Building Societies Association

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SOCIETY matters

Building Societies Conference follow-up

contents

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Hello and welcome to the summer edition of

Society Matters

My last as guest editor as I retire from the BSA after 12 fabulous and varied years.

I will always be a firm fan of mutuality and the strategies and day to day actions and behaviours it engenders – it is well and truly 'in action', every day right across the UK.

This edition of the magazine is a bumper one. A follow-up to the Building Societies Conference which took place in Liverpool in early May and the only edition that I can remember with 20 pages. We just couldn't fit it all in 16, and it could have easily been even bigger.

There is always a buzz at conference but with 834 people attending across the two days, plus 53 exhibitors, 10 sponsors, and 76 people providing information, views and opinion from platforms various, it was a particularly vibrant and thought provoking one. Having the arrangements for Eurovision next door just added to the vibe as delegates navigated their preparations – one way to get our step count up! Liverpool has proved itself to be a great host city for us as well as Eurovision.

In this edition, Robin Fieth, Chief Executive of the BSA discusses some of the questions delegates raised at conference. Are questions like – "Do you think that building societies and credit unions select the members that we want to serve rather than the ones that need us?" worth a bigger debate? I think so – see pages 3 and 4.

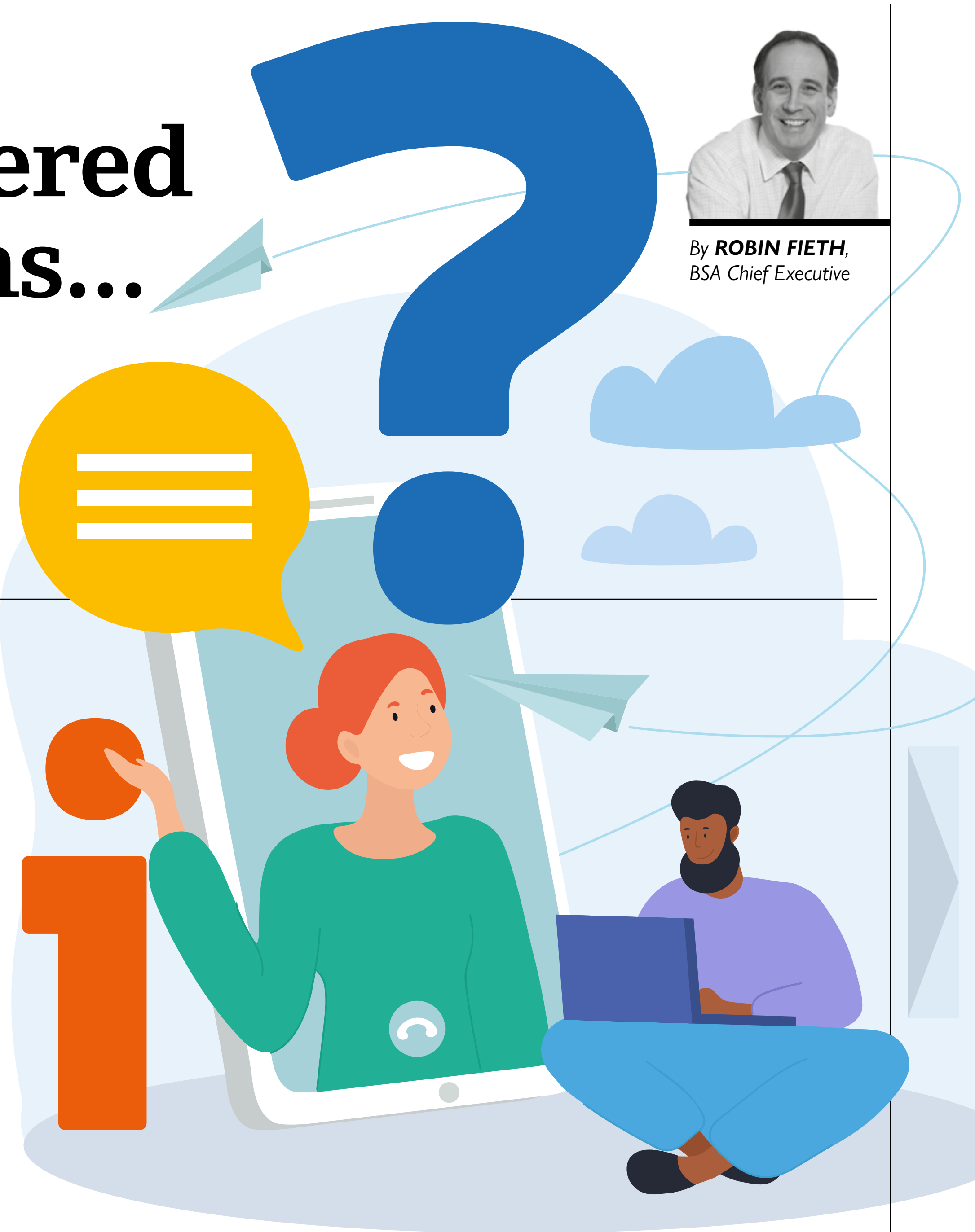
Rodney E Hood, a member of the Board of the U.S. National Credit Union Administration flew the Atlantic to be with us, to discuss a regulator's perspective on providers meeting the needs of society, (page 8). Sacha Romanovitch, CEO of Fair4All Finance, challenges us, in the context of our own organisations, to hit pause and reflect on our purpose. On page 18 she asks us to think about why our organisations exist, and what and who we are there to serve?

Internal to the sector: Debbie Crosbie, after her first year as Chief Executive of Nationwide reflects on the modern mutual challenge and the opportunities it brings (pages 6 and 7). Turning to other current topics, on pages 10 and 11 we have the Chief Executives of Newbury and Ecology considering the problem of decarbonising our housing stock. Turn the page and our own Ruth Doubleday looks at the value of simple versus complex prudential rules in the wake of SVB Bank et al (pages 12 and 13), this follows the Strong and Simple session in Liverpool.

We also have articles on digitising the house buying process (page 5), savings and racial justice (page 14), Open Banking for financial health (page 15) and agile leadership (pages 16 and 17). And so much more... I hope that you enjoy this edition. Meanwhile my colleagues are already planning the Building Societies Conference 2024 – in Manchester this time.

HILARY MCVITTY
Guest Editor
Former Head of External Affairs at the BSA

Some unanswered questions...



By ***ROBIN FIETH***, *BSA Chief Executive*

There never seems to be enough time at the Building Societies Conference to discuss all the delegates' excellent questions.

One of the beauties of having a conference app is that we can capture those questions and reflect on them in the weeks and months after the Conference itself is all over. From the many questions asked during the opening plenary session this year, four stood out to me as being capable of sparking whole debates in their own right. So perhaps we can treat this article as a starter for ten, and then run each of the questions as an online discussion. Please do contribute to those debates.

1. Avoiding group think is clearly good in some ways, as it means we are not all wrong in the same way. But sometimes the majority view is a good one. We all believe in votes for women nowadays for example. How can we tell the difference between the two situations?

