

Hi Society

WINTER 2023/24

Up Front with Gary



Welcome to your winter 2023/24

Hi Society magazine. You should also have received the Summary Financial Statement which includes your notice about our 156th AGM and Society results for the year. We're planning to record the AGM this year and make it available to members

after the event. Please see your

AGM notices and emails for how to do that.

As with recent years we'll make a charitable donation to FareShare who focus on the plight of the hungry. The demands on them continue to rise as the impact of high food inflation has hit many hard. We continue to work with the Leicester arm of the charity so benefiting those in the Society's heartland.

Please take time to read the notices and vote online or return your form by post or in branch. To encourage you to vote, and vote online, we've kept the donation per on-line vote at £1.

Gross mortgage lending is at its highest ever in a single year at over £140m

A year in numbers

This has been a record year for your Society. Gross mortgage lending is at its highest ever in a single year at over £140m. Mortgage balances, gross of hedging valuations and provisions, have reached another record level of £464m, up 23%. Members have responded positively to the various new notice accounts and bonds on offer which has taken share balances to another all-time high of £445m, up 16.5%. Unlike last year, our pre-tax profits have hardly been impacted by hedging gains and were £1.1m. This represents a good return to allow the Society to invest in the future and its people and provide our saver members with a decent return.

Taken together this has increased the total asset size of the Society to over £530m which meant we reached the £0.5bn landmark two years ahead of our medium-term business objectives.

To achieve these results the staff have worked incredibly hard and have handled more enquires this year than ever before. I'd like to thank you for

providing so many compliments on the service you've received despite everyone being so busy achieving these results.

Total assets reach £530m

Savers

The Bank of England started raising rates in December 2021 and as at the end of November 2023, have done so on 14 occasions holding at 5.25% for the last two MPC meetings. This has caused a number of larger firms to start offering better returns to savers but with the medium and smaller firms generally providing the better deals.

We've continually updated the rates on our new and existing products

Our savings and branch teams have worked very hard to continually update the rates on our new and existing products across the year.

To give you an idea of what that means in practice, over the past year we've provided a number of attractively priced bonds with the last two year bond being withdrawn early given the market wide interest being shown, only to be replaced immediately by another. We'll continue to offer you fixed rate bonds in the coming year and monitor our member needs in relation to the type of accounts available.

People and investing for the future

As we've grown and look ahead to the opportunities presented, we needed to enhance our senior manager team. Our Risk and Compliance function has been strengthened following the in-year promotion of Sue Lee to Risk & Compliance Director and Society Secretary. We've also added to the senior management team following Eileen Wheatley's retirement in the autumn. Thank you to Eileen for all her hard work over the years. You'll be able to meet members of the new team at the AGM. It's important we face forwards to ensure the Society has the skills it needs to succeed.

Work on the new IT platforms continues and at the time of the AGM we should know our launch dates and we'll be able to describe what that will mean for you as members. Digital platforms require extra

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Building Society**

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resilience and security so only once those factors have been tested will we allow the new systems to go live.

After some redesign, the new Head Office has been stripped out ready to start on the refit and should be ready for occupancy just after Easter 2024.

Work on the new IT platforms continues

Cost of living

The higher levels of inflation we've all experienced has been one of the drivers of rising interest rates and increases in household budgets. This has meant that market lending rates have increased, as has the rates offered by the Society. However, we've been more measured in moving mortgage rates upwards and have not simply mirrored the increases in base rates announced by the Bank of England.

We continually evaluate the competing demands of savers to be paid more and that which borrowers can afford to pay. If you're experiencing financial difficulties as a borrowing member, please do contact us at your earliest convenience.

Our members

I'd like to thank all our members for their continued support and loyalty to the Society. It appears that the country will continue to face some economic hardship as inflation hasn't gone away, this will be felt by most households as the economy isn't growing. I want to thank you again for all your messages of support and gratitude, across the year.

On behalf of all of us I hope you have a safe and enjoyable 2024.

Gary Brebner
Chief Executive



Rob Broadbent
Finance Director



Susan Lee
Risk & Compliance Director

NEW BOARD APPOINTMENTS

We'd like to welcome Rob Broadbent and Susan Lee to the Loughborough Building Society Board.

Rob joined the Society and was appointed to the Board in November 2022.

Susan joined the Society in 2012 and was appointed to the Board in March 2023. She was formerly the Society's Head of Risk & Compliance.

Further details are available on the web site and in the Summary Financial Statement.

You'll get a chance to meet both Rob and Susan at the Society's AGM in February.



TALKBACK MEMBER PANEL

In 2024, we'll be engaging our member panel and seeking their valuable opinions on a number of forthcoming updates and services.

In addition to engaging with our existing member panel, we're looking for more members to join and get involved in shaping the Society for the future.

This is an opportunity for you to comment and give feedback on all aspects of the Society, from what you think about current and future products or services, to how we engage with the community.

We appreciate that this would mean giving us a little of your time once or twice a year and to say thank you, we'll reward you with a gift for every session you take part in.

We'd love to hear from you, so if you're interested in helping to shape the future of your local Society, please email lbsmembers@theloughborough.co.uk

TRADITIONAL VALUES, MODERN LIFESTYLES

As you'll have read in Gary's update, higher levels of inflation has been one of the biggest drivers of rising increase rates, resulting in tighter household budgets.

