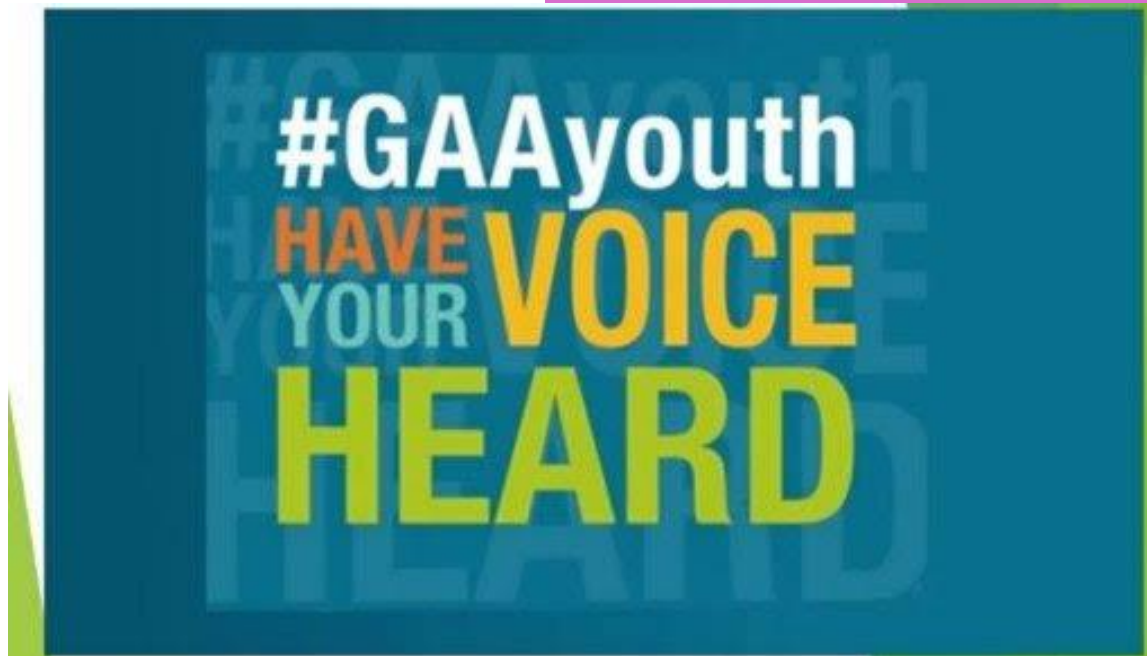


Youth Survey Report



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National GAA Youth Committee
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1.Introduction & Background

National GAA Youth Committee

The National GAA Youth Committee is made up of a group of young people from all across the country, drawn from every code within the Association, representing the youth of the country between the ages of 12 and 21. The Committee exists to give young members a genuine voice within the GAA, ensuring that the perspectives, experiences and ambitions of youth are heard and acted upon at every level of the Association.

Authorship

This report was written by Tara O'Mahony and Rose Donohue, two members of the Youth Committee, with the support and guidance of Aideen Howlin.

What This Report Entails

This report presents the findings gathered by the Youth Committee through survey data, research, and case studies. It has two aims: first, to give a clear and honest account of where young people currently stand on volunteering, involvement, and safeguarding within the GAA; and second, to offer a set of recommendations and guidelines to support deeper youth engagement within the Association going forward.

The Reasoning Behind This Report

As young people involved within the GAA, we identified a gap: a shortage of young people working within our communities and organisations. Through this report, we wish to demonstrate that young people are willing and want to get involved, and that there is space, and a need, for them to do so. This report is, in many ways, an invitation for all Associations to recognise the appetite that exists among its youngest members and to build the structures that allow that appetite to be realised.

Context

This report comes at a time when the GAA, like many voluntary organisations, is facing real challenges around volunteer shortages, youth disengagement and succession planning. Clubs across the country are increasingly relying on a smaller and often ageing pool of committed volunteers, while opportunities for



young people to step into meaningful roles, whether in coaching, administration, committee work are not always clearly signposted or made accessible.

