



Tips for Young Farmer Leaders

# Running a Successful Club

Secretary





# Welcome to running **Successful Clubs – Tips for Leaders**

- a guide to help you run a strong and successful Young Farmers Club.

*The first thing to be said is*

**THANKYOU**

*for your willingness to put time into your local Club.  
Your dedication to the job is greatly appreciated.*

We recognise that the Secretary's job is very important to a successful club so we have put together this handbook which should help you in your leadership role. Please take the time to read the following guidelines and put into practice the suggestions.

The guidelines and advice compiled here are the collective wisdom of different members of successful Young Farmers Clubs, gained from making a Club work for the needs of the members.

Having fun is the core to a successful Club because people like participating in things they enjoy, so always look to run Club events that the members want to do!!

It sounds basic but this is a key to your Club's success.

Now it's over to you to run your Young Farmers Club to the best of your ability.

**Remember work as a team because we're all in it together....  
enjoy!**

## The Clubs are the Building Blocks of the Organisation

NZYF is a great organisation to be part of. It provides many opportunities: having fun, making friends, advancing your career, improving your skills, winning great prizes, traveling overseas ....just to name a few.

These opportunities are huge, but most of the action happens at the club level. This is because the clubs are the engine room of NZYF. This is where people hang out, share a pint, yarns are traded and lifelong friendships are formed. The clubs are where the fun starts and people connect.



So, NZYF is all about fun and friends. Doing stuff that interests the members and having fun along the way. Doesn't that sound all too simple?

Well, it is .....and it isn't!

Things don't organise themselves so in order to have club activities somebody has to take the plunge and commit to organizing them. This can be quite challenging for some and deadly simple for others, but rewarding for all.

So to make life as easy as possible for all, we have drawn up these guidelines for club organisers to fast track your learning and help you get into the organising groove without tears and stomping feet.

Basically each club needs someone where the buck stops. This is the Chairperson. They are the person who can be contacted about any general aspects of the club life. However, they do not do all the organising work in the club that is a group effort.



Then there is the secretary, who keeps note on the club activities. Next is the treasurer who does the banking and keeps control of the finances.

There are a few other people involved but these three are the main players in the clubs life.

It's not a complicated affair so look at the guidelines below, follow the tips and go for it!

# CLUB SECRETARY

The efficiency of a Young Farmers Club depends on the efforts of the Secretary.

To be a successful Secretary, you need a capacity for regular and consistent work. You must be enthusiastic for ventures undertaken by the Club and display initiative and tact in your dealings with people and situations.

In addition to these qualities, Secretaries need to be neat and methodical in their work because others will find it necessary to refer to Club records.

All correspondence and records are the property of the Club and should be carefully looked after. This makes it much easier for a newly elected Secretary to follow the development to date.

Like your Chairperson, you should show an interest in all members, even if at times some irritate you almost to the point of distraction - never let it show.

## ***Communication***

The greatest barrier in Young Farmers is the lack of communication at all levels. This is evident at Club meetings when the Chairperson and Secretary have private discussions during the meeting, while the remainder of the members are kept waiting.

It is necessary to meet with your Chairperson before the meeting so that you are both fully aware of all matters likely to be discussed.

If anything of importance arises between the meetings, then advise your Chairperson in case immediate action is needed.

Where possible, provide your members with a written agenda. Otherwise use a blackboard and chalk or a large piece of paper and marker pen to make a display agenda. This is one certain way of ensuring that you are breaking the communications barrier between the committee and members. This will make the members feel that they have a part to play in the Club.

You should answer all correspondence that requires a reply and where necessary send appropriate letters of congratulations and appreciation.

Encourage members to give comprehensive reports about District and Regional meetings and activities that they have attended. This will help build self confidence especially among new members.

## ***Club Secretary Job Description***

1. Maintain effective communication with Chairperson and Committee members, this is essential.
2. Keep up to date the following items:
  - The final copy of minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
  - Headline correspondence as it arrives and liaise with the Chairperson on this.
  - Ensure the Publicity Officer has all the correct details regarding dates, times and venues for upcoming activities.

3. Attend district and regional meetings as this will give you a more in-depth appraisal of the organisation.

4. Some Clubs draw up a calendar (or diary) for the year, which includes meeting and activity dates, guest speakers each month, etc. The Secretary can use this as a check throughout the year. This calendar can be added to the official records throughout the year and be used as resource material by future secretaries.

### ***Hints for the Secretary***

- You are one of the doers of your Club. Be a doer.
- Your efficiency will ensure an easier job for the Chairperson as well as yourself. The Club will prosper from your efforts.
- Handle items as they arrive, do not let them build up.
- Use your telephone (and take notes or follow-up with a letter).
- Your work will make the Club run effectively.
- Have a well organised area at home to handle the Secretary's duties. Ensure Young Farmers material doesn't get mixed up with other business.

### ***Meeting Preparation***

#### **Before the meeting the Secretary needs to undertake the following duties:**

1. Give notice of meeting to all members in accordance with procedure. This can be done via e-mail, phone or Club newsletter.
2. You may invite a guest speaker. If so, do so at least two weeks prior to the meeting date, never leave the invitation until 24 hours prior. A personal approach by telephone or in person is the most valuable means of contact.
3. If a guest speaker is invited, collect all the necessary information for the introduction, i.e. (name, title, occupation, special interests etc). Introductions are normally made by the Chairperson, and remind him/her to arrange before the meeting begins, a proposer of a vote of thanks before the meeting begins.
4. Follow up with the guest speaker about 24 hours before the meeting to remind them of their expected arrival time.
5. Prepare the agenda. This will require some consultation with the Chairperson and maybe sub-committee members. Include all activities to be reported on during the meeting.
6. Make sure that the Chairperson has a copy of the agenda in sufficient time for them to prepare for the meeting.