Here's a real cracker to start with. We (Society Matters readers and Building Societies Conference delegates) I am sure all do believe in votes for women. Sadly, that is still not a universal view across the globe. The wider issues of women's right, education, freedom and safety remain matters of concern in many countries and communities. As do the rights of minorities, migrants and refugees. The freedoms and privileges we all enjoy are not inalienable rights, but need to be continually nurtured and safeguarded.

> *"From the many questions asked during the opening plenary session at the Building Societies Annual Conference this year, four stood out to me as being capable of sparking whole debates in their own right."*

And that is where the danger of groupthink comes in. A strong voice or a dominant personality can all too easily build a personal following. Friends and colleagues from similar backgrounds, with similar education and life experiences, tend to see things in similar ways.

Who sees both sides of the story? Who raises the red flag? Who protects us from the complacency that all is well? This is as true around boardrooms as it is among regulators. And it is one of the reasons why we are so concerned, for example, that the early proposals for regulation of diversity and inclusion in the UK financial services sector risk creating a narrow, tick-box approach unless very carefully nuanced. I was struck at a recent Women in Finance Charter event by the comments from one of our colleagues from the PLC world. Having been successful in materially improving the gender diversity of their leadership team, they then realised that what they had actually achieved, was ***"to recruit the sisters of the brothers we already employed."***

2. What's the one thing we are not currently talking about as leadership teams across the building society and credit union sector that we really should be?

Would that there were only one! When putting together the programme for the Building Societies Conference, we are deliberately looking ahead to some of the themes that we think are likely to be important for building society and credit union boards in the months and years ahead. Some are more closely policy related, such as our panel discussions both last year and this on the PRA's Strong and Simple programme; some are more people oriented (diversity, equity and inclusion; engaging with Gen-Z); some again more technology focused – quantum computing last year, AI this year.

> *"There are always some great initiatives across the building society and credit union sectors. Let's continue to innovate; to think and act differently, to put members and future members at the heart of all our businesses, and play our part in building a better society…"*

But if there is one overarching theme that has concerned me for at least five years, and I still don't think is getting enough board and executive attention, it is how we continue to develop and demonstrate what it really means to be a member of a mutual organisation in the 21st century. Many will recognise the sentiment that the mortgage market is already largely disintermediated by the sector and industry's reliance on brokers. So who is your relationship really with? And who do your borrowers think their relationship is really with? What about savings members now and in the future? If branch becomes internet, becomes platform, become algorithm or AI driven, where is the member relationship?

For me, perhaps the greatest threat to the mutual business model is that we lose any connection with our members. That should be sparking a far more lively debate and perhaps causing quite a few sleepless nights.

3. Do you think that building societies and credit unions select the members that we want to serve rather than the ones that need us?

In a world that seems increasingly disillusioned with the "greedonimics" of big corporates, their lack of social responsibility – be it prioritising shareholder dividends over preventing river pollution or accelerating the transition to sustainable fuels, for example, – I have heard quite a few calls recently from within and around the sector that this really is our time. The time for truly purpose driven businesses to stand out for their positive contribution to society, while making fair surpluses to invest in the future. And we have seen some great examples of that in practice in savings rates, branch strategies, Fairer Share payments, mortgage products and commitments to our communities.

Can we and should we do more? Yes! I have argued for a long time that building societies and credit unions have a real opportunity to help improve household financial resilience and wellbeing by promoting workplace and other regular savings schemes far more strongly. There are challenges to getting employers and individuals on board; and with opening and maintaining large numbers of small value savings accounts. Let's overcome these challenges, with government support if necessary, using the second UK Savings Week this September as a great opportunity.

We have spoken in the past about using our history as the inspiration for our future. Our sector came into being from a few workers putting a few coins into a new savings scheme. They were then able to buy land and build houses. That is inspirational.

4. How do you make a virtue of mutuality?

And I think that is how we continue to make a virtue of mutuality today – asking serious questions around all of our board tables about how we can maximise our positive impact on our members and communities by reaching out to those who most need to save. And what more we can do to help people fulfil their dreams of home ownership – from first-time buyers, to movers-up, to self-builders, to down sizers.

There are always some great initiatives across the building society and credit union sector. Let's continue to innovate; to think and act differently, to put members and future members genuinely at the heart of all our businesses, and play our part in building a better society today as our founders set out to do in 1775 – nearly a quarter of a millennium ago.

Next Steps:

How would you like to move forward to have these debates – contact ***robin.fieth@bsa.org.uk*** or on ***LinkedIn***

Digitising the house buying process

– could technology make a 20-minute house sale a reality?

By **ARMAN TAHMASSEBI,**
Chief Operating Officer LendInvest

In the ever-evolving landscape of real estate, technological advancements are reshaping traditional processes. The digitisation of the mortgage process holds the promise of revolutionising the industry, potentially leading to a remarkably swift and efficient 20-minute house sale.

By harnessing the power of technology, innovative platforms and solutions are emerging, simplifying and streamlining the once laborious and time-consuming aspects of purchasing a property. From virtual tours and online document signing to block chain-based smart contracts, these advancements aim to expedite transactions, minimise paperwork, and enhance transparency.

Collaboration is key

The mortgage industry, despite its advancements in various areas, continues to struggle with lengthy processes that can take up to 12 weeks. One of the underlying issues is the fragmented nature of the industry itself, with different areas progressing in silos. Lenders, appraisers, underwriters, and legal professionals often operate independently, leading to a lack of seamless integration and collaboration. This disjointed approach hampers the overall customer experience and prevents the realisation of a streamlined mortgage process. By fostering greater cooperation, standardising processes, and leveraging technology these different components can be connected.

A prevailing issue is the proliferation of lenders and technology providers who have predominantly focused on niche products and solutions. The true leaders in the industry will be those who demonstrate the ability to unify and integrate all aspects, encompassing both front and back-end perspectives. A holistic approach not only streamlines the customer experience but also enhances operational efficiency, transparency, and collaboration across the mortgage value chain. Ultimately, the leaders who successfully bridge these gaps will redefine the industry and set new standards for excellence.

Open banking and the opportunity in progressive technology

Lenders hold a crucial responsibility in enhancing the customer experience by embracing change, fostering collaboration, and embracing digitisation. Initiatives like Open Banking, digital signatures and information sharing techniques such as online KYC verification contribute to both speed and transparency, a vital element in building trust. When lenders and high street banks support such advancements collectively, it bolsters customer confidence. By leveraging these tools and technologies, lenders can provide customers with greater visibility into their financial options, streamline processes, and offer personalised solutions.

Fragmented property data remains a roadblock

The pain of fragmented and incomplete property data in the UK is a persistent challenge that hinders progress within the industry. Existing property data is often inadequate, recorded on outdated systems, and lacks cohesion. While efforts are being made to improve the situation, particularly with initiatives undertaken by the Land Registry, there remains substantial work ahead. The task of consolidating and organising this vast amount of data in a cohesive and user-friendly manner poses significant difficulties. This limitation acts as a bottleneck, impeding the industry's ability to advance and innovate.

