YFC addressed mental health awareness in February 2024 by welcoming Alden from Farm Fox Training to the hall with a farm-themed workout session. Members commented that this was very enjoyable and was a great way of learning how physical activity is beneficial to their overall health. A successful Parents' Night was held, where couples enjoyed taking part in the Mr & Mrs Game and members from the audience also participated in Goat Yoga where they were tested on their flexibility. Other highlights and outings included a fun filled evening of bowling, a return exchange with Newtownards YFC, not to mention their annual BBQ at Shane's Castle in Antrim where members worked hard to paint signs, move potato boxes and get all set up for the big event.



MOYCRAIG YFC

March 2024 saw the return of Moycraig's Three Act Play 'Separate Beds' taking to several stages across the province. This was a huge success for the club. Members also held their Annual Dinner in April which took place at The Lodge Hotel in Coleraine. This event celebrated the achievements of members and saw many awards presented. Assistant Club Leader Rachel Smith was re-elected for the second year as Vice President at the YFCU Annual General Meeting which was held at the Silverbirch Hotel in Omagh. Moycraig congratulated Rachel on this fantastic achievement and wished her all the best as she continues in the role. Moycraig's One Act cast performed 'Knickers' in Ballymoney High School where Lois McCurdy was awarded a certificate of merit for her brilliant acting skills. Moycraig also showcased their strength and determination in our Tug Of War competition at this year's Balmoral Show, where they put forward both a male and female team. It was their male team that won third prize in the competition.



NEWTOWNARDS YFC

Newtownards YFC's spring programme included a 'Farm To Fork' talk from David Kerr who spoke to members about his Farm Shop selling local produce alongside home-reared beef and lamb. Another highlight was the trip to Lakeland Dairies where they were greeted with goodie bags and learned about the different stages of the production process, and a night of fishing organised by the club leader.

Despite the awful weather, this was something completely different and members were handed fishing rods and bait and showed how to catch some small fish. The annual Parents' Night saw guests taking part in the quiz and enjoy a BBQ. Awards were handed out to members for their hard work and dedication to the club throughout the year. To finish, members worked closely with Ards & North Down council and the local neighbourhood policing team in a bid to prevent graffiti by creating a beautiful mural on the side of the club hall.



NEWTOWNHAMILTON YFC

Newtownhamilton YFC enjoyed a farm tour to Redhouse Holsteins, a visit to the Spring Farm Machinery Show, a club exchange with Clogher Valley YFC and an outing to the local go-karting centre. On the same night as their

annual prize giving, they raised money for the Northern Ireland Children's Hospice. On the competition side of things, Newtownhamilton took part in the county heats of the Dairy Stock Judging, Silage Assessment, Build It and Machinery Handling competitions and participated in the County Armagh Apple Challenge where they enjoyed a game of netball. Another highlight of their Spring programme was senior member Jenna Belshaw, obtaining an invitation to Buckingham Palace to receive her Gold Duke of Edinburgh award, and members supporting the local Church of Ireland's Flower Festival, where they created beautiful floral arrangements in welly boots.



NEWTOWNSTEWART YFC

Celebrating their 80th Anniversary this year, Newtown Stewart YFC wanted to make it a memorable one, so they held several events to mark the occasion. Their 80th

Anniversary dinner was held on Saturday 10th February 2024 in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh where over 220 guests came along and shared fond memories about the club and celebrated success over the years. Guest speaker for the evening was William Wilson who entertained the room with stories of days gone by and the night was wrapped up by an auction with Richard Beattie. Proceeds of £2735 were in aid of Omagh Children's Community Nursing Team, in memory of baby Harrison McKelvey. The club held their 'Big Breakfast' on Saturday 13th April 2024 where YFCU President at the time, Stuart Mills, helped to plant a commemorative tree alongside their Club Presidents outside of the meeting hall. Money raised at the breakfast was donated to the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance. The club made the difficult decision to sell their much-loved cow Mabel at Newtown Stewart Livestock Mart, as members agreed it was for the best that the £1200 raised would go towards club funds, but they have kept in touch with Mabel's new owner who reports back that the cow is settling well into her new surroundings.

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RANDALSTOWN YFC

Randalstown YFC was delighted to have raised over £600 for Laurel House at their annual church service, this money will go to help those in need of the

facility. Achievements from members included Adam Sossick winning the 60cm category of the YFCU's first showjumping competition, Tom Walker placing joint third in the 'Junior Member of the Year' award at county level, Jack Johnston placing first in Silage Making, Georgia Nicholl placing second in Ulster's 'PRO of the Year' competition and Elizabeth Adair being elected onto the Board of Directors. They held their sports night with football and tug of war competitions on Friday 19th April 2024 and enjoyed seeing different clubs come along and support. Georgia Nicholl and Erin Crawford worked hard to produce their One Act sketch of 'Betrayal' and members also took part in the Belfast City Marathon relay and walking section, raising money for MacMillan. They also hosted their annual BBQ which saw the 'Eurovision Party Spot' hit the Caddy Road, proving to be a great night. Randalstown YFC were represented at the Balmoral Show with Steven Doole and Oisín McAteer bringing the Machinery Handling title back to the Randalstown area for a third consecutive year and their senior boys placed second in the 5-A-Side Football Finals.



