

Hi Society

SUMMER 2020

Welcome to the Summer edition of *Hi Society*.

I must start by expressing my sincere hope you're all well, virus free and not feeling too stressed.



These are the most unusual of times. The few weeks that followed our AGM in late February, for which we trialed a day-time slot, were quite momentous.

Very quickly we went from facing the implications of a national health crisis, to meeting the challenges of an operational crisis, to interpreting a financial crisis complete with an all-time low bank base rate.

There are a **number** of ways that the Society can assist those in **difficulty**

Many individuals and businesses still have significant challenges ahead. About 15% of all UK mortgage holders have taken up the option of a 'mortgage payment holiday'. At its height the government was paying 80% of the wages of 7.5 million workers on its furlough scheme. Many businesses are still waiting to hear how or when they can re-open.

We're working with an increased number of borrowers who are experiencing financial hardship. There are a number of ways that the Society can assist those in difficulty and our dedicated team will be working with them to see how we can help keep them in their home, if that is their choice.

The Society was in the group of businesses seen by the Government as 'essential' to remain open during the height of the pandemic. To that end I'm pleased to tell you that all our branches and our agency remained open, albeit with shorter hours. A reduced level of Head Office staff has been here to take your calls. As part of the challenges faced during this short period, in the first few weeks of March we managed to get about 30 staff working from home in quite short order to enable us to continue supporting our members.

It seems odd to thank those of you who've stayed away from the branches. However, this has meant we could focus on the most urgent of transactions in the limited time we were open. Our management and staff have worked hard during this period of crisis to keep our services to members as normal as we can.

The Loughborough
Building Society

theloughborough.co.uk

To see more of what it has been like working in the branches throughout this crisis please see the news article on our website at: theloughborough.co.uk/your-loughborough/news/2020/coping-with-corona

Investor deposits have **continued to rise** as members show their **confidence** in the Society.

Members will know that our profitability comes from successful lending and growing the business over time. The changes to housing and lending markets overnight created the prospect of low lending this year, almost no financial return on our liquid assets and additional running costs. Faced with all these challenges we've scaled back our overall ambition in the short term and forecast that the Society will be less profitable this year.

From a financial perspective at the time the pandemic struck we were on track for this year's lending target which would have beaten last year's record results. Our competitors have started to lend again with much reduced mortgage rates as larger lenders target re-mortgage customers. Investor deposits have continued to rise as members show their confidence in the Society just like in the 2008 financial crash. Mortgage balances had reached an all-time high at the end of April but with limited lending available it is likely to plateau until next year.

We're **managing** our own cost base to fit the new challenges ahead.

Sadly, faced with the economic headwinds the Board agreed that the investor rates needed to be reduced to reflect the move of base rates from 0.75% to 0.1%. Although it's not welcome news for savers to see lower rates of return we haven't reduced savers rates by the same degree and we continue to offer bonds for those who prefer a fixed rate of return over a longer period. We're managing our own cost base to fit the new challenges ahead. We'll do more by email rather than post and we are re-evaluating the order of investments planned to improve member services in the post COVID-19 world ahead.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish you all a healthy and happy summer.

INSIDE TRACK

HELEN SACHDEV

“Experience, level headedness and sound judgement are all essential, but so is the need to be open to change and doing things differently,” says Helen Sachdev, Chair of Loughborough Building Society.

I was born in Ashton-under-Lyne in Greater Manchester. As a child our family moved around a lot, due to my dad’s job. Dad ran the Magistrate’s Courts, and each time he got promoted, we changed cities. By the time I was 11, he was running the biggest courts in the country, which coincidentally took us full circle back to Manchester, the city I very much see as home.

I was educated in catholic schools, including a convent up until the age of 18. The nuns were all educated, independent women, who drummed into us that as young women, we could achieve whatever we wanted. My mum was a teacher and always worked, so it never occurred to me growing up surrounded by all these strong female role models, that I wouldn’t have a career.

“...a crisis is the time we learn most about ourselves.”

At school I was generally quite good at most things but did not excel in any single subject. This made choosing my A levels difficult, and in retrospect, I think a more general education that the Baccalaureate or Scottish Highers offer, would have suited me better. That said, studying for a degree in Retail Marketing created the opportunity for me to generalise again. I really enjoyed the breadth and the practical experience a sandwich degree offered, especially the opportunity to work on the east coast of the US for ten months.

