

YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS OF ULSTER

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Executive Committee present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 August 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Association's Articles of Association, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016)

Objectives and activities

The work of the Association's is guided by the mission statement: "... to encourage individual development, creativity, initiative and contribution for the benefit of members, the association, and the community." And this is applied under the Strategic Aims and Operational Objectives set out in the Association's Strategic Plan.

As the largest rural youth organisation in Northern Ireland, we inspire our active membership to flourish through the development of life skills and education, while serving the wider rural community as part of a vibrant, inclusive organisation, underpinned by strong governance.

As a volunteer led organisation we nurture and develop young people by encouraging participation in a selection of innovative and often unique opportunities in education, training, personal development and fun.

Our Values

- Engaging positively with our members and communicating the good
- Encouraging growth, development and participation through all opportunities
- Having a positive impact on our people, our community and our environment

People & Partnerships

To have highly valued, enthusiastic and committed members and staff, who work together to make YFCU & each other the best they can be, by communicating and engaging with local partners, sectoral groups and having a positive impact on our local rural communities.

Encourage & Equip

To deliver a portfolio of programmes, activities and resources that encourage members to engage and grow, whilst equipping them with the tools and skills needed to develop.

Relevant & Resilient

To be relevant in our mission as Northern Ireland's leading rural youth organisation, using our position to encourage strong communities and build resilient farmers for the future.

Our Commitment

Our People

To grow our membership as a youth shaped organisation where everyone is valued, encouraged and equipped to grow to their full potential

To provide a rewarding portfolio of activities, events and opportunities, where people are encouraged, rewarded and recognised.

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Our Community

As a member-led organisation, we seek to make a fundamental difference to young people living in NI, specifically rural and isolated areas, and their associated communities.

To provide our services and programmes through our clubs which are geographically spread through rural NI and in collaboration with local community groups and partners.

Our Environment

As farmers of the future, YFCU seeks to educate their members to be able to make sustainable, efficient and profitable environmentally friendly choice.

To encourage environmental sustainability and good farming practice within YFCU clubs, members and their families.

Achievements and performance

The Association has two key performance indicators, membership and participation. Membership increased by 60% back to pre-Covid levels. Participation rates in the Association's programme of training and competitions once again increased, reaffirming the relevance and value of these to the membership.

Proficiency Award Scheme- Rewarding Members

When a member competes in the central competitions they are awarded a proficiency. Proficiencies are awarded as follows:

- An award of Merit (40%) is worth 1 point
- An award of Distinction (75%) is worth 2 points

The competition year runs from 1st September- 31st August. All members were issued with a certificate. Level 10 plus are presented with badges at the AGM & Conference.

During 2022/2023 a total of 2,091 certificates were issued to recognise member's participation in YFCU activities.

We also have the President's Award Scheme during the year to reward members participating outside competition.

Child Protection Training

Child protection training continues to be a priority for the Association. During 2022/2023 a total of 59 members took part in the Keeping Members Safe training.

As part of our child protection strategy, the YFCU continues to ensure that staff, key elected officials and volunteers/ trainers are checked through Access NI. All members, parents and office bearers are provided with access to the Association's child protection policies and procedures.

External Scheme

YFCU continues to be a centre for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, thus giving our members the opportunity to take part in this challenging and highly rewarding youth development programme. This year, we had 16 members achieve their bronze awards, 12 members achieved their silver award and 6 gold award recipients.

Investment Performance

The YFCU continues to attempt to source the best rate for unrestricted and restricted funds in the fixed term 'Corporate Account' although in this low investment rate environment, the rates achieved are poor.

Investment in UK listed investments delivered interest income of £14,491 (2022: £12,665) while Endowment fund showed a loss of £9,933 (2022: loss £7,086) from a balance of £329,470 at 1st September 2022.

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Financial review

As in previous years the Association's core funding is from grants, provided by Education Authority (EA) and Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA). In addition to grants, monies are raised from donations, sponsorship, membership and competition fees.

This year there was an increase in income of £121,557 (2022: Increase of £992,562). Overall the Accounts show a surplus of £193,621 (2022: surplus £168,386). A Headquarters deficit of £32,921 is recorded (includes endowment deficit). The principles of 'best value' and 'added value' continue to be applied to all expenditure and activities undertaken.

It is the policy of the Association that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three- and six-month's expenditure. The Executive Committee considers that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Association's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year. The Executive Committee has considered the level of reserves required and has agreed a policy where the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be between 9-12 months of unrestricted annual expenditure. The unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets at 31 August 2023 are £455,219 with the unrestricted annual expenditure range being £194,942 (9 months) to £259,922 (12 months). The reserves held are currently in excess of the agreed reserves policy.

The Executive Committee has assessed the major risks to which the Association is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

The Executive Committees' assessment of the major risks has identified that loss of government grants is the major financial risk for the charity. A key element in the management of financial risk includes active discussion with the funders and regular review of funds and active management of trade debtors and creditors balances to ensure sufficient working capital.

