



CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2022 – 2023

September 2023

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Foreword

S G Milsom
Chair, Cymru Older People's Alliance

Introduction

1. The year 2022 – 2023 has been a challenging time for Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), with many older people's forums struggling to continue owing to the effects of the Covid pandemic. This report is the seventh Annual Report since we became a Registered Charity and covers the period from 1 December 2022 to 31 November 2023, although our accounts cover the 2022-23 financial year only.

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 now 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 monthly. 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 2022 AGM were published to the Charity Commission website with our Annual Accounts.
8. We secured continuing Welsh Government funding for 2023 – 24 and expenditure has been monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. The funding will continue to be claimed on a need's basis.
9. Board meetings have been held on a monthly basis (initially virtually but now hybrid) to ensure COPA's continued contribution on behalf of older people's forums. Monthly meetings were also held virtually with Forum Representatives.
10. We have developed a new COPA branding, logo, website as well as 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 Co-opted Trustee and 3 replacement Elected Trustees have been appointed for those retiring.
12. A Business Plan was agreed for 2023 – 24 and has been submitted to Welsh Government.
13. We held an all-day Conference and AGM in Cardiff in November 2022 on a face to face/hybrid basis. This was the first time we had been able to meet since the start of the pandemic. The 2023 AGM/Conference will be held on the same basis in November.

Policy Work on Behalf of Older People

14. The charity has been able to continue to make an influential contribution by ensuring the voice of the 50+ forums has been heard at the national level in discussions about older people's issues, and information and advice has been disseminated on a regular basis.
15. COPA has continued to make a substantial contribution to the shaping of national policy through the Ministerial Advisory Forum on Ageing and related groups. We have been involved in the monitoring of implementation of the Welsh Government's Strategy for an Ageing Society Delivery Plan.

16. Communication has continued with the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Care through meetings and letters. We have responded to Welsh Government and other consultations on issues relevant to older people.
17. COPA has worked with and supported the Commissioner and Councils in progressing Age Friendly Communities in Wales.
18. A Framework for Engagement of older people in developing Age Friendly Communities has been published following consultation with Forum Representatives. A statement was subsequently published to reiterate our support for Age Friendly Communities and set out the key principles and expectations for engaging co-productively with older people.
19. We have promoted Independent Representation of Older People/Co-production through publication of an article in an academic journal and disseminated it in the age sector in Wales. We have also published an article on 'banishing age discrimination to history' which was similarly disseminated.
20. We have written to Ministers about the Expert Group Report on National Care and Support Service and its recommendations and the issues relating to older people that we want to see considered in forthcoming consultations on this issue. We have engaged constructively with Llais – the new national, independent body set up to give the people of Wales a stronger voice in their health and social care services.
21. COPA Trustees are members of the following national level groups with feedback provided to Forum Representatives.
 - 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 Group
 - e. Commissioner's National Partnership Group for Age Friendly Communities
 - f. Commissioner for Older People – Action Group on Elder Abuse
22. There are a range of key national policy issues where we monitor developments and secure COPA involvement and intervention where needed.
 - Age Discrimination
 - Cost of living
 - Recovery of society from Covid-19
 - Isolation and loneliness
 - Digital inclusion
 - Promoting Age Friendly Communities
 - Working with Ageing Well
 - Paying for care
 - Transport including bus passes
 - NHS and older people

- Care home quality of care and life
- Implementation of Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Public Toilets Strategy implementation
- UK benefits for older people including TV licence for over seventy-fives

Engagement of forums

23. 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.
24. Monthly Forum Representatives meetings continue to be held virtually to improve communications with forums and to engage them with COPA's plans – 17 forums from the twenty-two local authority areas are COPA members. These meetings have also brought contributions from other organisations as a basis for debate and engagement. Development of our policies has been undertaken in consultation with forums.
25. The Forum Development Plan has been taken forward. It sets out our proposals for action and is being utilised as a basis for dialogue with Welsh Government and other key partners to move forward this agenda.
26. A pilot scheme to scope the support required by individual forums has been commenced. Interviews with forum members have taken place and further work will be taken forward in the next 12 months.
27. A Forum Grants Programme was initiated to support member forums to hold events to re-start activities post-Covid and to attract potential new members. This scheme was extended to the end of 2023 - 24 given the uncertainties about the pandemic and recovery from it.

Looking forward

28. The Board of Trustees has agreed its priorities and a new Business Plan for 2023 – 24. 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 – all in the context of the Covid-19 reconstruction and measures to address cost of living pressures.
 - ii. Contributing to the shaping and 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 to implement the programme of reform and revitalisation of forums in Wales.
 - 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 reformed 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.
29. 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.
30. Over the next year, we will seek to achieve a bolder and more 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 next year have been developed to provide prioritisation and direction.
31. 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.
32. The Welsh Government Strategy for an Ageing Society and associated Delivery Plan will provide a refreshed 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 implementations of its objectives.

Finances

33. Total funding for 2022 – 23 agreed by the Welsh Government was £6,400. A decision was taken by the Board in March 2021 not to drawdown further Welsh Government funding unless there was a clear need and demand demonstrated. This has continued during the latest financial year and is reflected in our verified accounts for the 2022 - 23 financial year at Appendix 2. This shows that as at the 4 April 2023, COPA hold a bank balance of £12,536.34 including reserves of £8,000. 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

34. 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 lead 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, support recovery from the pandemic 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 2023

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

+ Steve Milsom – Chair and Policy Officer – Caerphilly Over 50s

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

Angela Tritschler – Treasurer – RCT OPAG/50 plus*

Lyn Finn - Events Officer – Cardiff 50 plus*

+ Huw Bendall – Governance Officer - Cardiff 50 plus

+ Andrew Hinchliff – Conwy

Susanne Jones- Gwynedd Older Peoples Council*

Hazel Maguire – Swansea Ageing Well*

Mollie Reach – Pembrokeshire 50 plus

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

Siva Sivapalan – Cardiff 50 plus @

Gilly Davies – Val of Glamorgan 50 plus @

Rachel Luxton – Swansea Ageing Well@

+Co-opted Trustee

*Retiring Trustee AGM 2023

@New Trustee – to be ratified at AGM 2023

Appendix 2

CYMRU OLDER PEOPLE'S ALLIANCE

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2022-23

INCOME

Age UK £6400.00 25/11/22

EXPENDITURE

Grant to Pembs 50+Forum	£200.00 4/4/22
Carys M Thomas COPA Branding	£808.22 1/8/22
Facebook Adverts	£53.06 3/8/22
Rock Level Website Domain	£293.16 16/9/22
Caerphilly Choir Deposit	£50.00 16/9/22
Carys M Thomas Branding	£2213.20 11/10/22.
Future Inn Conference Exp	£3400.40 18/11/22
Caerphilly Choir Balance Invoice	£520.00 21/11/22
Attendees Conference T&S	£563.25 21/11/22
Carys M Thomas Branding	£2222.00 5/1/23.
Llanfairfechan Comm Hall	£40.00 12/1/23
Tantrwm Ltd Website	£3600.00 31/1/23
Edwards Insurance	£318.16 14/3/23

TOTAL INCOME £6400.00

TOTAL EXPENDITURE £ 14,281.45

OPENING BANK BALANCE £20,417.79

ADD: INCOME £6400.00

LESS: EXPENDITURE £14,281.45

CLOSING BANK BALANCE £12,536.34