



A Scottish Charitable  
Incorporated Organisation  
Tel. 01292 265304

# Age Concern Ayr SCIO

## Trustees' Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025



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### **Contact information**

Age Concern Ayr SCIO

Scottish Charity Number: SC051523

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Email address: [ageconcernayr@gmail.com](mailto:ageconcernayr@gmail.com)

Website: <https://ageconcernayr.co.uk>

Facebook: Age Concern Ayr

### **Trustee Annual Report signed by:**

Alec Oattes (Chair) :

Grace Bricknell (Treasurer) :

Pamela Ireland (Secretary) :

## Structure, governance and management

### Charity Trustees for the period 2024-2025

Alexander Oattes (Chair)

Gordon Potter (Vice-Chair)

Grace Bricknell (Treasurer)

Pamela Ireland (Secretary)

Norma E. Taylor

Kelvin Walker

### Other Trustees who served during the year

Julie Templeton (Honorary Trustee)

Age Concern Ayr is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is administered in line with our governing document.

We have an Executive Committee comprising our trustees who are all volunteers. We alternate monthly meetings with a General Committee, which, as well as the trustees, includes volunteer supervisors from our shop.

## **Trustee recruitment and appointment**

We advertise opportunities to become a trustee on Voluntary Action South Ayrshire's (VASA) volunteering website which sets out the role, requirements, and how to apply. Some of our trustees have served the organisation for many years, whilst newer members have come through this route.

Our Trustees bring a wide range of skills and experience to the role, boosting our charity's ability to meet its aims. No external organisations are allowed to appoint charity trustees.

## **Objectives and activities**

Age Concern Ayr SCIO is a registered Charity in Scotland dedicated to protecting and promoting the wellbeing of the those aged over 55 in South Ayrshire. We are 100% funded by our Charity Shop and public donation, and all money raised is used for the benefit of residents in South Ayrshire.

We have been operating in South Ayrshire since the opening of our Charity Shop in 1975. The Charity Shop quickly proved to be a great success, but we realised that our customers were often looking for advice. Whilst our Volunteers at the time dealt with these enquiries as best they could, it was evident that there was a local need for more, and so, in 1987 we also opened our Advice and Information Centre.

Our Governing Document sets out our charitable purpose as the relief of those in need by reason of age, ill health, disability, financial hardship or another disadvantage. Our shop provides the income to fund our advice centre and enables us to develop and support initiatives to assist our target group.

We recently updated our Governing Document to clarify our geographic boundaries, and this was approved at our Annual General Meeting. OSCR have been notified of the change.