Attention has also been focused on non-financial risks arising from fire, health and safety, child protection, litigation, etc. These risks are managed by ensuring robust policies and procedures are in place and regular awareness training for members in these areas. A child Protection Officer is employed to ensure Access NI compliance and staff training is available.

Structure, governance and management

The Young Farmer's Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 1st November 1957 and registered as a charity on 6th February 1967 with the Inland Revenue. On the 23rd February 2015 YFCU registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which set up the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association which were revised at the AGM in 2017. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1.

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The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Executive Committee.

Under the requirements of the Articles of Association, the members of the Executive Committee are elected to serve for a period of one year after which they must be nominated and elected at the next Annual General Meeting.

The Executive Committee comprises of the:

1. President
2. Immediate Past President
3. Deputy President
4. Vice-Presidents (4)
5. Honorary Treasurer of the Association
6. Two representatives nominated by each County Committee
7. Chairman and Vice Chairman of each Sub-Committee appointed by that Committee
8. One representative of the Ulster Farmers' Union
9. Two representatives of the persons co-opted to the County Committees
10. Chief Executive Officer of the Association (without vote)
11. Two persons co-opted by the Executive Committee
12. One co-opted as a YFCU representative on Rural Youth Europe Board

If appropriate, the Executive Committee may also include the standing Board member representing the Association on the Board of Rural Youth Europe. And if desired, one Life Member of the Association (ex officio).

As a young person's organisation the focus of the Executive Committee is on ensuring that the developmental need of this group are appropriately reflected throughout its membership and activities. To embed this, members nominated for election to the Executive Committee by County Committees must directly represent the membership of senior clubs.

The Charity indemnifies every relevant Trustee against any liability incurred in successfully defending legal proceedings in that capacity, or in connection with any application in which relief is granted by the Court from liability for negligence, default or breach of duty or breach of trust in relation to the Charity.

The company's current policy concerning the payment of trade creditors is to follow the CBI's Prompt Payers Code (copies are available from the CBI, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DU).

The company's current policy concerning the payment of trade creditors is to:

- settle the terms of payment with suppliers when agreeing the terms of each transaction;
- ensure that suppliers are made aware of the terms of payment by inclusion of the relevant terms in contracts; and
- pay in accordance with the company's contractual and other legal obligations.

Trade creditors of the company at the year end were equivalent to 14 day's purchases, based on the average daily amount invoiced by suppliers during the year.

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The governing body of the Association is the Council which meets annually at its AGM in April. The Council appoints an Executive Committee of up to 29 members with the power to manage and administer the business of the Association. The Executive Committee meets a minimum of six times per year.

At its first meeting the Executive Committee annually elects a Special Purposes Committee that reports to it on delegated issues such as finance, personnel and strategy.

In addition it appoints two sub committees which normally meet 3-5 times per year and report to the Executive Committee on aspects of the Association's activities. The ongoing role of these committees is review by the Executive from time to time.

These sub committees are Programming & Development and Agri & Rural Affairs.

The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Executive Committee to manage the day to day operations of the Association and supervision of the staff team.

While members elected to the Association's Executive Committee are already familiar with the practical work of the Association, they attend the Executive Board training weekend in April each year to familiarise themselves with aims of the Association and their role, responsibilities and duties as directors. These events are jointly led by the Chair of the Executive Committee and the Chief Executive Officer.

Over the last few years these residential events have covered areas such as governance, CRED, directors' duties, policies, communication, finance, departmental priorities, strategic planning and have involved internal and external speakers. The content is reviewed each year in line with strategic need and skill set shortages.


All Salaries and Terms and Conditions are considered by the Special Purposes Committee on an annual basis and ratified by the Executive (Board).


The Executive Committee receives support from the Education Authority (EA) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) who fund the work of the Association in providing training and social education opportunities for young people in our rural communities. Members and staff sit on organising committees and working parties of a number of Groups including the EA Regional Advisory Group, the Rural Development Programme Monitoring Committee, The open Farm Weekend Working Party, The Farm Safety Partnership, the Regional Voluntary Youth Organisations' Reference Group (RVYO Network) and Committees overseeing the work of Grassroots Challenge and Peace IV programmes.

Auditor

In accordance with the company's articles, a resolution proposing that Harbinson Mulholland be reappointed as auditor of the company will be put at a General Meeting.

The Executive Committee report was approved by the Board of Executive Committee.


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Mr Richard Beattie
Chair, Executive Committee
Dated: 20/2/24


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Mr Robert Esler
Honorary Treasurer
Dated: 20/2/24

YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS OF ULSTER

STATEMENT OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 AUGUST 2023

The Executive Committee, who are also the directors of Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster for the purpose of company law, are responsible for preparing the Executive Committee Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company Law requires the Executive Committee to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Association and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the Executive Committee are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Association will continue in operation.

The Executive Committee are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Association and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Association and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.