Recruiting new members...

New members bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm which can often revitalise a club. As the ‘Countryside’s best kept secret’ we need to actively go out and find new members. The following pages will give you helpful tips and advice to boost your membership. Look at your club demographics and decide which age groups to target.

Plan the campaign
Recruiting new members should be an ongoing process throughout the year, but a specific recruitment drive may be necessary to increase your membership figures. Either way, you’ll need to plan your campaign. Begin by having a meeting with members to discuss the best ways of recruiting new members and draw up an action plan of how this can be done. Make sure your targets are SMART:

Specific – Write down who you’re targeting and what you want to achieve.
Measurable – Outline the goals, so that you can check you’ve achieved them. For example, you might want to recruit 10 new members and, as most existing members are seniors, these would ideally be five intermediate and five juniors.
Achievable – Make goals challenging yet achievable and ones that involve everyone
Realistic – Always make goals realistic using the time and resources you have available.
Timescale – Set a realistic timeframe to achieve these goals and keep everyone informed.

Attracting new members
There could be lots of young people living in the area that may wish to join YFC but have just not heard about it. How effective are we at promoting the fact that you don’t have to be a farmer to join? YFC is an organisation that members are proud to belong to, so it’s up to us to tell people about the benefits of belonging to YFC.

To recruit new members as part of a campaign you could consider: online recruitment, social media, newsletters, posters, bring a friend evenings, open evenings, word of mouth, leaflets, display boards, local newspapers, radio and TV. Make all your promotional material fun, colourful and attractive to the public as this will encourage people to attend your club and events. Use the same branding i.e logo on all material as this will become instantly recognisable to local people.

How visible is your online presence?
• Have an attractive and engaging website and check which websites have links to your club’s website/Facebook page and that the details are up to date. Decide with your County officers whether to use your county’s contact details as the initial point of contact for new member enquiries or set up an email address for your club.

• Search online for things to do in your area to see if YFC appears in the top rankings. Make sure your club’s details can be found on local community websites and you have reciprocal links to partner websites.
Making it happen Recruiting new members

Social media
Many young people use social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter daily. If your club uses these sites, check the privacy settings to see whether the pages are open to the public – you need to be to recruit. If they are, think carefully as to the content of your pages, who can post on the site and decide who has overall responsibility for its content. Your page should include a piece about YFC, a link to your website, a link to the county website and contact details. Keep the YFC Facebook page for YFC business and separate from your personal pages to ensure that personal information is not shared. Whilst Twitter is not a direct recruitment tool, it’s important to know that it’s being used to advertise YFC even if members don’t realise that they’re doing it. For example, people who don’t follow the club can see what their YFC friends are tweeting: “Got another great YFC club event on tonight #YFCrocks.” If members use it wisely to advertise YFC, it could encourage non-members to find out more. If you would like to know more about using social media as part of your recruitment campaign, speak to the Communications Officer at NFYFC for further guidance.

Websites
Many people search online for things to do and clubs to join. Make the most of your website by making sure the homepage is welcoming and engaging for potential new members and not designed exclusively for existing members. Provide a new members’ section written especially for people who have no previous knowledge of YFC and include an enquiry form or email address for people to request more information. Try to update the site regularly, so it stays fresh. Finally, if you get an enquiry make sure you respond quickly and are always friendly and welcoming.

Presentations
Recruitment presentations can take place in a variety of settings, such as at schools, events and conferences. It’s an ideal opportunity not only to recruit new members, but to publicise your club and YFC. Be sure your presentation is appropriate for the group you are presenting it to. Use the correct language and promote various activities depending on the age group and setting. If it is a small group you could include an activity

When planning your presentation remember to consider:
Introduction – Grab the audience’s attention.
Objective – Keep it brief and make the objective of the presentation clear.
Language – Keep it simple, not patronising. Try and add humour where necessary.
Voice – Speak with enthusiasm, rather than with a monotonous tone.
Speed – Vary the speed of the presentation and use pauses where necessary.
Pitch/level – Make it appropriate to the audience.
Audience – Involve the audience and keep them interested. Use eye contact.
Visual aids – Use good quality aids if necessary.
Mannerisms – Try to avoid distracting mannerisms.
Conclusion – Round off well and succinctly.
Handouts – Give out recruitment posters and leaflets at the end.

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Posters
When designing a recruitment poster choose a clear typeface and make it eye-catching and colourful. Make use of members’ skills, such as IT and drawing. Remember to include the club’s name, venue, meeting time and date along with up-to-date contact details. Make sure the main contact, (an over 18 year old) agrees to their details being on the poster and is available to receive enquiries. Give posters to members who can put them up in schools and local shops as well as on parish, village hall, library and doctors’ notice-boards. Take down out-of-date posters.

Leaflets
Recruitment leaflets can be used in many different settings. Here are a few helpful hints:

- Computers produce bold, legible designs, but good hand-drawn designs can often look more friendly.
- Keep the design simple if it is going to be photocopied.
- Ensure vital information is included, especially a contact address and phone number.
- Consider the audience and language you use – avoid jargon.
- Ask for feedback on the leaflet from non-members to see what they think.
- Ask other members to proofread the leaflet before you finally print or copy it.
- Save a copy and update when required.

Whether to print or photocopy the leaflets will depend on the budget and the number of copies required. Printing can work out cheaper for large volumes and enhances the quality, particularly of photographs. Be realistic about how many copies are needed and distribute them to shops and services in the local area.

Newsletters
Use a newsletter as part of the recruitment campaign and distribute copies at similar venues to those listed for leaflets. Remember to include:

- An introduction to the club and its aims.
- A feature that will be of interest to new members, such as a round-up of all the activities and competitions that will take place in the coming year or an article from someone who recently joined the club about their first year as a YFC member.
- Diary dates and details of the club programme.
- A slip that can be cut out and returned for enquiries from potential new members.

You could do a leaflet/letter drop posting information through mailboxes in the local area.

Club Programme
Having a printed club programme, which shows the full range of different activities, is a great way to promote YFC and give potential members a flavor of the sorts of things they can get involved with.