



Support Booklet for Active Retirement Associations

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Active Retirement Ireland

Our mission

Active Retirement Ireland reaches out to all older people to stop loneliness through friendship and support.

Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) is a national network of local Active Retirement Associations (ARAs) with a regional structure of nine regions and an elected national Board comprising members who are elected annually at the national AGM and external co-opted members. ARI is a voluntary organisation whose voluntary members plan, organise and deliver activities at local, regional and national levels. ARI has a national support office that supports the overall work of the organisation with a CEO and staff.

The Board

The ARI national Board is elected each year at the national AGM. The Board can appoint external members if required. The Board is responsible for the overall governance of the organisation. Each Board member is a director of the company (Active Retirement Network Ireland) and trustee of the charity.

The company member

Any ARA that affiliates to the national organisation may apply for membership of the company by nominating someone from their group to hold such membership in their own name on behalf of the ARA. This entitles them, as company member, to represent the group and vote at the general meetings of ARI.

The regions

The nine regions of ARI are sub-committees of the board and each has a committee elected at the regional AGM. Each region has a voluntary regional development officer (RDO) and a development team that support the region to deliver a range of activities that bring local ARAs together. The voluntary development teams are in place to support existing ARAs, help set up new ARAs in areas of need and bring ARAs together for sharing information and networking through cluster meetings.

The ethos of volunteering is vital to ARI and members are central to the development of the organisation.

The ARA

The local ARA is an independent local association that enables older people to lead a full, happy and healthy life. They do this by offering organised opportunities for participation in a wide range of activities. Each local ARA plans and delivers a range of social, cultural, lifelong learning and physical activities based on what members like to do and their ability to participate.

Activities include:

- Physical activities such as walking, bowls, swimming and Go for Life exercises
- Social activities such as tea dances, evenings out, holidays and short breaks
- Cultural visits to theatres, museums, heritage centres and galleries
- Learning activities such as creative writing, IT training, arts and crafts
- Information sessions on issues of interest, such as health, welfare rights and pensions
- Advocacy — using individual and collective voice at local and regional levels.

All activities are designed to reduce isolation and are aimed at keeping older people independent, active and healthy.

Useful contacts

Active Retirement Ireland National Office:

Phone: 01-873 3836

Email: info@activeirl.ie

Website: www.activeirl.ie

Running an Active Retirement Association

ARAs are established to ensure that older people have opportunities to remain healthy and active through engaging in a range of activities within their own community. The main aim of local ARAs is to arrange social events, educational options and activities which encourage and support members to remain as active participants within their group and community.

Many ARA members are also involved in other organisations locally, providing much needed volunteers in a variety of activities.

To enable local ARAs to run smoothly and effectively, members elect an ARA committee to oversee ARA operations and organise events on their behalf. This booklet outlines the various roles associated with this committee.



Committee roles

Typical roles of a committee

- | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| ❖ | Chairperson | ❖ | Treasurer |
| ❖ | Vice-Chairperson | ❖ | Public Relations Officer |
| ❖ | Secretary | | |
-

The Chairperson

Chairing is a key role on any voluntary management committee. The chairperson must ensure that the management committee functions properly, that there is full participation during meetings that all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

Tips for effective chairing:

- Chair in a way that encourages participation of all committee members, particularly newer members.
- Be able to conduct meetings with impartiality and in a pleasant and tactful way.
- Be able to think objectively and hear all opinions.
- Be able to delegate tasks so that as many members as possible are involved and gain vital experience for the future.

A chairperson may act as spokesperson or representative for the ARA, with the prior agreement of the members. As they are representing the views of the ARA and not speaking as an individual, it is important that the chair hears the differing views of the committee members and seeks agreement for any public statement. A chairperson must be thoroughly familiar with the matters of procedure and rules of the ARA.

Chairperson — Before the meeting:

The chairperson will consult and work with the secretary to ensure that:

- the meeting agenda is prepared
- suitable premises and facilities have been arranged for the meeting
- anyone who is to report to the meeting is aware of the fact
- they are familiar with issues that are likely to be discussed
- they are familiar with all the actions taken in previous meetings.

Chairperson — At the meeting

- Arrive in good time before the meeting and start the meeting on time.
- Ensure there is quorum present according to the rules, without a quorum no decisions can be taken.
- Clearly and distinctly declare the meeting open. Receive apologies from those who are absent and sign the minutes of the last meeting.
- Ensure that decisions are agreed by the committee as a whole whether through consensus or vote
- When coming to a decision, sum up clearly and concisely the points members are making for and against actions.
- When a proposal has been voted upon, ensure that the secretary has recorded the decision.

