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# informed





## MEET THE TEAM

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THE VALUE OF INVESTMENTS CAN GO DOWN AS WELL AS UP, PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT NECESSARILY A GUIDE TO FUTURE RETURNS.

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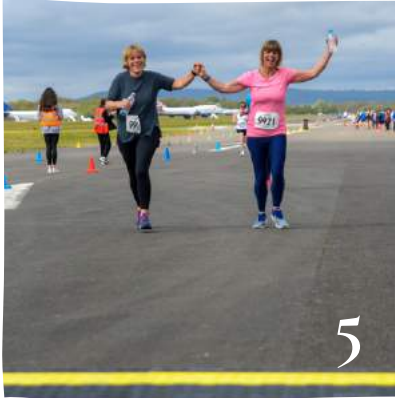
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## IN THIS EDITION



## WELCOME

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Shelley McCarthy, Managing Director

Life seems even more complicated than ‘normal’ at the moment – nothing is simple!

For example, I managed to get tickets to Wimbledon this year, but I needed to have downloaded the NHS app to prove that I’ve had two vaccinations to be able to go. This involved face scanning, uploading ID and then trying to get this connected to my GP surgery. I am pleased to say it was all resolved, and I got to attend an enjoyable day of Tennis, Prosecco and Strawberries!

My Wimbledon experience got me thinking that we need to ensure that we simplify everything for you wherever it is possible to do so. We certainly need to reduce any stress we might cause and reduce the time involved in activities that most of you probably do not enjoy (form filling, reporting to HMRC, etc.), all while increasing understanding. We need to be accessible and visible to you.

We also need to be careful that we don’t alienate you with overwhelming technology. My recent experiences have meant that I would not be able to go to Wimbledon or even order drinks at my local pub without a smartphone. There were no other options available. Neither my Dad, my Uncle, nor my Nan has smartphones and would have been excluded from these activities.

I’m an advocate for technology, but there need to be alternatives for people who are uncomfortable with this. I would love to keep as many Zoom meetings as possible but have started to see more clients face to face, particularly those who have not been keen on Zoom during the pandemic.

In a world that is increasingly complicated, our role as financial planners is more vital than ever. With full financial planning, our remit is much broader than just looking at your finances. When looking to ‘make things simple’, one of the key recommendations is understanding your priorities.

We need to ask you good questions to help you understand your priorities, what is important to you, and fundamentally, what you want from life. Having a plan, a track to run on, understanding why you are saving, and understanding how much you can spend all make your life simpler.



## JIGSAW RUN 10K 2021

The 2020 Jigsaw Run 10k was postponed, twice, due to the pandemic. When it finally took place at Dunsfold Park back in May, we were delighted to welcome 500 runners, all raising money for the fantastic local autism charity, Jigsaw Trust.

Informed Choice is once again supporting the Jigsaw Run 10k as it returns to its usual spot on the calendar, taking place on Sunday 28th November 2021. With two race starts, at 9am and 11am, this year's event will offer a brilliant opportunity for runners to get back on track and take on a fantastic flat and fast 10km race.

The Jigsaw Run is a fantastic opportunity to run at Dunsfold Park aerodrome, home of the BBC's Top Gear and site of the Jigsaw Trust which supports children and adults with autism.

It is also a great chance to run for fun while raising much-needed funds for the Jigsaw Trust, stretch your legs and celebrate the end of the race season in this friendly charity run.

You can find out more and enter now at [jigsawrun.co.uk](https://jigsawrun.co.uk).



# COMPLIANCE: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Victoria McNulty, Head of Compliance

The board of directors recently promoted me to Head of Compliance at Informed Choice. I wanted to share a little about my new role and its importance to you, our client.

Look at our emails, letters and our website. You will see the legend “Informed Choice Ltd is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority” What does it mean to be an authorised and regulated firm?

Put simply; it’s all about you. It’s about ensuring that when you take advice from an authorised and regulated firm or buy a financial product, you can be confident that they are doing their very best to provide you with a suitable service.



In the financial planning world, this is all about suitability. If ever we recommend a course of action for you to follow, we should evidence that this course of action is most suitable for you.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) sets out a series of rules and guidance for the authorised and regulated firm to follow. Those rules and guidance notes are enormous in their volume. It is for us, the authorised and regulated firm, to interpret and apply those rules to the work we do for you.

The best way we can ensure compliance with our regulator is to put you and your requirements “front and centre.”

