**61st Annual General Meeting Minutes**

**Sunday 29th October 2017**

**Holiday Inn, Taunton**

**National Chairman:** Adam Ervin, Northern Ireland

**National Secretary:** Elaine Meikle, Scotland

**Welcome**

Adam welcomed everyone to the 61st Reunion of Young Farmers’ Ambassadors and asked that the meeting observed a minute’s silence to reflect on the YFA friends we had lost in the past year.

**Attendance**

There were 101 recorded in the Attendance book.

**Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Caroline Robertson, Ann & Derek Redpath, Brian Fell, Mollie Gamill, Dai Jones, Rhiannon Dafydd, Margaret Borrill, Russ Carrington, Eunice Finney, Liz Gilkes, Sam Hawkes, Helen Vale and Kate Careless.

**Adoption of Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting**

The minutes from the 60th UK YFA AGM held in the Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown, Northern Ireland on Sunday 30th October 2016 were proposed by Tony Walkers and seconded by Peggy Amos.

**Matters Arising from the Minutes**

David Paterson noted that the minutes referred to 2019 for the World IFYE Conference and this should have been 2018.

**Correspondence**

No correspondence had been received.

**Executive Committee Meeting**

The executive meeting was held on Saturday 28th October 2017 and the main items discussed were:

Banner

Huw Williams explained that he had made some initial enquiries regarding a new banner for the UK Reunion and had been quoted £30 plus a £15 design fee. This was considered a reasonable cost and could allow each country to have their own banner removing the need for one banner to be transported around the countries. It was agreed that Huw and Elaine would co-ordinate a new design and proposal to be circulated with the aim of new banners being in place for the 2018 reunion. The existing banner would be kept at Stoke-on -Trent in the meantime.

Archives

After some discussion regarding the secure storage of the UK YFA records, Pauline Armstrong offered to make enquires with the Bridge Library to see if they could store the records. Elaine Meikle will be the custodian of the UK records books for the next year.

Scottish Region noted that they had similar concerns and although it was suggested that the National Library of Scotland could be contacted to see if they could provide storage, they will first check if any of the past Secretaries had any files and decide from there.

IFYE Development Fund

Linda Steele explained that there are three ways in which members can apply to the IFYE Development fund:

1. The first process is open to any country and all applications should be made before April. The applications will be discussed and approved at the AGM, with any monies awarded, being received after the event.
2. The next option is for members attending their first European IFYE conference within 5 years of their exchange and they would qualify for a 160 Swiss Francs rebate on the conference fee.
3. The third option is for nominations or applications for new attendees at the European IFYE conference, that had been on their exchange more than 5 years ago. This was an option that was going to run for 3 years and the Board would decide on these rebate nominations / applications.

**Election of National Office Bearers**

Chairman – It was Scotland’s turn to take the chair and Neil Brims was nominated by David Stevenson and seconded by Alison Spencer.

Secretary - Elaine Meikle will remain as secretary for another year.

At this time Adam invited Neil to chair the remainder of the meeting.

**Regional & IFYE Reports**

England & Wales YFA Annual Report 2017 by Kate Careless and delivered by Karl Hockenhull

Firstly, a big thank you to Tony, Andrew, Polly and the rest of the committee for the warm Somerset welcome, and for arranging such a great Reunion.

One thing that will never waiver amongst members of YFA is their support of the opportunity to travel as a member of young farmers. This year we have been able to provide financial support to both NFYFC and Wales YFC to support their respective travel programmes along with supporting individuals who excelled at their interview with YFA scholarship monies.

Following last year's successful reunion, we had new members for the committee yet none really understood what the group role was they had agreed to. In order to get the most from all, we need to value their time and input so as chair I suggest in the next 12 months we really do get to the nub of what we are about and the committee needs and structure. We live in an ever changing (and shrinking) world. Therefore, as a group we need to ensure we move with this world and engage as needed across our membership.

Thanks to all members of the committee for their support over the last 12 months. As I said at the start, we know the value of travel to broaden the experience of YFC membership so let's ensure we provide the support in the right places to ensure it is an opportunity that all can engage with.