NB: Remember that above all else, the chairperson is there to guide the meeting, support good decision making and enable all members of the committee to work harmoniously and purposefully as a team.

The Vice-Chairperson

A vice-chairperson's role is to assist the chairperson in the execution of duties and to fill in as chair when the chairperson is absent.

A vice-chairperson should be equally as pleasant, tactful and humorous as the chairperson and should be able to think objectively and act impartially.

The vice-chairperson of a group should also be thoroughly familiar with matters of procedure and group rules.

Tips for Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons

- ❖ Work with a pleasant and friendly manner
- ❖ Treat everyone the same way
- ❖ Listen attentively and impartially
- ❖ Be sensitive to the general feeling of the meeting
- ❖ Start on time
- ❖ End at a reasonable time Try not to be long-winded
- ❖ Short succinct summaries are perfect
- ❖ Don't appear disinterested
- ❖ And finally ... a friendly disposition and a sense of humor
always helps!

The Secretary

Like the chairperson, the secretary should have certain characteristics:

- Recognition of the importance of dealing promptly with correspondence
- Attention to detail
- An orderly mind and a methodical way of working
- The ability to phrase different types of correspondence suitably
- The ability to absorb information and summarise it in written form and at meetings.

The **Minutes** are the official record of the meeting and must record what was discussed, what decisions were taken and who is to carry out the decision. They do not need to go into detail of what everybody said at the meeting but should summarise the discussion that took place and major differences of opinion. Traditionally these were handwritten and kept in a minute book, if using digital technology, the minutes need to be kept on electronic or hard copy file.

Secretary – General Duties

- Be responsible for the administration of the group. Keep an up-to-date list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the group's members.
- Keep careful, orderly records of the group's work, including a written/typed copy of all minutes.
- Filing all correspondence received and copies of replies sent in order of date. Filing reports received and made.
- Compile lists of any names and addresses that may be useful to the group.
- Keep a record of past activities and decisions of the group and keep a diary of future events.
- Prepare a report of the group's activities for the year, to be given at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Secretary – Before the meeting

- Collect together all the business of the meeting and consult with the chairperson on the order of business and on how all business will be dealt with on the agenda.
- Ensure that the notice of the meeting has been given, that a suitable venue has been arranged and that copies of the agenda have been prepared. Have a record of the minutes from the last meeting in the minutes file and ensure they are available.
- Make sure that any reports or information requested at the previous meeting is available.

Secretary – At the meeting

- Arrive in good time before the meeting, with the minute file and all relevant correspondence and business matters for the meeting arranged in good order.
- Record the names of those present and convey and record the apologies of anyone absent.
- Read the minutes of the previous meeting and get the chairperson's signature.
- Report on any action or matters arising from the minutes.
- Read all correspondence from national office, board or regional committee and summarise all other correspondence.
- Ensure that deals or special offers to the members are available for members to read.
- Take notes of the meeting for the minutes.

Secretary – After the meeting

- Prepare a draft of the minutes and consult with the chairperson before entering them into the minute file.
- Send a notice of reminder to any person required to carry out any action for the group.
- Send all correspondence, as decided by the group, promptly.
- Keep a record of all telephone, postage and stationary expenditure and present it regularly.

- Write up the minutes and deal with all correspondence as soon after the meeting as possible.
- Keep a checklist of everything needed for the next meeting.

The agenda: items on a typical agenda

- ❖ Apologies
- ❖ Minutes of previous meeting
- ❖ Matters arising
- ❖ Correspondence
- ❖ Chairperson's report
- ❖ Treasurer's report
- ❖ Items of main business
- ❖ Any other business (AOB)
- ❖ Date of the next meeting

NB: AOB should be short and should not have items for discussion.

The Treasurer

All groups must have up-to-date financial records for a number of reasons.

- Groups must have the latest available information on their financial situation.
- They must be able to provide financial accountability to their members and to all bodies from which the ARA has received funding through grants or fundraising activities.
- Written records of all income and expenditure must be kept.
- It is good practice to have a set of procedures for dealing with money, which all committee members are aware of.

Take care when handling cash and taking cash to be lodged. ARI (through the insurance broker) can offer discounted cash in transit insurance cover to affiliated ARAs.