Drawing inspiration from Europe and further afar

In countries like Sweden and Finland, digital mortgage processes are prevalent. They leverage electronic identification systems, digital signing, and centralised databases, resulting in efficient and secure transactions. The Australian mortgage market has seen significant advancements in electronic conveyancing. Platforms like Property Exchange Australia (PEXA) enable seamless and paperless property transactions, reducing processing times and enhancing transparency. Singapore's mortgage market is known for its technology-driven solutions. The country's central bank, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), launched the MyInfo platform, which allows seamless sharing of verified personal data between banks and government agencies, expediting mortgage applications.

By studying and adopting successful elements from these examples and other innovative practices worldwide, the mortgage industry can explore ways to enhance speed, transparency, collaboration and customer satisfaction, ultimately moving closer to the realisation of a 20-minute mortgage experience.

Next Steps:

See information about LendInvest at ***www.lendinvest.com/***

[1] 2021 UK greenhouse gas emissions, provisional figures (publishing.service.gov.uk)

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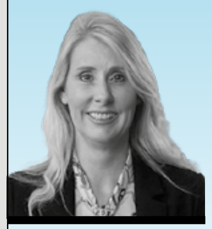

The Modern Mutual Challenge

By **DEBBIE CROSBIE**, *Chief Executive Officer, Nationwide Building Society*

In a world that's changing as quickly as social media posts and influenced as much by AI as it is by world leaders, many of us are wondering about the role of a mutual in the modern world.

At the BSA Annual Conference I spoke about how the values of mutuality are more relevant than ever, but that we needed to modernise if we were to continue to serve a strong social purpose. Without change, our long-term survival is not assured.

The challenge facing the modern mutual is to look beyond the daily headlines to the fundamental change needed if we are to have the scale of impact today that we did when our movement started.

For me it's refreshing to lead a mutual where social purpose is as important as business performance. Where you can invest in branches because you know their value and worry less about their cost. And where your people are just as passionate about their communities and customers as they are about their careers.

However, it's no longer enough to simply look better than a bank. Mutuals need to do more than just deliver a change from banking. They need to inspire a change to banking.

Banking can, and should, be fairer. As mutuals we should hold a mirror up to the banks to secure change for society.

> *"Mutuals need to do more than just deliver a change from banking. They need to inspire a change to banking. Banking can, and should, be fairer. As mutuals we should hold a mirror up to the banks to secure change for society."*

The case for change

For many, life has never been so volatile or uncertain and society is more divided than ever. 42% of workers on the lowest incomes are trying to cut back a lot on spending, compared to 18% of those with the highest incomes and while the top 20% of earners account for 37% of all disposable income, 62% of households with the lowest earners were going without essentials including meals, showers and adequate clothing.

While government and all of business has a responsibility to address inequality and exclusion, for building societies there's also an opportunity to resonate again in the way we did when our movement first formed.

More than half of consumers are attracted, after price and quality, to companies that put purpose before profit and more than three quarters of us buy from brands that align with our values. Research that Nationwide is carrying out shows that 53% of people agreed that mutuals are good for the economy.

So, how do we capitalise on this connection?

First and foremost, building societies need to remain purpose driven. At Nationwide we've just concluded a process to define our purpose, strategic drivers and behaviours and I know many other societies have done the same.

While many businesses, including banks, believe they are purpose driven, they're ultimately shareholder controlled. And the shareholder's ultimate interest is the value of the shares they hold.

Beyond purpose we need to create a recognisable day-to-day building society experience to demonstrate that we are working more effectively for our customers and delivering a better experience than the banks can.

A key part of this must be brilliant customer experience and maintaining a physical presence where people live, work and do their shopping. A mutual has to serve all of its customers and branches will always be part of that.

And to build on these differentiators we need to be bold in rewarding customers in ways that the banks can't or won't. At the moment, this is mostly through better rates and incentives for members. Now we need to explore other ways to make membership truly meaningful.

This is why we launched the Nationwide Fairer Share payment and Fairer Share Bond. The payment will reward members with the deepest relationships with a share of £340 million in addition to the £1 billion plus that Nationwide returned to customers over the last year through better rates and incentives.

Members who hold both a qualifying current account and a qualifying savings or mortgage product will receive a £100 one off Nationwide Fairer Share payment. All members will also be able to access a two-year fixed rate bond offering 4.75% interest.

> *"To be modern, mutuals will need to stay true to their roots and core values, while also adapting with the times and learning what we can from others, including banks. The question for our sector is how to do that at pace, with passion, and with purpose."*

The Nationwide Fairer Share is a tangible benefit of membership more akin to those that shareholders are familiar with, and we hope as many members as possible become eligible for the reward in future years. We intend to make the payment annually, provided it would not be detrimental to the Society's financial strength.

Championing the modern mutual

To be modern, mutuals will need to stay true to their roots and core values, while also adapting with the times and learning what we can from others, including banks. The question for our sector is how to do that at pace, with passion, and with purpose.

My career has been in high street banking, but I'm now delighted to be part of the building society movement. I intend to be one of the loudest cheerleaders for mutuality, after all there's little as powerful as the passion of a convert. I look forward to working with you all on our modern mutual journey.

Next steps:

Find out more about Nationwide's Fairer Share at ***www.nationwide.co.uk/about-us/fairer-share***

[1] www.which.co.uk/news/article/more-people-could-turn-to-cash-to-help-budget-as-cost-of-living-rises-aada54Q9HEAk

By **RODNEY E. HOOD**, *member of the U.S. National Credit Union Administration*

Financial services providers should focus on meeting society's needs

American economist Robert Shiller has argued that finance should serve a social purpose "as the steward of society's assets and an advocate of its deepest goals."

Recent turmoil in the banking sector suggests that some of our colleagues in the financial services industry have lost sight of that sense of social purpose.

The question is, how do we restore the sense of stewardship and trust that is so essential to a soundly functioning financial system? This is where smaller financial services institutions – including credit unions, building societies, and other cooperative finance entities – have a distinct advantage. In a time of declining trust in so many of our society's institutions, these entities enjoy consumer loyalty thanks to a strong commitment to serving their members and their communities.

Unfortunately, the larger trend in the financial industry is toward consolidation, a trend that threatens smaller institutions like credit unions and building societies. While larger financial institutions have advantages in terms of scale and efficiency, they risk becoming less focused on the needs of the people and communities they're supposed to serve.

Yet remarkably, many smaller financial institutions still manage to swim against this foreboding tide and flourish. What's their secret? The answer lies in service, trust, and stewardship.

A report published last year by the Filene Research Institute, a US-based think tank that focuses on the cooperative finance industry, explored how small credit unions are thriving in today's marketplace. That report, titled *"The Puzzle-Solving Approach That Enables Small Credit Unions to Thrive"*, reveals that successful small cooperative finance institutions focus primarily not on growth, but on service to their members. Growth is still important, but not as an end in itself – it follows as "an outcome of member-focused strategy."

"In short, when credit unions serve their members better, they also grow faster," the Filene report's authors emphasize. "Thriving small credit unions are clear about who comprises their market and what their target members' needs are. We find that these organizations think deeply and clearly about what matters in the specific market they serve, and then tailor a focused set of offerings to meet those needs.

