

## **Frequently Asked Questions – October 2018 – ahead of Council meeting**

### **1. The Board and its responsibilities**

The Board of the NFYFC is appointed by the NFYFC Council (*elected representatives of YFC members*) with the full power to superintend and conduct the business of the Federation as its committee of management (charitable trustees). As a charitable organisation, the NFYFC Board and its members hold the legal duties and responsibilities (as well as personal liability) for:

- The organisation's activities and its reputation (including the actions of its members)
- Finance
- Protecting and safeguarding the organisation.

There are legal responsibilities of the managing trustees (Board of Management). These responsibilities are also held by YFC Club Management Committees and a county federation executive committees, or county boards and include:

- To advance the purposes and charitable objectives of the NFYFC
- To be responsible for the proper and legal administration of the NFYFC
- Accepting ultimate responsibility for everything the NFYFC does.

The Board of Management is responsible for the **vision, mission and management of the charity**.

[Click here](#) for more detail.

### **2. Who sits on the NFYFC Board of Management?**

**The Board comprises:**

- The Chair of the NFYFC Council – elected by the Council annually.
- The two Vice Chairs of the NFYFC – elected by the Council annually.
- Four YFC members, elected by the NFYFC, following nominations from the YFC community. The Council meeting in June 2018 agreed to recruit these members in a different way, so the recruitment process is underway for these places.
- Treasurer – elected by the Council.
- There are currently two independent places on the NFYFC Board. One place is vacant – it has been filled, however the recent national press coverage has meant that this person has put on hold when they will join the Board. The other is held by a youth work and governance specialist.
- The 'YFC' Director of HOPS Labour Solutions Ltd is also on the Board – a YFC associate member who also holds a directorship for NFYFC commercial company.
- The Chief Officer attends the Board meeting and does not hold a vote and acts the secretariat.

The Chair of the Board is currently occupied by an independent – youth work and organisational management specialist. The post holder reaches the end of the term of office in October 2018.

### **3. Annual Convention – why the NFYFC Board made and communicated its decision**

At the June NFYFC Council meeting, the scale, magnitude and impact of the antisocial behavior was presented to Council members and discussed. The outcomes of these discussions with the Council were summarised by the Chair of the meeting as:-

- Members that have been identified have been expelled and we are continuing to look for others.
- Board of Management and Council cannot offer the required guarantees to allow us to run the event again in 2019.
- Before we can even consider running an event again, cultural change is required at club and county level.

The Council was aware that the Board was to make the decision at the end of July/early August – the decision was made then and communicated to all on 2 August 2018.

The negative press attention that the Annual Convention has attracted in recent years is causing harm to the Federation and carries with it huge reputational risks for the organisation and its members.

As an organisation that represents young people from the age of 10 to 26 the Board have a legal responsibility to safeguard the organisation and demonstrate due diligence in the way it operates. The increase in social media coverage of incidents associated with the event and the YFC brand are damaging for the Federation and the people involved. Rather than the publicity showcasing the great achievements inside the event venue, the reports are centred on the actions in the town where the event is held.

The decision of the Board is made in order to safeguard and protect the organisation and its members from further and reoccurring harm. The communications strategy adopted by the NFYFC was to protect the reputation of the YFC membership and the YFC community, including the NFYFC. This had been, by and large, successful immediately after the event concerning the antisocial behaviour of YFC members in Blackpool in May 2018 as the media coverage was not wide-spread.

However, you may have seen new attention by the national media last week in the Times, The MailOnline (the most read English language news site in the world) and The Sun, which was prompted by the news about the vote of no confidence and not by NFYFC.

The rise in complaints received by the NFYFC from the residents of Blackpool, businesses and visitors has been very significant this year - more than 90 letters/emails directly to the YFC Centre and many damaging comments on social media. These comments now form part of NFYFC's digital footprint and will be available for all to see for a very long time. This is evidenced in the national media coverage of last week which referred to incidents in previous years.

Since May, we know of YFC members who have been especially scrutinsed at interview because of their YFC membership – this is serious and harmful to young people in the infancy of their careers. This is an example of the serious reputational harm that has been done.

The decision to cancel the event is most definitely not a punishment – it is recognition that an event that brings about such a high level of complaint and exposes the organisation and its membership to ongoing reputational damage is no longer suitable for an organisation with members aged 10 to 26. YFC members are at a stage in their lives where they are transitioning into adulthood. YFC county federations have worked very hard to ensure the membership attending the Convention are aware of their personal responsibility to uphold the values of a young person's organisation. It is clear from the incidents reported that the membership is ignoring this.

The NFYFC Board of Management is held to account by the committee that appoints it – the NFYFC Council. It is accountable to the Financial Conduct Authority and the organisation also goes through

a full financial audit annually. The organisation has had good audit reports for many years demonstrating solid financial management.

