

OPPORTUNITIES IN RETIREMENT AYR

Minutes of Group Leaders' Meeting held at 11am on Thursday 26th March 2025 at Ayr North Parish Church

Attendance:

- a) Committee Members - Barrie Southwood (Chair/Tuesday & Saturday Walking Groups), Meg Steel (Minute Secretary/Vice Chair), John Rattenbury (Treasurer/Web & Facebook Manager/Wine-tasting), David Bowman (History), Denis Rattenbury, Lesley Brown (Breakfast Club), Margo Ross (Web & Facebook Assistant Manager/Online Book), Maggie Roebuck (Online Poetry/Ladies/Men Keep Fit), Ann Green and Margaret Fagan (Office Manager).
- b) Group Leaders - Doug Nicolson (Badminton), Christine Prout (Tuesday Photography), Dick Vernon (Hillwalking/Bridge), Rober Kerr (Bowling), Alice Bates (Birdwatching/Walking), Clive Gardner (Wednesday Photography), Jim Mason (Table Tennis), Sylvia McKinlay (Decoupage), Bob Drummond (Scottish Country Dancing), Martha Baillie (Wednesday Supper Club), Sandy Douglas (Tennis), Linda Burgess (Choir), Jim Scullion (Ukulele), John Cornwell (Tuesday Table Tennis), Kenny McIssac (Thursday Table Tennis) and Pat Lappin (Philosophy).

Apologies for Absence: Mick Roebuck (Committee), Amy Kinnaird (Committee), Evelyn King (Short Tennis) and Billy McCallion (Cycling).

Welcome: Barrie welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Questionnaire – responses and Group practices.

John explained the reasons for the “OiR Group Survey” which is important now that the office is open and enquiries are coming in. The first part of the questionnaire will provide the core information about each group so that Margaret and the office volunteers have the correct information for enquiries and so up-to-date information appears on the website. The second part deals with the group finances, and all monies held by the group must be notified to the Trustees who are responsible to OSCR. The third part is about your group’s online activities and any if any information could be shared to promote our organisation. Finally, the questionnaire asked if there are any issues that should be discussed by the committee. Doug Nicholson, Badminton, asked that the office always ask potential new members to contact the Group Leader in the first instance. Margaret Fagan noted that this is current practice for all members who make enquiries through the office.

Action: John Rattenbury stated that an ‘End of Year’ form will be sent out with the minutes. The completed forms will update the committee on the financial situation of each group. John Cornwell, Tuesday Table Tennis, asked how to keep their webpage up to date. John replied any changes or new information be notified to the office as soon as possible. In addition, John would be grateful for any new information or interesting material relating to the group activities which he could post on their webpage.

2. Communication:

Dick Vernon (Bridge/Hillwalking) asked if it would be possible for the following items be sent out by email: a) next Group Leaders' Meeting Agenda b) Outlook. In relation to Outlook, he stated that only one-third of his groups' members looked at it online, but he believes there would be more interaction with personal email. Pat Lappin (Philosophy) asked if the Group Leaders could be notified when Outlook was available, so they can disseminate information to their groups. Also, he asked if we could use AI to help. Maggie Roebuck stated that the committee have set up a sub-group to investigate how we can best use AI.

Action: John stated that it would be impossible to send Outlook out by email attachment as each PDF file is 3 megabytes plus. Files of this size would bounce or become spam. In addition, many members don't have up-to-date phones or Wi-Fi at home. Notification of Outlook being available on the web goes out with the monthly OiR News to all members unless they have no email or have unsubscribed. The cost of printing is £4 to £5 a copy, however, Margaret also keeps a few printed copies in the office for those not online. Group Leaders could pick up a copy of Outlook from the office for circulation in their group. Maggie Roebuck stated that the office volunteers are intending to phone members where no email has been entered on the database. If any group members are complaining that they do not receive the monthly OiR News, it would be useful if Group Leaders would ask them to check that current email addresses are up to date in the office. In relation to the Group Leaders Agenda, they will be notified by email prior to the next meeting. The agenda will also be posted on the Group Leaders webpage as soon as it is available.

3. Risk Assessment:

John stated that our insurance covers all OiR members, but not non-members. In order meet health and safety requirements it is important that the Group Leaders carry out risk assessments of their group's activities and that the premises are suitable. Jim Mason (Table Tennis) stated that premises e.g. church halls have an accident book and any incidents should be recorded. Dick Vernon (Hillwalking/Bridge) noted that his two groups required very different risk assessments, and he had enlisted the advice of an expert for his hillwalking group.

Action: Guidelines for conducting Risk Assessment for their group are on the Group Leaders' web page – Appendix 4. John Cornwell (Tuesday Table Tennis), noted that if the Group Leader is absent, then a deputy is left. Dick Vernon could contact his expert on risk assessment with a view to a meeting with John Rattenbury and advising OiR on their procedures. John and Dick will meet towards the end of May and go through the Risk Assessment Guidelines on the website.

4. OiR web pages and Facebook content:

John thanked the Group Leaders for any pieces and/or photographs that have sent for the webpage. There are many people visiting our website, e.g. last month we had 1,500 hits. Therefore, the website is a good way of promoting OiR and the different groups.

Action: John asked the Group Leaders to check their own pages and notify the office or himself of any changes.

5. Pastoral Care

More elderly are becoming isolated and sometimes group members help to bring elderly to a meeting. If you drive a group member to a meeting it is important that you emphasise they “go as a friend” for your own insurance purposes. Carers accompanying a member are insured through their employers.

6. AOCB:

- a) Annual check of membership cards:** The committee asked all Group Leaders check their members have renewed or joined in the current year. It would be helpful if all groups could be checked within 2 months of the new year. If they have paid but have no card – membership cards will be available in the office for collection by them or the Group Leaders. It is always useful to remind members to take a note of their membership number before collection, especially those who use Sumup. John noted that there is now a digital version of their current card, and this has proved helpful to those who have paid by BACS. Membership cards are still available in the office to be collected
- b) First Aid:** Dick Vernon (Bridge/Hillwalking) stated he had circulated information to Group Leaders about a First Aid Course but had not received any replies.
- c) Bowling:** Rober Kerr (Bowling) stated that we are losing the local indoor bowling which is very sad. He noted that the nearest is Kilmarnock, but the parking is poor.
- d) Table Tennis Tables:** John Cornwell (Tuesday Table Tennis) stated that the table tennis tables were now 12-15 years old and needed repair/replacement. The tables are OIR equipment, so John asked if there were funds to replace the tables. **Action:** John will send in details of the tables to Margaret Fagan, so the cost of replacement can be investigated.

On behalf of the committee, Meg Steel thanked the Group Leaders for all their efforts.

The date of the next meeting will be notified early in 2027.