## COMPLIANCE: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

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We adhere to certain principles that determine how we act with integrity and treat our clients fairly. These principles ensure that we provide our clients with the most suitable advice.

Our starting point is to know our customer - you. If ever you have asked yourself, “why do Informed Choice ask me so many questions and gather so much data about my financial affairs as well as what I am trying to achieve?”, the answer is suitability.

We can only determine if our advice to you is suitable by really knowing you. The regulatory rules and guidance about knowing our customer are quite basic. Still, we expand our data capture because, for us, it's never about trying to provide advice to masses of people. All of our clients are genuine individuals.

Without our clients, Informed Choice wouldn't exist. Ensuring that the advice we provide and the overall service we offer meet our clients' objectives is vital to our success. Still, it's also a regulatory requirement with which we must comply.

One of my key accountabilities is to ensure we have in place the systems and processes to ensure we know our customers and provide suitable advice.

Every authorised Financial Planner must achieve a minimum level of qualification (diploma level qualifications). At Informed Choice, we aspire to reach higher standards and become Chartered Financial Planners, the gold standard for Financial Planners.

Qualifications prove that we have a high level of technical knowledge and our clients can have confidence in the advice we are giving them. At Informed Choice, we also encourage all staff members to take qualifications as we take a team-based approach to servicing our clients.

We live in a constantly changing world which makes Continuing Professional Development (CPD) very important as you will know each time the Chancellor sets out with his red box, the tax rules are constantly changing!

The investment world is also dynamic, and we need to respond to change to ensure we continue to deliver suitable advice. We all undertake a significant number of hours of CPD each year to ensure our knowledge remains up to date.

One of my jobs is to supervise our training and competence plan and ensure everyone keeps their records updated.

## COMPLIANCE: IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

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Our regulator gathers data from a wide variety of firms that it regulates. Even a modestly sized firm is required to report to the FCA regularly.

Twice a year, we submit answers to an extensive set of questions from the FCA about our financial position and our activities. This data is generally referred to as RMAR (Retail Mediation Activity Return) or Gabriel, the name of the software platform. Even using technology, this is many hours of work.

In addition, we respond to other data requests from our regulator. As I write this, we are about to respond to regulatory questionnaires about the impact of Covid-19 on our firm's financial robustness and a further questionnaire about Credit Broking (which we don't do!) Later this month, we expect an additional questionnaire about our activity advising on defined benefit pension transfers.

Last year we completed six sets of data requests for the regulator.

Making sure these are accurately completed in a timely fashion is another of my responsibilities.

We have to adhere to regulatory requirements to ensure that, should Informed Choice cease to trade and has any claims against it, we can satisfy those claims. To do this, we have to set aside many tens of thousands of pounds to be capably adequate. In addition, we have to buy suitable professional indemnity insurance. Last year that cost nearly £100,000.

It is not cheap to be an authorised and regulated firm! But these are part of the essential protections from which you, our client, benefits.

As has been said before, "a poor financial planner is a poor financial planner" You would expect your financial planner to manage their business finances the way they manage your personal finances, with a high degree of financial prudence.

Apart from all the regulatory reporting, we probably would not do anything differently if we were not a regulated firm. We might also get rid of many overbearing details that we are required to send to you that you may not read (don't worry, we read it all for you!)

The tasks that we have to complete and procedures we have to follow for the regulator are time-consuming but ultimately mean that we provide the most suitable advice to our client, and that is what Informed Choice is all about.



## PROFILE: SAM O'CONNOR

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What was your first job? - Working as a waiter in my local pub, The Star Inn.

When did you start in financial services? - About ten years ago.

What do you do in your spare time? - I play golf, travel, play the guitar and listen to music. I also enjoy politics, and I have a Brighton and Hove Albion season ticket (Up the Albion!)

Who are your nearest and dearest? - Ramn (pronounced like the noodles), my wife of 5 years in April! My Mum lives in East Grinstead, which is where I grew up. I have an older brother in Sheffield, and my Dad lives in the US.

What do you like about working at Informed Choice? - The people! Everyone has been very welcoming and friendly. I like that we do a weekly quiz – which is good fun and nice to see everyone.

What is your favourite film? - I'll go with The Matrix. I've watched it many times, but somehow it never gets boring! The sequels were awful, though.

What type of music do you like? - I like rock, hip hop, blues and jazz.

