

**MINUTE OF THE 40th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD WITHIN AYR TOWN HALL ON
APRIL 30th, 2025, AT 1.30PM**

1. Welcome.

The Chairman, Barrie Southwood welcomed everyone present to the 40th Annual General Meeting.

2. Apologies for absence.

Apologies have been received from Denis Rattenbury.

3. Approval of Minute of 39th AGM held on Tuesday April 30th, 2024.

The 2024 AGM Minutes were posted on the website, and copies were available in the pop-up offices, 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

This is the 40th AGM of Opportunities in Retirement. OiR was set up in the Autumn of 1985 so this year will be our 40th anniversary. I plan for this to be acknowledged at the Welcome Day later this year. It has been a big disappointment that our office was closed for all of last year and, at the time of writing, is still not open. I hope this will be rectified soon. Pop up offices in Prestwick Community Centre on a Tuesday and Newton Wallacetown Church on a Thursday have, however, been very successful.

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 are all the Group Leaders so many thanks to all of them. Our organisation would not be able to function without them.

At the end of 2024, we had just over 800 members. This was very similar to the previous year. The newsletter, Outlook, was published in July 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 within Ayrshire Housing. Unfortunately, we lost two of our members in 2024 and new Committee members are urgently needed.

A very successful Welcome Day was held in October. The aim of this event was to attract new members and publicise OiR. This event is very important to the organisation and another one is planned later 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.

Our links with VASA continued with our attendance at publicity events in the Town Hall and the Cutty Sark. These events are important as they allow information on our organisation to reach a wider audience. They also improve communication between VASA and ourselves.

The Tuesday walking group enjoyed their walking weekend in Llandudno in October. Everyone enjoyed the weekend, and we had excursions to Conwy, Portmeirion and Caernarfon. The Saturday walking group continues to be popular with visits to Dumfries, Kirkcudbright and Threave Gardens and many others.

The annual Christmas Lunch was again held in the Horizon Hotel in December, organised by Christine Harris, and was enjoyed by all.

One new group, Spanish, was started in 2024. The Friday Breakfast Club continues to meet every two weeks at Wetherspoons in Prestwick and is very well attended and has a great atmosphere. The History group continues to be very successful and is the biggest group in OiR with over 70 attendees for some talks. Two members of the Committee made a visit to the Ukulele Group which meets in Prestwick Community Centre on a Thursday afternoon. This was very enjoyable, and we were made very welcome.

Looking ahead to this year, 2025, the main focus is to increase our membership and also to increase the number 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 continue with some very interesting speakers. Paul Semple gave a good talk on the paddle steamer Waverley and also gave out some half-price tickets. There will be someone talking about the Broadway Cinema in Prestwick in the Autumn. The line up for the rest of this year is now complete culminating in the party on December 9th. The Town Hall meetings are a very important part of OiR activities. Any suggestions for potential speakers are very welcome. There must also be many people within the OiR who have led interesting lives and could give a talk.

In conjunction with Holly Houston at VASA, seminars are being held to help members struggling with new technology. Holly is also available for one-to-one support.

On behalf of OiR, I am 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 will be continuing as your Chair for the next year. I am confident of good progress in increasing the membership during this period. Thank you for listening to this Report.

Barrie Southwood

OiR Chair April 2025

Betty McDonald raised a couple of issues following Barrie's report. She asked if there were other plans to celebrate the 40th anniversary. Barrie replied that apart from the table at the Welcome Day, the committee had discussed the 40th anniversary year which commences in autumn 2025 and will plan other events. Any ideas would be gratefully received by the committee.

Betty also asked about why work to repair the office was taking so long. Barrie passed this to John in his role with property maintenance. John explained that there have been 2 incidents causing damage and it took time for South Ayrshire Council to agree to a quote so that work could commence. A Project Manager was appointed in August 24 and his first job was to ensure the building was safe, this was followed by several weeks of heater and dehumidifiers drying the premises. Painting was completed 2 weeks ago. All floor coverings need to be replaced, the boiler and the alarm system serviced, then we can start to move equipment back into the office. Some computer equipment will be upgraded. It is hoped that the office will be open again in September.

