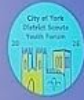


Got an idea
for the
District
Youth Team?



Send it to us via our
Suggestion Box form!

City of York District Youth Forum 2026



Scouts
City of York
Youth Team

Insights from
the project



Contents

Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Our Approach.....	5
Who did we speak to?.....	6
Programme & Events.....	8
Badges & Awards.....	15
York Scout Activity Centre.....	18
The future of the District Necker.....	21
Leaders Youth Shaped Scouting Workshop.....	26
Recommendations.....	27
Suggested actions for Scout & Explorer Leaders.....	28
Definitions.....	29



Summary

This report summarises the findings from the City of York District Youth Forum Project 2026. The project was led by the District Youth Team to ensure young people's voices are heard in the new District strategy plan. The Youth Forum covered four key areas: Programme & Events, Badges & Awards, York Scout Activity Centre, and the District Necker.

Across the sessions, recurring themes developed in terms of the types of events and opportunities young people want to take part in:

- Young people want more opportunities for outdoor adventurous activities, including bushcraft and survival skills.
- They're enthusiastic about events and badges that bring practical and transferable skills, such as leadership, cooking and DIY.
- International opportunities are a high priority, particularly those that take place abroad, such as International Jamborees, Kandersteg and Explorer Belt Trips.
- Though Top Awards can incorporate all of the above opportunities, young people are generally not aware of this. Enthusiasm was displayed for awards when participants were given the opportunity to hear about someone's own experience of completing them first.

Themes also developed on how young people view Scouting:

- Inclusivity is a high priority and was a key factor young people took into account when suggesting ideas around topics that would affect the whole district directly (such as the District Necker and St George's Day).
- A sense of community and belonging is highly valued, as well as the opportunity to meet others in Scouting. This was shown not only through session findings, but also through event feedback, which mentioned the chance to meet others as a highlight.

The report findings correspond with the UK Youth Forum findings, which also highlight adventure and inclusivity as national priorities for young people.



A photograph of York Minster, a large Gothic cathedral with a prominent clock tower, set against a blue sky.

Introduction


The creation of a new City of York District Scouts (York Scouts) in February 2026 brought together Scout Groups from our previous York Minster and York Ebor Districts.

This brings a unique opportunity to pool resources and shape plans for the future of Scouting across York, which provides fun and adventure for over 2000 young people. A District Leadership Team meeting has been arranged for 18 April to set strategic priorities with our Trustee Board, and a District Conference has been set for 9 May 2026, to draw up a District Development Plan for 2026-29.

As York Scouts exists to serve young people, we felt we needed to capture their views, and other inputs, to inform our strategy and plans.

A District Youth Forum was organised to ensure Scouts and Explorers were consulted on 4 key topics:

- District Programme & Events
- A new District Necker
- York Scout Activity Centre
- Badges & Awards

A photograph of the White Tower of York Castle, a large stone structure on a grassy hill under a blue sky.

The Youth Forum Project aimed to reach as many groups in the District as possible. This was done via a main Youth Forum Day held at the University of York Chemistry Buildings, Youth Forum activities run at Troop/Unit meeting nights, and a Youth Shaped Scouting Leaders' Workshop.

Our approach

The Youth Forum Event

We designed an event that aimed to be exciting and engaging for young people, while being productive and allowing the Youth Team to gather the information needed.

Four workshop style sessions were run, one on each of the four key topics. Sessions included interactive activities that got participants working together in teams and thinking creatively. They were delivered by members of the Youth Team who had interest or experience in that area, so young people had the chance to learn about the many exciting opportunities in Scouting first hand.

The day also involved a Scavenger Hunt activity, as an opportunity for Scouts and Explorers to get out and explore the University Campus with new friends from other groups.

In the breaks, young people had access to a social area where they could chat to other Scouts and Explorers and play some games. This was also an opportunity for them to share ideas unrelated to the sessions, via an online or paper ideas form.



Troop / Unit Nights

The Youth Team delivered sessions for Explorer / Young Leader Units who weren't represented at the the main Youth Forum Event.

Key activities were delivered from the Programme & Events, Badges & Awards and York Scout Activity Centre sessions. The District Necker topic was not included due to that separate project needing to be completed sooner.

Leaders Workshop

As part of the Youth Forum Event, we held a Youth Shaped Scouting workshop for Leaders only. This aimed to equip Leaders with ideas and resources to make their Sections more youth shaped and led.



Who did we speak to?

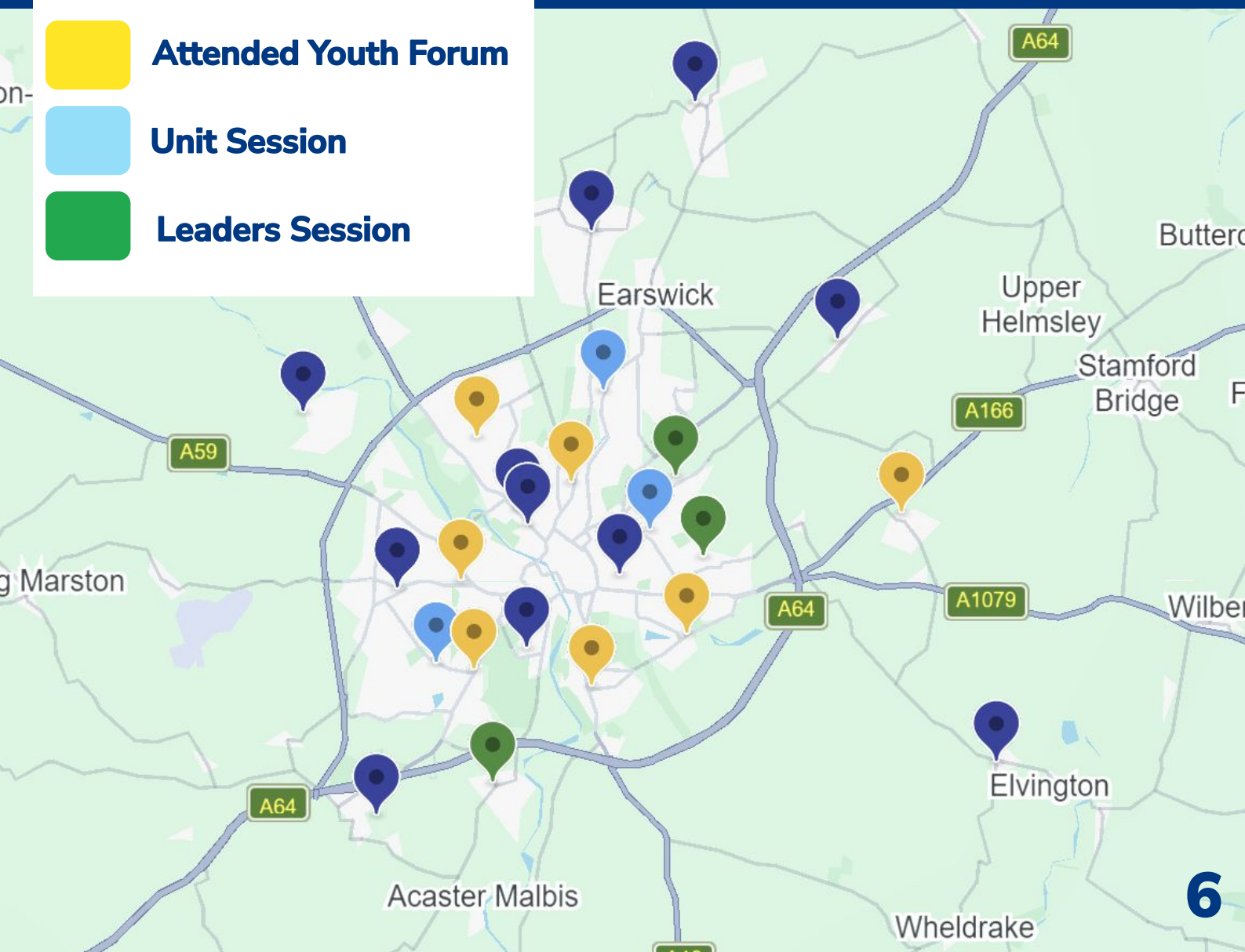
We originally aimed for 60 young people to attend the main Youth Forum event. However we faced challenges with availability of young people and Leaders given the event was at the start of the Easter Holidays. In the end we totalled an attendance of 32 Scouts & Explorers.