What thing about you might surprise people?! I can recite the gayatri mantra. (Google it), and no, I won't be doing requests! Ha!

## PROFILE: JANE DANIELS

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What was your first job? - A Saturday job in a book shop.

When did you start in financial services? - Too long ago to remember!

What do you do in your spare time? - Walking and exploring the local area and watching The Great Pottery Throw Down with my daughter.

Who are your nearest and dearest? - Nearest is my husband and our two children. Dearest is our dog, without offending the family, as they are aware of the pecking order.

What do you like about working at Informed Choice? - Although currently working remotely, it doesn't feel like it. Everyone has been very welcoming.

What is your favourite film? - The Muppet Christmas Carol.

What type of music do you like? - Very varied and especially if it's outside and live.

What thing about you might surprise people?! - I may have been the second from last person in Surrey to get my hair done before Lockdown Three, furtively exiting the hairdressers at 11.30 p.m.







## TONY & BEA

A couple of years ago, Tony sent me some photos of the mountain bike crash he had endured.

It was a pretty severe accident, as were his injuries, but one of the photos he sent bought some degree of humour to the event. He had fallen forward off his mountain bike and had the indignity of then being run over by his own wheels. The photo, taken by a friend of his, showed the track mark across the back of his shirt!

The x-ray photos he sent me of various bones pinned together with metal were much less amusing.

This incident is indicative of the humour of Tony & Bea. They have a great sense of humour and are "smiley" people.

Andy Bodman and I have met with Tony & Bea in a country pub just outside of the village in which they live in Northamptonshire. We enjoy beer-battered fish and chips, but each of us has declined the pot of curry sauce offered with the food! We discuss this mix of fish, chips and curry sauce and debate whether it is a Midlands or Northern thing, although Tony points out that when he was in Ireland, he encountered a "curry half and half" (half rice and half chips), who knew?

Tony and Bea are long-standing clients of Informed Choice and more recently have benefited from the full financial planning process as they transition from work to retirement.







We talk a lot in the Financial Planning profession about "transition in people's lives", and a lot has changed in the last year or so for Tony and Bea because Tony left the company he worked for a very long time. He didn't know whether they had enough money or if he would have to find further employment, so the financial planning process demonstrated they could do all the things they wanted to in retirement and not run out of money.

They met each other through mutual friends and had spent the evening in a pub local to where Tony was living in Kent. Bea had travelled to Kent from her home in London to spend the weekend with a friend. Tony's interest in Bea was evident from the start because he kept taking trips up to the bar to buy drinks and chose the spot right next to Bea to park his pint, so he had to lean past her each time to pick it up!

Long story short, Tony invited Bea to a dance a couple of weeks later, and they became a couple. Pretty soon, they moved to Northampton, and that has been their home county ever since. They married in 1989.

Bea loves gardening, and she describes how she has had a really good month in the garden. She says that her garden is too small for her horticultural ambitions, such, I guess, is the lot of many gardeners. Bea does, though, have lots of pots and containers, and as those with a small garden will know, this provides the scope for expansion of the number of plants you can have.

Bea makes up for her small garden by helping other people in their gardens, and she does so simply for her love of gardening. Often she finds she has committed to an hour or so of helping to discover that she is still there three hours later, sometimes to be told, "do you know what the time is? You should really go home now?!"

As well as the plants, we discuss the wildlife they spot, and Bea waxes lyrical about the Scarlett Tiger Moth they have seen black with red patches standing out against the green of the leaves.

Tony and Bea have three grown-up daughters, each with their careers in hand. Emily is a teacher in a local school, Grace is working on her PhD in Liverpool, and Alice is an audiologist in a local hospital. There is little doubt that a considerable chunk of Tony and Bea's lives has been raising their family and setting their children on their successful career journeys.

Tony tells us about the project on which he is working. He is building a bike park, a project that he says has helped keep him sane during the last year of the pandemic. Funding for the bike park is from the local council and British Cycling. The park is designed for mountain biking rather than cycling and BMX. And it's aimed at everyone of all ages, not just the youngsters.



## TONY & BEA

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We return to the subject of retirement and financial planning, and it is great to hear it from the side of Tony and Bea, our clients. Andy Bodman reminds them that there was a definite shift between the first and second times they met.

Whereas the first time, the focus was on building up the retirement pot and investing their pension funds, there was no "counting down of the days" to retirement. The second time, it was clear that work wasn't missed, and Andy remembers the big smiles they had on their faces.