After completing my degree, I joined Sainsbury’s on their internal audit graduate scheme. I enjoyed the pace and growth being seen in the retail sector at the time and wanted to work for the best.

On the graduate scheme I was offered an opportunity to undertake chartered management accountancy exams (CIMA), which resulted in a pay rise each time I passed. Living in London, I was constantly broke – although the social life was great – so I jumped at the chance. I worked full days during

the week, studied in the evenings, then attended accountancy school on Saturday and Sundays. It was full on!

After four years, I’d completed both my accountancy exams and the graduate scheme. Remaining at Sainsbury’s, I initially worked on a massive project implementing a sales-based ordering system. Then after three years I transferred to an internal consultancy unit and worked on a range of high-profile projects including the concept of ‘convenience retailing’. Two years later, I stepped up into an operational role to lead the implementation and running of the Sainsbury’s Local network, and from there, now with two small children, I took an assignment in Egypt as their Property Director.

On returning to the UK, I transferred back into the internal consultancy unit for a few months before being headhunted by Tesco to join them as a director. Although I’d valued my time at Sainsbury’s, after 13 years, I was ready for a change. The move also coincided with my becoming a single parent, and while I was worried about stepping up into a bigger role, in a much larger and faster paced company, the opportunity to move my children outside of London and offer them a different kind of life, inspired me to go for it. I stayed with Tesco for just over five years, and I learnt more at that time in my career than at any other.

After Tesco, I was approached to join Barclays to reorganise their 1,700 branch estate. I loved the job, as it played to my strengths, but I did find the change in culture hard to adjust to. I led the branch transformation for five years, then was offered the chance to lead the UK strategy team, which I did for two years.

After Barclays, I started to shift my focus to a plural career. I worked part time as an operations director for a London estate agent and started to gain my early non-executive experience.

In 2017 I joined the Loughborough Building Society as a non-executive director and when the previous Chair retired earlier this year I stepped up



QUICKFIRE

Rave read
Any Jack Reacher thriller

On the box
Killing Eve

Favourite food
French or Italian

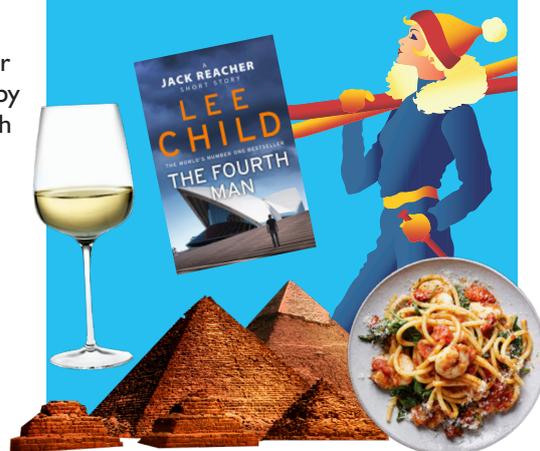
Holiday haunt
South of France, in the foothills of the alps

Philosophy for life
Plan for the worst, hope for the best

Biggest bugbear
Those whose glass is always half empty

Happiness is...
Garden, sunset, white wine and laughter

When not working you’d find me...
With my family, ideally, on the ski slopes



into the role. As Chair, as well as leading the Board, I have the chance to work more directly with the Chief Executive and get closer to the business.

My new role coincided with the outbreak of coronavirus, so definitely an interesting time. My past experiences - two recessions, a financial crisis and now a pandemic - have taught me that a crisis is the time we learn most about ourselves, the people we work with and the culture of the businesses we are part of. Experience, level headedness and sound judgement are all essential, but so is the need to be open to change and doing things differently. My hope is that one of the legacies of surviving COVID-19 will be that our way of working will be positively changed forever.

TAKE FIVE TO STOP FRAUD

Fraudsters are constantly looking at new ways to scam the public out of money with many using current events and circumstances to their advantage. The COVID-19 pandemic in particular has seen a rise in financial fraud, with scammers benefitting from the disruption and panic caused by the virus.

These fraudsters often pretend to be from banks, building societies or other trusted organisations, to exploit and persuade people to provide personal information that will allow them to access their private bank accounts.

Scams like these are unfortunately costing people millions of pounds each year, with new scams being uncovered on a regular basis, however there are ways we can fight the scammers to prevent it happening.