Though this could be considered a limitation of the project, feedback from Leaders and Youth Team Members running sessions, noted the smaller group sizes allowed for more in-depth, quality discussions between young people and adults. This may not have otherwise been possible with a higher attendance.

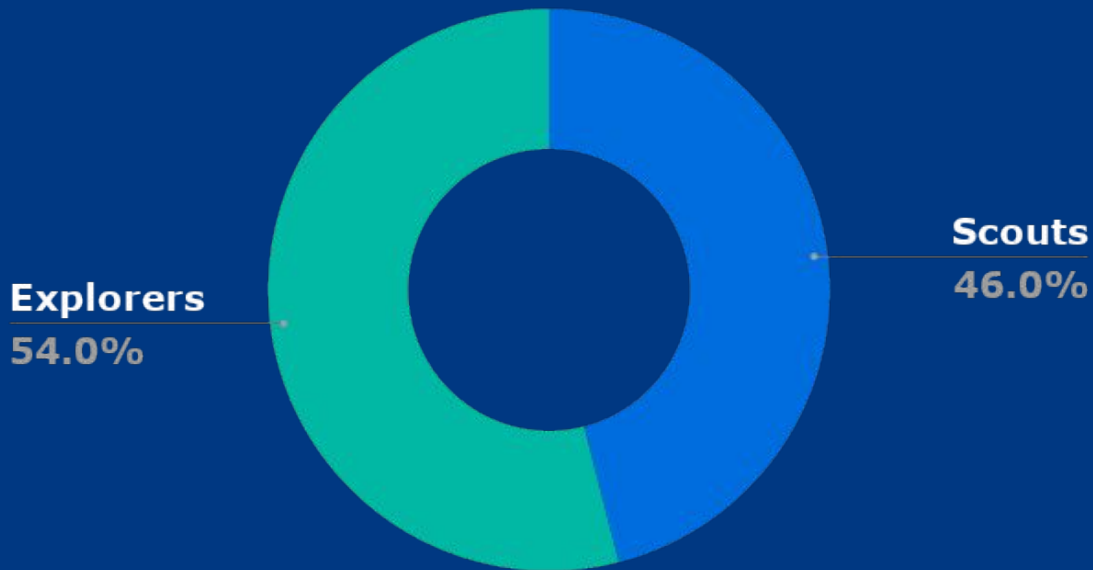
16 Explorers took part in Youth Forum activities run at their section nights. This brought the total to 50 young people taking part in the project, approximately 2.5% of our Youth membership.

However, between the Youth Forum Event, Unit Nights and Leaders Workshop, we still only reached 13 out of 24 groups in the District.

-  **Attended Youth Forum**
-  **Unit Session**
-  **Leaders Session**



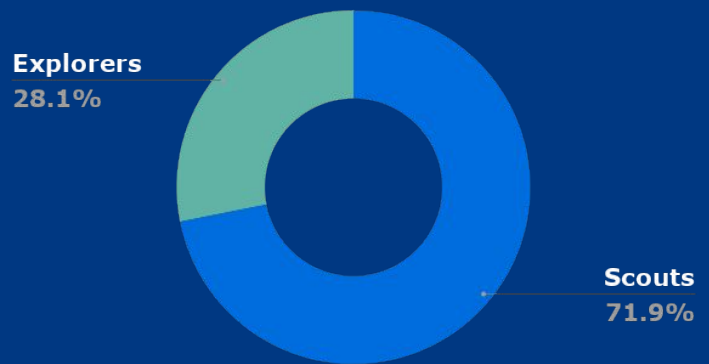
Youth Forum Project Participants (50)



50 young people took part in the Youth Forum Project. 23 Scouts and 9 Explorers attended the Youth Forum Day and 16 Explorers took part in Forum activities delivered at their section nights.

Section night sessions were limited due to the time constraints of completing the report in time for the Leadership Meeting. Groups were targeted who were keen to take part in the event, but couldn't attend, or who hadn't yet been represented in the project. In future, this could be planned out better in advance so groups would have the opportunity to take part in the main event or a delivered session as a backup.

Youth Forum Day Participants (32)



A note on the split of Sections

Scouts were a majority at the Youth Forum Day, but with the Unit nights added, Explorers were in a majority overall. Most Explorers did not take part in the activities alongside Scouts, who could potentially influence views, and vice versa.

Though this may have had little impact on findings, young people who attended the day may have been more likely to consider the other section as they took part in activities together.



Programme & Events

This session aimed to gather opinions on events run regularly across the previous Ebor and Minster Districts, as well as ideas and feedback for potential new events we could implement in the City of York District.

