



Cynghrair Pobl Hŷn Cymru
Cymru Older People's Alliance

CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE
ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2023 – 2024

APPROVED AT ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 19 NOVEMBER 2024

November 2024



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Foreword

I am very pleased to present this seventh Annual Report for Cymru Older People's Alliance since we have become a registered charity to give a national voice for 50 plus Forums and Groups across Wales.

The last 12 months have again been challenging for older people as substantial impacts on their lives have continued through the cost-of-living crisis and impacts of the pandemic on older people. We are pleased that our charity has been able to make an influential contribution to the response by ensuring the voice of the 50+ Forums has been heard at the national level in discussions on age and ageing and advice about it has been disseminated on a very regular basis.

The Board and Sub Committees have met quarterly over the last year, and we have also organised regular meetings with Forum Representatives. We continue to make sure that the independent and self-determined voice of older people is heard. We also try to make a substantial contribution to the shaping of national policy through the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing and a range of other representative and consultative groups. We have been particularly active in campaigning on age discrimination, poverty in later life, reform of social care and digital exclusion. We have continued to ensure that our Charity is well managed and continues to meet the Charity Commission requirements for registered charities.

Looking ahead over the next 12 months, there are a number of challenges and opportunities. The Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society provides a good framework to make progress. In particular the creation of Age Friendly Communities offers real potential to engage with older people and improve their lives. I do however have concerns that older people are not being given sufficient priority in all Council areas and that the contribution that active and supported Forums can make is not being recognised widely enough. Genuine partnership and co-production with local older people must become the norm in all parts of Wales.

In closing, I want to inform you that after a number of enjoyable years with COPA I shall be retiring as Chair and Trustee at this year's AGM. I also want to acknowledge the significant contribution that Steve Milsom has made to COPA since 2017. Steve was Chair for 5 years and is standing down as a trustee after completing the two terms permitted. He has most recently been Honorary Secretary of COPA and will continue in that role on a voluntary basis. I must also thank Age Cymru who have given us excellent support over the last year, and we are very grateful to Vicki, Kathy, and the team. We are also most grateful for the support and engagement that we received from Helena Herklots, the former Commissioner for Older People, and her team. We look forward to working closely with her successor Rhian Bowen Davies. Finally, thanks are due to all our Trustees and Forum Representatives for their hard work.

Ralph Stevens
Chair, Cymru Older People's Alliance

Introduction

1. The challenges for Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA) have continued during 2023 – 2024, with many older people's forums struggling to continue. This report is the eighth Annual Report since we became a Registered Charity and covers the period from 1 December 2023 to 30 November 2024, although our accounts cover the 2023-24 financial year.

Context

2. COPA has been recognised by Welsh Government as the national charity to lead and support 50+ forums in Wales and they have provided small-scale development funding since 2014.
3. COPA brings together the views, opinions, and concerns of local older people's forums to the all-Wales level. This provides a strong, credible, and coherent voice to government at all levels and represents what older people want and need. COPA is a group that has existed in different forms and titles since 2001, initially working under the umbrella of the Welsh Government's Strategy for Older People. As such, it has a strong tradition of influencing policy and practice for older people in Wales. It is a genuinely independent organisation – a voice for older people led by older people. COPA challenges ageism and lobbies government nationally and locally through forums so older people are properly consulted and involved in decisions that affect them and their communities.
4. The future direction of COPA continues to be discussed and agreed with members across all parts of Wales through regular engagement with forums.

The Board

5. The Board of Trustees (see Appendix 1) has met regularly over the last 12 months with structured agendas and an agreed Business Plan. COPA has worked hard to devise, debate and review position papers and policies and to ensure that we fulfil Charity Commission requirements. We have made progress on some priority issues impacting on older people that we have raised in our discussions with Welsh Government Ministers and officials, and with the Older People's Commissioner for Wales as well as other Public Bodies.

Reporting on Key Objectives

6. In the last 12 months, COPA has been fully operational as a Registered Charity. A Board of 11 Trustees, including 4 co-opted Trustees, meet quarterly. The COPA Board has addressed a range of issues over the last year and a short summary of the action taken is provided for the main objectives in our Business Plan for 2023 – 24.

Governance of the Charity

7. Our Annual Report and Financial Statement agreed at our 2023 AGM were published to the Charity Commission website with our Annual Accounts. COPA has continued to work hard to fulfil Charity Commission governance requirements.
8. We secured continuing Welsh Government funding for 2023 – 24 and expenditure has been monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The funding has and will continue to be claimed on a need's basis.
9. Board meetings have been held on a quarterly basis (hybrid) to ensure COPA's continued contribution on behalf of older people's forums. Quarterly meetings have also been held of the Communications, Policy, and Finance Committees. Bi-Monthly meetings were also held with Forum Representatives.
10. We have implemented a new COPA branding; logo n updated website and progressed a communications and marketing plan to promote the charity and give a bolder voice to older people's representation.
11. Recruitment for new co-opted and elected Trustees was undertaken and one new Elected Trustee and one new Co-opted Trustee have been appointed.
12. A Business Plan was agreed for 2024 – 25 and has been submitted to Welsh Government.
13. We held an all-day Conference and AGM in Swansea face to face but also on a hybrid basis with hubs in, Anglesey, Conwy, and Pontypridd as well as for delegates at home.