How can we create conditions to help these small institutions to continue to thrive? First, from a policymaking standpoint, regulators and lawmakers should focus on forging a regulatory framework that empowers small institutions to prosper and to protect their position within the financial services ecosystem.

Second, credit unions and building societies should experiment with innovations to heighten their competitive advantages in a crowded marketplace. I urge credit unions to explore financial technology to improve their ability to serve their members.

Finally, I encourage the industry to seek out and nurture partnerships with other credit unions and building societies, working together to share ideas and strengthen the cooperative finance system as a whole.

When it comes to financial services, bigger is not necessarily better. We should encourage a diverse financial services ecosystem that offers consumers a wide range of options to meet their financial needs, while also focusing on the broader needs of the communities they serve and society at large. Credit unions, building societies, and other smaller financial service providers, with their focus on service and stewardship, play an important role in that ecosystem, and deserve our support.

Next Steps:

Rodney E. Hood is a member of the Board of the U.S. National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), and served as Board chairman from 2019-2021. This text is an abridged and edited version of Mr. Hood's speech to BSA in Liverpool on May 4, 2023. ***A full version of his remarks is available at the NCUA website.***

How do you build your future?

By **SACHA ROMANOVITCH**, *CEO Fair4All Finance*

In the busyness of dealing with the here and now, it's crucial for leaders and organisations to hit pause and reflect on their purpose. Why does an organisation exist? What's it in service of? Looking back this way helps us see that organisations can and do change the world – when they are intentional in pursuing their purpose.

Since originating back in 1775 building societies have played a significant role in the UK's history, helping people save for their futures and buy their own homes.

They've contributed to societal shifts, such as enabling broader voting rights through the Great Reform Act in 1832 and facilitating increased home ownership, as rising wages and a doubling of housing stock transformed the number of people who owned their own homes from less than 30% in 1910 to some 65% by 2016.

These changes shaped the assumption that by retirement most people would own their homes outright, free of housing costs. Home ownership became an asset that could be passed down generations or used for care in later life.

Yet revisiting purpose in light of today's realities is essential to build for the future.

The housing landscape has shifted considerably. A lack of house building, cheap money and a period of lower wage growth has seen a massive hike in house prices and the rise of the buy to let landlord market.

Millions of people are trapped in private rentals, paying landlords' mortgages while struggling to save a deposit and prove creditworthiness for their own home. The pandemic and cost of living crisis have made these challenges much harder.

While the dream of retiring in a home you own has come true for many over 65s, homeownership rates are declining for all age groups below that. In 1991, 67% of the 25 to 34 age group were homeowners. By 2011/12 this had dropped to 43%. Similar falls were seen for all other age demographics.

Alongside this the number of people in financially vulnerable circumstances has grown. Our segmentation study in 2022 identified at least 17.5m people in financially vulnerable circumstances in the UK.

3.9m are categorized as 'Squeezed and sliding' including homeowners struggling with rising interest rates and living costs and navigating life shocks that have eroded savings. Then there are the 1.3m 'Unsteady starters' – typically younger people with irregular or unstable work. They face a rental market often demanding six months' rent upfront.

Given these dynamics, the role and purpose of building societies and mutuals in helping people save for the future and buy their own homes takes on a new urgency.

Many organisations – and indeed whole sectors – fail due to boiling frog syndrome. They continue to deliver products, manage business models and regulate for a world that no longer exists. The opportunity and challenge for building societies is to revisit that founding purpose. How do you adapt your offer to fulfil your purpose in today's world?

One way we're doing this at Fair4All Finance is by working with purposeful organisations on proposition pilots, through the no interest loan scheme and by looking at new methods to consolidate existing debts to reduce the burden of higher cost credit.

Leading in an industry with such a proud legacy is both a joy and a responsibility. The question is how the boldness and pioneering spirit of your founders is carried by you in forging a future in a very different world.

How do you build your future? One block at a time. Understand the realities of those you serve (and more importantly who you are not serving yet). Innovate and deliver the products and services that provide them with stepping stones to financial resilience. Be thoughtful of your part in the system.

You can build a future that lives up to the legacy of your founders – but only if you choose that path!

Next Steps:

The Fair4All Finance segmentation study can be found at ***https://fair4allfinance.org.uk/segmentation/***

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Decarbonising housing in the UK: driving greater consumer action


By **PHILIPPA CARDNO**, *Chief Executive, Newbury Building Society*

By **GARETH GRIFFITHS**, *Chief Executive, Ecology Building Society*

At this year's Building Societies Annual Conference, I chaired a lively debate around the 'green mortgage market.' Discussions focused on the obstacles and challenges preventing homeowners from making the necessary retrofitting measures to improve the environmental impact of their homes.

With the Government looking to the financial services sector to help provide solutions for homeowners, it is clear that lenders themselves require more knowledge and understanding as to how the market is working today in addition to how it needs to work tomorrow.

Therefore, it is no surprise that consumers are also finding it confusing. Consumers require independent, reliable information on what the best approach for retrofitting their home is, what it will cost, and what benefit the improvements will provide. Without this knowledge, it's difficult to envisage how consumers will be motivated to seriously consider retrofitting.

Three key issues

The conference session 'Decarbonising housing in the UK: driving greater consumer action' highlighted three key issues.

1. What do we mean by a 'green mortgage'?
2. Are Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) fit for purpose?
3. How to address the national labour shortfall needed for retrofitting homes?

Here, Gareth Griffiths, Chief Executive, Ecology Building Society, who was on the panel shares his thoughts on these issues:

"When I look across the mortgage industry, often a 'green mortgage' is merely a 10 basis point discount mortgage. To me, that's the furthest away from what a 'green mortgage' should be!

As we think about the future of the buildings and housing stock we already have, we need to shift our thinking away from the broken EPC system and start to think about energy efficiency in different dimensions.

In life there are problems and predicaments, the difference being that problems have solutions, whilst predicaments can't be solved… EPCs are a problem for a number of distinct reasons particularly that an EPC can often boil down to the ratio of a property's total floor area and the hypothetical fuel costs. Furthermore, looking at the UK's energy mix, plans to decarbonise the national electricity grid, as well as the cost of 'real-world' energy, the EPC rating and reality of energy efficiency can begin to diverge. This could mean a more energy efficient property could get a lower Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score.

At the same time, advancements in the efficiency of heat pump technology, widely considered to be a significant enabler for energy efficiency, are not being considered.

The EPC system has not been updated since 2012 and contains a number of inaccuracies. Not only that, but we also need to start thinking in terms of real-world energy usage and how occupants actually use and heat their properties.

Lenders are key in trying to help address some of the issues inherent into the system. We should be urging government to help to ensure that creation of the 100,000 jobs required for retrofit at scale and the reskilling of gas engineers, who will have been made redundant, happens. We should also challenge the government to take bold action, such as the US Inflation Reduction Act, which potentially provides fiscal incentives to stimulate homeowners to act.