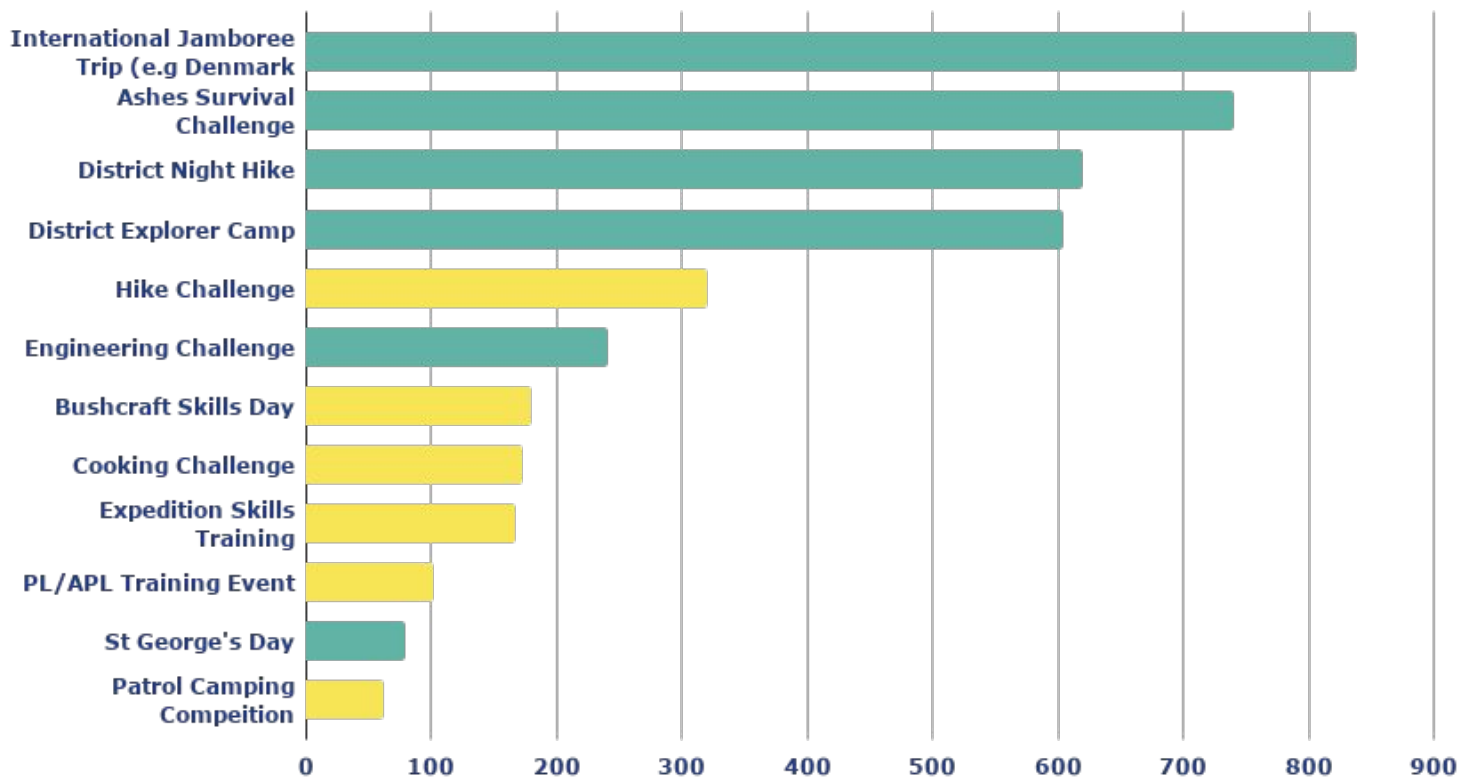
Three main topics were covered in the session: Existing & new events, International Events and St George's Day.

Part 1: Existing and new events

Scouts and Explorers were given monopoly money - each a 1, 2, 5, 10 and 50. They were asked to spread their 'money' across various existing and potential new District Events. Money represented funding and support. See below the total money given to each event. Existing/past events are shown in turquoise, new event ideas (suggested by the Youth Team) are in yellow.



Total 'money' given to each event



Limitations & Considerations

Consideration should be given that some young people may have attended some of these events before, some may have only heard about them word of mouth, and some may never have heard of them before. Some events are only open to either Scouts or Explorers which will likely have influenced decisions.



Summary

Unsurprisingly, existing events were ranked higher, as young people may have already attended them and had positive experiences, or heard good things, whereas new events are unknown.

Outdoor skills events such as survival and hiking ranked highly, as well as events involving practical transferable skills such as engineering, cooking and bushcraft.

Events are categorised into high, medium and low priority, to help determine how to prioritise these in future.

High	Medium	Low
District Night Hike	Hike Challenge	PL/APL Training
International Jamboree	Engineering Challenge	St George's Day
Ashes Survival Challenge	Bushcraft Skills Day	Patrol Camping Competition
District Explorer Camp	Cooking Challenge	
	Expedition Skills Training	



Part 2: St George's Day

A large focus was given to the York Scouts St George's Day event, as it's the one event in the year where all members of Scouting in York get together and take over the City Centre.

Scouts and Explorers were first given a short presentation on the significance of St George's Day, and why we celebrate it as Scouts. They learned about the legend of Saint George, and how Baden-Powell chose him as the patron Saint of Scouts because he represents the Scouting values of helping others, bravery and responsibility.

Via a show of hands, approximately three quarters of young people in each session had attended the York Scouts St George's Day event in the past. A summary of the event was given for those who hadn't attended. Young people were then asked to mind map their likes and dislikes of the event in small groups.

Recurring themes for likes and dislikes are noted in word clouds below and on the following page. Larger words represent ideas that appeared more frequently.



St George's Day Likes

Makes you feel proud

Scouting Tradition

Centre of attention in the city

Getting everyone

Scout

Bands together

Promise renewal

Flags

Community

Meeting

History

Flagbearing

others

St George's Day Suggestions

More engaging service
Fundraising
Knights
Games & Music
Talent Show
Costumes
Parade
More modern
Optional Service
Reinactments
Mascots
Floats in the parade
Dragon
Competitions
Colourful
Stalls
Fair
Racecourse
Prizes
Keep it the same
Audience participation



Summary

On the whole, young people expressed enthusiasm and interest for the meaning behind St George's Day. Getting everyone together and taking over the city were key highlights of the event for them, suggesting they value the social and community atmosphere of the day.

On the other hand, evidence from the session suggests young people feel St George's Day in its present form is not a relevant or meaningful celebration of the day for them.

They suggested the Minster service is not engaging, due to the length, speeches, readings, and the hymns they don't know. Some young people justified this by suggesting the service is not inclusive to all religions and beliefs, and

pointed out the UK is becoming a less religious Country.

