DEVON YOUNG FARMERS NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2026





JUNIOR SCHOLARSHIP TO SLOVENIA



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JUNIOR READING COUNTY FINALS

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN



As we move into the autumn, it can only mean one thing - Club and Group AGM season is here!

As we head towards the end of another YFC year, it has been fantastic to see members across the county making the most of the summer months and everything that Devon YFC has to offer.

Our Junior and Senior Scholarships took place over the summer, with both teams enjoying successful travel trips.

There has also been some fantastic success for our Men's Tug of War Team, who travelled to Tenbury Show at the beginning of August and came away as National Champions once again! A massive congratulations to the whole team on such an incredible achievement. To retain the national title is something to be extremely proud of, and you have done Devon YFC proud once again!

The South West Area Junior Activities Weekend, held from 28th–31st August, was another highlight of the summer. The majority of the weekend was packed full of Devon members and leaders, who travelled to PGL in Shropshire for a weekend of activities, fun and plenty of memories. It was brilliant to see so many of our younger members getting involved and making the most of the opportunity.

As we move into the autumn, it can only mean one thing - Club and Group AGM season is here! I am really looking forward to welcoming all of our new club and group officers into their roles. You will hopefully see plenty of our County Team over the coming months as we attend your AGMs, pass on federation information, support your new officers and answer any questions you may have. We are always here to support you, so please do make the most of us!

Our Christmas festive event is still very much in the planning stages, but watch this space! More information will be coming out from Devon YFC soon - one thing I can promise is that Devon YFC will still be getting festive!

We are also incredibly excited to welcome Bridget, our newly appointed County Organiser, to the Devon YFC team. I have every confidence that she will quickly get to know our members, clubs and the organisation.

It was also great to see a full cathedral during this year's Harvest Festival in Exeter. A huge thank you to all six groups for their generous food offerings and donations. Together, an amazing 734kg of food was donated to Exeter Food Action.

Finally, it has been lovely to see so many dinner dances already getting underway, with plenty more still to come. I hope to see lots of you at these events over the coming months as we celebrate the achievements, successes and memories of another fantastic year for your clubs and groups!

A. Retallick

Anneliese Retallick
County Chairman





Meet our new Devon YFC County Organiser: Bridget Down!



Bridget started in her new role in September and shared a few words after her first week on the job:

"A week has already flown by, and what a wonderful welcome it has been. I've been genuinely touched by the kindness, encouragement and enthusiasm shown by so many members, volunteers and supporters across the Federation.

Having grown up on a Devon farm and now being part of an eighth-generation farming family in Iddesleigh, I know just how important community, friendship and opportunity are.

Throughout my career, I've been passionate about helping people flourish, grow in confidence and reach their potential. That's the spirit I hope to bring to Devon YFC.

It's a real privilege to be part of this remarkable organisation, and I'm excited to work alongside you all as we continue to help young people thrive, develop and make the most of everything Young Farmers has to offer."

A huge welcome to Bridget from everyone at Devon YFC!



Remembering Andrew Hedden-O'Hara

Devon YFC was saddened to hear of the passing of Andrew Hedden-O'Hara, a former Devon County Chairman and member of Beaford Young Farmers' Club.

Andrew joined Young Farmers as a teenager and was actively involved in debating, public speaking and entertainment. In 1969, he travelled to America alongside 125 fellow Young Farmers from across the South West, an experience that led to lifelong friendships.

Andrew went on to become Devon County Chairman, a role of which he was immensely proud. His involvement with Young Farmers continued long after his membership, judging competitions across the South West.

Andrew will be fondly remembered for his enthusiasm, humour and dedication to the Young Farmers movement. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

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SPORTS & SOCIAL
Alex Rodd

It has been a busy few months for clubs across the county, and we have had several sports competitions, with the always-popular mixed netball competition at Crediton Leisure Centre! A massive thank you to all the teams that came and competed.

Mixed Netball Results

1st: Culm Valley
2nd: Bow
3rd: County Officers

The National TOW Championships also happened in the summer, and a massive well done to all Devon's representatives! A massive well done must go to Anstey Men for winning the Men's TOW competition – a huge achievement. Another big well done must go to Honiton Ladies for finishing fourth, which is no easy task, and also a big well done to Yarcombe Ladies, who competed strongly and represented Devon so well.