Duties of a treasurer

- Present a record of the current financial state of the ARA to members at meetings as agreed and present a statement of accounts at AGM.
- Act as one of the signatories for group cheques.
- File all receipts, monies and statements of accounts in order of date paid.

Treasurer — fundamental rules

- Always give receipts and retain duplicates for all money received — however small the amount.
- All money received must be lodged in the bank, post office or Credit Union with lodgment slip receipted and lodgment recorded in cash book.
- All expenses, including drawings for petty cash, must be by cheque — this can then be recorded easily.
- Obtain a receipted invoice or voucher or petty cash document for all cash paid out — no matter how small the amount.
- Never make cash payments from cash received. All monies received must be lodged and recorded; expenses must be recorded and paid out.
- Never use personal cards for making payments.

Annual statement of accounts

This must be submitted to members once a year at the AGM in the form of an income and expenditure account. See example in Appendix 2.

These accounts must be checked and found correct by a person other than the treasurer, preferably a member of the ARA who does not sit on the committee.

All account books must be available for general inspection at the AGM.

Essential documentation

- Receipt book
- Voucher of petty cash
- Cheque payments book
- Bank lodgments book
- Cash book
- Bank statements

The Public Relations Officer (PRO)

The PRO's duties can cover three very different, very important functions.

The first is to maintain good internal communications between the people who are directly linked with the group, e.g. making contacts, attracting new members.

The second is keeping local people up to date with the activities of the group, e.g. writing notices of events in local newspapers, hanging posters in shops etc.

The third is to keep a wider external audience informed through the media — web, broadcast and print. This means maintaining a public image of the organisation.

The PRO — general characteristics

A PRO should be contactable (at agreed times) in the day-time or early evening, either by landline or mobile phone.

PROs should have good language skills and the ability to communicate well through written pieces such as press releases.

A PRO should be a good verbal communicator and should be confident enough to appear as the 'public face' of the group on occasion.

Computer literacy is a highly desirable skill among PROs, as much communication takes place via email.

Sub-Committees

Committee members can sometimes become frustrated or anxious because they feel they are expected to know and do too much.

When an ARA is small and just beginning, everyone on the committee can be involved in every decision. But when the ARA becomes larger or more complex it is unreasonable to expect everyone on the committee to be an expert in all aspects of the ARA management. One way to get around this problem is to set up sub-committees to deal with specific areas of interest.

Sub-committees can be permanent and cover areas of ongoing work such as finance, premises, outings or publicity. They can also be formed to do specific short-term pieces of work and may be called 'working groups'. These can be formed to organise specific events.

Sub-committees and working groups can draw on the expertise of people who are not on the committee. They can also be used as a way of getting more ARA members involved in the day to day operations of the ARA and the ARA committee at a later date.

Sub-committees should have a clear remit setting out what areas they cover, the decision-making powers of the sub-committee, who its members are and who it reports to and how often.

Sub-committees are not independent of the ARA and should have a representative from the ARA committee. Any monies raised through the activities of the sub-committee are property of the ARA and will be held in the ARA accounts. Activity reports from the sub-committees should be presented to the ARA committee.

Remember: Much of what is discussed in a committee or sub-committee setting should remain in the group setting. Some information, such as funding or other sensitive issues, must remain confidential. It is important that all committee members are loyal to this confidence. The group is a social entity, people join to enjoy themselves.

Always remember that each member is there to have fun!

Members' Code of Conduct

Who is this code for?

The members of the local ARA within the network of ARI.

Purpose of this Code of Conduct

- To contribute towards a constructive and pleasant atmosphere in the ARA so that members can volunteer for and take part in activities.
- To ensure that all members know what behaviour they have a right to expect from other members and the committee.
- To ensure that all members know what behaviour is expected of them whilst taking part in the activities of the ARA and its subcommittees.

Respect for others

Both ARA members and committee members will:

- treat other people fairly and equally and with respect
- not discriminate unlawfully against any person
- allow others to express themselves and understand that all views are important even if they are not the same as their own — as long as no offence is caused even if unintentionally
- speak to the subcommittee leader in the first instance if they have any issues with the activity or the other members.

Equal opportunities

ARA members must:

- understand, respect and work at all times without prejudice to race, age, ethnic origins, disability, gender, physical and mental health, religion, sexuality or cultural background
- understand that all forms of discrimination, including bullying and harassment are unacceptable and contravene Equality legislation and ARI's policies
- perform his/her work on subcommittees or within the ARA with honesty, integrity, impartiality, objectivity and a positive attitude.