Mortgages

With the increasing interest rates, and a rise in the cost of living, 2023 has been a challenging year for existing borrowers, first time buyers and those seeking to move home.

The Loughborough, however, has continued to help people to realise their home ownership ambition, helping first-time buyers, those in or approaching retirement, and those looking for buy to let to find a mortgage deal that's suitable for them.

We've also continued to support people who are finding it difficult to save for a deposit, with a range of options including Shared Ownership mortgages, Family Deposit mortgages and Joint Borrower Sole Proprietor mortgages.

In June 2023, The Loughborough proudly signed up to the new Mortgage Charter which was agreed with the government to support homeowners who are concerned about paying their mortgage.

The Mortgage Charter is designed to give confidence to people worried about meeting their mortgage payments that real help is at hand.

You can find details of all our mortgage products on our website or get in touch and we can talk further.



Savings

The increases to the Bank of England base rate during 2023, however, brought some good news to our savers; we've responded to the base rate rises by increasing the rates on a number of our savings accounts throughout the year.

We've also added a large number of new products to our range of Savings Accounts, ISAs, and Fixed Rate Bonds.

Back in 2021, we launched an Access X4 account that gives our savers the ability to withdraw up to four times a year. We've now expanded this range to include Access X2 (withdrawals up to 2 times a year) and Access X6 (withdrawals up to 6 times a year) accounts, giving both new and existing customers even more flexibility to access their savings with The Loughborough.

Along with the flexible access accounts we've added a 30 day notice account that enables savers to withdraw from their accounts with 30 days' notice/ penalty, we also added additional Monthly Saver accounts so savers can deposit up to £2,000 per month to help them save for something special.



For those who don't mind waiting a bit longer to access their hard-earned savings in return for an enhanced rate of interest, we've continued to offer our popular fixed rate bonds throughout the year, with one year and two year options.

For those wanting to make the most of their tax-free savings, we've had Fixed Rate ISAs including 1 year and 2 year options available during the year.

It's not just savings accounts for individuals that we launched, we've also added to our Business Savings accounts including 30 day and 60 day notice, aimed at small and medium businesses, clubs, societies and charities looking to save money for their organisational goals.

If you haven't reviewed our range of saving options recently why not take a look at our website or get in touch and we'll send you the information. As ever, we'll continue to consider potential new accounts based on member and market feedback, so please get in touch if there is anything that you'd like to see.

NEWS & EVENTS

FARESHARE FOOD REDISTRIBUTION CHARITY



The cost of living continued to rise in the UK during 2023, with food and energy prices in particular seeing sharp increases over the year.

Worryingly, these rises have meant many people in the UK are struggling to feed themselves, with around 13 million people in the UK experiencing food insecurity (nearly 1 in 5 of the UK's population).

To help, the Society has once again chosen FareShare, the UK's longest-running food redistribution charity, as our adopted charity in 2024.

For those who don't know, FareShare is a UK wide charity fighting hunger and tackling food waste. The charity redistributes thousands of tonnes of good quality, in-date, surplus food to 9,500 fantastic frontline charities each year. These local organisations help feed and support disadvantaged people across the UK.

To help get food delivered to charities feeding vulnerable people, FareShare run a number of fundraisers and campaigns throughout the year, including the annual Tesco Food Collections and the recent Cost of Living Crisis appeal.

As our adopted charity, donations from this year's AGM votes will go to FareShare. This contribution will help them feed more children and their families who are most affected by the cost of living crisis.

If you'd like more information on FareShare and how you could help by volunteering or donating visit <https://fareshare.org.uk/>



LOUGHBOROUGH LIBRARY EXHIBITIONS WINTER/SPRING 2024

The Local and Family History Centre at Loughborough Library is hosting a selection of fascinating exhibitions and displays during the first half of 2024 including:

November 23rd 2023 – January 26th 2024:

Showtime! A History of the Theatre at Loughborough Town Hall.

February 6th 2024 – April 27th 2024:

Where the Boatmen Dwell, an exhibition on the Loughborough Canalside Buildings and the Boatmen Families who lived there.

May 9th 2024 – 27th July 2024:

Charnwood Borough Council 50th Anniversary exhibition, a celebration of the formation of the Charnwood Borough Council.

These exhibitions will be on display at Loughborough Library with free entry during the Library's staffed hours.

For information on Loughborough Library including its open hours visit: <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/find-a-library/loughborough-library>

LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN HALL PETER PAN-TO!

To celebrate Little Wolf Entertainment's 10th year of performing pantomimes at Loughborough Town Hall, the team brought a brand new adventure that had never been seen at the venue before!



The swashbuckling tale of Peter Pan was performed throughout the festive season,

with The Loughborough Building Society sponsoring the annual pantomime for the 18th time!

To get everybody excited for the Panto season, Loughborough Town Hall hosted their ever-popular Panto Sunday Funday on Sunday 10th September.

Activities included backstage tours, dance workshops, pirate ship rides, a treasure hunt and arts and crafts activities.

The pantomime season kicked off in November with the annual Gala night on Friday 1st December, with an auditorium packed full of guests.

Those who attended this year's panto were treated to a high flying action-packed adventure full of spectacular effects, and a barrel load of laughs! It was certainly the perfect PAN-to.

As sponsors of the annual pantomime season, we were again able to support the Town Hall with its community focused performances, including relaxed performances, and a BSL Signed performances. With support from The Loughborough, many more people can experience the magic of the pantomime season.