

Getting On

Quarterly newsletter of the Irish Association of Older People

Summer 2007

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The Irish Association of Older People

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EDITORIAL

In 1999 Ireland began its strategic approach to combating poverty and social exclusion with the introduction of a National Anti-Poverty Strategy. Subsequently in common with the other Member States of the European Union National Action Plans against Poverty and Social Exclusion were produced. The process of monitoring and evaluating progress was then undertaken and is now being co-ordinated by the Office of Social Inclusion within the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

The recently published National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 states that the Government is committed to a coherent strategy for social inclusion based on the lifecycle approach set out in the National Partnership Agreement 'Towards 2016'. This National Action Plan for Social Inclusion, complemented by the social inclusion elements of the National Development Plan 2007-2013 'Transforming Ireland - A Better Quality of Life for all' sets out how the social inclusion strategy will be achieved over the period 2007-2016.

AGE, The European Platform of Older People, of which I.A.O.P. is a member, is a non-governmental agency also addressing the subject of social exclusion from the perspective

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of older people.

The AGE Project is being funded by the European Community Action Programme to combat social exclusion and the Irish Senior Citizens Parliament is the Irish representative in this Transnational Exchange Programme which includes also representatives from the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Lithuania and the UK.

The Project aims are

- To develop the role of older

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NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION 2007-2016



people experiencing poverty and social exclusion in the implementation and further development of National Action Plans against Poverty

- To develop a toolkit that can be used to organise small Workshops of Older People and which can continue to be used by them in the future.
- To produce recommendations on how policymakers should consult with older people
- To produce recommendations on how older people and their organisations should be involved in the monitoring and implementation of social inclusion policies.



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The National Action Plan being co-ordinated by the Social Inclusion Unit within the Department of Social and Family Affairs includes a section on Older People specifically addressing the issues of Community Care and Income Support.

Emphasis is being placed on the need for service delivery that is accessible, flexible and customer centred. A local Government Social Inclusion Steering Group will be developed to support linkages between the national and local level and will report to a Cabinet Committee. New mechanisms at national and local level to improve co-ordination and delivery of housing in particular where there is a care dimension for older people and people with disabilities will also be put in place.

At the local level, the involvement of local interests, particularly local authorities and County/City Development Boards will be key elements in ensuring the delivery of social inclusion across all sectors of society.

If effectively implemented these institutional arrangements will provide useful local fora for Active Retirement, Senior Citizens and issue driven groups of older people to express their views and exert pressure to ensure implementation of person centred and needs led services.

EUROPEAN AGENDA



Recently at the Annual General Meeting of AGE, The European Older People's Platform, I.A.O.P. was represented by Ms. Mary Horkan.

Two issues on which Mary had carried out research i.e. Safety and Security Needs of Older People and Elder Abuse were raised as matters of concern at the meeting.

A project financed under the Community Action Plan to which reference is made in the Editorial will address the issue of poverty and social exclusion among older people, looking specifically at developing the participation of older people experiencing poverty and social exclusion themselves in the social inclusion process at local, regional, national and international levels, having regard to the fact that factors such as low income, poor health, age-based discrimination, reduced physical or mental capacity, isolation, abuse and limited access to services all play a part "increasing the risk of social exclusion".

Mary reports that the track record of AGE in Europe is very impressive. In 2006 membership increased by 37% and the attendance of several senior E.C. executives at the Closing Address by Mr. Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is indicative of the high regard in which the organisation is held.
www.age-action.org/EN/

AGE AND EMPLOYMENT



In a recent report on Age and Employment within the European Union, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, points out that "the issue of Europe's ageing workforce has, over the last decade, emerged as a central priority for policy makers in the European Union". The Report goes on to state that this demographic shift calls into question both the sustainability of pension systems and the future of Europe's Labour supply".

In order to achieve more sustainable economic and social development, The European Union has set itself the target of increasing the employment rate of older people. For this to be successful, governments, social partners and organisations need to work together to develop the skills and employability of older people while at the same time maintaining the health, motivation and capacities of workers as they age.

www.eurofound.europa.eu

DO OLDER WORKERS IN THE NEW EU MEMBER STATES FACE AGE DISCRIMINATION?