Scottish YFA Regional Report for 2017 by Mary Turner and delivered by Andrew Baird

On Saturday 25 February, the Annual General Meeting and Photo Presentation was held at Perth Race Course. This was a change of venue to coincide with the SAYFC Competitions weekend and we had hoped to attract more current young farmers; however, this did not materialise. The following Office Bearers were elected: Chairman: Andrew Baird; Vice Chairman & Treasurer: Neil Brims; Secretary: Mary Turner; other committee members – Elaine Meikle, Meg Findlay, Alison Ross, David Stevenson, David Paterson, Katie Punler, Caroline Robertson, Paul Fraser and Richard Wilson. Several Exchangees from 2015 and 2016 gave short presentations of their trips. This year, eight lucky young farmers went on exchange to New Zealand, Canada, USA, Finland, Switzerland and Ireland. In addition, 4 members went to the European Rally in Latvia. YFA made a contribution to all of the aforesaid.

On Wednesday 14 June, YFA hosted the 2017 Incoming Delegates for the day. There were 12 of them from Australia, Finland, New Zealand, Switzerland, and much nearer to home, England, Ireland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Mary Turner was the Minibus driver with Andrew Baird as chief navigator. Having picked them up in Edinburgh, Elaine Meikle and Margaret Khnichich were on hand to take the luggage by car. It was off to the Kelpies and Falkirk Wheel and although it wasn’t brilliant sunshine, everyone enjoyed their picnic looking at the engineering feat that is the Falkirk Wheel. Next was a visit to the Riverside Museum in Glasgow, and finally dropping them at the Fenwick Hotel, to be picked up by their first hosts in Ayrshire.

Over 90 people attended the Annual Drinks Reception held on 23 June at the Royal Highland Show, and that included this year’s exchangees. Also amongst the guests were 18 Anniversary Guests celebrating between 5 and 50 years since they did their exchange. In addition, 3 former exchangees to UK from Australia and New Zealand attended. There was a real buzz about the place, and it was good to see the rekindling of old friendships and making new ones. The generous sponsorship from Aldi, Mackies of Scotland and Walkers Shortbread, really helped to keep costs down. This is the biggest event in the Scottish YFA calendar; so, if you’re planning to be at the Royal Highland on Friday 22 June 2018, please get in touch.

The 59th European IFYE Conference was held from 15 – 22 July at a beautiful location overlooking Lake Neuchâtel, Switzerland. There were 22 Scots amongst the 250 group from 19 different countries and we enjoyed a varied programme in brilliant weather. From water skiing, canyon walking and climbing, riding an E-bike to traditional activities like playing the drums, Swiss accordion, Alp Horn, yodelling and learning to make pleated bread. Visits included chocolate and watch factories, bee keeping, cement factory, milk processing, wine tasting, vegetable warehouse and an open prison to name but a few. All in all, it was a great week.

Plans are well on the way for next year’s UK YFA Reunion weekend in Aberdeen, from 26 – 29 October, 2018. The only fund raiser during the year is the Grand Raffle, and the winners will be announced shortly. The next event will be the AGM and we are going back to the usual format, and this will be held on Sunday 11 March, 2018 at Carnbo Hall, Carnbo.

On behalf of Scottish YFA, I’d like to thank the 2017 UK Reunion Committee for a fantastic weekend here in Taunton.

YFA Ulster Annual Report October 2017 by Janette Stirling

Following on from what had been a busy October 2016 with the Reunion in Cookstown, Co Tyrone, we took a more mythical approach to our annual dinner. We moved our date from the traditional last weekend in January to the 25th February 2017 and we were joined by 46 YFA members at the Carrie Restaurant in Kells, Ballymena for a typical YFA themed dinner. This year’s theme was “Myths and Legends” where we were quizzed on all things Mythical and legendry in Northern Ireland, including a game of blockbusters inspired by using the Giants Causeway stones. The Youngsters could show off their knowledge and enjoyed the win. Thanks must go to Claire Woods who put so much work in the tasks.