We know another challenge for consumers is knowing where to start with retrofitting their home. PAS 2035 has given social housing organisations a defined standard by which to approach retrofitting by providing a number of clearly defined roles within the value chain. Can the same standard be applied to individual dwellings across England and Wales? Most certainly, however, as with many nascent technologies, there are poorly educated and/or unscrupulous suppliers willing to install expensive technologies which may not have the desired impact of increasing energy efficiency.

Having a trusted scheme of assessment and implementation is going to require collaboration across the supply chain together with finance partners. It will be interesting to see the suppliers who will be endorsed as part of the government's Green Homes Finance Accelerator Programme.

In 2020 Ecology was one of the founder signatories of the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Framework (PCAF). PCAF is designed to help financial organisations measure and disclose their emissions, as well as set targets and a strategy for reduction, in line with the Paris Climate Agreement 2015. PCAF has allowed Ecology to use a defined and consistent methodology for reporting our own financed emissions, and if Nationwide can achieve the same, what is to stop the rest of us from following suit?

This is an opportunity to demonstrate our mutuality, be transparent and display willingness to 'do no harm' - a collective purpose during the next pivotal decade for our planet."

What are the next steps?

As lenders, we can agree that we certainly do not have all the answers, or even all the questions we should be asking! But we do know building societies can work together to help solve some of the key challenges mentioned here.

The role for building societies to play going forward, includes the ability to remove friction from the retrofit consumer journey and the collective messaging to take to government. There is an obvious need for clear retrofit parameters, similar to PAS 2035, which are easy for both consumers and lenders to understand. For Net Zero by 2050 to be possible, delivering efficiencies in our existing housing stock is essential. According to one study, if current trends continue, 88.5% of emissions from housing will come from existing homes, and just 11.5% from the building and running of new houses.[1]

However, we must not risk creating mortgage prisoners by implementing policies or measures that disadvantage some homeowners – it is important no-one is left behind.

The BSA Green Finance Taskforce group, chaired by Colin Fyfe, Chief Executive of Hinckley & Rugby Building Society continues to bring BSA members together to explore green issues. The group has been working to increase take-up of green financial products and energy efficient home retrofit innovations and has worked with the Green Finance Institute (GFI) and others involved in housing finance to develop a retrofit guide for intermediaries, with a similar guide for consumers next on the list. Education is a key factor in helping to solve the lack of direction consumers currently have.

Next Steps:

If you are interested in finding out more about the BSA Green Taskforce, please contact ***chris.busey@bsa.org.uk***

A copy of the GFI guide for Intermediaries can be found at ***www.greenfinanceinstitute.co.uk/news-and-insights/green-finance-institute-launches-new-resource-to-supercharge-green-home-retrofit-solutions***

[1]zu Ermgassen et. al. A home for all within planetary boundaries: Pathways for meeting England's housing needs without transgressing national climate and biodiversity goals, Ecological Economics, Volume 201, 2022.

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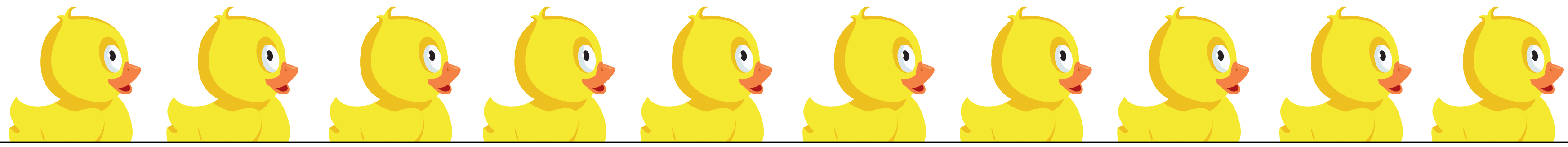
Strong and Simple Rules: Keep the baby, throw out the bath water

By ***RUTH DOUBLEDAY****,*
Head of Prudential Regulation, BSA

Much has been written about the failure of Silicon Valley Bank. Was it a failure of the regulatory framework that applied, or the firm's poor risk management which was not adequately picked up and dealt with by supervisory oversight?



Various analyses have been done to consider whether liquidity and funding ratios i.e. LCR and NSFR would have been met if they had been applied.[1] Silicon Valley Bank was subject to Pillar 3 disclosures but even the rating agencies, with their superior insights didn't highlight problems until only days before the bank's failure. The bigger question for me is whether rules alone are ever enough to prevent bank failure if not coupled with strong supervision, and whether those rules should be simple or complex? Here in the UK, people are now asking questions on what this means for the PRA's post-Brexit 'Strong and Simple' project.

I argue that complex rules are not better. In fact I believe that simple rules are better. The strength of the rules is in the calibration, coupled with robust implementation, sound risk management and supervisory oversight. So the emphasis is on the 'Strong' as well as 'Simple,' and this project should be viewed as refining and improving the regime and not as a 'de-regulatory Brexit bonfire.'

For context, let's go back to 1988 when the Basel Committee agreed to the first internationally harmonised minimum capital ratio of 8%. What was new and radical is that it set aside more capital for riskier assets and less capital for safer assets. It was implemented widely and still underpins the

> *"Calls for simplicity are not new. Andy Haldane gave a speech about a dog and a frisbee a decade ago and a growing number of people have joined him including Sam Woods the current PRA chief in his speech - 'Bufferatti'."*

Basel framework today. The numerator and the denominator of the ratio have changed beyond recognition, with models driving a level of complexity to the inputs of the ratio, but the fundamental ratio has remained the same. The calibration of the 8% minimum has also endured. Various folkloric tales involving London buses and the shape of clouds in the sky exist to explain where the 8% came from. The reality is it was more likely calibrated according to the levels of capital in banks at the time and a judgmental overlay on where they really should be. Sometimes I remind advocates of "complex rules for a complex world" that the 8% capital ratio calibration is not backed by any science.

So back in 1988, the global harmonised capital ratio was elegantly simple. Where did we all go wrong and how do we put it right? I believe the Basel ratio was actually a victim of its own success. People loved the concept of risk weighted assets so much that they wanted more of it. What we needed was more granularity to achieve more accuracy and more risk discrimination. What's more, there were these clever folk in banks that understood risk way better than regulators and could build fancy models to do the job. We should narrow the gap between the way regulators crudely capture risks and what the sophisticated banks were now doing. And so, Basel II was born. It included options for modelled inputs for greater accuracy and risk sensitivity. And I'll stop there. This isn't an essay about the history of the Basel framework. But it can be important to understand how we got here.

Calls for simplicity are not new. Andy Haldane gave a speech about a dog and a frisbee[2] a decade ago and a growing number of people have joined him including Sam Woods the current PRA chief in his speech 'Bufferatti.'[3] One of the ideas often discussed is dispensing with the risk-weighted framework and replacing it with a simple leverage ratio. This risks throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Incentives matter. Requiring firms to hold the same amount of capital against UK residential mortgages as they do against a holding of Bitcoin is fundamentally a bad idea. History has shown that the actual losses on a portfolio of residential mortgages are incredibly low compared to almost all other forms of lending.