At the same time, youth disengagement remains a pressing concern. As young people move through their teenage years and into early adulthood, many drift away from active involvement in their clubs, not necessarily through lack of interest, but often due to a lack of clear pathways that aren't playing, e.g. volunteering and leadership roles. This creates a succession planning gap: without a deliberate effort to bring young people into these roles now, clubs and county boards risk losing vital experience and continuity in the years ahead.

This report addresses these issues directly, using the voice and evidence of young people themselves to make the case for change.

2. Survey Methodology

The survey was distributed to clubs and counties across the Association between 30 March 2026 and early April 2026. In total, 237 people took part, representing 233 different clubs, 30 counties and all provinces, giving the Youth Committee a broad and representative picture of youth involvement from across the country.

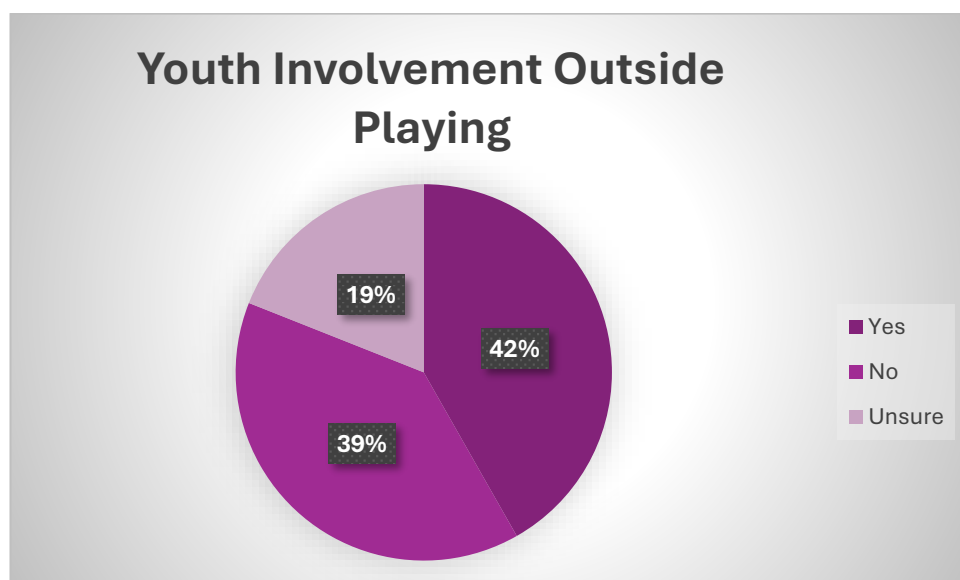
After the survey was complete the committee identified clubs that had significant youth engagement and to complement the survey data, the Committee also carried out a case study to gain a deeper, on-the-ground understanding of youth engagement in practice. On 11 August, the Committee met members from Manor Kilbride GAA in Wicklow to discuss their club's youth committee and their broader experience of youth participation. This conversation offered valuable qualitative insight to sit alongside the quantitative survey findings and helped ground the report's recommendations in real club-level experience.