## Achievements and Performance

### The Age Concern Ayr SCIO Charity Shop

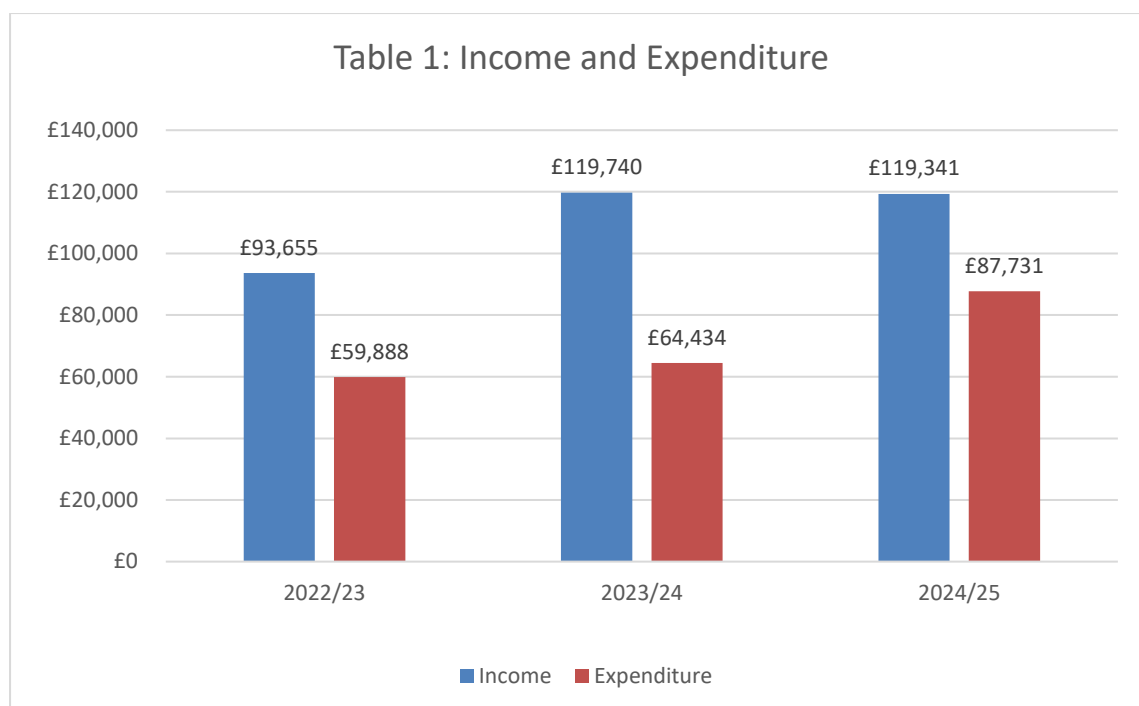


*Our Age Concern Shop*

Our Charity Shop is located at 5 Crown Street in Ayr and is run entirely by Age Concern Ayr SCIO's greatest resource - our team of dedicated volunteers.

In our reporting period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 shop sales realised £110,119.03, an increase on the previous year when sales totaled £97,861 (see Table 1 for three years comparative income and expenditure).

These sales enable us to run the Information and Advice Centre and the other projects set out in the section on **Other Funded Initiatives**.



Thanks to support from individual donors, our shop is always well stocked, and we can sell pre-loved goods and donations back to the local community at really affordable prices. Any items we cannot sell, we recycle to reduce our carbon footprint.

Please come along to the shop and remember anything you buy will help support local older people. In terms of donating have a look at what we can accept on our website <http://www.ageconcernayr.co.uk>

**Our shop is open Monday to Saturday, 10.00am - 3.45pm, closing for lunch between 12.30 pm - 1.30 pm.**

**Tel: 01292 262 894**



## The Age Concern SCIO Advice and Information Centre



*Our Information and Advice Centre*

Age Concern Ayr SCIO operate an Information and Advice Centre at 6 Garden Street, Ayr with a focus on issues affecting South Ayrshire residents aged 55 and over. The Centre is fully funded by our shop, and we employ a part-time Administrator to support clients who need help or advice on a wide range of issues. We understand that completing forms can be confusing and that not all our clients are digitally aware, and so we help make the process simpler for them. We can help them to request and complete forms including applications for:

- ❖ Attendance Allowance, now Pension Age Disability Payment in Scotland
- ❖ Carers Allowance
- ❖ Blue Badge
- ❖ Personal Independent Payment, and
- ❖ Self-Assessment Forms (requesting aids and adaptations).

We can also help them with:

- ❖ Explaining letters from DWP, Council,
- ❖ Calling the DWP, Council, etc on their behalf, and
- ❖ Writing Letters of Appeal if turned down or overcharged.

We can make sure they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to, and, by comparing the market, we can also help them find cheaper energy bills, home



insurance, car insurance and trusted local traders. We can help people to resolve issues with their energy suppliers, an important element of support for many older people. We increasingly support clients who are of, or are approaching, retirement age and have been recommended to get our help by South Ayrshire Council and the local Job Centre.



*Alan our Administrator at an Ageing Well Event*

Many of our clients greatly value the opportunity to discuss their issue 'face to face' and Alan McIntyre, our Charity Administrator, also deals with issues over the phone and by e-mail. He has an 'anything and everything' approach and seeks to resolve issues in the first instance or to refer them to a trusted peer agency.

In this financial year Alan has:

- ❖ Supported clients to make 95 claims for Attendance Allowance
- ❖ Completed 48 clients to apply for a Blue Badge, and
- ❖ Assisted an additional 31 clients with various claims, e.g. checking eligibility for pension credit and other benefits.