Good luck to everyone for the month ahead, which is sure to be a busy one with AGM season in full flow, and to all the new officers elected!

Looking ahead, the Tamar Cup is back on Friday 6th November, and the team have been training hard. The event has sold out, with 1,000 tickets sold. It's always a great night and a gritty contest, so come along and make as much noise as you can to cheer Devon on!

Also coming up, we have our Christmas event, which this year will be a Country Christmas Boozy Bingo, so keep an eye out for ticket sales coming shortly and keep the 4th of December free in your calendars!









COMPETITIONS
Katie Davie

The autumn programme of YFC competitions is here! Please get your teams prepared, practices held and group rounds completed ahead of the county rounds, which will be held as follows:

Thursday 12th November:
Intermediate and Senior Just a Minute

Sunday 15th November:
Senior After Dinner Speaking

A county stockjudging practice is also being organised ahead of the English Winter Fair in November, where the National Live & Carcass Finals take place – so keep an eye out for further details on this too!

September brought more national finals, where we had Chulmleigh represent us in Ready Steady Cook, and in the Floral Art competition, Macie and Erin represented us fantastically!

More recently, at the Harvest Festival, the pillar decorating made the Cathedral look beautiful.

Pillar Decorating Results

1st: Exe Valley
2nd: East Devon
3rd: Haldon





Finally, a massive well done to our five teams who competed in the County Junior Reading Finals last month.

Junior Reading Results

1st: East Devon Green
2nd: East Devon Pink
3rd: South Dartmoor
Best Chair: Robert (East Devon)
Best Reader: Barney (East Devon)



Thank you to our judges, Claire Quick and Ruth Gray, for judging our competition! Congratulations to Robert, Barney and Darcey from East Devon, who will be representing Devon YFC at the South West Area round in March next year.



AGRI
Lily May







At the end of August, we had a fantastic time at the Rivermead Dairy Open Day, kindly hosted by the Davis family. There were over 200 people in attendance from Devon YFC, the South West Jersey Club and the South West Texel Club.

We started the morning with a talk from Mark, Kev, Emily and Gordon about how they started on the council farm in 1989. We then moved outside, where the cows spoke for themselves! The herd is averaging 5.5% butterfat, 4% protein and 8,500 litres, housed all year round on sand cubicles and milked through a parlour.

I would like to say a massive thank you to the Davis family for their hard work and generous hospitality in making this day so wonderful!

Last month, Devon YFC also helped coordinate the Arable Zone at FarmWise, giving 1,600 schoolchildren the chance to learn more about where their food comes from and the crops that have to be grown before it reaches our supermarket shelves.

A huge thank you to all of our Devon YFC volunteers who gave up their time to help throughout the day, including Josie Fry, Katie Grist, Helen May, Anneliese Retallick, Harry Sprague, Lily May and Linda Bulpin.

WEST COUNTRY TECH

Rural security and internet experts in the south west of england

- CCTV and intruder alarms
- Number plate recognition cameras
- Gate intercoms
- Vehicle entry barriers
- Livestock monitoring cameras
- Starlink
- Wi-Fi and Networking









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TRAVEL
Lois Sing





Last month, our travel interviews took place – a huge congratulations to everyone who secured places for the 2027 travel scholarships. For those who were unsuccessful or didn't apply this year, don't worry – there's always next year!

Travel is a special part of Devon YFC, offering members the opportunity to meet new people, discover agriculture across Europe, experience different cultures and make memories that will last a lifetime.



SLOVENIA 2026
Junior Scholarship Report

What better way to spend a Young Farmers scholarship trip than combining Italian culture, Slovenian farming, adrenaline-fuelled adventures, freezing swims, questionable driving and a fair amount of food and drink!

After arriving in Venice, we made our way from Marco Polo Airport to Mestre and checked into the hostel before jumping on the train to Venice Santa Lucia. From there, we set off on foot to explore the city, wandering through the maze of back streets and canals towards the famous Rialto Bridge.

We even got to experience a traditional Venetian traghetto gondola crossing for just €2 – an absolute bargain and a great way to cross the Grand Canal like a local!

The following morning, we packed up and headed for Slovenia. After arriving in Ljubljana, we checked into our accommodation… and let's just say the Villa Ljubljana experience was certainly one for the memory bank! Our first full day in Slovenia started with meeting Tadej, who took us on a tour of Ljubljana Castle.