“...many organisations no longer speak of “population ageing” in the traditional sense.”



In recent years policies and practices aimed at improving opportunities for older workers and at extending working life have developed significantly within the EU 15 Member States. However, the position within new Member States and acceding countries has been less apparent

Age discrimination and negative stereotyping of older workers must be tackled while working conditions and employment opportunities need to adapt to an age-diverse workforce. The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions draws attention to some outdated ideas about the capacities of older people and seeks appreciation of the skills and abilities which older people can bring to the workplace e.g. Europe's workforce is old but not in terms of life expectancy.

The age of retirement is becoming increasingly distant from the age at which people may be considered to become old. The increase in life expectancy over the 20th century - by nearly eight years in the last four decades - means that it is no longer correct to describe those of 60 to 65 years as 'elderly' or even 'old'.

If old age is viewed as the time that people generally start suffering from disabilities, then the onset of old age has been in constant retreat for decades. It was around 60 years of age in 1930s; by the 1990s, it had climbed to over 70 years for men and over 75 years for women. As a result, many organisations now no longer speak of 'population ageing' in the traditional sense".



Irish Seniors Citizens Parliament

In its 2006 Annual Report, amongst other things, the Parliament notes that the Department of Social and Family Affairs has given a commitment to changing the pension payment system so that qualifying adults will receive a pension in their own right set at the rate of social welfare non-contributory pension. The expectation is that this provision will be enshrined in the 2007 Social Welfare Act.

In regard to the Adult Dependent Allowance, a commitment has also been given to increase this allowance to the level of the non-contributory pension over a three year period.

The Parliament also draws attention to the fact that the issue of tax on pension income will be addressed in the Green Paper on Pensions and opportunities will be provided to respond to any proposed tax treatment of this income, when the Green Paper is published.

When you
know
You are doing
Your very best
Within the
circumstances
of your
existence,

APPLAUD
YOURSELF!

PLAYGROUNDS FOR OLDER PEOPLE?

Evidence supports their benefits

Older People and the Built Environment

It is clear from research and anecdotal evidence that increasing numbers of older people in Ireland are surviving into great old age as a result of improved living conditions and medical advances. This demographic development demands a review of the built environment within which this segment of the population is living.

In a recent article in the Irish Times Derek Scally draws attention to the fact that in Berlin a playground for pensioners has been built by the City Fathers. The new playground is in an area famed for its high proportion of elderly war widows and their dogs. This park is home to eight machines. One mechanism, a swing for the legs, helps train calf muscles; another machine, featuring a rotating red disc with hand grips trains the arms. A third machine, a long pole with nobbles on it, allows users to massage their back.

In Finland already there is a network of playgrounds to encourage "intergenerational play" and at the University of Lapland researchers discovered in a study of older playground users that after just three months on the machines users had built muscle tissue, reduced fat and improved their speed and co-ordination.

...older people themselves should now lobby for the provision of ancillary services and quality environment.

Older people in Ireland often draw attention to the lack of seating at bus stops and public open spaces, to the problem of uneven footpaths and difficulties accessing public transport. In general there is an insensitivity to the needs of those experiencing increasing frailty and vulnerability so it would be useful for local Active Retirement Associations and Senior Citizens Groups now being represented in Local Authority Fora to draw the attention of Planning Officers to the need to develop a more sympathetic environment for this sector of the population.

In our Spring Edition we drew attention to the Minister for Health's statement in the Senate about the need to designate portions of land for health related facilities especially Residential Care. Having given us the lead in this area, older people themselves should now lobby for the provision of ancillary services and quality environment. The Association responded to an invitation to make a submission on these issues when the National Spatial Strategy was being drafted.



BARNARDOS - can YOU help?

The following invitation from Barnardos represents an opportunity for the development of intergenerational solidarity:

Volunteer Literacy Tutors

IF YOU

- ▶ Like reading and understand its value
- ▶ Want to help kids reach their potential
- ▶ Have time on your hands
- ▶ Live in the Dublin area
- ▶ Have plenty of life experience
- ▶ This may be the volunteer opportunity for you
- ▶ Applications from older and retired people welcome
- ▶ No formal qualifications required
- ▶ Must get on well with children and be patient and encouraging
- ▶ Full training and support provided.