Policy Work on Behalf of Older People

14. The last 12 months have again been challenging for older people as economic factors have made substantial impacts on their lives. We are pleased that our charity has been able to continue to make an influential contribution to the response by ensuring the voice of the 50+ Forums has been heard at the national level in discussions a wide range of issues and information and advice about it has been disseminated on a very regular basis.
15. Communication has continued with the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Care and her officials through meetings and letters. We have responded to Welsh Government and other consultations on issues relevant to older people. In particular we have worked with other organisations to oppose a Welsh Government consultation which proposed a £20 a week increase in fees paid by some older and disabled people for the personal care they receive at home. We joined over seventy organisations across the UK in supporting a Statement of Intent to shine a light on pensioner poverty and its serious impacts.
16. COPA has worked with and supported the Commissioner and Councils in progressing Age Friendly Communities (AFCs) in Wales. From COPA's position of strong support for the concept and practice of AFCs, we have written to the Welsh Government and new Commissioner to set out the issues we think need to be addressed to make Wales an age friendly nation on a more comprehensive and consistent basis.
17. We have campaigned on key issues affecting the lives of older people including health and social care, transport, digital inclusion and have published an article on 'banishing age discrimination to history.' COPA responded to the UK Parliament's Welsh Affairs Committee Call for Evidence on Access to Cash. COPA contributed to the Senedd Finance Committee's engagement programme for the inquiry into Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025-26. We have developed an effective dialogue with the new Llais – Health and Social Care and with the Future Generations Commission.
18. COPA has continued to make a substantial contribution to the shaping of national policy through the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing and related groups. Although as a registered charity COPA is entirely politically impartial, we wrote in the same terms to all of the main political parties with the aim of influencing the debate in the

General Election on 4 July 2024 in respect of older people. Our “Manifesto” for Older People” set out a prospectus that identifies the key strategic and policy changes that COPA wants to see considered by the UK Government to benefit older people in Wales.

19. A strategic review of our Charity has continued, and action agreed to bring about fundamental change in the impact we are able to make. A Forum Development Action Plan as a basis for COPA to support revitalisation of Forums across Wales has continued its implementation. We have written to the new Minister and new Commissioner for Older People to secure their support for revitalization of Forums to help further progress implementation of Age Friendly Communities in Wales.
20. COPA has Membership of the following national level groups with feedback to Trustees and Voting Members.
 - a. Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing in Wales
 - b. Cross Party Group on Older People and Ageing
 - c. Cross Party Group on Intergenerational Solidarity
 - d. Commissioner for Older People National Organisations Chair’s Group
 - e. Commissioner’s National Partnership Group for Age Friendly Communities
 - f. Commissioner for Older People – Abuse Action Group
 - g. Commissioner for Older People – Community of Practice

Engagement of forums

21. The ‘buddying’ scheme with Forum Chairs continues to ensure sustained engagement with the membership. Under the scheme, Trustees establish and maintain contact with Chairs to offer support for their local work and campaigning and create a two-way dialogue to inform COPA’s work. This scheme is now being reviewed.
22. Over the last 12 months we have held regular meetings with Forum Representatives to ensure dialogue between national and local levels is improved. A variety of issues have been discussed.

Looking forward

23. The Board of Trustees has agreed its priorities and a new Business Plan for 2024 – 25. The main priorities that will be targeted cover:

- i. Make a difference to the lives of older people in particular through activity that i. creates age friendly communities ii. addresses isolation, loneliness, and digital inclusion iii. increases intergenerational solidarity iv. promotes well-being.
- ii. Contributing to the implementation of the new Strategy for an Ageing Society including through membership of the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing.
- iii. Working directly with Forums and Groups across all parts of Wales and work with Councils to support creation of Age Friendly Communities.
- iv. Implement our new Communications and Marketing Plan on a phased basis to improve understanding and awareness of COPA, for our charity to become more influential and project our values of the place of older people in society.
- v. Ensure that the Board has sufficient capacity and range of skills and knowledge required by completing a recruitment exercise to identify and appoint new and replacement elected trustees.
- vi. Identify new opportunities to increase capacity and raise funding for COPA to enhance its role as the national voice for 50+ forums in Wales.

24. As a result of our Strategic Review, we will continue to implement the programme of development. We will aim to change and grow our charity and increase its impact, capacity, and resources to enable us to maximise the potential of COPA to support the revitalisation of forums and ensure older people in communities across Wales are effectively engaged. Our Engagement Framework will be utilised to ensure that this is done on the basis of key principles of equity and fairness.