3. Key Findings

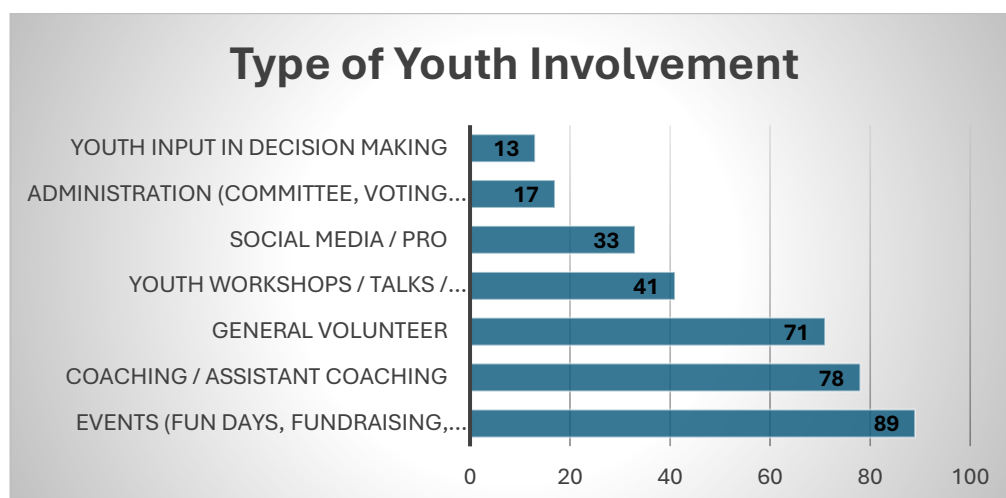
This section presents the data and findings gathered through the survey, offering a detailed picture of the responses received from young people and clubs across the country. It draws together the key statistics and trends that emerged, from participation levels to the experiences and views shared by respondents, in order to give a clear and evidence-based account of where youth involvement in the GAA organisations currently stands. These findings along with the case study laid out in Section 4 form the foundation on which the report's recommendations have been built.

3.1 Existing Youth Engagement Outside Playing

% of clubs that have meaningful youth engagement outside of playing activities



Less than half of clubs (41.8%) report meaningful youth engagement outside of playing.

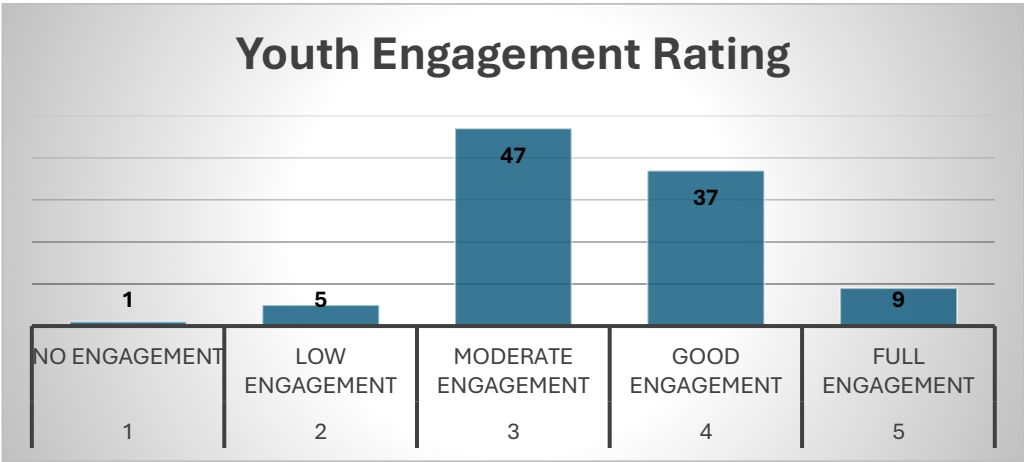


Based on the **99 clubs** that confirmed meaningful youth engagement outside playing , they could have picked more than one.