The volunteer will be matched with a child and tutor them in their school 2 - 3 times a week in one of three locations: Tallaght, Cherry Orchard and Finglas.

Contact:

Barnardos Volunteer Development Manager
Tel: 4530355
Email: angela.walsh@barnardos.ie
www.barnardos.ie

ACTIVE RETIREMENT IRELAND

In his address to the 21st Annual General Meeting of Active Retirement Ireland, the Chairman, Kieran Molloy said "he felt honoured to be a member of an organisation that can bring lasting positives to those who become part of our wonderful movement".



Since its origin in 1978, the movement has established four hundred and twenty five associations with a total membership of over 23,500. "The Active Retirement movement is a powerful antidote to cynicism and disengagement. Active Retirement people participate. They help themselves. They act to strengthen intergenerational limits. Active Retirement combats loneliness and isolation. The movement has much to contribute to the community and to society in general".

The movement's ongoing support for a project in Sri Lanka, managed by Pastor Layasing de Silva, arising from the Tsunami which to date totals €16,005 is one example of the effective social role in civil society which this organisation fulfils.



READERS' RESPONSES!

WHAT IS THE TURTLE SAYING TO THE SNAIL?

The following are some of the interesting responses we received from our Snail and Tortoise quiz:

- Road hog!
- Are we there yet?
- Hurry - Mr. McGregor plans to sow his lettuce next month!
- Another foreign escargot!



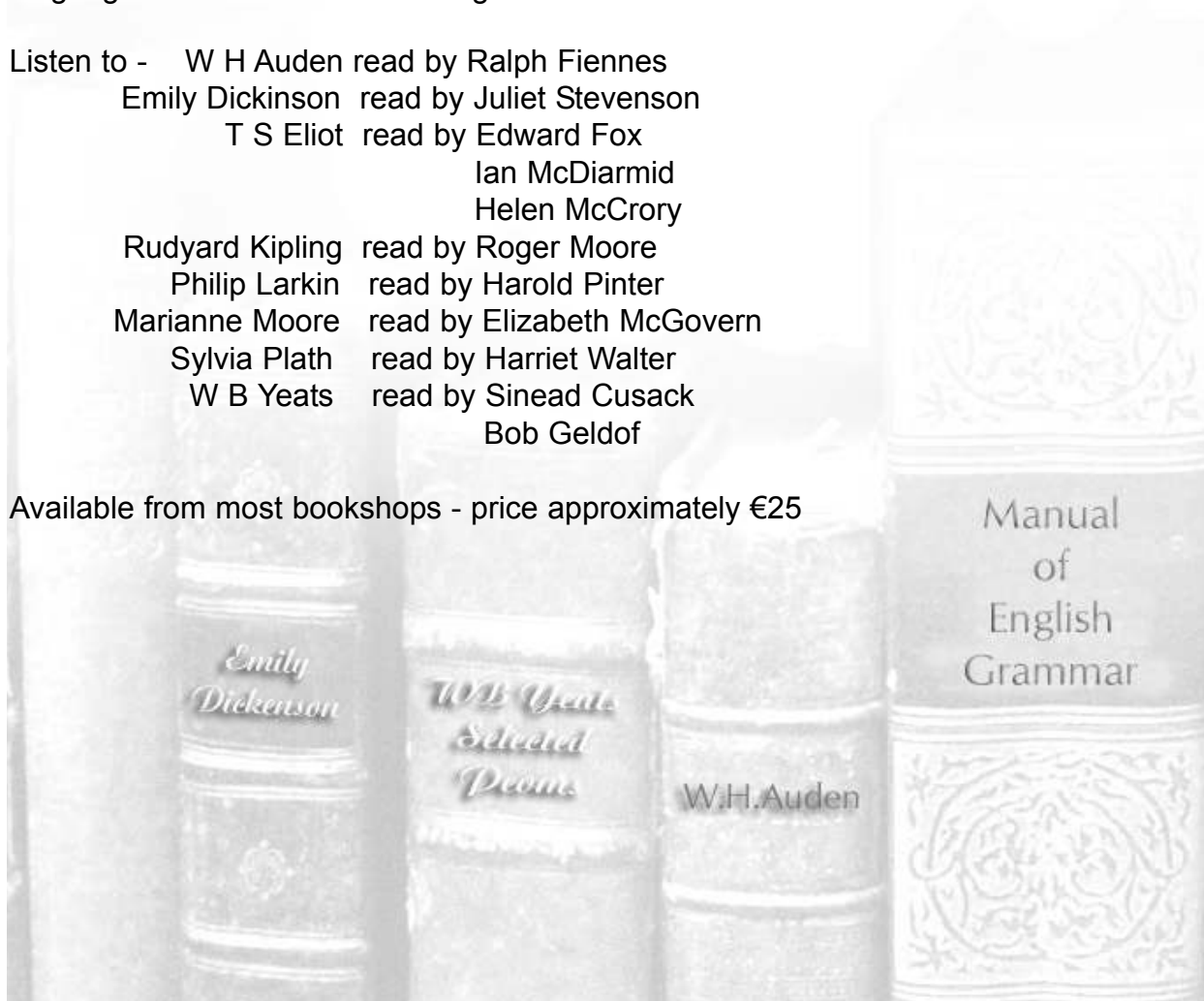
With thanks to all who sent in suggestions!