"The UK is becoming a mostly non religious country" - Notes from a participant

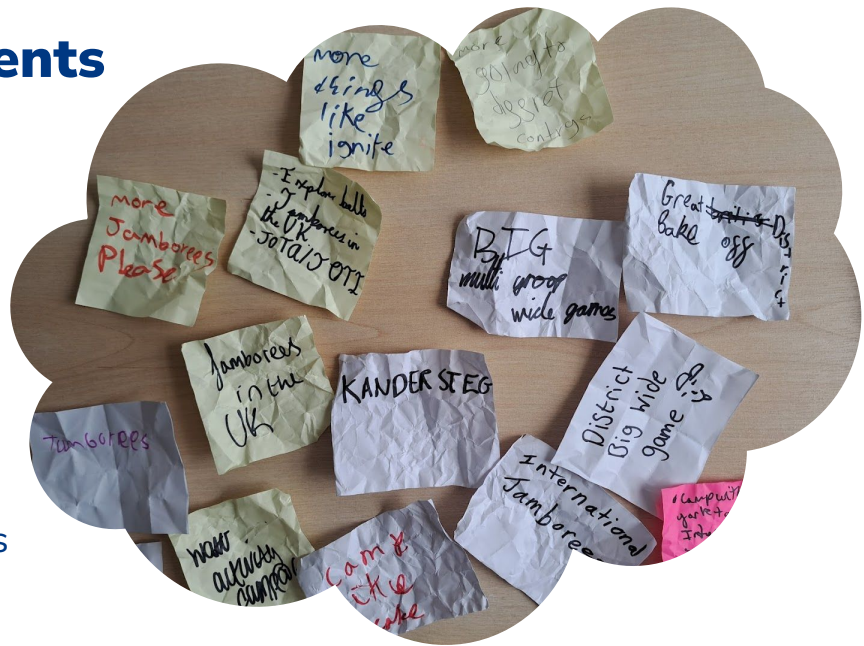
Participants were also keen to share their own ideas for how the day could look. Suggestions leaned towards a carnival style event, with a parade involving floats and costumes. It was also suggested the parade could conclude at a central location where each group could run a stall to promote Scouting to the public, while fundraising for their group, camps and trips.



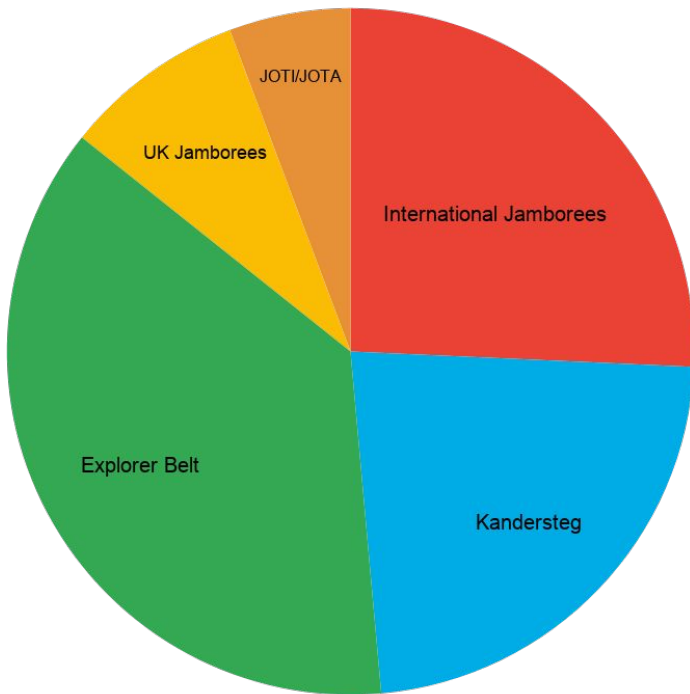
Part 3: International Events & other ideas

Young people were introduced to a range of International Scouting opportunities via an active quiz, which got them walking around the room.

They were then asked to write down the one International Event they'd most like to do (and have a Snowball fight with their ideas!). Note Larkin was specifically mentioned but has been categorised under UK Jamborees.



Top Choice International Event



Participants were also given the chance to suggest other ideas for District Events.

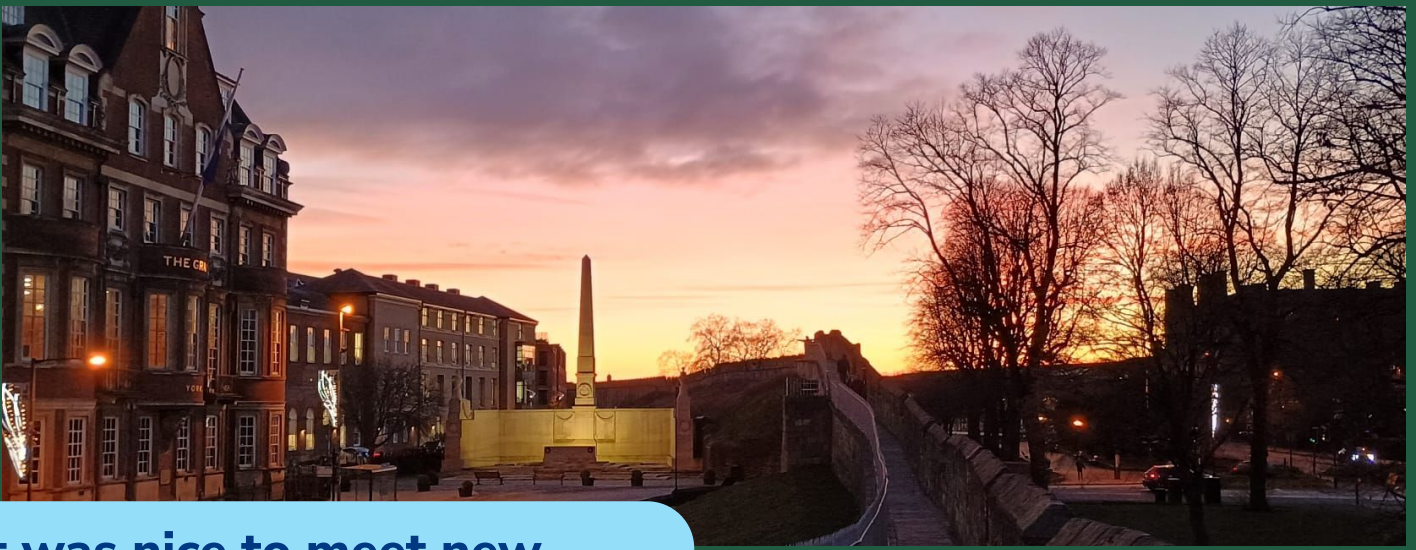
Ideas included:

- District Scout Camp
- District wide game / multi group wide games
- Great District Bake Off
- More events like Ignite (NYS County Event)

Summary

Young people are keen to take part in International Events that take place outside the UK. Note approx 85% of top choice International Events would take place abroad. Explorers Belt was the most popular choice with 37% putting it as their top event choice.