So that then leads me to the question of how to simplify the existing framework. If we keep the baby, what's in the bath water that we need to throw out? Let's start with Pillar 3 disclosures We know based on website hits, that these are rarely read so are not meeting the original policy intent of providing 'market discipline.'

Buffers are another obvious area. All capital is essentially a buffer. So why do we now need buffers on buffers? Then firms set their own risk appetite to avoid going close to breaching buffers so you have a management buffer on top of the regulatory ones.

Pillar 3 and buffers are just two examples. My general observation of the development of regulation is that new rules are made but rarely are old rules reviewed to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. So the rulebook grows and grows. Perhaps

> *"I believe it's a myth that more detailed and more numerous rules are somehow better and more robust. A small number of easy to understand and easy to implement rules that capture the biggest risks and are sensibly calibrated are surely better than pages and pages of complex regulations – coupled with strong governance and clear accountability."*

there should be a 'one out, one in' rule for regulations? I believe it's a myth that more detailed and more numerous rules are somehow better and more robust. I would argue the opposite. A small number of easy to understand and easy to implement rules that capture the biggest risks and are sensibly calibrated are surely better than pages and pages of complex regulations. Coupled with strong governance and clear accountability, such as is the case in the UK under the Senior Manager's Regime.

So what does this all mean for the PRA's Strong and Simple project? Taking away, for example, pillar 3 reporting, should not be seen as a de-regulatory measure that weakens the regime. To the contrary, staff currently tied up preparing these disclosures can be re-deployed to better use.

So, let's not throw out the Basel capital ratio, but rather let's go back to basics. Keep the baby, but throw out the bath water.

Next steps:

Follow Ruth Doubleday on ***LinkedIn***

[1] *Yale analysis of LCR and NSFR*

[2] *The Dog and the Frisbee, speech by Andy Haldane, Jackson Hole, August 2012*

[3] *Bufferati, speech by Sam Woods, Mansion House, April 2022*

By JERRY DURING,
CEO Money A+E

Let's end the Ethnicity Premium and its impact on financial resilience

As savings rates fly up as high as 9%, this is the time to shore up our financial resilience – our ability to withstand large 'life events' – with a solid savings buffer.

Yet a shocking 60% of people from Diverse Ethnic Communities have no savings to speak of. Why?

My colleagues and I point to a phenomenon that we are naming the 'Ethnicity Premium'.
The organisation I work for, Money A+E, provides money advice, education and mentoring to Diverse Ethnic Communities, with 80% of our advice clients not identifying as white British.
Our experience and research with our partners has identified the Ethnicity Premium: like the Poverty Premium, it is a complex set of barriers to equal economic participation, and additional costs for goods and services, encountered daily by Diverse Ethnic Communities.

It extends into financial products: people of colour are 4 times more likely to be denied a bank loan than their white peers, for example, and will pay £250 more on average for car insurance.

And it makes achieving financial resilience a greater challenge.

Broadening horizons in saving
At Money A+E, our mission is to transform lives through high quality money advice and education. Our average advice client has £3,788 in debts incurred on essentials like rent and household bills – all of which have risen in the Cost of Living Crisis – and come to us in significant mental distress.

We help our clients to manage those debts, supporting them to be £737,473 better off in total in 2022, while also experiencing 58% average increases in wellbeing.

And effective financial education can take people from that place where saving seems like a distant possibility, to broadening their horizons.

As Frederick, our Head of Education, puts it: 'Financial literacy develops certain habits, it makes you aware. Many of the people that we see don't know about certain products that could help them. Being able to make those things visible for them is very important.'

One sage piece of advice that Fred and his team passes on is that regularly saving small amounts – starting as small as one pence per day if necessary – is the best way to build long-term wealth and healthy habits.

We know that with the right support, our clients can save hundreds or thousands, taking advantage of those rocketing rates and building their financial resilience through a powerful habit.

Trust through representation
We know the barriers involved in this work too. A low level of trust in traditional finance providers among Diverse Ethnic Communities is mirrored in a distrust of traditional money advice providers – unfortunately often linked to discrimination and other negative experiences.

Money A&E Mentors course graduation 2022

For us, community-led support is the answer. This approach has proved highly effective and saw some amazing results in underprivileged communities in Dagenham last year.
And in terms of personal finance products, we hear from our communities that diverse representation in the sector and products could help them to connect.

As my colleague and former Money A+E service user Tanzila puts it, 'For me and my friends and family, banks could offer choice including Islamic finance options. It would be like going to an event and the food having a Halal option: choice!'

The Racial Justice network
This is why Money A+E and our partners are now working to bring together Black and minoritised Londoners with lived experience of financial exclusion, the building society and banking sectors, regulators and politicians, to address the Ethnicity Premium together.

Our new Racial Justice network is a strategic partnership and action-focused campaign that aims to improve access to financial products and services; I am thrilled to have already seen huge enthusiasm for this among the sector when I facilitated a session at the Building Societies Conference in May. We will also be working to increase representation through employment within the financial services industry.

And Fred sums it up. 'Encouraging and bringing in diverse groups, it does help to close that gap where the banks could just be aware of a group of people: this is where we are, this is the product that we need, the type of support we need.'

Next Steps:

*Contact Jerry During at **jerryduring@moneyaande.co.uk** if you are interested in learning more or joining the Racial Justice network.*

Open Banking and vulnerable communities - can it help?

By AKIL BENJAMIN,
Strategy Director,
COMUZI

By EREL ONOJOBI,
Financial Health Lead,
Impact on Urban Health

In 2021, Impact on Urban Health commissioned design agency COMUZI to answer the question:

"How might we make use of Open Banking technology to improve the financial health of people on low incomes with health conditions?"

The 18-month research project was co-designed with organisations working with communities in Lambeth and Southwark – Stockwell Partnership, Rooted Finance and Shelter London – with input from consultant Bailey Kursar.

In the first phase, we worked to understand the financial needs of people living with one or more long-term health condition. In the second phase, we selected Open Banking apps that could address these needs and ran a 74-day trial of the apps with residents, completing a diary study to gather feedback.

Our Participants
In terms of who we asked to participate in the project, we worked with the same demographic criteria, which included residents of Lambeth or Southwark in London, people of working age with a focus on speaking to Black and other ethnic minorities, members of the Portuguese speaking community, and those on a low-incomes.

In addition to this, we also spoke to people who had a chronic health conditions, physical disability, mental health conditions, or were neuro-diverse.

The Open Banking Apps
Our participants tested the following Open Banking Apps: Snoop, Plum, Money Dashboard, Credit Ladder, HyperJar, nous and Lightning.

Overall, the apps participants found most useful helped them evaluate their spending patterns and identify potential savings, leading to positive habit changes and mind-set shifts. On the downside, we found that extra information could also exacerbate anxiety in some users.

Participants also had concerns about sharing data and technical challenges in terms of the apps being able to link to participants' accounts to analyse spending and opportunity. There was also some unease about some of the business models behind the apps, which felt manipulative. Some participants also felt the apps were not tailored enough to their circumstances, in particular those on lower incomes. Low awareness of the Open Banking apps we tested was also a problem.