3.2. Youth Engagement Rating (1–5 Scale)

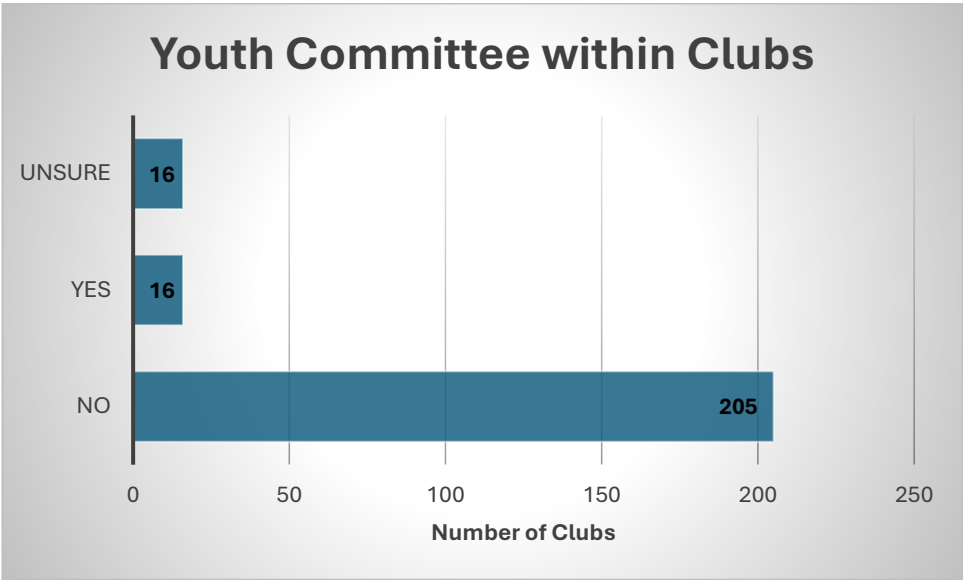
- Average engagement score across all clubs

Mean	3.48
Median	3



3.3. Youth Committee Prevalence

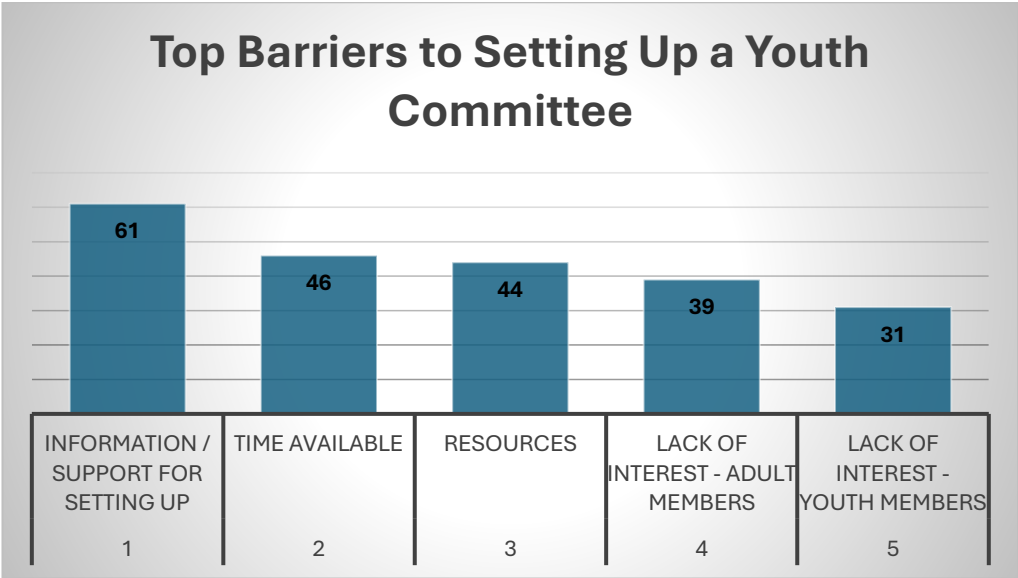
- How many clubs currently have a Youth Committee



- Although we gave people a definition of what a youth committee people is we do believe some of these yeses could be incorrect

3.4. Top Barriers to Setting Up a Youth Committee

Based on **221 clubs** (those without a Youth Committee). This was a **ranking question**; clubs ordered all 5 barriers from most to least significant. The table below shows both how often each barrier was ranked #1 and its average rank position:

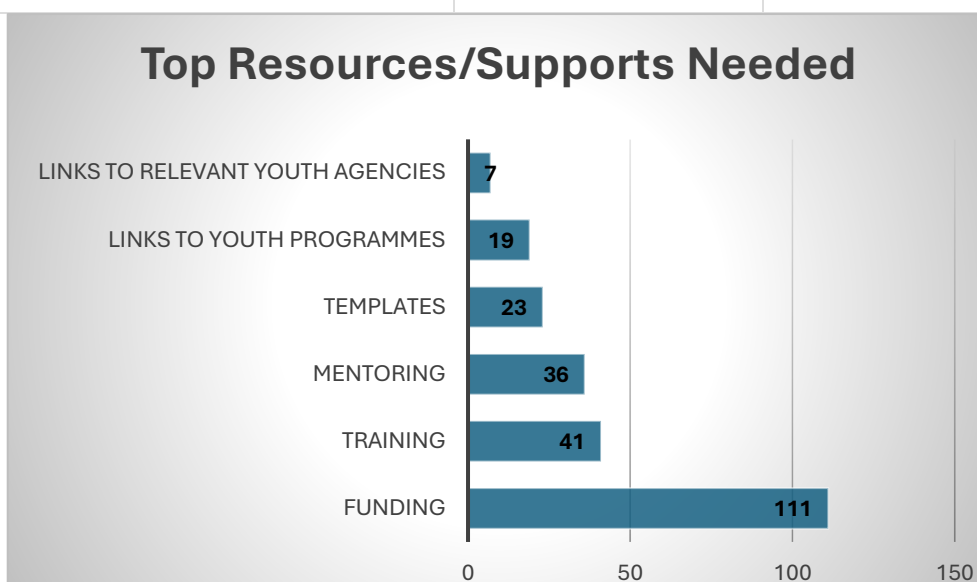


Rank	Barrier	Avg Rank
1	Information / Support for Setting Up	2.76
2	Time Available	2.77
3	Resources	2.93
4	Lack of Interest - Adult Members	3.13
5	Lack of Interest - Youth Members	3.42

3.5. Top Resources/Supports Needed

- **Funding is the runaway #1 priority** - cited first by 111 clubs (46.8%), nearly 3 times more than the next support. This is a very clear and unambiguous finding

Rank	Resource / Support	Times Ranked #1	% Ranked #1	Avg Rank
1	Funding	111	46.8%	2.59
2	Training	41	17.3%	3.07
3	Mentoring	36	15.2%	3.08
4	Templates	23	9.7%	3.69
5	Links to Youth Programmes	19	8.0%	3.74
6	Links to Relevant Youth Agencies	7	3.0%	4.84



The following questions were asked (What would encourage youth to take on more active roles? What the benefits of a youth committee would be? The Challenges of Having a Youth Committee and for any additional comments) in an open context to allow the respondent to answer what they believed to be the most important. The information you see below is taken directly from the survey data. We have aimed to present a full picture of all the responses with the information shown below. The direct quotes from the survey can be seen below in Appendix A.

Across the responses, a clear picture emerges of what would encourage young people to take on more active roles in their clubs. The most frequently mentioned factor was simply ‘being asked and feeling wanted.’ Closely linked to this was a desire for meaningful responsibility rather than token participation. Respondents repeatedly stressed the importance of giving young people real decision-making input, listening to their ideas, and letting them see projects through to completion, with one person stating, "assisting in the decision-making process to shape the future of the club." Recognition and reward also featured heavily, whether through formal certification schemes tied to national frameworks, small non-monetary tokens of appreciation, or public acknowledgment of effort. A number of respondents also pointed to the social aspects, suggesting that youth involvement works best when it is fun, peer based, and framed as an extension of young people's existing social lives.

When asked about the benefits of a youth committee, respondents most commonly returned to two themes, succession planning and skills development. Many saw youth committees as a direct pipeline for future club officers and committee members, ensuring continuity as current volunteers age out of their roles, echoing the comment that "young people become the future committee members and officers of the club." Equally prominent was the view that youth committees build transferable life skills. Leadership, teamwork, communication, confidence and public speaking were all mentioned repeatedly, alongside the value this adds to young people's CVs and personal development. Retention was another recurring benefit, with respondents noting that a youth committee gives nonplaying members and those who have finished their playing days a reason to stay connected to the club, reducing dropout among teenagers which is an ongoing issue within the majority of clubs these days.