**“It was nice to meet new people in my group and from other scout groups”
- Scout**



**“I enjoyed this a lot more than I thought I would and I could really tell how much effort the leaders put into making this happen. I’m so glad I came and if there are any other events like this in the future I would be eager to sign up for it. This was my first district event and I loved seeing everyone get together.”
- Scout**

Badges & Awards

This session had three objectives

- To find out what young people already know about Badges and Awards
- To gain input on what kind of activity badges they'd most like to earn
- To get young people excited and inspired to achieve Top Awards in Scouting

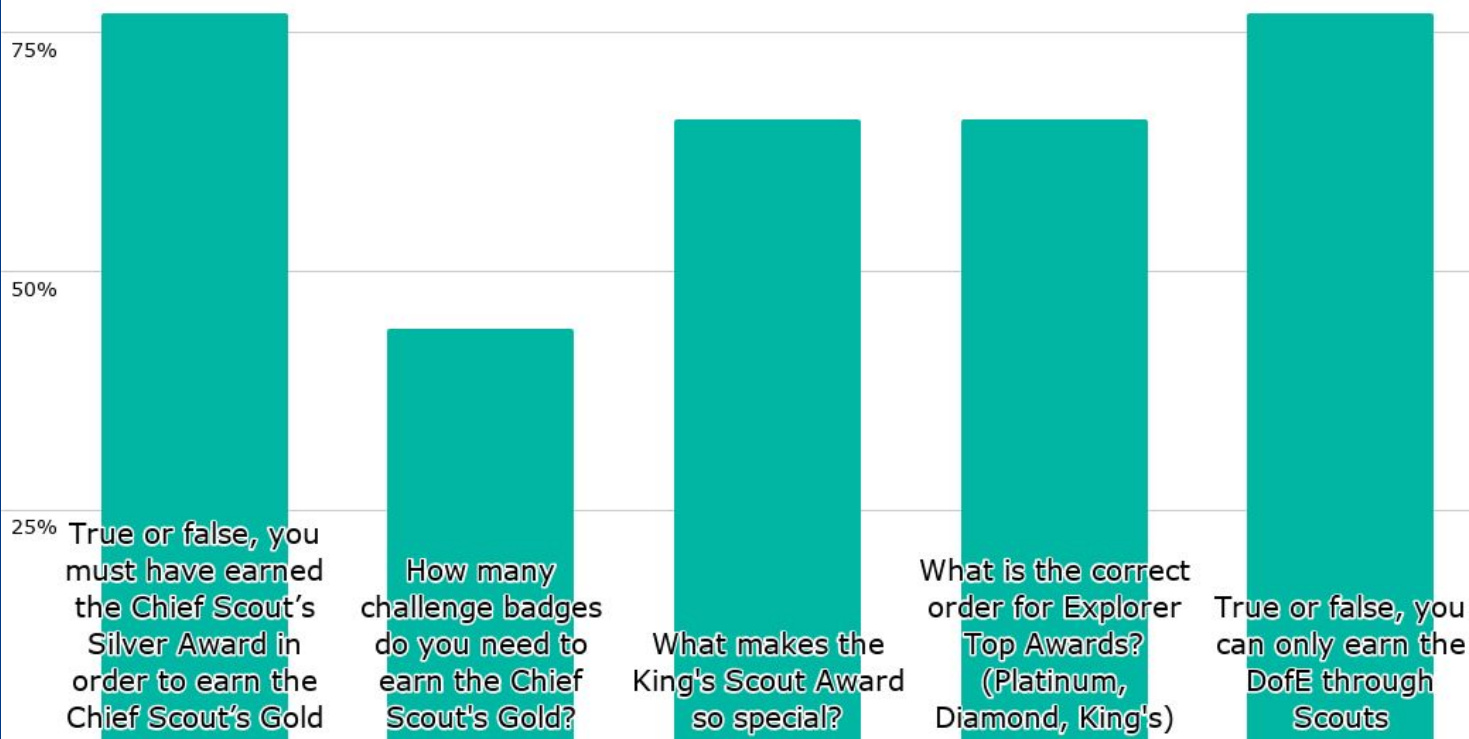
This should allow us to consider what support we can give for Leaders and young people regarding Awards, and what badges and awards could be run at a District level.

Part 1: Existing knowledge of Badges & Awards

The first activity was a multiple choice quiz. This aimed to gather a basic understanding of what young people already know about Activity Badges, Higher Awards and DofE Awards. Key questions and percentage of answers to them that were correct are displayed below.



Percentage of answers that were correct



Summary

Young people generally had a good knowledge of Scout badges and awards, however knowledge was lower regarding the Chief Scout's Platinum, Diamond and the King's Scout Award. (Top Awards)

Part 2: Activity Badge Cool Wall

Young people were given a selection of Scout and Explorer Activity Badges. They were asked to place each one on a 'Cool Wall' - which meant placing them in one of 4 categories: Seriously Uncool, Uncool, Cool and Sub Zero (really really cool!).



Each of these badges could be placed under a general category: Adventure (Climber, Mountain Biker, Caver), Traditional Scout skills (Survival, Pioneer), Creative (Creative Arts, Performing Arts, Writer), current issues (Global Issues, Environmental Conservation), life skills (Fundraising, Leadership, DIY, Chef, Money Skills). When placing badges on the cool wall, young people were asked to think outside of the specific badge and consider the wider category it would fall under.

Limitations

Not all young people rated every badge, so consider the *proportion* of Sub Zero, Cool, Uncool & Seriously Uncool ratings per category rather than the number of overall ratings. Additionally, more badges fell under the 'Life skills' category, contributing to the higher number of ratings.

Badges by category and cool rating



Summary

Evidence shows young people are keen to take part in adventurous activities and develop life skills, such as leadership, cooking and DIY. There is also keen interest in traditional Scouting skills such as survival and pioneering, whereas enthusiasm for badges based on creative and current issues was low.

Other session activities

Young people were then given presentations from Youth Team Members on highlights of their Top Awards: Chris on his King's Scout Award and Mieszco on his Explorer Belt. The aim of this was purely to get young people excited about top awards, which was a success! Many Scouts and Explorers were keen to ask questions about the awards and offer ideas as to where they'd like to go on Expeditions. They were then signposted as to where they could find out more about badges & awards.



“It was great learning about the explorer belt - I definitely want to do it!” - Scout



York Scout Activity Centre (Snowball)

This session aimed to gather young people's thoughts on York Scout Activity Centre, what they like, what they don't like and what they'd like to see added. At the start of each session, participants were asked for a hands up if they'd been to YSAC. Across all sessions just 2 young people had not been, so the vast majority were familiar with the site when taking part in Youth Forum activities.