We held our Annual General Meeting in Loughry College on Thursday 6th April 2017 where the election of new office bearers was conducted by Gordon Marshall. We welcomed a new committee with Adam Ervin taking on the Chairman role. At the AGM, our committee for the 2017 IFYE Conference was formally elected, with Linda Steele being elected Chairman and Avril Herdman elected as Secretary. We were joined by 2 of our out-going exchangees Linzi Stewart and Amanda Hamilton who received their sponsorship cheques. Sean MacAntsoair gave us an in-depth insight into the history and methods of making Cider. A few samples were passed around, purely for research purposes.

Over the summer months, we were able to send 5 members on short term exchange across the UK, and 6 members further afield to Canada, America, Germany and Estonia, along with a rally team to Latvia. As an organisation we hosted 8 international exchangees and 5 from the UK.

With the appeal of Switzerland as the destination of the IFYE conference, 13 of our members and friends set off on their holidays and took part in all aspects the conference had to offer. I think our members were carrying out their PR duties seriously ahead of summer 2017, and a successful informal interview process ran throughout the week, so we are excited to say we already have over 70 people registered to join us in Greenmount in July 2017.

Our Summer outing on 20th August to Gosford Country Park in County Armagh had all ages enjoying the walks, playgrounds and views, with our typical picnics in the rain being brightened up with a special rendition of Happy Birthday for our Patron’s wife – Fiona Cromie. Fiona signifies all that YFA is about, with her enthusiasm and passion and we are always delighted to see John and Fiona joining us. To finish off the great day out, we enjoyed a delicious meal at The Scullery Restaurant owned by member Eric Reid.

We are delighted that our new YFA member, Linzi Stewart was elected to the Rural Youth Europe Board in September at the General Assembly in Estonia, and look forward to strengthening links between RYE and YFA Ulster. More recently, our autumn meeting was on 7th October, and took the form of a Pud-gin Party in Annaclone and Magherally YFC Hall. The committee members all brought different desserts and various types of gin were on offer. This was a great fundraiser with everyone keen to try out the “Gin of the Hour” which our mixologists Helen Ervin and Trevor Woods were in charge of.

Throughout the year our IFYE committee having been meeting to discuss, agree and arrange all the finer details of our conference. The week is shaping up to be filled with a lot of fun as we look forward to hosting the 60th conference.

I would like to thank the committee for all their hard work throughout the year in organising such a variety of events which entices many different members along.

On behalf of Ulster YFA, thank you to the organising committee of this conference for a great weekend here in Taunton, which has given us all many opportunities to re-acquaint ourselves with old friends and make new ones.

Thank you.

2017 European IFYE Conference

Alison Roberts gave an overview of the week’s activities in Switzerland in July 2017 which had been enjoyed by all in attendance. Some of the activities in the week were bread making, hiking, a drum night, an alphorn workshop and Absinthe tasting in Boveresse as well as the opening ceremony, fancy dress party and the farewell dinner. Unfortunately, neither the President or Vice President were able to attend the AGM and thanks go to the other committee members for stepping in.

2018 European IFYE Conference

Linda Steele extended an invitation for everyone to attend the 2018 conference being held at Greenmount College, Northern Ireland from 21st to 28th July 2018. Sharing information about the venue, trips and some of the planned activities, Linda reminded people of the financial support that may be available from the IFYE Development Fund mentioned earlier.

Confirmation of Officers for the 2018 UK Reunion

It was confirmed that the 2018 Reunion chairman is Meg Findlay, secretary is Elaine Meikle and Treasurer is Elaine Mowat. The 2018 UK Reunion is being held in Aberdeen 26th – 29th October and Meg Findlay gave a presentation of the Aberdeen area and some of the activities being planned for the event.

Any other business

Liz Miller noted that there hadn’t been any mention of the World IFYE Conference in 2018, which was confirmed as being an Alaskan Cruise from 9th to 16th September 2018.

Mary Turner announced the prize-winners of the Scottish Region raffle with the star prize of £100 being won by Helen Ervin.

Neil Brims offered the vote of thanks to retiring chairman, Adam Ervin, for his two years’ service as UK Chairman.

Tony Walkers announced that lunch was being served immediately after the meeting followed by skittles at 2pm and after the buffet dinner there would be some Morris Dancing.

The meeting closed at 1.03pm.