CATCHING LIFE BY THE THROAT - Poetry Book and CD

In her introduction to "Catching Life by the Throat" - Poems from eight great poets with an accompanying CD, Josephine Hart, the founder of Gallery Poets says "at twelve every girl in my class could recite at least one Shakespeare sonnet, a minimum of four Yeats poems, some Eliot and Auden". "Even the tone deaf could hear the music of language. Our inner ear was being cultivated".

Listen to - W H Auden read by Ralph Fiennes
Emily Dickinson read by Juliet Stevenson
T S Eliot read by Edward Fox
Ian McDiarmid
Helen McCrory
Rudyard Kipling read by Roger Moore
Philip Larkin read by Harold Pinter
Marianne Moore read by Elizabeth McGovern
Sylvia Plath read by Harriet Walter
W B Yeats read by Sinead Cusack
Bob Geldof

Available from most bookshops - price approximately €25



Flagging the Problem - understanding mental health

In his recently published "Flagging the Problem" Dr. Harry Barry , a medical director and board member of Aware, with extensive experience of dealing with issues such as depression, addiction and anxiety was moved to write this book following the particularly tragic suicide of a young man.

Dr. Barry addresses the deficit in public knowledge relating to the understanding of mental health and in the words of the reviewer, Cathy Kelly, he shines a wise and professional light on the often taboo subject of mental health.

A Liberties Press Book - price approximately €25.

NATIONAL MUSEUM**"SEA Stallion - Dublin's Viking Warship comes home"**

In 1962 archaeologists excavated five Viking age ships at the bottom of the Roskilde Fjord in Denmark. The largest of these, the Skuldelev 2, was found to be the remains of an ocean-going long ship built in 1042 in Dublin using Scandinavian ship-building methods.

A project to reconstruct this ship was launched in Denmark in 2004 and Her Majesty Queen Margrethe christened the ship "Havhingsten fra Glendalough" (The Sea Stallion from Glendalough).

In July a crew of 65 brave men and women will attempt to sail this vessel from Roskilde back to Dublin. This trial voyage will test the replica ship under realistic conditions in the very waters the original ship was built to cross.

Calendar of Events:

- ▶ **29th June** - Exhibition opens at National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks, Dublin. Track the voyage from Roskilde to Dublin and learn about the discovery of the archaeological remains of the construction of the replica warship. Admission Free.
- ▶ **1st July** - Sea Stallion departs from Roskilde, Denmark
- ▶ **14th and 15th August** - Welcoming ceremony for the Sea Stallion and two days celebration at Custom House Quay.
- ▶ **17th and 19th August** - Sea Stallion arrives in National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks with a weekend of Viking related activities
- ▶ **August 2007 - early Summer 2008** - Both the Sea Stallion and the accompanying exhibition will remain on display at the National Museum of Ireland Collins Barracks.

