



ACTIVE
RETIREMENT IRELAND

**GUIDE TO
HOLDING AN
ARA AGM**

Active Retirement Ireland 2024

A guide booklet to support local
Active Retirement Associations
to plan and deliver an AGM

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Holding an AGM

The purpose of the annual general meeting (AGM) is to inform members of the work and activities undertaken by the Active Retirement Association (ARA) over the past year and to present the yearly accounts. Elections for the ARA committee are also held at the AGM and for this reason most ARAs aim to hold their AGM early in the year.

Prior to the AGM, all members must receive the following:

- Notice of the AGM
- Nomination papers
- Agenda for the AGM
- Any motions for the meeting

It is important to allow enough time for the nomination papers to be returned and for motions to be submitted. A minimum of 21 days' notice is best practice.

The AGM provides a good opportunity for the committee to engage and consult with the membership — to answer their questions and seek their views. Ordinary members should be able to raise their concerns and participate. This can be done in two ways at an AGM: formally, through submitting motions and less formally, during a questions and answers (Q&A) session.

Notice of the AGM

It is important to give members sufficient notice of an upcoming AGM. This notice should include the agenda, venue, date and time and other items of importance for the AGM.

Nomination Papers

When electing new members to the committee, many ARAs use nomination papers which should be distributed to members prior to the AGM. In other cases, members are nominated from the floor on the day of the AGM.

The AGM agenda

A meeting agenda sets out the order of business and the topics to be covered. Following an agenda is a good way to ensure the meeting stays on course and all relevant information is communicated at the AGM. It is recommended that an agenda for the meeting is prepared and circulated to members along with the notice of the AGM, plus a reminder that any motions must be received in writing prior to the AGM.

It is important to try and keep the meeting to a tight schedule so that members have time at the end for a Q&A session or open floor discussion. While the topics and running order may differ from one ARA to the next, the following will usually be included on most agendas:

- Report on work, fundraising events and general activities of the ARA over the past year. This is usually presented by the chairperson.

- Treasurer’s Report — the treasurer will usually present a statement of income and expenditure for the ARA over the past year.
- Elections for the next year’s committee
- Q&A session

An example of a standard agenda is shown below.

- Opening remarks/welcome
- Apologies
- Minutes of previous AGM (Secretary)
- Matters arising from the minutes
- Report on year’s activities (Chairperson)
- Presentation of accounts (Treasurer)
- Adoption of accounts
- Election of committee
- Motions to be put to the AGM
- Q&A session
- Guest speaker (if desired)

Motions to be put to the AGM

Any motions to be put to an AGM should usually be received in writing by the committee on or before an agreed date before the AGM, so that it might be included with the papers sent out to those attending. Motions may take a number of forms and can be in relation to the activities or operation of the ARA and/or the ARA committee. An example of a motion: That *(blank)* ARA increase the ARA membership by €5 for the following year. Any motion such as above should be proposed and seconded and, following discussion, be voted on.

Venue and meeting set up

At larger ARAs’ AGMs, there is generally a ‘top table’ where the committee sits facing attendees. When laying out the room for your AGM it is a good idea to form circular tables with 6-8 attendees per table, depending on the number of members. This encourages discussion and interaction between members. For smaller ARAs it may be necessary to adjust this conventional layout to a single ‘round table discussion’ where the table(s) are set so that all attendees are facing each other.

Consider whether you will need a microphone or presentation facilities.

It is also a good idea to provide light refreshments immediately following the meeting as this will allow members an opportunity for more informal socialising to get to know each other and, equally importantly, allow the committee the opportunity to circulate and encourage members to get involved at committee level or in sub-groups of the committee.

During the meeting

Minutes / matters arising

It is usual to place copies of the minutes of the previous AGM, the annual accounts and any other relevant papers that have not been sent to members beforehand on the seats of those attending. After the secretary has read the minutes of the previous AGM, any matters arising from the minutes should be taken in the order they appear. In some cases, the chairperson may ask that matters arising be dealt with during the course of the meeting. The minutes of the previous AGM should be proposed and seconded by members, whose names should be recorded. Once proposed and seconded, the minutes of the previous meeting are formally adopted.

The secretary must also take the minutes of the current AGM in session, for providing for formal adoption at the next year's AGM.

Adoption of accounts

Similarly, after the treasurer has read statement of accounts, it is good practice for these to also be proposed and seconded by members in attendance so they can be confirmed and formally adopted.

Election of ARA committee members and officers

The following is an excerpt from ARI's Sample Local Constitution

There should be an executive committee to carry out the policy of the association and to provide for its administration, management and control. It should ideally consist of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and not less than 3 or more than 7 ordinary members.

The executive committee should be elected by the registered members at the annual general meeting.

No officer should hold the same office for more than three consecutive years.

The executive committee may appoint from among its members such other honorary officers as it may determine from time to time. It shall have power also to co-opt to fill vacancies and establish sub-committees.

The executive committee shall meet at least once each quarter. Four members shall constitute a quorum for the executive.

The executive committee and the sub-committees shall hold office until the following annual general meeting.

Elections

- All officers and committee members stand down at the AGM, prior to the election, even if seeking re-election.
- All nominated candidates, including those seeking re-election will be announced.
- If more than one person is nominated for any office, or if there are more nominations than there are places for ordinary committee members, there must be an election.
- The voting procedure will be chosen by the ARA, however best practice would be a secret ballot of all registered members present.

Special procedural provisions

The only special procedural provisions at an AGM are that:

- If the position of chairperson is being contested, the chairperson should stand down during the election and be replaced by an acting chair (someone who is not standing for any position) who is specially agreed and will officiate just for the period of the election.

Amendments to ARA constitutions

Any proposed amendments to the constitution are also discussed at the AGM. These will have been discussed by the current committee and the chairperson may wish to take a few moments to explain why the committee believes that the change is needed. Amendments are often made to update the constitution in the light of new circumstances. When the motion or amendment has been presented a vote will take place.

Questions & answers session

Many meetings conclude with an open floor discussion or Q&A session allowing members to share their views, ask questions or make suggestions about the events and operation of the ARA. This should be facilitated by the chairperson.

Guest speakers

You may invite a guest speaker for after the elections and Q&A session, if desired or relevant. For example, many ARAs will invite a speaker from a community group or service or other area of interest to members to give an information presentation. This is optional and at the discretion of the ARA committee.

Raise awareness

In some cases, the AGM can be used to gain publicity for the organisation — for example, if you have a guest speaker or an announcement that you think may be of more general interest than just to your own membership, you may wish to promote the AGM for wide attendance (local media, local representatives and so on). However, this

must be handled with care as many AGMs can bring up quite sensitive issues that you may not wish to publicise. You must weigh up your priorities and approaches for promoting the organisation carefully.

Contact your RDO

Your regional development officer is available to support your ARA to deliver a successful AGM.

Your ARA's region:

Name of your regional development officer:

Contact details:



government supporting communities

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