Please note these figures only include those clients who made and attended an appointment at the Advice Centre. In addition there are those who simply call in, or telephone for advice and support.

As a non-statutory organisation, clients are not obligated to provide feedback and so there is no measure to determine the success of the applications for benefits. However, from the callers who do provide feedback, we estimate 80% - 90% have successful outcomes.

Alan said:

*Mr. N from Ayr contacted the Age Concern Ayr office late Friday afternoon: "Just calling to say thank you for helping me with my Attendance Allowance Form. I got it and a £600 sum backdated". How fantastic is that? Another person who will get £3,216 over this forthcoming year to help them out as well as a wee lump sum in their account right away.*

*The Centre recently had a major success for a client who had not claimed her State Pension. She had not worked for many years and did not think she was eligible. She and her husband had recently been evicted and financial worries were considerable. Our team was able to get onto the DWP and found she was due a pension of £203 a week, with a back payment of £10,000. Needless to say she left the office a much happier lady!*

**Do not hesitate to contact us if you need advice - we are here to help. Phone 01292 265 304 or email [ageconcernayr@gmail.com](mailto:ageconcernayr@gmail.com) or visit our office (please check opening times).**

## Other Funded Initiatives

### Our Grass Cutting Service

Working with a local contractor, we offer an affordable fortnightly seasonal grass cutting service to private tenants aged over 55 in Ayr and Prestwick.



We subsidise this service and demand continues to grow - in 2022 they were cutting 50 gardens and in 2023 this rose to 70, and in 2024 it was 97. We have now agreed to fund a maximum of 100 clients and for the last two years, aware that clients were having to cope with the increased cost of living, we have absorbed the increased cost of the service.

*Our Grass Cutting Service*



If you would like to find out more about this service, please contact our Advice and Information Centre.

## Cycling Without Age

Cycling Without Age is a not-for-profit organisation which provides trained volunteer cyclists who use special three wheelers. They enable people with mobility or disability issues to experience a bracing ride along the Ayr seafront. We donated £300 to help them set up this local initiative.



*A Cycling Without Age Trip*

## Visits to the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum



*The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum*

Age Concern Ayr worked with the National Trust Scotland to offer over 55s an opportunity to visit the museum for free and to enjoy a coffee and scone. Fifty people requested tickets although not all were used. The total cost of the project was £545.



## Hospital Emergency Toiletry Bags



In response to a request from Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), Age Concern Ayr donated £1,500 for the purchase of 100 emergency toiletry packs for people in hospital who did not have family or friends who were able to bring them the items they needed. The bags are distributed as needed by VASA workers who also check that people in hospital are getting the benefits they are entitled to.

*An Emergency Toiletry Pack*

## Ayr and Prestwick Men's Shed



*Our Chair Presenting the Cheque*

In addition, in the last year, we donated £500 to the Ayr and Prestwick's Men's Shed (APMS), a new local charity which supports mental health and well-being.

Ronnie Russell from APMS thanked us for the donation, which was used to buy materials to enable them to create a 'quiet space'

Our Chair, Alec Oattes is pictured presenting the cheque.

### Winter Cozy Bags



*A Sample Cozy Bag*

Age Concern Ayr donated £2,500 to VASA to fund the purchase of Cozy Bags which were distributed to vulnerable people struggling with heating costs. They contained a fluffy blanket, an 'oodie', a hat and gloves set, cosy socks, a hotwater bottle and a copy of the 'Strictly Seniors' magazine. They were much appreciated by those who received them.

### The Telephone Befriending Service

VASA run a telephone befriending service in South Ayrshire whereby lonely and isolated people, many of whom are older, get a weekly phone call from their befriender. The project employs a co-ordinator who plays a vital role in matching clients with benders and ensuring the service runs smoothly. VASA contacted Age Concern Ayr because a major funder had pulled out, leaving the service in an untenable position. The Trustees agreed to donate £5,000 for the project and this enabled VASA to get matched funding to keep the project running while longer term funding is secured.