There is now a motion of no confidence in the Board, which is the ultimate test of accountability. The vote takes place later this month.

#### **4. Communications of the decision with the YFC Community**

The Board issued a statement on 2 August 2018. This was sent through all formal YFC channels – a direct email to members of the NFYFC Council, County Chairs and to the County Offices. The same statement was also posted on NFYFC's website and official social media channels as it is known that this information platform is used most often and is where a lot of members would be debating the issues. The same statements were issued to the farming journals and the Blackpool news media at the same time as these publications were chasing hard for the decision. The statements did not refer in detail to the antisocial behavior to protect the reputation of the membership.

A second statement was issued on 10 August, again protection of members' and the organisation's reputation was an important factor.

#### **5. NFYFC Council and its responsibilities**

The Council appoints the NFYFC Board of Management and gives them the full power to superintend and conduct the business of the Federation as the Federation's committee of management (charitable trustees).

The NFYFC Council comprises representatives elected by YFC County Federations and other elected positions (President, Vice Presidents, Life Vice Presidents, for example) and has the power to establish working groups and steering groups to determine the work of the Federation. Members of the Council hold responsibilities for communicating the work of the NFYFC to the YFC membership and to also inform the membership of discussions held at meetings of the Council.

The Council is charged with shaping the overall policy for the federation, continuing the development and leadership of YFCs to meet the needs of its members and developing the status and image of YFC to the outside world.

The steering groups of the NFYFC Council also decide and shape the programme of work for the NFYFC - planning events, competitions, campaigns and training for members.

#### **6. Finance**

The finances of the NFYFC are always reported to the NFYFC Council – the members of the Council have management accounts to take away and to scrutinize – they are invited to bring forward any questions at any time.

The Annual Convention did make an operating surplus which will be missed. The NFYFC reserves are strong, and allow the NFYFC's membership to examine the future of the organisation without making decisions to cut spending immediately – that is important – a rush to cut spending means a cut in services and programmes as well. It is known that services provided by the NFYFC are much needed and demand is increasing. A quick decision to reduce spending (resulting in cuts to services) would be very damaging to county federations and to YFC Clubs.

## **7. Strategic Plan**

The consultation with the YFC membership that has just closed is one of a series of consultations that will be taking place as the organisation's membership establishes the priorities for the future. The questions are designed for the YFC membership to have a say in which programmes matter to them. The questions asked are extremely helpful in ranking the programmes that YFC members most enjoy/value and several questions included the option to strongly disagree, which allows the YFC membership to send very strong messages of disapproval. Several questions, especially those around national events, asked for answers as 'free text' – giving YFC members the opportunity to write their own views in their own words.

As these consultations progress, it is the intention of the NFYFC to hold consultation meetings and road-show events to gather the solid information required to examine the future direction and services needed to support YFC Clubs. The results of all the consultations are to be reviewed by a group of YFC members – so YFC members will shape and direct the strategic plan with the required information at hand to understand the views of the YFC membership.

YFC members should think about putting their name forward to be part of this group when the call is made for YFC members to join the Vision:2023 Strategic Planning working group – this call will be made after the Council meeting (if the Council agrees to it).

## **8. Votes at Council meetings**

The October 2018 meeting of the NFYFC Council is the last meeting of the 2018 year. The county-nominated representatives that should attend and use the 'county vote' are those nominated for the 2018 Council [not the new ones that county federations and nominating at meetings for the 2019 year].

As is usual at a Council meeting, votes will be issued only to the named 2018 Council representatives for each county federation. As is normal practice, if they cannot attend, and another person is attending as deputy, the YFC Centre MUST be informed that this is the case and be given the name of the deputy in advance of the meeting – at least 24 hrs before the meeting. The voting card will then be issued to the named deputy only.

Also please note, the YFC should also know who else may be attending the meeting – for the catering and seating arrangements that need to be organised. Anyone planning to attend can alert the office using [post@nfyfc.org.uk](mailto:post@nfyfc.org.uk).

It is important that the discussions at your county executive and area meetings steer the way in which the Council vote is used – i.e. your Council representatives must have the discretion to use the vote in another way if he/she becomes aware of additional information as the actual debate at the meeting of the NFYFC Council progresses. If they think this changes the way in which the vote should be used – they must feel empowered to do what is best (for the YFC members they represent) on the day.

Remember, people in the body of the Council meeting may well say things that are game-changers – this happens in many debates held week in and week out in many organisations, so it is important to recognise this from the outset. This process demonstrates and enables representational democracy.

As county federations plan their approach and response it is important that county executive committees consider their position, whilst also making sure their Council members are given the discretion to act as they think is best after hearing and participating in the debate.