

2026 AGM Questions and Answers

Responses to the most commonly asked questions raised by members, both in advance of and at the AGM, are published below. Thank you to all our members who submitted questions.

IT Platforms

Question: We have heard about the increasing costs from new IT systems. Can you explain the benefits and reduction in cost we are likely to see in the future?

Response: The costs to change our IT capability does three things. First it provides the Society with greater resilience the speed of restoration of services will be significantly improved. Second, it will allow the Society to grow without requiring a commensurate increase in headcount. Third, the agility of the platform means that going forwards adding new services will be much easier saving time and cost.

Question: What is the time scale for the online savings platform?

Response: The new system is expected to go live in the next few months. The next phase of work will look at online savings, realistically this will be for delivery in the first half of 2027.

The online mortgage portal, which will include ability to select product maturity options, is expected to come ahead of online savings and should be later this year.

Question: I am interested in hearing more about the ongoing work around your digital transformation to offer better services to remote members. Specifically, could you please share any information and timelines around the introduction of an online portal and free of charge electronic withdrawals, and can you also confirm if these features will extend to existing passbook accounts, or new accounts only?

Any further information around other areas of your digital transformation would also be gratefully received.

Response: Aspects of the question regarding services and online portal timeline are addressed in the preceding member questions.

The core platform allows integration to other suppliers and will provide additional services that in time will bring greater efficiencies and better services to members.

The Society will not charge for online withdrawals. In relation to whether online features extend to existing passbook accounts, members will have to apply for online services. The Society cannot automatically turn a passbook account into an online account. This is normal in terms of how platforms work and it provides for greater security. Passbook members can apply for online accounts.

Interest Rates

Question: There have been a number of reductions in Bank of England interest rates. Why have mortgage rates remained the same on my tracker mortgage. Your branch staff said it was for the board to reduce them. Why have you not reduced them?

Are you putting profits ahead of keeping me as a customer?

Response: For tracker mortgages, rates have changed. In relation to discounted mortgage products, these move in relation to the Society's SVR.

Bank of England base rate increased from 1% in May 2022 through ten separate moves peaking at 5.25%, and has subsequently declined. Current base rate is 3.75%. The movement of the Society's SVR in that same period was slower to move upwards. In the same period from May 2022 base rate moved upwards by a total of 4% whereas the Society SVR only increased by 2.4%, so only passing on 60% of the increase. Other lenders approached this challenge differently and passed on all the base rate increases.

As base rate declines further the Society intends to mirror the upward path and, all things being equal, when the next base rate reduction arrives the Society will reduce its SVR.

Being a mutual we believe we have a responsibility to both savers and borrowers during periods of changing rates. Savers have benefited from market and Society rates staying higher for longer. Borrowers benefited by the slower increase in SVR and not all base rate increases being passed on. We continue to manage ourselves for the long term benefit of our members.

General Matters

Question: Can I suggest that Directors are not allowed to propose or second a resolution, as it is somewhat self-fulfilling as they vote on items at Board meetings. I think we should try to rely on Members to do this.

Response: We will investigate the practicalities of adopting this for the 2027 AGM and non-Board Members attending the AGM could be asked to propose or second the resolutions.

As is common practice, Non-Executive Directors have historically proposed or seconded resolutions, as Members of the Society in their own right, and representing the wider membership. The majority of Members vote in advance and nominate the Chair, as proxy, to vote on their behalf at the AGM according to their voting preferences.