Part 1: Likes & Dislikes

Young people were asked via discussion and mindmap notes what they like and don't like about York Scout Activity Centre facilities and activities.



Part 2: New ideas

Young people were asked to come up with ideas for activities and events that could be introduced at YSAC. They mind mapped out ideas, then in teams had to present a Dragon's Den pitch of one activity they'd like to see most.



A summary of ideas suggested and presented is displayed below in three Categories:

- Permanent Onsite Activities,
- Activities in a box - equipment could be hired and self led
- Events - ideas suggested as permanent onsite activities, but could be ran as events
- Other ideas

Activities	Activities in a box	Events	General ideas
Caving Climbing Zipline High Ropes Go-Karts Paintball Giant Swing Water Activities Pond	Capture the Flag Laser Tag Cooking	Scout Fair Fairground Cooking Zone Music event Mini festival	Treehouse Pond Football nets Better pull trolleys Make noticeboard look better More main field events Playground More lighting on main path Garden area

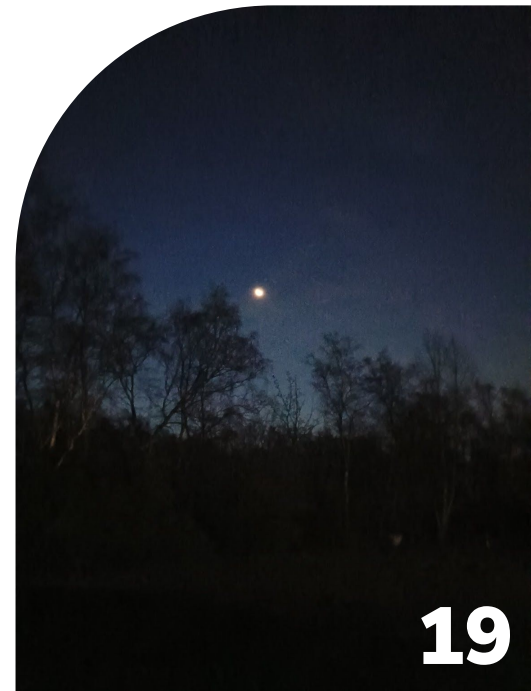


Summary

Young people enjoy the present range of target sports activities, but are keen for York Scout Activity Centre to host more adventurous activities.

They're also keen for toilet facilities to be improved, and for the site to be more appealing to camp on outside

of summer - due to it being damp in winter months.





[My highlights were]
**“Making friends and
learning about the
future of scouting”**
- Explorer Scout



The future of the District Necker



This session was a part of the wider City of York District Necker Project, led by Youth Team Members Marcus and Katie. The project aimed to consult with stakeholders on two matters:

- Who should wear the District Necker
- What it should look like

This was done via a stakeholder questionnaire - which was promoted to Leaders and Explorers at the District Explorer Camp and via WhatsApp Groups - and the Youth Forum session. Note the topic of the District Necker was not discussed at Unit Sessions, due to the time constraints of preparing a separate report for the Necker Project in time for the District Leadership Team and Trustee Board meeting on 18th April. The stakeholder questionnaire data analysis

will not form part of this report as it was not part of the Youth Forum.

Part 1: Pros & Cons of a District Necker

Participants were asked to note pros and cons of a District Necker. Common suggestions are shown below. More common ideas are suggested in larger bubbles.

Pros & Cons of having a District Necker



Summary

Overall, young people were very keen that a District Necker is necessary. They suggested it promotes unity, a sense of belonging across the District and sets us apart from other Districts - though it was pointed out this could encourage a rivalry against other areas. Other cons noted down included the practicalities of Neckers in general - such as 'gets in the way during games' and 'ends get ragged' - young people generally seemed to struggle coming up with arguments against a District Necker.

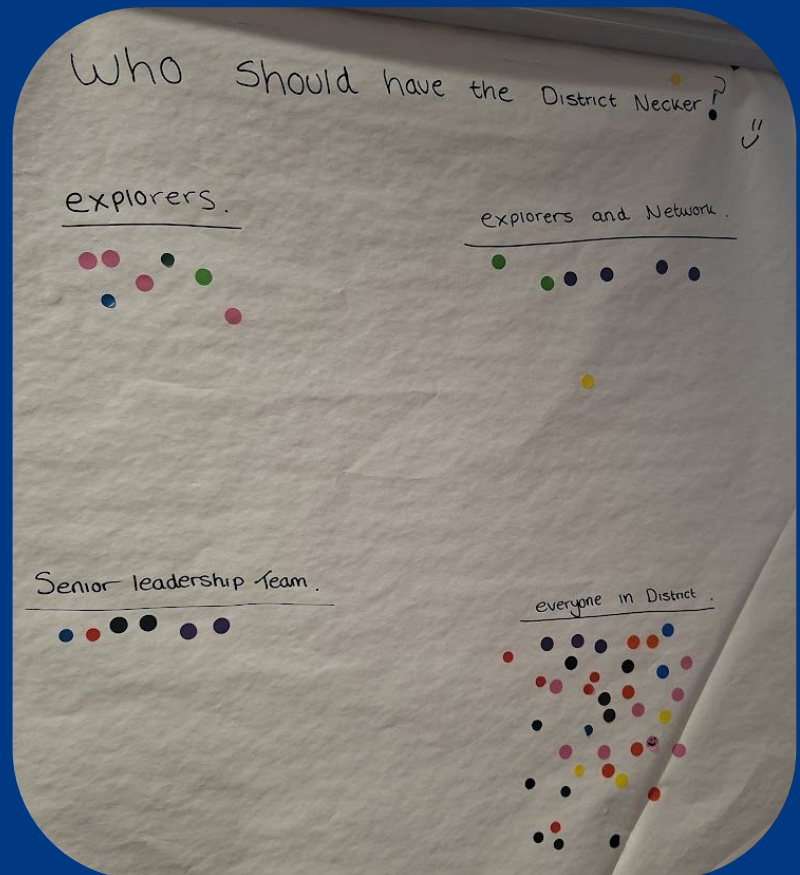
Part 2: Who should wear the District Necker?

Via dot voting, participants were asked who they think should wear the District Necker. Options given were Explorers, Explorers & Network, Leadership Team, and everyone in the District.

Summary / Limitations

As shown, young people were keen that everyone in the District should have the opportunity to wear the Necker.

However, in order to not influence young people, limited background information was given regarding who wore the District Neckers in Ebor and Minster Districts and what other Districts do. On reflection, this may have been a better option, so young people could properly take into account practicalities of Necker usage and costings.