CONTACT:

National Museum. Collins Barracks,
Tel 353 1 6777444
Email marketing@museum.ie

The National Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin

In Dublin 9, the National Botanic Gardens is one of our national treasures and an interesting and enjoyable venue for a day's outing. Within the gardens there is a comfortable restaurant with a menu providing a wide variety of choices.

Contact:

Tel: 01 8570909.

Web:

www.botanicgardens.ie

Email:

botanicgardens@opw.ie

House Open: 4th February
- 27th October 9am to 6pm.

Also

National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh Arboretum

In Kilbride Co. Wicklow, the Arboretum includes a remarkable collection of mature conifers and other trees dating back to the 1850s and many fine Rhododendron specimens.

Directions:

Off the N11 - the Dublin to Wexford road - details on website.

SHORT BREAKS

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has recently put together short break options for older people including activities walking in the Sperrin and Mourne Mountains and along the Causeway Coast Way.

The activities include golf at Royal County Down and Royal Portrush Golfclubs, and visiting the gardens of Northern Ireland at Florence Court in County Fermanagh or Springhill House in County Derry.

Now that free travel has been extended to the North of Ireland this provides an ideal opportunity for social interaction between North and South.

Contact:

Phone: 1850 230 230
www.discovernorthernireland.com



Please note that while we have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of all content in this newsletter, we cannot be responsible for any errors that may occur.



LOCAL LIBRARIES OFFER INTERNET SERVICE AND BOOK CLUBS!

An excellent information service is being provided by local libraries including an Internet service and in many branches Book Clubs. One example is Lifesteps which offers a range of online and printed guides on a wide range of subjects such as Gardening, Family Health, Music and Art.

Lifesteps is written by staff from Irish public libraries and each guide contains easy to follow, step by step explanations on how to use the Internet to achieve a specific goal or 'life step'.

This is an initiative of Irish public libraries, managed by An Chomhairle Leabharlanna and funded by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government through the Information Society Fund.

For more information:

Updates, news on the project and for a full listing of all the guides, log on to www.lifesteps.ie!



NEWS YOU CAN USE

HOUSING GRANTS - MOBILITY AIDS GRANTS SCHEME

In its recent report 'Delivering Home Sustaining Communities' the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government sets out proposals for the provision of grants to cover works to address mobility problems, primarily but not exclusively associated with ageing. The intention is to fast track limited grant aid to people on lower incomes (maximum annual household income threshold €30,000). The maximum grant available will be €6,000 and may cover 100% of the cost of works.

The details of how the system will be administered or what Department will be responsible for the introduction of this innovative approach to housing adaptation is not yet clear so it is important for interested parties to keep in touch with the Housing Departments of Local Authorities and also with the Local Community Care units of the Health Services Executive.

It is interesting to note that in some areas of the United Kingdom, Home Improvement Trusts, (some not for profit and/or Local Authority funded Agencies), are providing a service installing banisters, shower rails, and other minor innovations and adaptations to support those experiencing mobility problems, thus supporting vulnerable older people whose wish it is to live independently in their own homes.

HELPING YOU TO CARE - New Directory and Guide

Helping you to Care is a Directory and reference guide to care recently published by The Irish Red Cross in response to a need expressed by Carers for greater access to vital information . This Directory provides useful and practical advice to the many people in Ireland who are providing or are in need of care.

The Directory includes information on a wide variety of issues including medical care, end of life arrangements and health and social care provision. It also includes a list of the recently established Citizens Information Centres throughout the country.

Free Information Packs are available by contacting 1850 650 651 Monday to Friday 9-5pm

Heart Health and Wellness: New Information Leaflet

A useful information leaflet on Heart Health and Wellness, endorsed by the Irish Heart Foundation and the Diabetic Federation of Ireland, has been developed by Paula Mee, Dietician and Member of the Irish Nutrition Dietetic Institute.