Betty queried why tracking the number of members was so difficult. Barrie replied that not being in the office makes things more difficult. In addition, in 2023 the first Welcome Day allowed members to renew membership for the following year and new members appeared in the 2023 subscriptions, but applied to 2024, and this boosted membership numbers for 2023. The lack of office and computer/printing facilities at the start of 2024 made it very difficult to follow up on members who had forgotten to renew their subscription resulting in an overall drop of recorded members in 2024. The new and renewed memberships from Welcome Day 2024 are 2025 subscriptions. John added that we are developing computer systems to make record-keeping easier.

5. Treasurer's Report on the Annual Accounts for the year to 31st December 2024.

Total income for 2024 was £42,295 and expenditure was £43,573 leaving a deficit of £1,277 from our unrestricted funds.

During the repairs to the office, nearly £3,000 of electricity was used in drying out the building. We are pursuing a refund for this from the insurers.

The Walking Group's restricted funds showed a surplus of £303.

Our office manager and the office volunteer team are to be congratulated on how they coped with the lack of access to the OiR office for the whole year, and no computers or printing/copying facilities until June. With collapsed ceilings and debris on the floor, entry to the office was unsafe up to August.

Allowing for the expected gift aid and refund for electricity, which will appear in the 2025 accounts, the charity has shown a small surplus for 2024 – our first surplus since Covid hit.

Increasing membership and reducing costs continue to be key issues for the committee. Online payments and BACS are increasingly being used for membership subscriptions, and with the aid of group leaders processing subscriptions and membership cards, postage expenses have been saved.

Unrestricted reserves at the end of financial year 2024 were £19,411 plus our Charifund holdings of £6,622.

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

John Rattenbury

April 2025

Betty McDonald raised a couple of issues following John's report. She asked why the Group Activity income was greater than expenditure. John replied that the balance is recorded at the end of year and depends on all bills being received for group activities. John also noted that Gift Aid was still to come for 2024 because of limited access to the office. John encouraged all to register for Gift Aid if they qualified. Betty asked how to find out if she has signed for Gift Aid. John will send out an email informing members of their Gift Aid status.

6. Election committee members/Office Bearers.

There have been no nominations for the committee.

Barrie will remain as Chair for a further year. Meg Steel has been co-opted to the post of Vice Chair, subject to the approval of the members at the meeting and John is willing to stand as Treasurer for the next 2 years. Attendees approved Barrie continuing as Chair, Meg as Vice Chair and Minute Secretary, and John as Treasurer.

Ann Green has been co-opted onto the committee subject to the approval of members at the meeting. All attendees approved their re-election.

In addition, because of the 2-year cycle of re-election of all committee members, Barrie reported that the following members are standing down from the committee – Meg Steel (Minute Secretary), John Rattenbury (Treasurer), Denis Rattenbury, Douglas Sanderson, and Lesley Brown but all are available for re-election as committee members. All attendees approved their re-election.

Barrie reported that the other committee members – Barrie Southwood (Chair), David Bowman, and Amy Kinnaird will continue for another year.

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

7. A.O.C.B.

Digital sessions: Lesley Brown stated that many members had benefitted from the IT sessions organised with VASA. There were approximately 35 OiR members in the first group with a variety of IT issues, e.g., mobile phone use, Facebook, web searches. Holly (VASA) continues to support some members of the group on a one-to-one basis. Holly will second group of approximately 15 OiR members

8. Vote of Thanks

David Bowman gave the vote of thanks.

David thanked Barrie for his work as Chair, reminding the attendees that this was his second period as Chair due to Arnie Green's ill health. At this point David expressed his condolences for the loss of Arnie. He next thanked John for his work as Treasurer, his role in co-ordinating both the website and Facebook, and his recent heavy work with the property. He continued by thanking Meg for her work as Minute Secretary and with Gift Aid submissions, and for the work of 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 extended thanks to all Group Leaders, the office volunteers and all members attending today. Finally, he thanked John Rattenbury for organising the entertainment to follow the meeting today.

9. Entertainment provided by showing a film.

John showed a film of "Old Ailsa Shipyard". The film depicting the history and work of this Ayrshire shipyard proved both extremely interesting and enjoyable to members.