At The Loughborough keeping your personal and financial information safe is the utmost priority for us and we have measures in place that will help protect you from attempted fraudulent activities.

As well as the measures we have in place, there are steps you can take too.

Take Five, a national campaign set up by the government, has outlined the following advice which can help you avoid becoming a victim of financial fraud:

1. Requests to move money:

A genuine building society, bank or other trusted organisation will never contact you out of the blue to ask for your PIN, full password, account details or to move money to another account. Only give out your personal or financial details to use a service that you have given your consent to, that you trust and that you're expecting to be contacted by.

2. Clicking on links/files:

Don't be tricked into giving a fraudster access to your personal or financial details. Never automatically click on a link in an unexpected email or text.



3. Personal information:

Always question uninvited approaches in case of a scam. Instead, contact the company directly using a known email or phone number.

4. Don't assume an email or phone call is authentic:

Just because someone knows your basic details (such as your name and address or even your mother's maiden name), it doesn't mean they are genuine. Be mindful of who you trust – criminals may try to trick you into their confidence by telling you that you've been a victim of fraud.

5. Don't be rushed or pressured into making a decision:

Under no circumstances would a genuine bank, building society or other trusted organisation force you to make a financial transaction on the spot; they would never ask you to transfer money into another account for fraud reasons. Remember to stop and take time to carefully consider your actions. A genuine building society, bank or other trusted organisation won't rush you or mind waiting if you want time to think.

6. Listen to your instincts:

If something feels wrong then it's right to question it. Criminals may lull you into a false sense of security when you're out and about or rely on your defences being down when you're in the comfort of your own home. They may appear trustworthy, but they may not be who they claim to be.

7. Stay in control:

Have the confidence to refuse unusual requests for personal or financial information. It's easy to feel embarrassed when faced with unexpected or complex conversations. But it's okay to stop the discussion if you don't feel in control of it.

For more information on protecting yourself from fraudulent activities visit <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

If you receive an unsolicited call from someone claiming to be from Loughborough Building Society and feel that it's fraudulent, please get in touch with our Customer Service Team on 01509 631960.

REMEMBER

Stop: Take a moment to think.

Challenge: Don't be afraid to ask questions or to say "No" and end the conversation.

Protect: If you think you've been the victim of fraud, contact the building society or bank from which you've made the payment immediately.



PROTECTING YOUR PERSONAL DATA



WHAT IS DATA PROTECTION?

Data Protection is about how **personal information is collected, used and stored** by organisations, businesses or the government. It's important because as individuals we should all know what happens to our personal information.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

You may remember that in the winter 2017/18 edition of *Hi Society* we told you about the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018 and is reflected in the Data Protection Act (2018).

The introduction of the GDPR updated and strengthened the previous data protection laws, increasing individuals' control and rights over their data and its protection.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU AS A MEMBER

In order to comply with the GDPR there are a number of things we have to do including:

1. Provide you with information about how **we use, store and manage** any personal data we hold and we do this in our Privacy Notice.
2. Contact you to remind you that you have the right to change or update your instructions about how and when we communicate with you.

We will only contact you with information about new products or services that we offer if you've asked us to. **We'll never pass your information** on to any third party for sales or marketing purposes.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

There is certain information we're required to send you without asking for your consent. Examples of this include information that may affect the operation of your account and statutory notices, including notice of the Annual General Meeting and the Financial Services Compensation Scheme information sheet.

As a Society we take our environmentally friendly green credentials seriously so where possible we'd like to use email to send you these types of communications because it:

- **helps the environment**
- **helps to reduce costs**
- is a much **quicker way** for you to receive information

CONFIRMING YOUR CONSENT TO USE EMAIL

If you haven't already given us your consent to send you general communications by email and would like to, you can complete an online form at theloughborough.co.uk/confirming-your-choices or email us at enquiries@theloughborough.co.uk

CHANGING YOUR MARKETING PREFERENCES

If you've previously given your consent to our contacting you with information about products and services that may be of interest to you or would like to, you can change your contact preferences or withdraw your consent at any time. You can do this via our website at theloughborough.co.uk/change-marketing-preferences, email us at enquiries@theloughborough.co.uk or write to us at Loughborough Building Society, 6 High Street, Loughborough LE11 2QB.