Next up was an adrenaline park, where the group tackled the high ropes and zip wires. There were screams, laughs and plenty of encouragement as everyone pushed themselves out of their comfort zones. We then headed to a beautiful glacier lake for a swim. Calling the water cold would be an understatement – it was absolutely freezing!



One of the most important parts of our scholarship was getting the opportunity to learn about Slovenian agriculture. We began the day at KGZS – the Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia, where we learnt about the organisation's role in supporting Slovenian farmers.

We then headed to Farm Pr'Matevž, a dairy farm in the Škofja Loka area. The farm milks around 50–60 cows, with around 20–30 calves and heifers. The farm produces milk which is used to make a fantastic range of products including cheese, mozzarella, burrata, milkshakes, iced coffee and yoghurt.

Venice and Slovenia 2026 – one unforgettable adventure!

After a busy morning on farm, we headed to Velenje Lake, where another lake swim was on the cards. We then travelled on to Maribor for the night in eastern Slovenia. Tadej joined us for our time in Slovenia representing ZSPM – Slovenia's Rural Youth Association. Tadej shared the organisation's history and what they do, giving us the chance to compare Slovenian rural youth with Devon YFC.

Our next farming day took us to Farm Žitnik, where we got to see a real variety of farming enterprises, including fields, a bakery and chickens. We then moved on to Valdhuber Wine Farm, situated close to the Austrian border. The farm combines wine production, tourism and hospitality, including a restaurant.

No trip to Slovenia would have been complete without visiting the famous Lake Bled. Once at Bled, some of the group tackled the climb to Mala Osojnica viewpoint. There was also, of course, time for a swim in Lake Bled and plenty of time to take in the stunning scenery.

Our final morning in Slovenia was spent having a relaxed wander around Ljubljana, picking up souvenirs and enjoying one last look around the city. Then it was back on the bus towards Venice.

After arriving, we had one final evening to enjoy Italy. We wandered through the streets, inevitably got a little lost, enjoyed an Italian dinner and finished the trip with live music.

A huge thank you to Devon YFC for giving us the opportunity to experience such an incredible Junior Scholarship trip.



RURAL CRIME REMAINS A COSTLY CHALLENGE FOR SOUTH WEST FARMERS

For farmers and rural businesses across the South West, the threat of crime remains a very real concern. In May, NFU Mutual released its annual Rural Crime Report, with the latest figures showing that even though the cost of rural crime in the region fell by 8% in 2025, it still totalled an estimated £6.2 million — a stark reminder of the financial and emotional pressure crime can place on farming communities.



Further figures show that, across the UK, rural crime cost an estimated £41.5 million in 2025, down from £44.1 million the previous year. The reduction points to the impact of continued investment, stronger collaboration and targeted action from farmers, insurers, police forces and rural communities.

But behind the headline improvement lies a clear warning: organised criminals are still targeting the countryside, with valuable farming equipment remaining high on their list.

In the South West, the cost of agricultural vehicle theft rose by 18% last year, with quad bikes, excavators and dumpers among the items particularly targeted. These specialist vehicles are essential to modern farming, helping farmers manage land, livestock and day-to-day operations — but their value and mobility also make them attractive to thieves.

There was more encouraging news around livestock theft in the region, with costs falling by 6.6% — bucking the UK-wide trend, which saw livestock theft costs rise by 30% to £4.5 million in 2025.

A concerted effort from farmers, insurers and the police has also helped to significantly reduce the cost of theft of valuable GPS devices across the UK, showing what can be achieved when the industry works together.

Nick Turner, Chief Executive of NFU Mutual, said: "For more than 20 years, NFU Mutual has called for a stronger response to rural crime, and we know the financial and emotional toll it takes on farmers.

"As a mutual, our support goes beyond paying claims: last year we invested over £500,000 in rural crime initiatives, including ongoing funding for the National Rural Crime Unit and the UK's first dedicated livestock theft officer. We also collaborate with the unit to identify at-risk areas and support recovery efforts.

"In addition, we also worked with local police forces to install 13 ANPR cameras across rural hotspots in England and Wales to track suspicious vehicles and disrupt criminal activity."

For more information on rural crime trends and advice on how to tackle rural crime in your area search '**NFU Mutual Rural Crime Report**'.