Committee and subcommittee members should:

- work together and help each other wherever possible
- listen to and adhere to the activity leader's instructions for delivery of activity
- ask the committee leader if in doubt about any of the instructions — as many times as is needed.

Members/volunteers who agree to this Code of Conduct can expect to:

- be praised for their contribution where and when it is due
- be treated fairly and with respect by all others
- be listened to and have their views taken in to account when performing tasks and activities.
- work in a positive and friendly environment as per the mission statement of ARI.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Adults from abuse is important to ARI and its members. Awareness of the processes to be followed to safeguard adults at risk is part of our work at local level.

Information and awareness raising will be provided where possible in the voluntary local associations. ARAs will support and enable members to talk about abuse and to report to the appropriate channels.

GDPR guidelines for ARAs

Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a regulation in EU law on data protection and privacy for all individuals' personal data within the European Union. Personal data is any information relating to an individual, whether it relates to his or her private, professional or public life. It can be anything from a name, a home address, a photo, an email address, bank details, posts on social networking websites, medical information, or an individual's computer IP address.

The regulation is about being able to show that the data the ARA has gathered, has met "lawful processing conditions" which include:

- Consent – that the member has clearly and willingly agreed to the processing of their data for membership purposes
- Contract – that the member understands that their data is necessary for membership of your ARA and for membership of ARI.

The eight principles of GDPR

Personal data must:

1. Be processed fairly and lawfully

Any individual's data, held by an ARA, **must be collected with the individual's consent** and using a lawful means; i.e. personal information cannot be sourced without the individual being aware that their data is being collected. For example, if you receive an email and there happens to be an individual's email address in the correspondence, you are not permitted to take this address and store it for your own use at a later date. You need to have permission.

2. Be obtained only for specific, lawful purposes

There must be a reason for your ARA to store someone's personal information; for example if they are a member of your ARA and you require this data for affiliation purposes. An ARA cannot keep a record of someone's personal information if they are not a member of your ARA, or if they are not a company supplying services to your ARA.

3. Be adequate, relevant and not excessive

An ARA should only hold personal data on individuals that it needs for the purpose of making someone a member of the ARA. Any data collected in excess of this, is unnecessary.

Or

An ARA may hold contact details of a tutor or trainer but their permission must be sought to hold on to this data.

4. Be accurate and kept up to date

Efforts must be made to ensure that all personal information held by an ARA is the most current. For example, if a member changes their address, or updates their contact phone number, these details should be updated in the ARA's records.

5. Not be held for any longer than necessary

It is unnecessary to hold onto personal data that is no longer relevant. If a member has left an ARA then their personal information needs to be deleted from the ARA's records.

If you collect names and contact details of members every year then ask yourself do you need to keep each year's record — if not, delete.

6. Processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects (access)

If an ARA member requests that they be provided with a record of all personal information concerning them that is held by an ARA, then this information must be supplied to the individual within a month of the request. This is why it is important to make it clear that only names, addresses and contact details are required.

7. Be protected in appropriate ways

All personal information concerning members of an ARA must be stored in a secure location. **For example, paper records should be kept in a locked cabinet and electronic files should be password-protected. Care must be taken as to who has access to this information and whenever it is being distributed electronically. Personal data cannot be shared outside the ARA without the consent of the individuals it concerns.**

If you are using a membership book ensure this is not left lying around.

When affiliating to the national organisation the affiliation forms will include a sentence on this so that ARAs can safely send names and contact details for membership purposes.

8. Not be transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA), unless that country or territory also ensures an adequate level of protection

The ARI central support office uses a secure server located within the EEA to store personal data.

ARI has adhered to many of these principles throughout its existence, as had been recommended by previous data protection policies issued by the Irish Government, however; these points are now EU regulations and must be complied with fully.

The GDPR came into effect on Friday 25 May 2018, if an organisation or an ARA is seen to be in the process of becoming compliant with GDPR, then they will not be penalised. But you should begin to adhere to the principles outlined above and ensure that the data you collect on your members is protected, accurate and up to-date.

Summary:

Remember to ask yourself the following:

1. What information from members do I need to collect to run my ARA?
2. Why do I need this information?
3. What am I going to do with this information?
4. Can I reassure members that their information is safely kept?
5. How long will I need this data? You must dispose of information as soon as it is not needed.

Other useful information

The Active Retirement Ireland website has information for members. Visit <https://activeirl.ie/members-resources> for affiliation and other forms as well as handbooks and support books.