### The Sensory Impaired Support Service (SISS)



*A SISS Wellbeing Walk*

Age Concern Ayr were asked to support SISS who were trying to raise funding to enable their co-ordinator to run a monthly Visual Loss Support Group, a weekly Well Being Walk, and one-to-one support visits for those struggling with age related hearing and/or sight loss. The trustees agreed to donate £1,000 to this worthwhile charity. We subsequently increased this by £3,500 which will show in next year's accounts.

## Our Shop Volunteers

Our work would not be possible without the support of our dedicated volunteers, and we are always keen to add to our Volunteer Team. Our volunteers gain experience and new skills in a retail environment whilst working as part of a friendly and supportive team and helping to support older people in our community.



*Members of Our Volunteer Team*

Irene, Mary and Jan are three of our dedicated shop volunteers. Irene has been volunteering for 13 years, Jan for 6 years and Mary for a year. They all say they love working in the shop and get a lot of satisfaction from being able to help the customers who come in, some every week, and some just for a chat. Irene, Mary and Jan are pictured in our shop. When asked what they enjoyed about their volunteer role they were very positive.

*Jan: "I love being among people and having a laugh"*

*Irene agreed: "We do have lots of laughs while working together"*

*Mary: "I love the feeling that you can cheer people up and the way they love what they buy."*

**If you would like to find out more about volunteering please call us on 01292 265304 or email [ageconcernayr@gmail.com](mailto:ageconcernayr@gmail.com)**

Thanks to the work of our amazing volunteers, Age Concerned Ayr, was presented with an award for serving the local Community for more than 40 years at the South Ayrshire Volunteer Awards 2024.



To ensure that we are providing sufficient support to our volunteers we undertook a Volunteer Consultation in 2024, which provided us with areas for improvement which we have addressed. We consult our volunteers regularly.

We also revised the Volunteer Job Description to ensure it covered all aspects of volunteering in our shop.

In 2025 we conducted a full Health and Safety Audit of the shop and the Advice and Information Centre.

## **Trustee Development**

We held our first Trustee Development Session in 2025. This aimed to give us the space and time to consider some of the issues which are not easily dealt with at monthly meetings.

Examples include:

- ❖ Succession planning and filling key Trustee Positions.
- ❖ Volunteer recruitment – what can we do to attract more volunteers to ensure our work can continue.
- ❖ Premises – we are finding it very difficult to find a new premise where we could have both the shop and the Advice Centre. Do we need to change our parameters?
- ❖ Funding Priorities – to consider what we see as the funding priorities in the next year.

## Promoting Age Concern Ayr

During the last year we have sought to increase the promotion of the charity, the volunteering opportunities and the work that we do.

- ❖ We produced volunteering leaflets and distributed these widely in the community.
- ❖ We also produced a six-monthly Newsletter for volunteers and customers, setting out what we were doing and funding. We plan to continue doing this on a twice-yearly basis.
- ❖ We had a two-page article in South Ayrshire Council's annual Strictly Seniors Magazine which is widely distributed in South Ayrshire.



*The Strictly Seniors Magazine*

- ❖ The Age Concern Ayr Secretary was a keynote speaker at the launch of South Ayrshire's Ageing Well Strategy in the Gaiety Theatre.



*The Launch of The Ageing Well Strategy*

## **Future plans**

- ❖ We are reviewing our plan to purchase a property which would enable us to bring the shop and the Advice Centre together. Whilst this would provide much needed storage space, and an area for the volunteers, as well as saving on rental costs, it has proved to be exceptionally difficult to identify a suitable property for sale in our target area. In the interim we have changed the layout of the Advice Centre to provide a separate more usable room for meetings and we are planning to refresh the shop toilet and kitchen area.
- ❖ We are currently researching how to set up a fund which would enable local organisations to bid for our funds for initiatives. We have set out a task plan for this which we are working through. This includes the basis and criteria of the fund, the application process, the decision making process, informing the bidders of the outcome and the reporting requirements for funded projects.
- ❖ We will continue to explore opportunities to work with other local voluntary organisations to address the needs of older people in South Ayrshire. This includes participating in South Ayrshire's Ageing Well Movement and Champions Board.