SESKINORE YFC

Seskinore YFC achieved many awards this season, starting with second place in 'Club of the Year' and second place in 'Top Chairperson' at the County Tyrone Efficiency Awards. Emily Clarke also collected first place for 'Top Secretary' and Sophie Crawford collected first place for 'Top PRO'. They received 'Best Use of Props' at their annual One Act Rosebowl competition and came second place overall in Northern Ireland while Lynsay Hawkes received the 'Most Promising Actress' award at the drama awards night. Furthermore, Seskinore attended the AGM and celebrated five members achieving a President's Award and Emily Clarke placing third in Northern Ireland for 'Top Secretary'. Four members participated in the Floral Art competition at the Balmoral Show with Lucy Hawkes and Joshua Keys receiving awards, and three members took part in the Sheep Shearing.

The club also held their first 'Big Breakfast' on Saturday 9th March 2024 which was a huge success. Their annual Parents' Night was held to showcase the many awards received at County level and their own club awards. Looking forward to the Summer programme, a trip is planned for a visit to Splash Water Park in August and their annual Family Steak BBQ which always pulls a crowd.



RATHFRILAND YFC

Rathfriland YFC held a fantastic 'Ibiza Beach Party' on Saturday 23rd March 2024 in the Bannville Hotel,

Banbridge which members stated to be one of the highlights of their year. Achievements were celebrated when Catherine and Rachel Hanna both came first in their respective age groups at the Demonstration Presentation Competition Finals, while Rebecca Cromie proceeded into the Home Management Finals. Rebecca also achieved third place in the County Down 'Most Efficient Secretary' competition with Nicola Murray coming first in the "Most Efficient PRO" section and third in the Northern Ireland finals. Rathfriland YFC also celebrated when they received third place in the County Down Club of the Year competition. A successful Parents' Night was held where members were awarded Proficiency Certificates and Duke of Edinburgh awards with their family and friends there to show their support. Looking towards the 2024/2025 programme, plans are already in place to mark the club's 80th anniversary!



SPA YFC

Spa YFC had another successful and busy few months! They held their annual quiz in the Lakeside Inn, Downpatrick with a great attendance of sixteen teams, raising a tremendous £860

for Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke. Club Leader Martin Rodgers received 'Club Leader of the Year' at the Annual General Meeting in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh where many Spa YFC members attended to support him. They have kept very busy with different meetings and competitions, one of which was an 'Industry Night' where sixty members took the trip to Carryduff Building Supplies to get an insight into some 'behind the scenes' business and hear from the people behind the family-run organisation. They also attended the show jumping competition where member Charlotte Nelson achieved second place in the 85cm section. A highlight of the celebrations was their 80th Anniversary where they painted tiles to commemorate the achievement. Deputy President of the YFCU, Kristina Fleming, attended their much-anticipated Parents' Night as guest speaker, and congratulated everybody on their successes throughout the year. Spa YFC formed three teams to partake in the 5-A-Side Football competition where one team came second in the Ladies section of the finals at Balmoral Show! Spa YFC were also well represented at the Floral Art finals with Jamie Kelly gaining third place in the 14-16 age category and Sarah Douglas coming second in the 18-21 age category.



STRAID YFC

Straid YFC held their Big Breakfast in February 2024, raising over £1500 for Cancer Focus. Members recalled that it was a great opportunity to showcase their club to the local community. It was a great night all round when

members performed in front of their families and friends at Ballymena High School in their Arts Festival performance 'The Travelling Soldier'. Straid YFC welcomed Avondale YFC to Northern Ireland with a fun-filled weekend packed with activities that included farm tours, shed parties and pub golf. Mark McConnell and John Nelson competed in the boxing ring at the County Big Night. Both members fought very well but it was John who won his match. Their annual Parents' Night was held in March 2024 where members performed several different plays and dances and received prizes recognising their accomplishments throughout the year. The club celebrated achievements at the YFCU Annual General Meeting where Jonni Ferguson won the President's Award Scheme and Stephen McConnell was placed second in the Ulster Young Farmer 25-30 age category. The highlight of the year was their BBQ which was a roaring success in May 2024 and what members celebrate as an event that they love working at.

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