

Conference Report - Secretary

I wish to start my report by expressing my gratitude for the support of the membership over the past six years I have been on the executive. I am incredibly proud of all the work I have done and changes I have made, especially to the culture of this organisation.

Unfortunately, I am looking forward to November 1st greatly due to the significant increase of ableism on the executive, which I know directly led to at least one resignation this year, and the misogyny that has made this year so much more difficult despite working harder than ever before.

I am, however, incredibly proud of this year's work and look forward to sharing this within my report.

TLDR:

- I am on top of and have completed all of my required work, minutes and reports are up to date and submissions have improved, when normally they drop off around now.
- Committees have a long way to go to be the best they can be in this organisation, but progress has been made.
- The General Election was a lot of work, but this was successful in many ways and I worked incredibly hard to strengthen relationships for YL.
- The Thank You party was a huge success and the feedback has been so overwhelmingly positive.
- I continue to support the exec where I can, often doing admin tasks and providing reminders.

I would also like to note a thanks to our resigned colleagues, especially Sean who was always a good sounding board and Harvey - who was a phenomenal communications officer and is the biggest single loss this organisation has had in my time from a resignation.

Minutes

All minutes I have taken are uploaded and on the website, along with any agendas and executive reports I have access to. Significant attempts have been made to chase up any minutes not taken by me.

I introduced a slightly different style of minutes and asked for feedback – none was received, so I continued in this style. As well as this, I sent action points directly to named individuals, and reminded the exec of them in slack. I also added a recurring agenda item to go over action points to ensure they were complete or in case they needed to be chased up.

This has resulted in a significant increase of productivity within the executive, and importantly provides reminders outside of meetings for work needed doing.

Committees

The list of committee meetings and attendance can be [found here](#). All the minutes I have been sent [are here](#).

There has been a significant lack of committee meetings, some of which can easily be explained and justified through the May local elections and General Election. We often advise not meeting in April/during the short campaign to ensure volunteers are doing their best to directly impact the election. The resignation of committee chairs is another factor.

However, despite this, we are still seeing the somewhat typical dip in activity around this time of year. I suggest that the next secretary considers this, and the executive also considers if this is due to personal reasons or lack of motivation overall. It is natural to have busier and quieter periods.

Minutes are not always being taken, and I am rarely being informed of meetings after they happen, and often have to chase for information. In an attempt to fix this, I requested I was slacked or emailed in advance so I knew to chase minutes instead of blindly asking, and also asked every committee chair to appoint a minute taker. The former action has never happened, but the latter has occurred within several committees, improving the likelihood of minutes being taken and quality of said minutes.

Committees are often left alone and when asked to take on responsibility, this does not always happen, especially when individuals resign, which is to be expected in a youth organisation where many of us may find politically restricted jobs etc. There is a lot of work to be done that cannot be completed with the remainder of this term, and requires a culture shift to actually share responsibility, share workload, and encourage delegation and promotion of skills within the organisation. Harvey Jones had done a brilliant job of this, by

completing skills analysis with the directly elected members etc. This is something future committee chairs should consider.

I also believe that the future committees and secretary should consider which committees have been made redundant by the way the organisation has continued to evolve and adapt - we elect a lot of individuals, and very few seem to actually be given the opportunity to do much with their roles currently.

Forum

The clean up of Forum has officially begun. The first stage has been completed and any individual who actively comes up as someone who has either lapsed or resigned their membership has been removed.

The next stage is to remove anyone who is not flagged as YL. This will be done alongside an attempt to flag more YLers as YLers. I proposed that we send an email out and immediately following that, start pushing that if anyone under 30 did not receive it, to email me with the needed details and I will liaise with the Membership Team at HQ.

After this, we can more accurately remove aged out members.

The stage following this will be to remove members who we cannot find on the system - this may be because they have changed their name since their membership stopped, or because their facebook name does not match the membership name. To account for this, we have created and pinned a form asking members to let us know if this is the case and request they inform us in the new joining questions.

We have recruited non-executive moderators, Liv Dunn and Johan Prinsloo, both of whom have increased our ability to approve posts and have been great sources of viewpoints from outside the executive.

WhatsApp

While Forum continues to be useful, it has become a continuous and increasingly more serious issue that Facebook is simply not used by many younger people. We have spent several executives discussing this issue, and had a few previous attempts such as the YL Discord. At the beginning of this executive, I raised that I wished to have a WhatsApp community. We discussed safeguarding and other issues, and I am pleased to say that the executive voted to allow the creation of a community.

This is not the perfect solution - the privacy settings allow anyone to be in the announcements and only have their number seen by admins and no one else. This means that it is a safe method for vulnerable adults and under 18s. However, the groups which allow for socialising do not have this, meaning we have had to restrict under 18s from using the groups, and anyone not wishing to share their number cannot join. We have implemented the need to message an admin, of which all are executive members for GDPR and safeguarding reasons, with membership number and date of birth for approval into the groups.