The most consistent challenge and concern raised throughout the survey, was capacity and competing commitments. Respondents repeatedly pointed out that clubs already struggle to recruit adult volunteers to fill existing roles, and worried that a youth committee would simply become another task requiring an adult "champion" to run it. There was also concern about time pressure on young people themselves, who are often already stretched across training, matches, school commitments and part-time jobs, leaving little room for an additional committee. Furthermore, most respondents were strongly supportive of the idea of a youth committee within their club, describing the idea as important for the club's future, but a notable group said they simply lacked information about how youth committees work or how to set one up.

4. Good Practice Case Studies

As above mentioned, the GAA National Youth Committee conducted a case study on Manor Kilbride GAA after their response of the Youth Survey was received. The committee members interviewed members of Manor Kilbride regarding their youth committee and youth involvement in their club. The interview aided us gaining insight into the structure of the committee, how and why it was formed, the work they do, its benefits and the future plans Manor Kilbride GAA have for the committee. Below are some of the standout points from the interview.

- The committee was set up when a member came home from the National GAA Youth Forum 2025 in Croke Park and said she wanted to have a youth committee in their club.
- Committee is made up of members ages ranging from 10-20
- They found it easy to set up as their club was all in with the idea and offered all the support needed.
- As of when this report was released the committee have organised one event in the club and with to do many more
- With no structured guidelines about Youth Committees, they would like to get some information to aid with the future development of the committee and club.
- They are willing and able to support and guide other clubs on their journey to setting up youth committees.

This case study shows us is that a small committee can be established quickly when there is strong club support. Youth committee and forum participation can bring new ideas directly back into the club. Young people can lead discussion, identify priorities and bring forward new and vibrant ideas. Youth committees can also work with other areas of the club, Healthy clubs and the Executive etc. It also shows us that club level involvement can drive the desire for other clubs and even counties to follow the same path.

It is also important to note that the National Youth Committee is continuing to engage with other clubs and counties to gather future information on established youth committees and are opening to hearing from clubs that we haven't been in touch with previously.



5. Youth Voice - What Young People Want

While the survey was beneficial in gaining insight into the mood surrounding Youth Committees and their place within our organisations, it can be acknowledged that these responses came mostly from people who fall outside the realm of what is considered youth within the GAA (12 – 21).

The case study and additional discussions with youth members at our Youth Forums, especially the National Youth Committee were completed for this reason. As acknowledged above, the youth have many great ideas and are looking for the opportunity to get involved wherever they can. Set out below are the aspirations of the young people in our organisations shaped by the information gathered over the course of the research

- The opportunity to have their voice heard.
- They want to give back to the community.
- To work with their clubs and executive to make the club a better place.
- To allow them the opportunity to learn from the committee members now in order for them to fulfil those roles in the future and be ready.
- A formal structured committee to guarantee they can follow through on their plans and goals.

6. Recommendations

Below is a set of recommendations that we have set out for different sections of our organisations. We believe that these recommendations can help boost youth engagement and participation within our communities, clubs and counties.

- For the Youth
 - Ask around your club and ask if there are any jobs you can do
 - Talk to your peers about how you can help within your club
 - Believe in your abilities
- For Clubs
 - Reach out to your youth and identify the people who can help
 - Carve out roles that the youth can get involved
 - Advertise that you are open to help
 - Be open to new ideas and new phases
 - Look into starting a youth committee
- For Counties
 - See roles that are open for youth to be involved within the county board
 - Liaise with clubs and identify strong youth members
 - Look into starting a youth committee
- For the GAA
 - Continue the National Youth Committee and their work and forums
 - Consider imposing a rule that states all clubs/ counties must have a youth forum before a certain date
 - Commission the creation of a structured guideline to aid clubs/ counties in the formation of a Youth Committee



7. Conclusion

In conclusion the findings from this research make clear that youth are not simply the future of the GAA, but an essential part of its present. Clubs that engage young people meaningfully, through real responsibility, recognition, and a genuine seat at the table, are already seeing the benefits in energy, retention, and a stronger sense of community.