"I didn't miss it at all from the day I walked out," says Tony. It was clear that having the confidence to retire removed a great deal of the stress that work delivers. The financial planning process evidenced that they could afford not to return to work if they didn't want to.

What do they have on their list of things they might do?

"I'd love to do Scotland, to tour around Scotland, a revisit in actual fact," because they went there for their honeymoon. They aren't sure if they would do that in a motorhome or some other way.

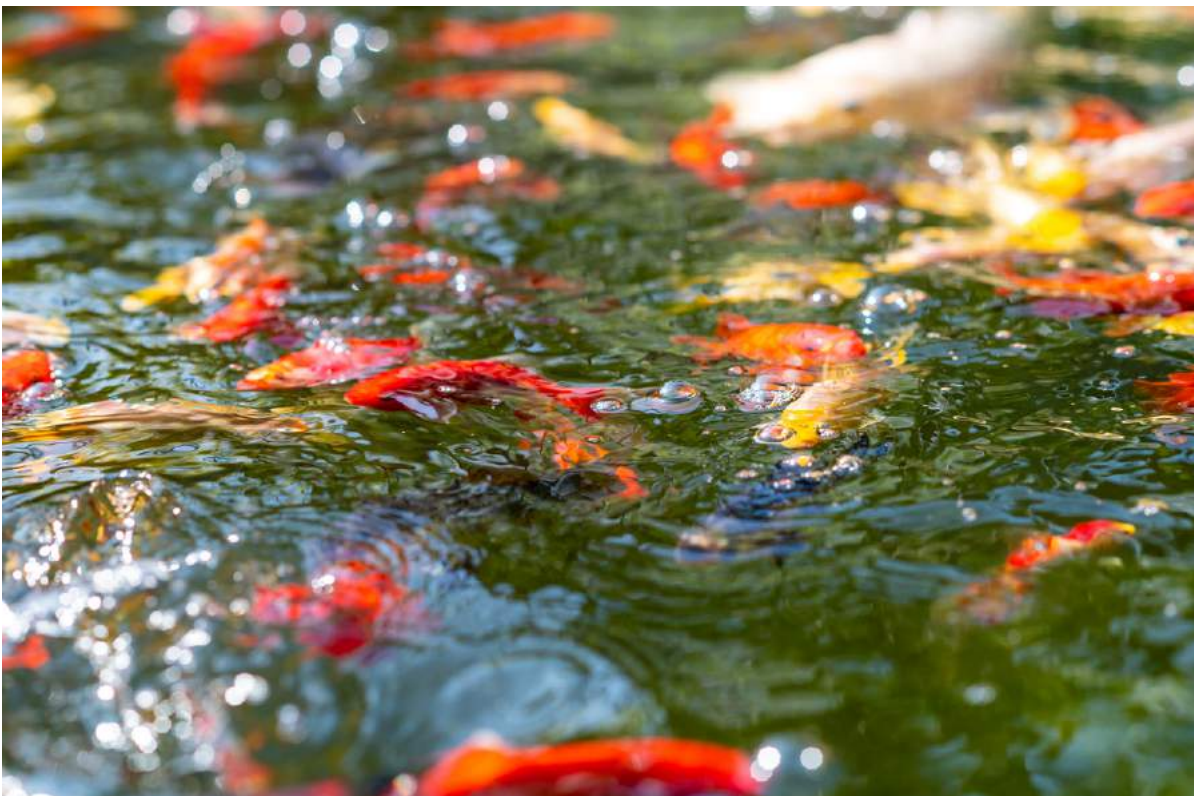
We chat about a vast range of subjects, and two and half hours have passed before we know it. That's what it's like with Tony & Bea because as well as being interesting, they are also interested. Andy Bodman reminds me that we need to leave soon because England versus Germany in the Euros kicks off at 5.00 pm (I arrived home to watch it 2 mins after kick-off).

Tony and Bea leave to go home to gardening, bike park project management, catch up with their three girls, or to enjoy the fact that they don't have to go to work anymore.



## TONY & BEA

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# NEW PROJECTS

Lizanne Doyle, Client Services Manager

Like any forward-thinking organisation, we are constantly striving to improve the service that we provide to you.

One of the values that we have as a business is always to be our most vigorous critics. All of the team members at Informed Choice know that they are front and centre when it comes to change. If we spot something that isn't as good as it should be, then our job is to agree and implement change to make it better.

