

**MINUTE OF THE 39<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD WITHIN AYR TOWN HALL ON  
APRIL 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, AT 1.30PM**

**1. Welcome.**

The Chairman, Barrie Southwood welcomed everyone present to the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.

**2. Apologies for absence.**

Apologies have been received from Colin Beveridge, Elizabeth Beveridge, Jim Walsham, Ella Simpson, and Ronnie Steele.

**3. Approval of Minute of 38<sup>th</sup> AGM held on Tuesday April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

The 2023 AGM Minutes were posted on the website and copies were available in the office, so hopefully members will have had a chance to read them. The minutes proposed as being correct by Liz McAdam and seconded by Ann Adams.

**4. Chairman's Report.**

As I mentioned earlier, this is the 39<sup>th</sup> AGM of Opportunities in Retirement. OiR was set up in 1985 by 40 "mature" men and women who had the insight to realise that today's older people were not content to sit by the fire, drinking tea and watching television.

The first part of my Report is very similar to last year, but the sentiments are just as important today as they were one year ago, so I make no excuses for repeating them. I would like to thank the Executive Committee for their support and our Treasurer, John Rattenbury for all his work in connection with the finances. Could I also thank our Office Manager, Margaret and all the office volunteers. An equally important part of OiR is all the Group Leaders so many thanks to all of them. Our organisation would not be able to function without them.

There was a very slight increase in the membership compared to 2022 and we ended the year with just over 800 members. The newsletter, Outlook, was published in August and December. My thanks to Stephen Dodd and his team for this. Outlook was complemented by a monthly email, the OiR News.

The Executive Committee continued to meet on a monthly basis, either on Zoom or within Ayrshire Housing.

A very successful Welcome Day was held in October. The aim of this event was to attract new members and publicise OiR. We were very fortunate to have our MSP, Siobhian Brown attend and this brings a lot of extra publicity. We even had a photograph and an article in the Ayrshire

Post! This event is very important to the organisation and will be even bigger and better this year. It draws new members to the organisation and helps existing members interact with other groups. If you haven't been to one yet, I can really recommend it.

The Tuesday walking group enjoyed their first post Covid walking weekend in Scarborough in October. Everything didn't go exactly according to plan due to Storm Babet. However, everyone enjoyed the weekend once the weather improved. The annual Christmas Lunch was held in the Horizon Hotel in December, organised by Christine & Frances and was enjoyed by all.

Three new groups were started in 2023 These were Spanish for Beginners, Fit for Life and the Friday Breakfast Group at the Wetherspoons Prestwick Pioneer. Fit for Life operates on Thursday and Friday afternoons in the Blast Gym in Crown Street. The Friday Breakfast Club operates every two weeks and is very well attended and has a great atmosphere. I can really recommend it.

The History group continues to be very successful and is the biggest group in OiR with over 70 attendees for a recent talk. A coach trip was arranged to New Lanark in June.

Looking ahead, 2024 is the OiR's 39<sup>th</sup> year. As I said last year, the main focus is to increase our membership and also to increase the numbers of members attending groups. The main way of recruiting new members is by word of mouth and every one of us can do that. If anyone has any marketing ideas, then please let me know.

The Town Hall talks will continue in their present form until the end of June. However, we are still looking for someone to arrange the Speakers for this group. The Committee will discuss this and I very much hope that the Talks will continue although possibly in a slightly different format. The Town Hall meetings are a very important part of OiR activities.

Another challenge we face is "digital exclusion". This is where some people are unable or unwilling to use modern technology - smartphones, tablets, and computers etc. This problem has been tackled by Lesley Brown who has arranged IT Seminars in conjunction with VASA and these will take place this summer. My thanks to Lesley for all of her excellent work on this.

On behalf of OiR, I have been attending the Ageing Well Champions Board which was set up by VASA. This supports South Ayrshire Council's Ageing Well Strategy. The long-term aim is to ensure that older people feel valued, celebrated, connected, and cared for.

I have agreed to be your Chair for the next two years. I am confident of good progress in increasing the membership during this period. I feel very privileged to be part of our

organisation and very much hope I can carry on the excellent work started by my predecessors in this role. Thank you.

Barrie Southwood

OiR Chair

April 2024

## **5. Treasurer's Report on the Annual Accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023.**

The walking group bank account is noted in the general OIR accounts but is restricted for their own activities such as trips and holiday events.

Leaving out the walking group account, the total income for OIR in 2023 was £47,481 and the total expenditure was £47,899. The deficit on the OIR account in last year was £418 compared to £8,461 in 2022. We might therefore confidently expect that with a continuing increase in membership and reduction in running costs, 2024 should see the accounts back in the positive.

Increasing membership is important, and the committee is always looking at additional ways to advertise and promote OiR activities and use of the website and Facebook page are a vital part of this. As many of you will be aware, we can now accept all types of payment and have an online shop linked to our website accepting payments for membership and donations.

Email has enabled us to dramatically cut back on printing costs and postage, and further savings have been made in a range of other areas. The largest part of our income and expenditure is in Group Activities, so we will be taking a close look at this during this year.

Thanks go to Margaret Fagan, Office Manager, for all her support and to Colin Beveridge, Independent Examiner.

John Rattenbury

April 2024

Following John's report, Dick Vernon asked about membership numbers reported in the 2022 and 2023 AGM reports as both reports seemed to state similar numbers. As John did not have the figures to hand, he was unable to give an exact number.

## **6. Election committee members/Office Bearers.**

Barrie explained that Arnie felt that he would be unable to fulfil the role of Chair but was happy to remain on the Committee as an ordinary member. Barrie had therefore agreed, subject to the approval of the members at the meeting, to remain as Chair for a further two years. All attendees approved his re-election as Chair. The post of Vice Chair is vacant at present.

In addition, because of the 2-year cycle of re-election of committee members, Barrie reported that the following members are standing down from the committee – Barrie Southwood (Chair), Arnie Green, David Bowman, Alan Green, and Amy Kinnaird, but all are available for re-election as committee members. All attendees approved their re-election.

Barrie reported that the other committee members – Meg Steel (Minute Secretary), John Rattenbury (Treasurer), Denis Rattenbury, Douglas Sanderson, and Lesley Brown will continue for another year.

Barrie made a plea to attendees to consider joining the committee.

## **7. OiR Life membership:**

The committee agreed to re-instate the award of Life Membership and each member awarded has given a long and dedicated service to OiR. The following members received their awards – Ann Adams, Alan Bates, Stephen Dodd, Andy Mitchell, Betty McDonald, and Dick Vernon.

## **8. Vote of Thanks**

David Bowman gave the vote of thanks.

David thanked Barrie for his work as Chair, John for his work as Treasurer and his role in co-ordinating both the website and Facebook, Meg for continuing as Minute Secretary and the other committee members. Special thanks went to Margaret Fagan in her work as Office Manager and for all the extra administration she has undertaken to ensure events like today and the Welcome Day run smoothly. Thanks also to the office volunteers for their valued contribution.

David gave thanks and congratulations to the six members awarded Life Membership today, and to all those Group Leaders who are the 'machinery' that make OiR work. Finally, he thanked all members attending today, and encouraged them to think about joining the committee, acting as Group Leaders, or becoming volunteers.

## **9. Entertainment provided by members of the OiR Choir.**

David introduced the OiR Choir, who entertained us with a variety of songs. Following their performance David thanked them for an excellent show. He gave a particular thanks to the Choir Leader, Lisa, for her enthusiasm.