A member newsletter, 'The Development Programme Newsletter' is published on the website on the first Friday of every month with the exception of August and September (summer break) and January (Christmas). You can find the newsletter at www.activeirl.ie

Active Retirement Ireland received funding from:



government supporting communities

The Scheme to Support National Organisations is funded by the Government of Ireland through the Department of Rural and Community Development

Appendix 1: Sample Constitution

Constitution and Rules of _____ Active Retirement Association

as ratified at the General Meeting held on: _____

Signed (1) _____ (Chairperson)

Signed (2) _____ (Secretary)

Title and Objectives

1. The Name of the Association shall be:

_____ Active Retirement Association,
hereinafter called “the Association”.

2. The Objectives of the Association shall be:

a) To provide a focal point for older people, of both sexes who are retired or semi-retired from paid or unpaid work, to meet and engage in educational, cultural, sporting and social activities.

b) To promote the spirit of self-help and independence and to encourage members to use their energy, talents, skills, knowledge and experience to benefit each other and the community.

c) To encourage a positive attitude to ageing and retirement.

3. The Association shall be non-party political and non-denominational.

Membership

4. Membership shall be open to older people, of both sexes who are retired or semi-retired from paid or unpaid work living in the general area.

5. An annual subscription shall be decided by the Annual General Meeting and shall be payable in advance not later than _____ each year. A receipt for the subscription shall be issued as evidence of membership.

6. The Association year for the purposes of membership and administration shall be from January to December.

7. The Management Committee shall have the power to fix charges for services if necessary.

Management Committee

8. There shall be a Management Committee to carry out the policy of the association and to provide for its administration, management and control.

It shall ideally consist of a Chairperson, vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and not less than 3 or more than 7 ordinary members.

9. The Management Committee shall be elected by the registered members at the Annual General Meeting.

10. No Officer may hold the same office for more than three consecutive years.

11. The Management Committee may appoint from amongst 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.

12. The Management Committee shall meet at least once each quarter. Four members shall constitute a quorum for the Executive.

13. The Management Committee and the sub-committees shall hold office until the following Annual General Meeting.

General Meetings

14. Not less than 14 days' notice of General Meetings, Annual or Special, shall be given to members.

15. The Annual General Meeting of the Association shall be held in the month of _____

All motions, nominations and amendments must be in the hands of the Secretary not less than 7 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting. Nominations for the Committee, including officers' posts, shall be made in writing by two current members, having received consent from the nominee.

16. The Agenda of the Annual General Meeting shall include:

- a) Minutes of the previous AGM
- b) Annual report submitted by the Secretary
- c) Financial report submitted by the Treasurer
- d) Election of Officers and members of the Management Committee
- e) Motions
- f) Any other urgent business.

17. A Special Meeting shall be convened by the Secretary within 14 days, if directed by the Management Committee or demanded in writing by not less than 20 current members, who in their requisition shall state the purpose of the meeting. No other business shall be transacted at that special meeting.

18. _____ current members shall constitute a quorum at the General Meeting of the Association.

Finance

19. The personal property of the Association shall vest in the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer for the time being of the Association, who shall hold such property in trust for the Association.

20. The Management Committee shall open a bank account on behalf of the Association and all cheques drawn on the said account shall be signed by the Treasurer and also by the Chairperson and/or the Secretary.

21. Correct accounts and books shall be kept showing financial affairs and receipts and disbursements of the Association.

Alteration of the Constitution

22. Alterations and additions to this Constitution may be made at any Annual General Meeting or at a special General Meeting, by a motion supported by at least two thirds of the members present and voting.

Interpretation

23. The Management Committee shall, subject to the authority of a General Meeting, be the authority for the interpretation of the Constitution and shall have full power to decide on any matter not provided for in this Constitution.

Affiliation to Active Retirement Ireland

24. Each ARA shall pay an annual affiliation fee to Active Retirement Ireland based on the membership of said ARA.

25. By affiliating to Active Retirement Ireland (ARI) and adopting this constitution, the Association will abide by the guidelines and rules therein.

26. Each ARA shall provide the contact details of their officers and members on affiliation.

27. Each ARA shall nominate a member to become the company member to Active Retirement Network Ireland as stated on the affiliation form. This named member will be the appointed delegate to attend and vote at the national AGM. Should said delegate be unable to do so a proxy can be appointed to fulfil the role.



ACTIVE

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