The last 18 months have indeed been challenging, but as we changed the way that we do things around here (working from home and via the technology we use), we uncovered the need for even more change.



## 'POD' TEAM APPROACH

Teams are nearly always going to produce better results than an individual can on their own.

Our current internal process for the administration and technical report writing is a team-based approach. Whilst this has worked well in the past, we have identified a lack of in-depth familiarity with the work for any particular client, which has led to less than optimal efficiency.

We decided that each Administrator, Paraplanner and Financial Planner needs to take time to familiarise themselves with any given client before they can commence any meaningful work.

We identified that to create a more efficient working environment, sub-teams would enable greater familiarity of client work, greater responsibility, and more attention to detail.

## NEW PROJECTS

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So we altered our team basis to create smaller teams. We call them pods (think of a family of Dolphins or Orcas!)

Our approach will include one Paraplanner and one Administrator supporting one Financial Planner and their clients. This pod approach will also help build on the existing client relationships that the team has nurtured over the years.

## USE OF TECHNOLOGY

As you might imagine, we use a lot of different pieces of kit to deliver our services. Our spend each year on computer software is one of our top ten expenditure items.

At the end of 2019, ahead of the pandemic, we introduced a better way of saving client data in the form of Virtual Cabinet (VC). This system has transformed our business in terms of the internal working of the office, for the entire team.

It has created enormous efficiencies and allowed the uninterrupted continuation of the business during the pandemic because we could each transfer files and reports, on which we were working, to one another at the touch of a button.

This software also allows us to communicate with you, our clients, entirely securely, and all data held on VC is secure. We take client data security very seriously and encourage all our clients to utilise the portal on VC wherever possible.

## TRAINING THE ADMIN TEAM

Training our team is high on our list of improving what we do. As well as helping the team study for formal professional qualifications, on-the-job training is also vitally important.

Whilst working from home and during the pandemic, we recruited several new members of the team. We wanted to give them a similar experience to what they would have received had they been physically present in the office.

## NEW PROJECTS

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Providing an office-based experience remotely was highly challenging; I have historically used my soft skills in an office environment to identify staff struggling to understand processes and who need further encouragement and support.

By increasing the meetings we had via Zoom and MS Teams, we got through this challenging period, and now each administration team member attends the office once or twice a week. We ensure our Head Office is staffed and see other team members face-to-face rather than via Zoom/Teams. As you can imagine, this is much better than being isolated from one another; I guess we have all learned how important human interaction is.

As a firm, we want to be as supportive as we can be for those team members who wish to continue working from home, and we have given the team the choice to do so. We have struck a balance for the administration team by creating a rota of working from home and working at the office.

## TUESDAY AFTERNOON TIME

In order to get better at what we do, we need to set aside the time to plan to do just that. On Tuesday afternoons, the administration team meet to discuss “wins and losses” over the last week, what went well and what went less well. We then identify training needs and areas where we need to improve.

After each Tuesday afternoon meeting, we progress to our project list of items that we work through in priority order. Our project list includes reviewing our existing checklists to ensure these are still relevant and asking ourselves if we need to add more or remove any items on the checklist.

## THE FUTURE

Kaizen is a Japanese term meaning “change for the better” or “continuous improvement.” It is a Japanese business philosophy regarding the processes that continuously improve operations and involve all team members. Kaizen sees improvement in productivity as a gradual and systematic process.

We may not have one word for the improvement we want to see at Informed Choice, but we are all committed to just that, continuous improvement.



## CLASSICAL MUSIC

One of the values that we have at Informed Choice is to be good corporate citizens.

We believe that running a business in a local community involves being an active part of the community.

As well as investing a lot of our time in various community activities, we also sponsor certain events. One of the local beneficiaries of our sponsorship is the Cranleigh Arts Centre.

Cranleigh Arts Centre is an essential resource for our village providing entertainment with comedy, popular and classical music, film and theatre, amongst many other activities.

This autumn, we have sponsored three lunchtime classical music concerts. These concerts are free to attend with a retiring collection.

Each concert starts at 1.00 pm and usually lasts about an hour.



## CLASSICAL MUSIC

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The upcoming events are:

Tuesday 26 October – Dinara Klinton (Piano) with a collection of short pieces by Sergei Taneyev, Glinka, Nikolai Medtner, Sergei Rachmaninoff and Alexander Scriabin.

