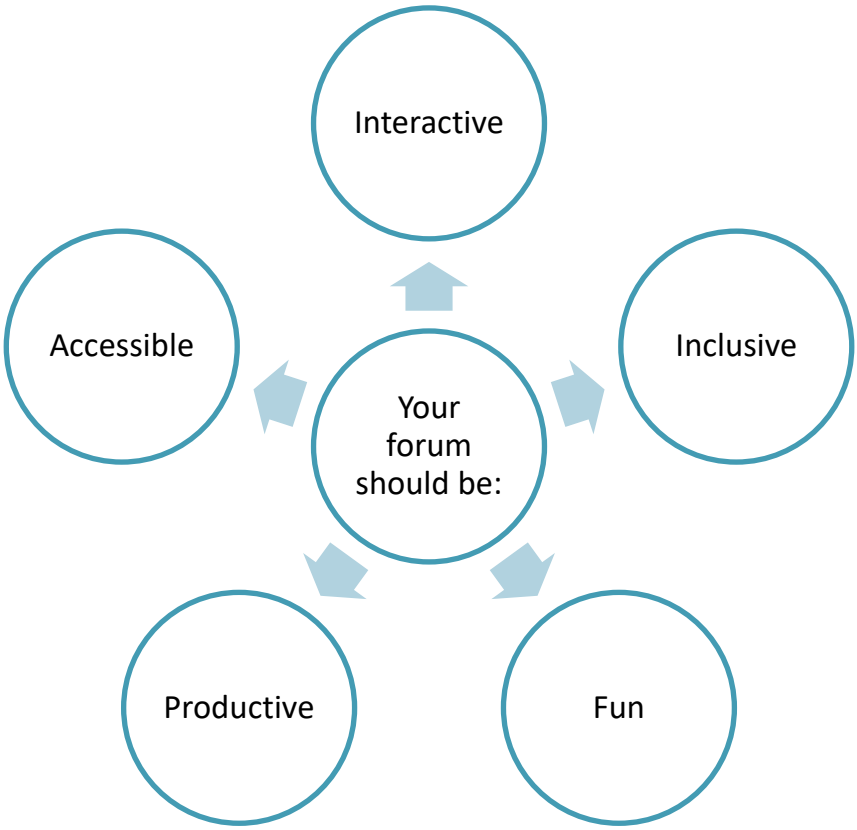
County Youth Forum



Before

- Planning
- Promotion
- Patrol Meetings
- PLC Meetings
- County Rep Meetings
- Review previous year

Forum

- Socialising
- Interaction
- Discussions
- Ideas
- Elections

After

- Action
- Programme
- Review
- Ideas back to Patrols and Troops
- Reps
- National Youth Forum

What is a County Youth Forum?
A County Youth Forum is an event run by young people along with the County Programme team. It gives the youth members an opportunity to discuss and share ideas and views within Scouting and in the larger community.

What is a County Youth Forum for?
- To give Youth Members a chance to run an event where they get to discuss things which are important to them
- To bring ideas to the County and Provincial Teams and to the National Forums
- To elect County Representatives
- To contribute to the County's Programme
- To form a network within the Scout County
- To facilitate Youth Empowerment in Scouting Ireland
- To allow youth members to learn the skills to be involved in decision making

Who can attend a County Forum?
All Youth Members from a section who are interested can participate in the Forum.

Main parts of a Forum:
The Forum is made of three main parts: **Introduction**, **Discussion Sessions**, and the **Formal Session**. The Introduction should be fun and outlines what work is to be done. The Discussion Groups is where most of the work of the Forum will be done. Then, the Formal section involves the actual voting on motions and elections to various posts.

1. Introduction:
Gathering and Socialising
It is important that an effort is made from the beginning of the Forum to ensure that the participants mix. The success of this event is based on the discussions, so an informal fun-based model of interaction should be encouraged. After a formal opening, the idea of the forum and its format should be explained to all participants. Next, run some Ice-Breaker games to help the participants to interact and to help get them to know each other. Organise the participants into 'sixes/patrols/crews' for the event; in pairs, mix members from different Groups into small teams of 6-8. Also, a number of fun yet productive activities can be run at the start and in between the discussion groups.

