

Creating an Engaging Club Programme

A varied and interesting club programme is key to a club recruiting new members and retaining its existing members. It's one of the main building blocks of any YFC. A good club programme details all the club's activities over the next few months, meets the expectations and interests of the members of the club and reflects the organisations' values and charity purpose.

You need a good club programme to:

- Be attractive to current members and draw the interest of new members – the programme needs to be planned and written up to ensure new members can see that things that interest them are coming up in the next few weeks and months.
- Encourage members to attend.
- Cater for members' needs and interests with a variety of activities and topics.
- Learn about new subjects and develop fresh skills – support club members by including club preparations and training for county or rally/show competitions in the programme as well.
- Keep the club alive and interesting.
- Keep members connected with YFC activities outside your own club.
- Inform members about what is happening in the club as well as where and when.
- Inform members about county, area, national and other clubs' events.
- Help with the organisation and structure of the meetings.
- Get to know the local area and people through visits or trips.
- Let parents know what's going on and get consent forms in on time.

What to include in a good club programme

The key to good, stable attendance is variety and balance. Remember that YFC is not only an educational and social organisation, but also has a commitment to community work, current affairs, international, agri/farming and environment topics – so the programme should reflect these too.

Your programme will be varied to include a mixture of:

- Outdoor and indoor meetings
- Visits
- Active and listening activities
- Joint meetings with other YFCs and organisations (a club can challenge neighbouring YFCs or other youth or agricultural societies to a quiz, a debate, a discussion or other activity)
- Open meetings up to involve your community.



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A club programme should have four sections, **business, learning, social** and **community engagement** activities. The Club Activities section of this guide contains ideas for each of these sections.

The business meetings

- Your club meeting gives members the chance to influence decisions. It unites, informs and is a vital part of YFC. Good business procedure is vital, so make sure new officers attend the club officer training provided by the county federation.

Learning

- Your members need to be given challenges to keep them involved in YFC, whether it's through achievements gained by holding office, entering competitions, participating in training opportunities or taking part in trips and visits to local businesses or places of interest. Your members need these aspects of a club programme to develop their skills and gain achievements.

Social events

- Socialising is the main reason why young people join YFC. The social aspect of your club programme must include every member and be sophisticated and well organised. Remember that the age range of YFC will mean that some social events will be provided for younger members – usually with the older members planning/organising a leading an activity, and other events will be for older members of the YFC. Make sure that members all have a say on the ideas for the programme that suits all ages.
- Try to develop the members' skills to run the social part of your programme. Stay up to date by offering the type of social activities that every young person seeks. Also, remember to encourage involvement in club or county competitions and sports. An important part of the YFC social activities is meeting YFC members from other nearby clubs.

Community engagement

- Building community relations should be included when planning your programme. This in turn will enhance your image and reputation and could bring sponsorship, leadership support or even the offer of facilities which your club will need to run a well-developed programme.
- Certain activities lend themselves to improving your club's profile, for example, fundraising, working in the countryside and community work.

Finally, make sure your programme is affordable for everyone, not just those in full-time employment, and above all try to ensure that the programme is appealing to all ages in your club as everyone wants to enjoy YFC. Clubs may decide to do some split age evenings etc to accommodate the breadth of membership age range.



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When should the club programme be designed?

Planning in advance will make your YFC experience less stressful rather than planning week by week. It is recommended that programmes are planned in either:

- three YFC 'terms' – September to December, January to April and May to August
- or
- that the whole year is planned September to August.

Ideally the programme should be confirmed and published to the club members a month before the term commences.

- Programme for September to December to be published by 1 August.
- Programme for January to April to published by 1 December.
- Programme for May to August to be published by 1 April.

Note, the club can adjust its terms to suit the rhythm of the club activities.

A good tip is for the outgoing committee to plan the first term of the next YFC year to give the new officers time to settle into the club.

It is important that a club programme is published online or in hard copy to let everyone know what's happening when and where and at what time it starts and finishes.

Who should be involved in the club programming?

It is recommended that before the next programme is due to be published that the club devotes a business meeting to the club programme. To do this plan a short session that will allow every club member to put forward a programme idea and have their voice heard.

Allocate about half an hour of the business meeting agenda to plan the programme.