Good – but it needs to be better
So – can Open Banking improve the financial health of people on low incomes with health conditions? Our study shows that yes, Open Banking apps can improve financial capability/resilience, which if maintained in the long-term, is shown to foster better health.

Yes, there are challenges that need to be overcome and our full report makes a number of recommendations for Government and regulators, banks and Open Banking app providers.

There needs to be more research into Open Banking, in particular around potential social impact use cases. In our study, participants with mental health conditions and neurodiversity struggled to continue using Open Banking apps and a larger study is needed to create apps that better support their needs.

Ultimately, we believe people from the communities most vulnerable to the increased cost of living and its negative impact on health should be given more support to engage with Open Banking. This could be done by either signposting people to the tools already available or incorporating Open Banking technology into their own apps and services.

People from vulnerable communities have the same aspirations for financial security and putting a roof over their heads. With the right adjustments, Open Banking tools can provide a tangible means for people from all communities and income levels to better understand their finances and build a better future.

Next Steps:

A short version of the report can be found here:

A short 30 min clip which gives an overview of the work which can be found here:

SOCIETY matters
special

Taking an Agile approach to digital transformation

*By **DARRELL JAGGERS**, Chief Transformation Officer at British Columbia Canada-based First West Credit Union (FWCU);*

*By **KATE MOORE**, Ways of Working Delivery Lead at Nationwide Building Society*

*By **STEPH ALSTON**, Agile Coach at Skipton Building Society*

The large numbers of technology firms and fintech's exhibiting at the Building Societies Annual Conference this year demonstrated how seriously the sector is taking digital transformation.

How firms manage big and continuous change is also a key challenge and was the topic of one of the final breakout sessions on the second day of Conference.

Darrell Jaggers, Chief Transformation Officer at British Columbia Canada-based First West Credit Union (FWCU), packed out the Seminar Theatre with a case-study presentation on how his organisation used agile leadership to deliver digital transformation.

Agile as a concept, came out of a meeting of software developers in America in 2001, who were frustrated at corporate culture and standard ways of bringing products to market. Agile frameworks are specific approaches to planning, managing, and executing work that incorporate elements of continuous planning, testing, integration, and other forms of continuous development, with the aim of delivering value to customers quickly and frequently. Many firms use agile frameworks to innovate and deliver change within departments. However, they also often maintain within leadership teams traditional hierarchical structures of "command and control", which limit the benefit you can achieve compared to holistic cultural change.

By contrast, FWCU took an organisation-wide approach to agile, with front-line, leadership and even its office space reconfigured around the principles of agile.

"Agile should be a verb, not a noun", Darrell told attendees at the Conference, with FWCU rated by consultancy McKinsey as a top decile organisation across the globe using its Organizational Health Index (OHI) in which agile plays a key role.

His presentation was also a discussion between Kate Moore, Ways of Working Delivery Lead at Nationwide Building Society and Steph Alston, Agile Coach at Skipton Building Society, who joined Darrell on stage to ask him questions and share their own experiences of applying agile principles within their respective organisations.

The session reflected meetings that have been taking place over the last year between FWCU, Nationwide, Skipton, Principality and Cumberland Building Societies, to share experiences about enterprise agility and work on specific challenges firms are facing.

What have been the main benefits for FWCU shifting to agile working?

Darrell: Since the beginning of FWCU's agile journey, we have seen major shifts in transparency, flexibility and speed of delivery. Visualisation practices in enterprise planning and prioritisation have brought previously invisible work to light. This transparency helps us better understand where capacity is being allocated and strengthens alignment with company priorities.

Transparency of work has enabled us to develop a true understanding of the work driving FWCU forward and what may need to be paused so we can take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Finally, transparency and flexibility has accelerated delivery speed. Rather than planning, investing in and committing to numerous siloed initiatives, we are re-organising teams around priority work to ensure we are delivering faster and more frequently. These benefits have been on full display as part of FWCU's plans to expand and operate across Canada, becoming a federally regulated credit union.

When the Canadian federal regulator (OSFI) asked us to advance our federal readiness plans it came just days after completing quarterly planning. Despite this, in less than four weeks we enacted an organisation-wide shift toward federal readiness work, were able to re-organise, and re-cast our plan. This would never have been possible in a pre-agile world.

Through cross-functional collaboration, we can more effectively tackle complex bodies of work. The Financial Consumer Agency of Canada (a federal body charged with a consumer protection mandate) has actually noted this approach for the cohesion, collaboration and transparency it creates in how we work.

What can building societies and credit unions learn from FWCU's example of agile leadership?

Steph: That we need to address this from an enterprise wide perspective, it is not just about delivering projects. Agile is about culture and how people interact and behave. For organisations to thrive in the future we need to attract and retain talent, leaders can support this by shifting their mind set to 'how can I serve you?'

Kate: The pace of change has never been as fast as it is now - and it will never be this slow again. In order to adapt for the future a new type of leadership muscle needs to be built that creates environments for colleagues to thrive.

Leaders can disproportionally impact (either positively or negatively) the ability to transform your organisation. For leaders that have spent a whole career operating a certain way this can be scary and there is much unlearning to do. However, you can't outsource a cultural transformation, it must come from within and be bought into at all levels of the organisation.

How do you address challenges or resistance from stakeholders when introducing agile practices in a digital transformation initiative?

Darrell: Early adopters and champions are eager to adopt different ways of working. They like the allure of something new, exciting and challenging – they are our transformational thinkers. Other people rely more heavily on social proof. When resistors to change see the evidence of a way of working that is better for both them personally and the organisation, they come around to the new way of working.

Steph: You can remove resistance to change when you get stakeholders deeply involved in your agile practices and show sustainable audience-specific benefits with real evidence. For example, customers receiving products they want more frequently, HR team members seeing improvements in employee experience scores or financial professionals measuring higher Return on Investment (ROI) on your finite resources.

Is there a size limit for firms looking to apply agile?

Steph: No. Size does not matter! What is crucial to acknowledge, however, is that adding more agile teams will not make you more agile. To reap the benefits, organisations must embrace enterprise agility and embed an agile mind-set, principles and practices in non-delivery teams. Using agile to become agile will unlock the ability to scale regardless of your company size.

Kate: Understanding what outcome you want to achieve is key in order to tailor your approach to your context. Start small, prove out some early hypothesis and keep moving forward from there, creating momentum for change. Being agile is not the goal. However, having more agility in your organisation can help you achieve your business goals. There is no endpoint for enterprise agility, rather an ambition to improve continuously.

Next Steps:

*A working group for building societies and credit unions is open to all BSA members - if interested, please **contact robert.thickett@bsa.org.uk***

Three Leicestershire building societies unite to tackle cost of living crisis

By **RACHEL KOLEBUK**, *Chief Customer Officer, Melton Building Society*

Hinckley & Rugby Building Society, Market Harborough Building Society and Melton Building Society, have joined forces to support local community projects across Leicestershire.

HINCKLEY AND RUGBY BUILDING SOCIETY · Market Harborough BUILDING SOCIETY · Melton Building Society · Supporting The bridge

Why is it important we have come together?