What emerges most strongly from this survey, however, is a call for action. There is clear appetite across the country for a defined Youth Committee guideline, one that sets out a practical structure clubs can follow, rather than leaving individual committees to navigate the process alone. Clubs want direction, not just encouragement, and a framework would go a long way toward turning enthusiasm into implementation.

Moreover, this survey is just the beginning of what hopes to be increased youth participation and engagements for generations to come. The National GAA Youth Committee strongly encourages to take the recommendations set out below for what ever category you fall under and act.

If we invest in the voice of today, we safeguard the strength of our associations for generations to come.

Mol an Óige agus Tiocfaidh sí.



Appendix

Appendix A - Survey Written Data

3.6. What Would Encourage Youth to Take on More Active Roles?

Recognition & Rewards

- "Incentives, conference day out, certification for CV"
- "Recognition and acknowledgment from the club and at a national level that their efforts are appreciated. For some young people an incentive by way of small tokens(non-monetary) of appreciation."
- "A new GAA Youth Qualification for hours volunteered along with age-appropriate online written tasks/submissions on various club tasks completed. Something like a bronze, silver, gold award that can be introduced as an add on into their QQI awards programme, the national framework of qualifications."

Meaningful Roles & Responsibility

- "Assisting in the decision-making process to shape the future of the club!"
- "They have their voice heard and can see projects through to completion and recognition for those achievements"
- "Speak to them and treat them like they are adults. Make them feel welcome. Give them responsibility and meaningfulness"
- "Tangible outcomes so they feel their voice is being listened to."

Peer Influence & Social Environment

- "Make it social and fun. If involvement feels like an extension of their social life, they'll stay. Pair roles with friends, make volunteering team-based, and recognise it publicly."
- "Social event engagement. Peer leadership regarding a range of activities that would be age specific. Health, Welfare & Wellbeing mentoring & follow through on those aspects of life to ensure that young people are on a healthy & fruitful trajectory."

Mentoring, Guidance & Adult Support

- "Engagement and encouragement by adult club members. Training and mentoring from a club with a youth committee."
- "Being asked to be involved"
- "Being asked and feeling wanted"
- "Being asked, having a structure in place to facilitate this"
- "Support from the club. Activities that would benefit the player & club. Responsibility for certain tasks."

Information, Structure & Pathways

- "More resources, facilities and information on what is available and what a youth committee / programme involves."



- "Having a clear pathway and encouraging young members involvement in other aspects such as young whistlers, umpiring etc."
- "More documents and literature that the GAA is not just about playing or starting for the sports team. Show the benefits and rewards."
- "Strong promotion by county boards so young members can see relevance of youth committee, more acceptance and awareness by adult members."
- "More supports at Divisional, County and Provincial Level"

Future Purpose

- "It's important for succession planning and also to make them part of the future of the club by helping them to engage with adult committee members"
- "Youth need to understand the benefits this would have for their future careers not just the benefits it has for the community."

Barriers & Concerns Raised

- "A lot of them already give a lot of their time to training and matches. And then outside of that, there is school, junior cert, leaving cert, college exams, and parttime jobs."
- "The problem lies in the lack of adult volunteers. It is becoming extremely difficult to get people to do the vital jobs that are required to run the club without adding extra tasks"
- "To be honest I wouldn't think they'd be listened to by club committee."

3.7. Benefits of Having a Youth Committee

Succession Planning & Future of the Club

- "It's important for succession planning and also to make them part of the future of the club"
- "Young people become the future committee members and officers of the club"

Youth Voice & Empowerment

- "Young people feel they have a voice in the club"
- "Empowers young members to take ownership"
- "Young people feel valued and respected"

Leadership & Life Skills Development

- "Develops leadership skills in young people"
- "Teaches responsibility, teamwork and communication"
- "Great for CV building and personal development"
- "Young people learn skills they can use in life and work"
- "Helps develop confidence and public speaking"
- "Builds life skills outside of sport"
- "Prepares young people for roles in wider society"