25. Over the next year, we will continue to promote an effective voice for our charity through the marketing strategy and new brand identity. This will include making improvements to communication in order to

raise awareness of who we are and what we do. It is vital that we continue to ensure that older people's voices are heard through co-production at the planning stages of national policies, legislation, and policies. Our focus will be on engaging and improving communication with all the local 50+ forums across Wales. Campaigning priorities for the period to the Senedd Elections in 2026 have been developed to provide prioritisation and direction.

26. We believe that working in partnership is the only way forward and will always aim to co-operate and engage with other older people's organisations to ensure a coherent voice is heard from older people in Wales. We will of course build on our strong partnership working with Welsh Government, the Older People's Commissioner, Age Cymru, and County Councils as well as with the other national older people's organisations.
27. The Welsh Government Strategy for an Ageing Society and associated Delivery Plan provides a framework for COPA's policy work on behalf of older people, and we want to ensure the views of Forums are taken into account in the implementation of its objectives.

Finances

28. Total funding for 2023 – 24 agreed by the Welsh Government was £8000 This funding is drawn down when there is a clear need and demand demonstrated.
29. On 31 March 2024, COPA held a bank balance of £16,011.05. including reserves of £8000. There are robust and effective arrangements for the monitoring and accountability for this expenditure through policies and processes agreed by the Board. The Treasurer, one of the Trustees, oversees these arrangements and reports to the Board on a regular basis. Any risks to the achievement of objectives and related expenditure are identified and addressed on an ongoing basis through our Risk Management policy.

Conclusions

30. COPA's strongest public benefit is enabling older people to have the confidence and access to change the conversation about ageing in Wales to one that is led from the experience of older people about their needs and what works best for them in an age-friendly country. The next 12 months will be critical as we continue to work with others

to respond to the cost-of-living crisis impacting on older people and ensure that 50+ forums in Wales have a viable and sustainable future and that their contribution to shaping and creating Age Friendly Communities is recognised and supported at all levels of government.

COPA Board
November 2024

Cymru Older People's Alliance
c/o Age Cymru
Mariners House
Trident Court
East Moors Road
Cardiff CF24 5TD

www.copacharity.com

029 2043 1555

Cymru.older.peoples.alliance@gmail.com

Appendix 1

The Board of Trustees

Dr Ralph Stevens - Chair and Communications Officer – Caerphilly Over 50

Chris Thomas – Vice Chair, Policy Officer - Anglesey Older People's Council

Siva Sivapalan – Treasurer, Cardiff 50 plus

+ Steve Milsom – Honorary Secretary and Policy Officer – Caerphilly Over 50s

+ Huw Bendall – Governance Officer - Cardiff 50 plus

+ Andrew Hinchliff – Conwy

Mollie Reach – Pembrokeshire 50 Plus

Gilly Davies – Communications, Vale of Glamorgan 50 plus

Rachel Luxton – Communications, Swansea Ageing Well

* Dilys Jouvenat – Rhondda Cynon Taf Older Persons Advisory Group (OPAG)

* Yvonne Apsitis, - Llandaff 50+

+Co-opted Trustee

*New Trustee – to be ratified at AGM 2024

Appendix 2
CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2023-24
INCOME
EXPENDITURE

BANK BALANCE B/FWD

£12536-34

Welsh Government/Age Cymru Grant £8,000.00
(Received on 18th December 2023)

L Finn T&S Board Meeting 15/6/23 £11-10
A Tritschler T&S Board Meeting 15/6/23 £11-95
L Finn T&S Board Meeting 20/7/23 £18-60
A Tritschler T&S Board Meeting 20/7/23 £15-80
Donation to charity 20/9/23 £25-00
L Finn T&S Board Meeting 21/9/23 £10-00
A Tritschler T&S Board Meeting 21/9/23 £15-50
Trosol (Website) 31/10/23 £647-14
G Davies AGM Travel 16/11/23 £21-63
A Tritschler AGM Exp 16/11/23 £72-51
C Williams AGM Travel 16/11/23 £5-45
G &K Davies AGM T&S 16/11/23 £247-00
M Roach AGM T&S 16/11/23 £262-95
Café Cwtch AGM Buffet at YMa 16/11/23 £300-00
Swansea Hub Buffet 17/11/23 £342-00
Becws Mon AGM Buffet 20/11/23 £100-38
Menai Science Park 22/11/23 £69-00
Production 78 IT for AGM 22/11/23 £1543-20
Artis YMa Hall & refreshments 4/12/23 £223.00
A Hinchliff AGM T&S 14/12/23 £27-00
(G Davies Travel Board Meeting 14/12/23 £7-30
S Challinor AGM T&S 14/12/23 £18-90
Caerphilly 50 + Forum Grant 4/3/2024 £200.00
The Brocker Network (Insurance) £337.18

TOTAL INCOME £ 8,000 .00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE £ 4,532.59

OPENING BANK BALANCE £12,536.34

ADD: INCOME RECEIVED £ 8,000.00

LESS: EXPENDITURES £ 4,532.59

***CLOSING BANK BALANCE £ 16,003.75**

*Note – this includes a Reserve of £8,000 held in accordance with the agreed COPA reserves policy

COPA/SPS/30/9/2024