*Estimated costs based on NFU Mutual claims statistics, rounded to the nearest £100,000. Percentage changes are based on exact figures.

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CLUB OF THE MONTH

Supported by South West Farmer

NEWTON ST CYRES YFC

Newton St Cyres Young Farmers have been recognised following an incredible show of community spirit, after organising a memorial tractor run for their fellow YFC member, Nathan Saunders.

Nathan sadly died aged 19 following an agricultural accident earlier this year. A much-loved member of Newton St Cyres YFC with a passion for farming, the club wanted to organise an event that would bring people together in his memory.

What started with fewer than 100 tractors booked quickly grew as support flooded in. On the day, an incredible 180 tractors took part in the run through the Crediton area, with hundreds of people lining the route to show their support.

Nathan's restored Ford 4000 had a special place at the front of the procession, driven by Newton St Cyres member and current Haldon YFC Chairman Harry Grigg.

Nathan's parents, Steph and Steve Saunders, said: "The support for the tractor run was completely overwhelming and it was incredibly special to see so many people come together in Nathan's memory.

"We would like to thank everyone who helped, sponsored, attended and played a part in making it such a special day. A huge thank you must also go to Harry and Milly Grigg, who put so much into organising the event and did Newton St Cyres YFC incredibly proud."

The event has now raised more than £13,000 for Devon Air Ambulance and the Yellow Wellies Farm Safety Foundation.

Newton St Cyres YFC's outgoing Club Secretary and one of the tractor run organisers, Milly Grigg, says: "We were completely overwhelmed by the support. We went into the weekend with fewer than 100 tractors booked and never imagined that 180 would turn up on the day.

"It wasn't just Newton St Cyres members who made it happen. Young Farmers from across Haldon Group and further afield came together to help, alongside Nathan's family, friends and the wider farming community. It was a real example of what YFC is all about – supporting each other when it matters most."







Welcome to the Devon YFC jobs board! Here we display job adverts from the farming and rural community across the South West. If you would like to advertise a job vacancy for your business, please contact organiser@devonyfc.co.uk. **Find out more information, with links to apply at www.devonyfc.co.uk/jobs.**

Perkins Ltd – Area Sales Manager

Perkins Ltd is looking for an enthusiastic and motivated Area Sales Manager to join its family-run agricultural supply business, supporting farmers across West, Mid and North Devon. They are looking for someone with strong communication and relationship-building skills, ideally with experience in agriculture, sales or account management.

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TALKWORKS tips: How to manage anxiety

Feeling worried or stressed from time-to-time is normal, but if anxiety is starting to affect your day-to-day life, here are three tips to help you to feel less anxious:

1. **Focus on your breathing.** Taking a few slow, steady breaths can help calm your mind.
2. **Keep moving.** Physical activity can help reduce stress and anxiety.
3. **Talk to someone.** Talking to someone you trust can help take the weight off your shoulders.

If anxiety is affecting your everyday life, TALKWORKS is here to help. You can access free one-to-one therapy sessions, interactive group courses and online self-help through Devon's NHS Talking Therapies service. Visit our website, call 0300 555 3344 to speak to a member of the team or email dpt.talkworks@nhs.net.

Friends of DEVON YFC



The supporters club for Devon Young Farmers friends, followers and past members. Support the running of our federation whilst also receiving these benefits:

- Entry into three cash prize draws throughout the year!
- Stay up-to-date with Devon YFC news by receiving our monthly digital Devon YFC newsletter
- Invitation to the County AGM and our annual Chairman's Reception at the Devon County Show.
- Invitation to special commemorative events.

All funds raised through Friends of Devon YFC will support our ongoing programme of activities for all members aged 10 – 28. **Become a Friend of Devon YFC today and you can make a difference to over 1,500 young people across Devon.**



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

NOVEMBER

6th: Tamar Cup Rugby Match
7th-8th: Officer Training Weekend
7th: Ivybridge YFC Dinner & Dance
9th: County Bowling Finals
10th: Leaders Training
12th: Intermediate and Senior Just a Minute
15th: Senior After Dinner Speaking Finals
19th: County AGM
21st-22nd: English Winter Fair
25th: Clip and Climb
26th: 'The Art of Semen Selection' Agri Session
28th: Winkleigh YFC Blind Drop





Find information about all our upcoming training courses, from telehandler courses to self defence, as well as all the forms to sign up here!

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