Retention of Youth Members

- "Keeps young people involved in the club beyond playing"
- "Helps retain members who may otherwise drift away"
- "Gives non-playing youth a reason to stay connected"
- "Reduces dropout rates among teenagers"
- "Keeps youth engaged when playing days are over"
- "Creates a pathway to stay involved in the GAA"

Club Culture & Community

- "Creates a more inclusive club culture"
- "Strengthens the bond between youth and adult members"
- "Brings energy and new ideas to the club"

Wellbeing & Social Benefits

- "Provides a safe and supportive social environment"
- "Promotes mental health and wellbeing among young members"
- "Young people benefit from having a support network within the club"

7. Club Volunteering & Capacity

- "More hands-on deck for club events and activities"
- "Reduces the burden on the small number of adult volunteers"
- "Grows the volunteer base of the club"

3.8. Challenges of Having a Youth Committee.

Commitment & Attendance

- "Trying to keep them involved due to their playing/ training schedules and other activities as well as school"

Practical & Resource Challenges

- "Making sure that it is well run and facilitated and not tokenistic."
- "Getting boys as involved as girls"

3.9. Additional Comments / Sentiment

Strongly Supportive

- "Very good initiative as the youth is the future"
- "The will is there, the candidates are there, we need to provide the direction & leadership"
- "Great initiative but hard to understand how it operates given lack of knowledge about it"



- "It's great initiative that allows young people to really engage and be heard; they are the future of our clubs"
- "We believe it would be a very positive experience for all clubs and should be pursuing"
- "We are moving towards a one club model; a youth committee can be an important part of that"
- "Formalising this committee in a club setting would be a good idea"
- "A youth committee is a good idea. A programme is needed, to follow/introduce/grow"

Interested but Need Information

- "I am only new secretary since last December, but I hadn't heard previously of the concept of a Youth Committee."
- "I was not aware that youth committees were a thing within GAA clubs, I would like more info."
- "Youth committee isn't something that has featured in our club development plan but it may be given higher importance with some information around how to proceed"
- "We currently don't have a Youth Committee in place. Would be good to understand do many clubs have 1 in place, how they went about it / how beneficial is it / share their experience. Thanks."

Calls for GAA Leadership & Support

- "There needs to be a defined role for the Youth Committee, that enables them to bring appropriate recommendations through to the Club Executive meetings for decision and action."
- "Now more than ever there is an onus on the GAA to engage with youth. Drugs, social media and feeling of isolation has to be tackled by the GAA"
- "Volunteerism is fading we all need to do more to introduce more Volunteers from a younger baseline"
- "Possibility of setting up a County Youth Committee under Rule in the Official Guide"
- "More supports at Divisional, County and Provincial Level"
- "Give them ownership and a voice. Young people are far more invested when they feel heard. Youth committees or leadership groups where they can suggest ideas (and actually see them happen) makes a huge difference"

Volunteer Capacity Concerns

- "Many clubs are having difficulty finding volunteers to take roles. Whilst very well meaning this appears like another task that needs an adult champion and committee to run it"
- "We struggle to fill our existing roles to run the club. Trying to recruit volunteers to run committee would be the biggest hurdle to overcome"

Time & Competing Commitments

- "The youth in our club have so many teams to play on including football, hurling, rugby for both club and school, I am unsure what interest they would have in a Youth Committee in whatever spare time is left."



- "I think it is difficult to get this age group to attend anything outside of football but if there was support to set up something I believe we would have the adults to run it."

Suggestions for the GAA

- "Perhaps setting up youth social media channels to encourage engagement"
- "Excellent idea for youth, youth need to be informed on how a GAA club is run financially and administratively. The leadership courses when completed should encourage the youth to participate in their GAA club and not just receive a cert."

Sceptical

- "I love the idea of a youth committee. For our club I don't think it would work. Club committee have become too political and secretive and that's coming from someone who was on the committee for many years. Club committees in my opinion have become very toxic and i personally wouldn't want that to be passed down to a group of young people."