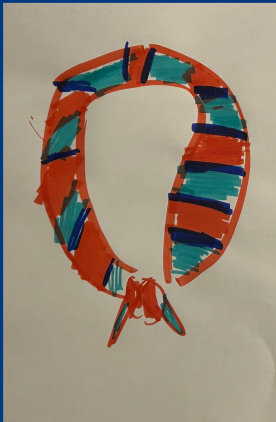
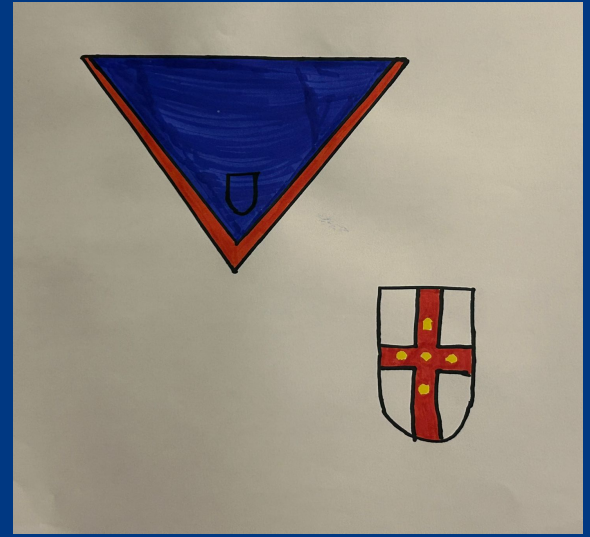
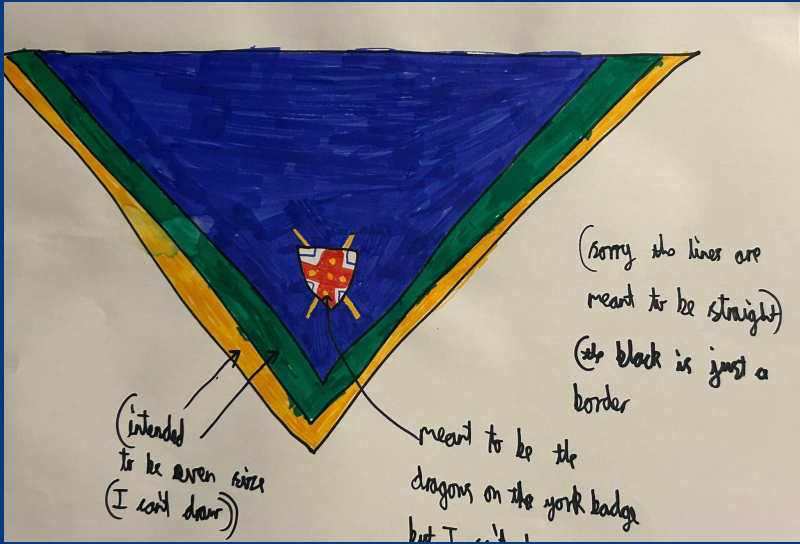
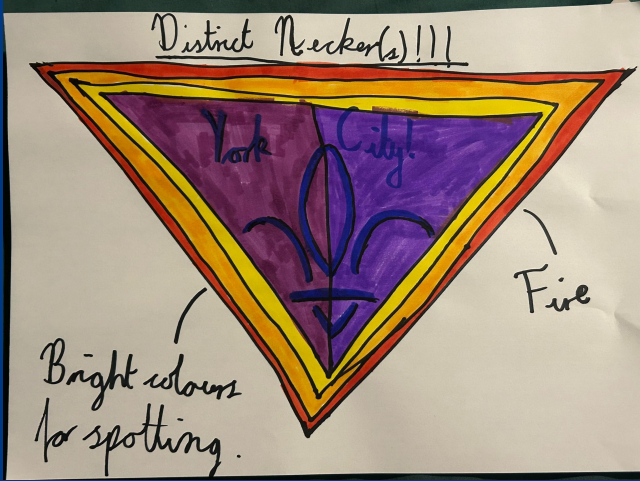
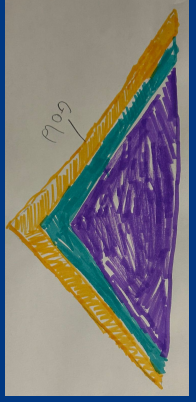
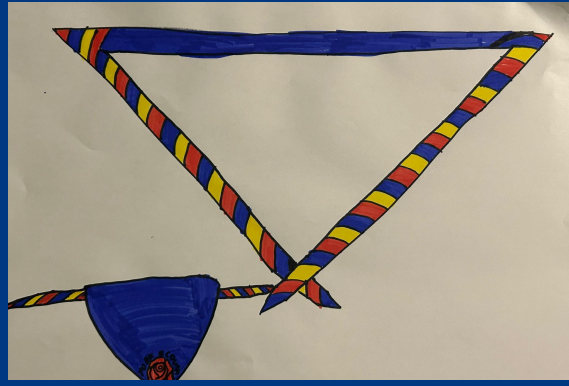
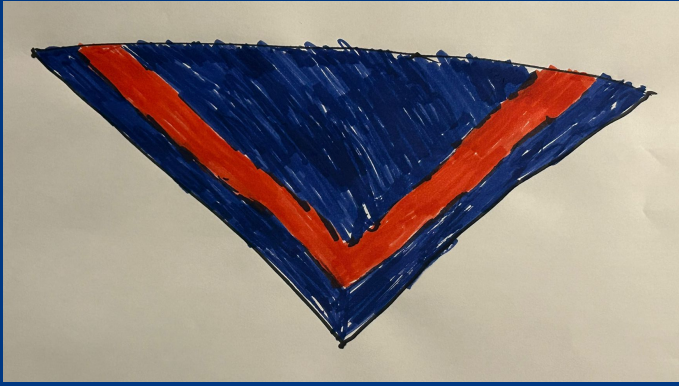
Part 3: Designing a District Necker

Young people were then asked to design a District Necker! They were encouraged to research colours that have meaning and significance to York and use these in their designs. They were also asked to consider if there should be an embroidered badge on the back of the Necker and if so, what it would look like.

See designs on the following page.