Tuesday 9 November – Adam Heron (Piano) with pieces by Robert Schumann and J.S. Bach.

Tuesday 7 December – Renata Konyicska (Piano) with pieces by Felix Mendelssohn and Robert Schumann.

If you are in the Cranleigh area and would like to enjoy a relaxing hour of classical music, do come along.





# INVESTMENT WEBINARS

Martin Bamford, Director of Client Education

I'm fascinated by the economy and investment markets. While we're confident that we cannot predict or time market movements, it is healthy to observe and attempt to understand what's happening out there, in the wider world.

We host our regular client investment update webinars. These 30-40 minute monthly sessions, which resume in November, typically cover four or five topical investment subjects.

As well as sharing my insights when it comes to various investment asset classes and the broader global economy, each webinar is an opportunity to ask your questions about any aspect of investing or personal finance.

As I write this article, several issues are at the front of investor thinking. Price inflation is likely the hottest topic of them all.

While a bout of surging price inflation was to be expected as the global economy bounced back from the Covid-19 pandemic, what remains to be seen is whether it will be transitory or more permanent.

Until recently, policymakers were adamant that higher prices were a temporary factor, soon to fade away. That view is becoming less confident as time goes on.

Traditionally, central banks including the Bank of England had at their disposal a fairly blunt tool to deal with rising prices - hiking interest rates.

But higher interest rates risk choking off economic recovery. With a fragile recovery taking place, haunted by global supply chain challenges and, closer to home, the hangover from Brexit, higher interest rates now could be disastrous.



## INVESTMENT WEBINARS

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The financial markets are pricing in a modest rise in UK interest rates in the first quarter of next year, with rates possibly going as high as 0.5% or 0.75% by the end of 2022. Compared to where we are today, it's a hike, but still extremely low by historic standards.

In my view, interest rates will rise next year, but not by much. Price inflation, on the other hand, is likely to be here to stay a little longer.

Right now, wholesale energy prices are making a significant contribution to higher prices. Some of the figures we are hearing in respect of commercial fuel and heating expenses are shocking.

But where there are losers in the financial system, there are invariably winners too. One effective way to protect your wealth from the eroding impact of rising prices is to invest in 'real' assets, such as company shares (equities). As prices rise, so do corporate earnings, preserving wealth in the form of higher share prices.

There are no guarantees when investing money. Keeping money in cash, paying paltry interest rates and with its buying power subject to the erosion caused by higher prices, is however a guarantee you will lose money, at least in real terms.

There is a lot to think about and explore, and I look forward to going into greater depth during our next investment webinar on Tuesday 9th November 2021 at 1pm. Do speak to your Informed Choice Financial Planner to reserve your seat.





## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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Financial planning is about so much more than just money!

At least it is here at Informed Choice. And it seems like we're not alone when it comes to this philosophy.

New research from insurer Aegon has highlighted how much further most financial advisers go when working with their clients.



According to the research, 78% of financial advisers ask their retirement clients about what gives them meaning, purpose and happiness.

Because, after all, what's the point in having money if you're not using it to deliver happiness!

The researchers spoke to 212 financial advisers and found that around four in five include questions about what gives life meaning and purpose as part of their getting to know the client process.

Advisers also ask clients who are planning to retire about what will bring them happiness in retirement.

According to those who took part in the research, these discussions about meaning, purpose and happiness are a valuable way to understand hopes and fears in retirement, and advisers can use the answers to support broader financial wellbeing.



## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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During an interview for the research, one adviser said:

"What can we do at a human level to have an impact on people's lives? Connect more with what they really want to do rather than do the same as everyone else; that means we can be far more effective and open and hopefully help them be even happier."

Thinking about the future, advisers increasingly expect their roles to move more into 'retirement coaching', with less of a focus on products and investment choices.

The top client aspiration in retirement is the ability to maintain living standards, with 39% of advisers saying this was the hope for the majority of their clients.



Other important retirement goals include maintaining health and longevity, not running out of money during their lifetime, and having a solution to cover long-term care costs.



## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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Steven Cameron, Pensions Director at Aegon, said:

"While advisers remain focused on helping clients achieve their financial objectives, the research points to an increasing focus on broader financial wellbeing. Advisers are going beyond their valuable role in recommending products and investments to optimise portfolios, towards a more holistic approach that offers coaching on life after work."