I hope future executives will continue to assess the social media options out there and find a substitute for both Whatsapp and Facebook, that will allow under 18s to engage as I believe we do ourselves a disservice to wait until individuals are 18, but ultimately safeguarding must come first.

Exec Reports and attendance

Please find the key and all explanatory notes on the [full spreadsheet here](#), but anything post Sheffield can be found screenshotted below for ease of reference.

I am incredibly happy to see report submissions have not decreased, and if anything increased. Naturally, this is likely also attributed to the increase of overall party activity (GE who?), but I like to think both my reminders to the general executive and personalised reminders have helped several individuals in meeting the deadlines set. I believe things like this ensure we are the professional yet compassionate and supportive organisation we should continue to strive to become.

	Conference Reports	February Reports	February Meeting	Extra Meeting 3	March Reports	March Meeting	May Reports	May Meeting	July Reports	July Meeting
Janey Little										
Katharine Macy										
Lucas North										
Miguel Smith										
Nicholas Orford-Williams										
Harvey Jones										
Ulysse Abbate										
Felix Andrew										
Will Tennison										
Joshua Parmar										
Fergus Kirman										
Emily Baker										
Sean Bennet										
Kai Pischke										
Rebecca Jones										
Chang Liu										
Joe Norris										
Leo Dempster										
Josh Rutty										
Leena Farhat										
Sam Wilson 1										
Sam Wilson 2										

Please note I was never given access to any March minutes despite chasing up several times and pointing this out in the May meeting.

General Election

For those unaware, I work for HQ, as well as recently beginning a full time job, so during the GE I was working 7am-10pm most days, as well as volunteering when I could.

To begin the GE correctly, I encouraged everyone to follow the HQ pattern of not working more than 10 days in a row and having 1 day off every week. Burnout is a huge issue and I organised a spreadsheet so we could keep on top of this,=.

In my YL specific role, I worked hard to improve our relationship with HQ - this was hugely successful, multiple Campaign Managers cited YL as a saving grace, and I was even informed by some higher ups that they were expected us to be an issue, but instead it's clear where we've made a difference.

I provided the Elections Committee with guidance and up to date information around target seats, ensuring we were sending people to the correct place as my HQ role was about ensuring seat pairs were kept informed, meaning I was the first person to receive this information.

I believe I made around 500 calls in the name of YL, with around 100 being direct YL phone banking. Via this I've advertised conference as well. I helped Nicholas (co-elections) at both the Eastbourne and Honiton Action Days.

I made a spreadsheet to help us keep track of where YL Exec members had formally been, both before and during the short campaign to aim to get to most targets. I personally went to Winchester, South Cambridgeshire, Eastbourne, Honiton, Wimbledon, and Richmond and helped directly with Chesham & Amersham and Carshalton & Wallington in the Richmond offices helping with the election addresses.

I worked with Danny Chambers to produce a thank you email for our members.

I also made a spreadsheet and wrote about 60% of the personalised paragraphs for our new MPs - huge thank you to Lucas (Events) for doing the mail merge for me!

I ensured to get photos as and when possible for the YL Social Media.

Thank You Party

This has had overwhelmingly positive feedback, with the only negative commenting on the lack of alcohol and honestly I'm incredibly proud of the shift we've had since 2019 away from this, so I'm incredibly glad it's been noticed!

A huge thank you to Will Tennison (MemDev) for his work on all the graphics of the medals and badges, and the support throughout. Thank you to Lucas North (Events) for stepping in and helping with emails.

The three MPs who attended left me some beautiful feedback in their emails - I believe this event also helped us to cement the relationship between us and those we invited, with even those MPs who were unable to attend often expressing sincere regret and offering to attend another event (some of whom have been secured for conference!)

General Support

Due to the few resignations, I have endeavoured to keep the exec running smoothly in a few ways. I have supported individuals on Diversity Committee, including a 121 meeting with Olivia Dunn (Liv) to work out what is within my capacity to help return to a gender balanced executive we successfully built a few years ago, along with overall acknowledgement that engagement with women has significantly decreased and we must improve. Examples of this include creating a WhatsApp groups specifically for women and minority genders, and helping Liv to begin the engagement there. Liv and I have have multiple discussions on how the organisation can be more welcoming, and I am acting on as many of these as possible. Examples of this include directly approaching people and inviting them to conference, to run for YL positions, and supporting other executive members to ensure we have gender diversity, such as Will ensuring we do not have male only training session panellists.

I pass on relevant emails to committees as part is resignation procedures too.

I have also raised relevant accessibility and diversity issues and ensured we do not backslide on issues such as gender representation and plain text.

As well as this, with Lucas supporting with email sending, I have then taken on some admin roles for conference, predominantly resulting in me emailing and liaising with MPs to invite them to speak.