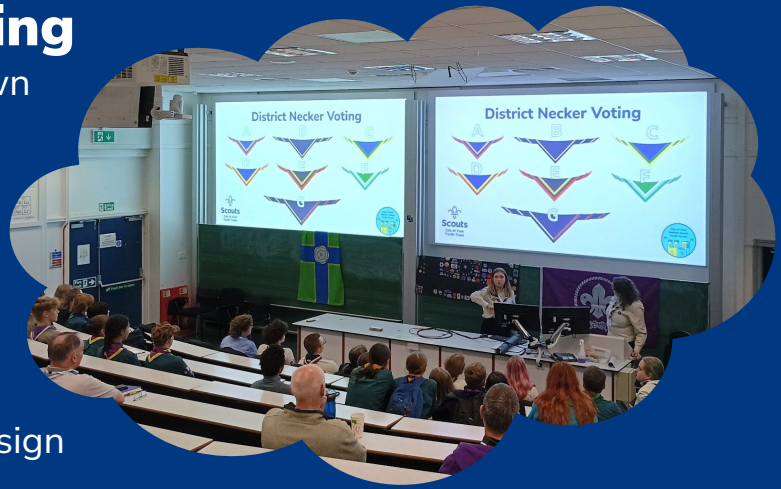


City of York District Necker Designs



Part 4: District Necker Voting

After the sessions, the Necker team sat down with the participant's designs and created a shortlist of 7 designs. Some were created by the Necker team featuring recurring and popular colours young people used, while some were direct copies of designs that they contributed. At the end of the day, young people were asked to vote once on their favourite of the 7 designs, of which design B was a winner.



They were then asked to vote on a badge to feature on the back of the Necker, from three options which appeared most frequently in the designs. From this the York City Coat of Arms was the winner.



Leaders Youth Shaped Scouting Workshop

As part of Youth Forum Day, we ran a session for Leaders on how to deliver Youth Shaped Scouting in their Sections. The workshop was open to Leaders already attending the event with their young people as well as any other Leaders in the District who wanted to attend. In total 11 Leaders attended the session, representing all sections from Squirrels to Explorers.



The session covered what Youth Shaped Scouting actually means, and why it's so important, as well as the role of the District Youth Team and how the team is there to support Leaders to implement Youth Shaped Scouting strategies.

“Fun and useful practical activity. Really good to have the opportunity to chat and share ideas with other volunteers.”

- Leader who attended the workshop

The workshop discussed when to gather ideas from young people, how to create the right moment on a camp or at a meeting and ideas as how to collect the ideas in a fun and engaging way.

Leaders took part in a 'Post it Note Possibilities' activity - which can be delivered for young people and allows them to contribute ideas for their programme. It then challenges volunteers to incorporate as many of these ideas as possible (even the crazy ones!) into their term plans.

The session covered the YouShape Awards, discussing the purpose of the awards, and how to deliver them while involving Young Leaders, Patrol Leaders, Sixers and Lodge Leaders.

Feedback from the session was positive - attendees were asked how likely they would be to recommend the session to another Leader on a scale of 1-5 (5 being highly likely.) 4 rated it a 5, and 1 rated it a 4.

Other feedback suggested more could have been covered on the Young Leader Award, which would be included if a longer session was run in future.

If you'd like to take part in this workshop in future or have it run for Leaders in your group, please email rowan.ward@yorkscouts.org.uk



Recommendations

Programme & Events

- Expand provision for the District Night Hike, International Trips, the Ashes Survival Challenge & District Explorer Camp
- Aim to introduce 1 or 2 new events that scored highly into the District Programme: Hike challenge, Bushcraft Skills Day or Cooking challenge.
- Conduct further inquiry into young people's thoughts around St George's Day. If views from the Forum are representative of groups and sections across the District, make changes to the event.
- Look into running a District Explorer Belt Trip as top priority, or to an International Jamboree or to Kandersteg.
- Consider how the District can signpost to more international opportunities (inc UK based ones) and increase opportunity for young people to take part in them.

Badges & Awards

- Consider how to make young people more aware of badges & awards available to them, particularly Top Awards. Young people have limited knowledge of these, but when given the chance, enjoyed finding out about them and had lots of questions.
- Encourage those who have achieved Top Awards to run sessions at group level showcasing their experience of their award with the aim of inspiring others.
- Consider creating a network of Top Award holders who could run such sessions.
- Provide activities at District Level to help young people work on Activity Badges that cover Adventure and Life Skills. Target badges that could be harder to run at group level first, such as Climber, Caver, DIY, Leadership & Survival (This links with programme & events - expanding provision for Ashes Challenge and bushcraft skills.)

York Scout Activity Centre

- Expand activity and event provision at the centre to include more adventurous, bushcraft and survival activities
- Look into hosting a mini festival / fair / music event for Scouts and Explorers
- Consider how the site could be more appealing to campers in winter months - less damp, sleeping options in the huts / hammocks, avoid tents on damp ground

The future of the District Necker

- Look into providing a Necker for everyone in the District, but keep cost restrictions and the realities of the Necker usage in mind. Consider Explorers and District Team wearing the Necker may be the best compromise.
- Proposed design is navy with a gold and navy trim, with the York City coat of arms embroidered on the back. Also consider outputs from stakeholder survey.

Suggested actions for Scout and Explorer Leaders

Programme & Events

- Make sure Young people are aware of District Events and have the opportunity to attend where possible.
- Emphasise adventurous, outdoors and traditional Scout activities in your programme, as well as transferable skills such as DIY and cooking.



Badges & Awards

- Get Scouts enthusiastic about their Chief Scout's Gold Award from when they join. Get PLs/APLs to tell the Troop about all the adventures they got up to when achieving the award. (Taking ownership over their awards may increase the likelihood they'll take on higher awards in Explorers!)
- Ask Explorers, Network & Leaders in your group who have achieved Top Awards to do a talk for your Section on their experience of the award. Young people at the youth forum loved getting the chance to ask questions. This is a great way to get them inspired to get involved with the Top Awards and the opportunities they bring!



York Scout Activity Centre

- Use YSAC as much as possible!
- Get young people involved in their Scout Centre by giving/signposting opportunities for work days/parties.

Definitions

Youth Team - A District Team made up of 18-25 year olds. The Team is led by the District Youth Lead and aims to ensure young people in the District have the opportunity to shape their Scouting experience, and are aware of opportunities available to them



Youth Shaped - An activity, programme or event that stems from ideas voiced by young people. It is delivered by adults or in partnership with young people

Youth Led - An idea is presented by young people or adults, but is delivered by the young people themselves

YouShape Award - An initiative from Scouts HQ, involving an Award for each Section, which challenges YP to take the lead on their Scouting experience

Young Leader Scheme - Award for Explorer Scouts 14-17. Involves 11 Training Modules & 4 'Missions'.

Top Awards - The highest awards in scouting, which YP can work on from 14-25

Project organised and delivered by the District Youth Team.

The Youth Team are:

Rowan Ward, Chris Jacobs, Dee Wright, Ella Wright, Hollie Wilson, James Byatt, Katie Ellarby, Marcus Barker, Mieszko Lichtarowicz, Rory Ekers.



With thanks to:

The University of York Chemistry Department, District Events Team, District Leadership Team, & the Scouts, Explorers and Leaders who took part in our first ever Youth Forum and Youth Team Project.