As part of the opening, the County Programme Team should present a report on the work done in the County in relation to the section. As well as covering events, it should outline supports and any potential issues. There is no need for this to be complicated or lengthy; it should just simply and concisely summarise everything they did over the year and make recommendations.

2. Group Discussions:
A number of discussion sessions can be run at once and the 'patrols' should rotate between them. Sessions can be *facilitated* by a suitable person who can encourage and foster discussion.

The conclusions should be listed and arranged as a motion for the Forum. These motions shall take several forms and will be brought to the appropriate level:

- **Group** related motions will be brought back to groups
- **County Programme** motions will be addressed by the CPC and their team
- General **County** related motions will be brought to the Scout County Team
- **Provincial** and **National** related matters will be brought by the County Reps to the relevant bodies and to the National Youth Forum.

The major topics for discussion should, where possible, be selected in advance of the forum. Participants should propose suitable major topics to discuss. The organisers and the CPC should correlate the different suggestions into several working areas which will form the basis for most of the Forum.

Before the event, try getting suggestions for discussion. Maybe have each troop suggest a topic. Or ask the participants to list the five most important issues facing them as individuals and another five as the most important issues facing Scouting or their community.

Possible discussion topics:

- Running Patrol Activities
- Completing the Chief Scout Award
- Finding out about National Events
- Community Service Projects
- Positive Mental Health
- Sample Programmes
- Communications
- Online safety
- Running a good PLC
- Understanding the SPICES
- Adventure Skills Training
- Challenges of Being a PL
- Youth Empowerment
- Respecting yourself and others
- New County Activities
- Inclusive Scouting

3. Formal Session

Although being a Formal Session it is important that this section is run in an interesting and relatively flexible way.

- Agreement on County Motions and Concepts/Ideas: The Motions and Concepts/Ideas which came out of the discussion groups should be agreed upon.
- All County Motions should briefly be formalised into an outline of plan for the work of the County Programme Committee in the forthcoming year.
- Appoint new the County Programme Team: Each Group nominates two youth representatives to help to make up the new County Programme Committee; the Forum then formally ratifies these nominations.
- Elections: The Forum should elect SIX (6) County Representatives to attend the advocate for their section in the County and to attend the National Youth Forum. These elections should be overseen by impartial observers. Before anyone stands for election, they should fully understand what is involved and commit to fulfilling the role as best they can.

A short closing ceremony should be held at the end. It can tie all the elements of the Forum together and send people away enthused.

Possible Programme

2.00 Gathering and Socialising
2.30 Opening
2.45 Ice-Breaker Games and Outdoor Activities (Compass Trail and Blind-trail)
3.45 Break
4.00 County Programme Team Report
4.20 Group Discussions (4 groups)
5.00 Game
5.20 Food
6.00 Group Discussions (Continued)
6.40 Quick Games
7.00 Formal Session
7.45 Break
8.00 Election Results
8.15 Closing

Organising a Forum:

1. Planning Meeting (4 Weeks before): At this meeting you should agree on details, send out information to sections in the County, discuss the programme, and request discussion topics. The current Reps and the County Programme Team should work together on this, also it would be helpful if youth members and Scouters from each Group was involved.
2. Organising Meeting (2 Weeks before): At this meeting you should know what the discussion topics will be and who will be facilitating each one. Also, the programme should be finalised with games and activities decided and delegated to people to run.
3. The Week before hand: The Event Coordinators should check up on everyone and make sure all arrangements are in place.
4. Pre-Forum (that day): All the organisers to meet beforehand and go over everything
5. The Forum: Make it happen!
6. Post-Forum Meeting (the week after): The organisers and Reps should review the activity and make recommendations for the following year. Also this meeting should include a celebration aspect.

Success of the Forum

The success of your Forum will depend on the amount of effort you put into running it. With a good plan, committed youth members and the support of the CPC and some other Scouters, your Forum will be a complete success. Just to help you here is a list of questions to which you should have answered YES, before you leave the Forum:

- Was everyone involved?
- Were decisions made?
- Has everyone left with something?
- Did everyone learn everyone else's name?
- Was it enjoyable?
- Has a plan for forthcoming projects been made and agreed on?
- Has the County Youth Programme been agreed?
- Have all discussions been conducted in an open and respectful manner?
- Has a date for the next forum been picked?