Resources needed:

1. Flip chart (or wall lining paper), flip chart pens or post-it notes
2. One paper headed trips/visits and another headed presentations/talks/training.

Activity to get ideas:

- Break up into groups of two, three, four or five people, each with post-it notes pads and a pen.
- Ask them to discuss the things they would like to see on the club programme and write ideas on post it notes (one idea per note). Inform the groups that these should be a mix of presentations/talks and trips/visits.
- After 15 minutes ask each group to nominate a person to feedback the ideas.
- Finish the group discussions and ask the nominated spokesperson to explain the group's ideas and place the idea on the relevant flip chart paper.



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- After the final group has added their ideas, bring the discussion to a close via a summary asking the whole club which are the most popular ideas, and these can be the priorities for the next term.
- Finally, when the priority list is ready ask the club members for any contacts that they have for any of the programme topics – this will assist the club committee and programme officers make plans.

In the following days, the club committee and programme officers can start to contact speakers, trip or visit hosts and firm up the plans for the programme.

Provide the potential speakers or hosts of visits with information about:

- the club and its members.
- The club's membership comprises of XX number of members.
- A summary of the age mix of the club membership.

Example

Xxxxxx YFC is a local charitable membership group for those aged 10 to 28 years in the area with an interest in agriculture/rural affairs, crafts and life skills. The club also provides recreation and leisure activities as part of the programme. These two things, combined with a vibrant competitions programme in which our members learn and acquire new skills and experiences, provide the annual programme that helps our members take responsibility and be active members of their community.

The club has XX number of members with X being under the age of 18 and X are 18 years or over.

- The date of the meeting/visit.
- Location of the meeting together with travel/directions/parking information.
- What are you asking for – a speaker for say, 30 minutes plus questions, a visit/tour of about an hour followed by questions etc.
- Ask what the speaker/host needs you to provide.
 - A laptop with PowerPoint or other software
 - WIFI required or not
 - PowerPoint projector
 - Speakers for a laptop
 - Any equipment or resources for the topic.
- Confirm the point of contact with the club (mobile number and email).
- Follow up any telephone conversation with an email to confirm arrangements and tell the speaker/host that you will contact them again two weeks before the date of the meeting/visit/tour to make final arrangements.



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Top 10 Tips for Club Programming

1. The club programme is best produced either:
 - Termly – over three terms (September to December, January to April and May to August).
 - OR
 - Yearly – the whole year September to August.
2. Include meetings that set aside time to prepare for county competitions and the county show and rally.
3. There are ready-made club nights using Curve workshops designed for YFCs – check out the club activities section of this guide where you can find details of what is available and how your county trainers can run these for you. Add these onto regular club meetings.
4. Consider linking several meeting topics, for example a speaker from a machinery dealer in the winter, followed by a visit to the dealership during spring or summer.
5. Speak with the officers of neighbouring YFCs and see if any plans can be done as joint meetings – your club organises one speaker or activity and invites the other club to participate. Then, the other club organises one speaker or activity and invites members of your club to participate. This reduces the number of speakers or activities that need to be planned and organised by each of the clubs.
6. Include the club social media links on the programme.
7. Include contact details on the information to be published. Do remember this programme is a public document that will be used by members and non-members – it is a recruitment tool. Therefore, it is important that the personal contact details of members holding club office that are under the age of 18, are not published.
 - a. It is recommended that a YFC Hotmail/Gmail (or similar) email address is used and that this account has auto forwarding activated, so all emails reach the club officers without the need to publish personal contact details.
 - b. Similarly, it is recommended that the club uses a pay as you go mobile phone as its permanent point of contact, instead of personal mobile or home telephone numbers being published.
 - c. The email address and the telephone number will be passed on to new officers at each club AGM. Passwords and security codes should be changed at that point as well.



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8. If possible, include the key dates from the county federation calendar of events in the club programme. For example, the county show and rally date, county executive and other county meeting dates. It is also useful to include the contact details for the county office on the club programme.
9. A club programme secretary will make sure a fun and engaging club programme is formed. If you don't already have a club programme secretary, consider adding this role. More information on this role can be found in this guide in the Your Role in YFC Section.
10. Remember that it is a great help if the programme for the next term is planned and confirmed by the outgoing committee to give the new officers time to settle into the club officer roles.

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Day to Day Running of a YFC