7. Prepare all the paperwork in sequence to avoid searching for papers during the meeting.
8. Just before the meeting, get together with the Chairperson to discuss the agenda and all the business (including matters arising from the previous meeting) to be brought up at the meeting. This will include all incoming and outgoing correspondence.
9. Also notify any members who are to give reports to enable them to gather their thoughts and prepare their reports.
10. If your Club calls for written nominations for officials, send out or hand out nomination forms prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

*At the Meeting:*

1. Arrive early for the meeting to be prepared. Arrange for the preparation of the meeting room to be organised by the members.
2. Greet and mix with new members. If the Publicity Officer is busy, introduce the new members to the Chairperson and other members. Remember that you and the Chairperson are the focal point at a meeting and it is best for people to meet you, or at least know your names. This job may be better handled by the Vice-Chairperson as the Club Secretary has plenty to organise before the meeting.

The role of Secretary has an important public relations aspect to it. You are the Club's letter writer, the person everyone turns to for help or information, and in many cases as a guide to Club procedure. Remember, the public will tend to judge the Club on the image its members present.

3. Read aloud the minutes of the previous meeting when asked by the Chairperson. (Note: Minutes read at an AGM are those recorded at the previous year's AGM.)
4. Ensure the minutes are signed and dated once they are confirmed as a true and correct record.
5. Read all correspondence when requested by the Chairperson. Long letters need not be read in full. Read them before the meeting and mark any important sections to be read. Remember to include important dates etc.
6. It is important your voice carries around the room so all attendees hear you. Speak clearly and with appropriate volume.
7. Record the motions accurately and legibly in clear language, taking care to record all proceedings. Include the full name of the mover and seconder of motions and amendments. All motions, whether carried or lost, need to be recorded - those that are withdrawn do not. Keep the minutes brief and informative so that time is well used at subsequent meetings. Rough minutes are best written into an exercise book and completed in a minute book or folder later.
8. You can move or second any motion, if you wish.
9. When recording the minutes, make a list of all letters to be written and duties to be performed, so these can be actioned.

### After the Meeting:

1. Arrange for the venue to be cleaned up, lights turned off and all doors locked if necessary.
2. Write any letters that are necessary and perform any duties required.
3. Write up the Minutes in a bound book as soon as possible to ensure that they are an accurate record of the meeting, while they are still fresh in your mind.
4. Write a thank you letter to the guest speaker and express the Club's appreciation.
5. Action the decisions of the meeting.
6. Check with the Chairperson before leaving the meeting to ensure there are no additional items which need attending to.

### **Club Rolls**

Club membership rolls are very important to the Young Farmers to keep track of how many members are in the organisation, how old they are and how long they stay members. So keeping the roll as up-to-date as possible is an important role for the Secretary.

Liaise closely with the Treasurer on the roll numbers. Immediately following your AGM, complete the Club Roll update form and the Club AGM form outlining the new officeholders and send this to the Regional Executive Officer (REO) before the 31st March each year. Retain a copy for your records.

During the year record any necessary amendments to the Club roll and send to the REO. The information will show:

- change of address;
- change of phone/fax/e-mail/mobile;
- change of name;
- change of office holders;
- new members/members who have left;
- members that may have transferred to/from another Club.

In making any changes write in the member's number and then write in the change (no need to write out in full all details).

Keep your own copy and record the date on it when you sent it to the REO. Preferably keep your records on computer.

### **Correspondence**

- If you receive an invitation to any function it is courteous to reply stating acceptance or declining the invitation.
- It is most helpful for catering at a function if a reply is made, stating approximately the number of members that will attend.

- People appreciate receiving a letter of thanks after they have performed a service to your Club.
- Use simple expressions in your written/spoken comments.
- We all have our own particular and natural style of writing letters - *“Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the secret of style.”*
- Choose simple words and an easy style rather than being stilted or long winded. It is preferable to type all your letters.

### ***Duties of the District Secretary***

1. Take the role of Secretary at District Meetings.
2. Prepare the agenda for district meeting and assemble relevant information in order. Ask the Treasurer to present a financial statement.
3. Purchase stamps, envelopes etc and send out agendas to delegates by fax, mail or e-mail.
4. Collate all correspondence and pass it on to Clubs, deal with it directly or hold on file for the next district meeting.
5. Book venue for the next meeting and arrange for the key to be collected.
6. Take notes and write up minutes of meeting which will include the collating of written reports. Minutes should then be typed and sent out with the next agenda.
7. Reply to all correspondence.
8. Make sure the Publicity Officer is aware of all the closing dates and upcoming events for the newsletter.
9. Ensure Clubs adhere to closing dates and entry forms are completed. Send on District entries to the REO.
10. Maintain a District Trophy Register.
11. After the District AGM compile a mailing list of delegates to all bodies etc. Write a letter to approach ex members to be Advisory members. Complete District annual meeting report and send to the REO.
12. Attend Executive and Committee meetings when required.
13. Keep in regular contact with the District Chairperson and Club executives within the District.





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