"Through open discussions during the fact find, advisers can gather a fuller picture of a client's wider life goals and priorities to help finance aspirations and mitigate fears in retirement. Clients not only benefit from advice to support their financial future but also have someone to help them identify what gives them joy and purpose and picture their 'future self'."



"The research highlights that the aspiration to maintain living standards in retirement is the primary objective for the majority of advised clients. To truly deliver on this, people often need help from their adviser to picture their future lives. To make this goal attainable, individuals should look for ways to plan well ahead to ensure they are on track and have the best investment approach to meet this objective."

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

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If you're looking for someone who will work with you to create a Financial Plan based on your values and goals, get in touch!

We would love to explore different options together so that you can retire happy knowing your investments are aligned with what matters most to you.



Let's talk about what gives you meaning, purpose and happiness in retirement!



## THE LAST WORD

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Nick Bamford, Chairman

48 years ago this month at the tender age of 18 (yes, I still had some hair!) I walked into an office block on Redcliff Hill, Bristol, to begin my first job and career in financial services. I had the role of Life Underwriting Clerk - filing record cards in alphabetical order and setting up the paper files for the Underwriters. The Underwriters always seemed to be the grown-ups, but I discovered many years later, are a mere two years older than me.

A lot has changed since then. At that time, the firm had one computer. It was so large it took up the whole of the third floor of the building. I doubt it had as much computing power as the laptop I am typing this on or the mobile phone you may have close to hand.

And on the subject of typing, we used to pick up the phone and dictate a letter to the typing pool and pop down and collect it later that day!

I was blessed with working with people whose values were well worth emulating. I hold onto those values all these years later. Honesty and transparency were essential to having a successful time under the stewardship of the people who supervised and managed the underwriting department.

They taught me so much about how to behave in the work environment, and I hope that someday some of the people who work with me will think back and say the same of me.

Owning up to errors (we all make them) was a key value, as was articulating how to correct that error. As Lizanne described earlier in the magazine, we are constantly changing things at Informed Choice to improve our effectiveness and efficiency. This is always done with you, our clients, at the front of mind.

Striving to improve is, we believe, part of our values, and we will never stop looking for ways to improve what we do for you.

## INFORMED CHOICE RADIO

Our audio podcast, Informed Choice Radio, continues to share conversations with a range of interesting guests.

Listeners can access the podcast online at [icradio.co.uk](http://icradio.co.uk) or by searching for Informed Choice Radio using their favourite podcast player, such as Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

With so many varied conversations, it's always a challenge to choose just a handful to highlight in this magazine!

Entrepreneur, keynote speaker and multi-award winning money coach Catherine Morgan joined Martin on the podcast to discuss how financial sabotage can prevent us from achieving our goals in life.

During their conversation, Martin and Catherine discussed the imprinting period in childhood that forms many of the emotions around money, why we are naturally attracted to people who have the opposite relationship to money, and the impact of Covid on our financial attitudes.

More recently, Martin spoke to solicitors Tim Carter and James Lister from Stevens & Bolton LLP.

They talked about how HMRC is cracking down on Covid loan scheme fraud, what attracts people to Ponzi schemes and how to avoid them, steps you can take if you have been the victim of fraud, and much more.

Their conversation was so insightful, it was picked up a few days later by the Daily Express, who wrote an article based on the transcript.





Sticking with the legal theme, Martin also spoke with Charlotte Plowman, an associate solicitor at Family Law Partners in Horsham, in an episode all about the financial aspects of divorce.

Where divorcing parties end up in court to settle their financial arrangements, those legal expenses can become substantial. Charlotte explained the various options for negotiating and reaching a financial settlement, and why ending up in front of a judge is likely to be a very bad idea.



Cryptocurrency is always in the headlines, with a growing number of people speculating on Bitcoin, Ethereum and other tokens. But, along with the rest of the financial industry, scams are rife. Thousands of people lost billions of dollars in the OneCoin scam, masterminded by the now infamous Missing Cryptoqueen, called ‘one of the biggest scams in history’.

Martin interviewed Erica Stanford, a crypto expert and educator. Erica is author of *Crypto Wars: Faked Deaths, Missing Billions & Industry Disruption*, highlighting the real stories behind some of the biggest crypto scams in the world.

In this podcast episode conversation, Martin chatted with Erica about distinguishing between the use case for crypto and the scam element of the industry, what some of the crypto scams look like, and the things you need to watch out for to avoid being scammed.

Who would you like to see featured on the Informed Choice Radio podcast in the future? Do let us know!





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