It sets out the positive choices to be made to ensure a healthier heart including the types, quantities and reasons for choosing appropriate diet.

Check in your local chemist for this leaflet.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

DISABLED PARKING

This is getting to be an increasingly thorny topic. We have all seen the abuse of the blue badge system. The blue Disabled badge is issued to someone with a significant disability, and permits the car in which they are a passenger, OR the car they are driving to be parked in a specially marked "Disabled" space.

The problems have arisen partly because these spaces are very convenient to the shopping centre or other amenity, which makes them attractive to the able-bodied also. Add to this the fact that the disabled badge can be used in any car, and sometimes temptations wins out .

We who need this facility have fought hard for it, and it is in danger of being abandoned because it is being abused.



The opposite also applies - one parking/clamping company manager said recently that, while clampers are not the most popular people, they have on occasion received a round of applause when they have clamped a car without a badge, parked in a "Disabled" parking space.

RESPONSES FROM OUR MEMBERS

The Item - Prevention of Falls in our Spring edition evoked the following responses:

- Work on your balance - take up Tai Chi which is excellent for balance
- Take special care when using stairs. Walk slowly and position your feet with great care
- On public footpaths, keep a keen watch for protruding concrete slabs, ramps and other hazardous patch
- When walking in areas which are poorly lit walk slowly and watch carefully. If necessary carry a pocket torch.

CARE SERVICES

A variety of care services in support of those who wish to remain in their own homes are now coming on stream.

One service recently advertised is **Home Instead Senior Care** founded because an active grandmother needed extra help to remain safe and independent while living at home.

Contact:

Home Instead Caregivers
3, Brewery Court, Brewery Road,
Leopardstown, Dublin 18.
Tel 02 2068022
www.homeinstead.ie

RETIREMENT VILLAGE

Glendale Estate in Tullow, County Carlow, is a recently developed "Retirement Village" providing the finest in retirement living in a community rich with culture, sports and entertaining. All aspects of the estate's operations "are designed to foster a refined atmosphere with an uncompromising commitment to service".

Contact:

Glendale Estates
Tel:059-9151184
Email at admin@glendale.ie
www.glendale.ie

Why Worry

There are only two things to worry about,
Either you are well, or you are sick,

"If you are well"
There is nothing to worry about

"But if you are sick"
There are two things to worry about,
Either you will get better, or you will die,

"If you get well"
There is nothing to worry about,

"If you die"
There are only two things to worry about,
Either you will go to heaven, or to hell,

If you go to heaven, there is nothing to worry about,
But if you go to hell,
You'll be so darned busy shaking hands with friends,
You won't have time to worry!!!

THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

SOME REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN:

The Irish Association of Older People is a national voluntary and membership based organisation of older citizens.

The main objectives of the Association are:

- to serve as the direct voice of older people;
- to campaign on their behalf;
- to serve as an information centre;
- to provide a forum for them to act as a social force;
- to afford an opportunity for debate and action

The Association networks with local, national and issue driven groups, and actively participates in transnational projects within the European Union, to help formulate policies and best practice for the betterment of older people.

The Association is administered on a voluntary basis.

Membership is open to all and the annual subscription is €10. Associate membership is also available for groups.

Please contact us with your reactions to the issues of importance to you raised in this newsletter, or any other matter of importance to you.

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

We believe that old age should be honoured unconditionally, that it should

- defend itself
- retain its rights
- subordinate itself to no one, and
- rule its own domain to the very last breath.

THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE

4 Sussex Street,
Dun Laoghaire,
Co. Dublin

Tel/Fax: 01 214 7055

Email: iaop@oceanfree.net Web: www.olderpeople.ie

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

I would like to join THE IRISH ASSOCIATION OF OLDER PEOPLE
and I enclose the annual membership fee of €10.00

Associate membership available for groups - please contact us for more information.

Name (block letters please):

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Date:

Signature:

Please detach and send, along with a cheque or bank draft in the amount of €10.00, to:
The Irish Association of Older People, 4 Sussex Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