The partnership aims to help the local community by working with different charities and organisations, donating money, and facilitating assistance and advice to those in need. By combining funds and resources the societies can make an even bigger difference to those needing support in and around Leicestershire.

The partnership between these three building societies represents a shared goal to help get people on to the housing ladder and achieve their dream homes, but in this case, they are coming together to support those who are worried about their ability to pay their mortgage or are experiencing difficulties due to changed circumstances or as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

Who will benefit from our community commitment?

This year, the three building societies have chosen to support The Bridge East Midlands, a homeless charity that has given help and guidance to homeless people since 1993. The Bridge East Midlands delivers a number of specialist housing related advice, support, and assistance services and accommodation options to homeless and vulnerably housed people across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The building societies have each donated £15,000 to The Bridge East Midlands to fund a Housing Adviser who offers advice and guidance to anyone that needs it. The Housing Adviser is easily accessible to the community, being based at suitable venues on the high streets of all three building society's home towns and is free for all to access.

On behalf of the three Societies: "We are delighted to be partnering in support of The Bridge East Midlands. We believe that the work they do is important in providing support and accommodation to homeless people in Leicestershire. We hope that our donation and the expertise of the newly appointed Housing Adviser will make a real difference in the lives of those who need it the most."

Anna Maudsley from The Bridge East Midlands, says: "We are delighted to have received this significant funding as it enables us to increase our service by another three days a week across the county for this year, offering specialist advice, information and guidance to prevent homelessness and supporting our mission to develop sustainable housing solutions for individuals and communities through partnership, empowerment and good practice which is an increasing priority during this cost of living crisis."

The early signs show we are already making a difference

After only one month, the Housing Adviser has provided advice on housing related issues to members of the community across the range of locations. This has included one-off general advice to individuals as well as one on-going detailed case covering a variety of different issues. Key topics where support is already being given include support with relationship breakdowns, mental health struggles, challenges with receiving disability benefits and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on ability to pay food and utility bills.

This partnership really shows the power of mutuality in action as three Societies are able to come together as a force for good helping to change lives. Great work by everyone to get this important new service up and running.

Next Steps:

Find out more about The Bridge at ***www.thebridge-eastmidlands.org.uk/***

Pronouncing a name – how hard can it be?

By ***TINA HUGHES***, *director and ethnicity colleague network sponsor at Yorkshire Building Society*

It's likely we can all recall a moment in time when we've been unsure how to pronounce the name of someone we're about to meet for the first time or think we know how to say someone's name only to be corrected at a later date. It might have felt embarrassing or awkward, so instead of trying it's easier to avoid using their name altogether.

Imagine if it was your name that was perceived to be hard to say, or if because of your name you feared racial discrimination. Perhaps you can relate, but if not, consider yourself fortunate never to have experienced what it feels like to have people regularly call you by the wrong name; not take the time to understand how you like to be referred to; or have your name anglicised to make it more comfortable for them. People might do this with the best intentions, or to avoid any awkwardness, but the unseen impact can be significant.

Work to do

My name is generally widely accepted by society, but it's unacceptable that people still experience the contrary. The devastating effect the mispronunciation of names can have throughout their lives – often starting in childhood – is palpable. Some refer to losing their identity, feeling less significant than others, or being cast as an outsider. Others have given up correcting people who pronounce their name wrong and instead have accepted a totally different name to feel more included. This should never have been, and never should be a solution.

A name is someone's identity. It can give a sense of individuality and can often be linked back to ancestors, cultural roots or tradition. It's a basic entitlement that deserves to be treated with respect. No one should ever have to feel that it takes bravery or courage to be addressed by the name they were given, go by, or want to be known as, to feel a sense of inclusion.

Getting it right

If you're unsure how to say someone's name – ask them. You don't need to make a fuss, but taking time to understand how they would like it pronounced can make all the difference. It can help to break down any perceived barriers and allow them to feel valued and equal.

Learning to spell someone's name phonetically could also help, and as part of our commitment to create an inclusive culture we've launched an initiative that does just that. The importance of pronouncing names correctly has been at the forefront of our ethnicity colleague network's work this year. As a result, we've made a small change to enable colleagues to spell their names phonetically which we hope will make a big difference to those who have long struggled to have their names accepted.

Of course, the mispronunciation of names isn't exclusive to the workplace – it's something people from all walks of life, heritage and backgrounds quietly struggle with socially too. But as organisations together, we can be a driving force for change, and as responsible employers, we can help individuals to speak on a topic that has for too long been silenced for fear of prejudice or embarrassment.

Be an ally, not an enemy, and start calling people by their true name today.

Next Steps:

YBS Inclusion & Diversity ***https://ybscareers.co.uk/life-at-ybs/inclusion-diversity***

Dates for your diary

The BSA delivers a range of knowledge sharing and educational events that increase awareness of business issues and provide the tools and skills that industry professionals need to develop their roles. View the latest listings and register at **www.bsa.org.uk/events**

An introduction to treasury management

26 July 2023 | London

The objective of this course is to introduce participants to treasury management. It provides an overview of treasury operations within financial services, more specifically within building societies and within the regulatory environment. Following this there is an in-depth study of treasury operations, focussing on liquidity, wholesale funding, credit risk and financial risk.

The course will be of interest to non-executive directors, senior management, risk officers/managers new to the building society world, those in related areas who require some background treasury knowledge, as well as those who have recently started work in the treasury function.

Cost: *£490 per course (VAT exempt) - BSA members & associates*
£695 per course (VAT exempt) - Non-members
www.bsa.org.uk/treasuryintro

Treasury risk management

27 July 2023 | London

The objective of this course is to provide participants with an overview of the financial and balance sheet risks a building society faces as a consequence of being a mortgage lender and how these risks are managed by the treasury function.

We will consider key risks such as liquidity risk, credit risk, market risk and interest rate risk within the new regulatory framework, and examine the role of board governance and the relevant committees, focusing on the Asset and Liabilities Committee. Additionally, we will discuss 'best in class' management information and how to read and understand key reports.

Cost: *£490 per course (VAT exempt) - BSA members & associates*
£695 per course (VAT exempt) - Non-members
www.bsa.org.uk/riskjuly

Conversations with vulnerable people course

12 & 13 September 2023 | Online

This online facilitated course is designed to provide training for employees in front and second line roles who need to be able to recognise and respond to vulnerabilities.

Being able to recognise vulnerabilities and to respond to individual situations is becoming even more important as the rapidly rising cost of living creates new vulnerabilities for our customers such as debt or lower financial resilience while making other situations such as illness, abuse or de-stabilising life events more difficult to manage.

The course will be delivered digitally over two half-days and will be led by an expert Samaritans facilitator using a variety of tools to encourage interaction and group learning.

Cost: *£360 (VAT exempt) - BSA members only*
www.bsa.org.uk/vpeople

Mortgage underwriting course

26 & 27 September 2023 | London

In recent years the recognised career path to mortgage underwriter has changed substantially, partly due to the changing nature of mortgage advice. This intensive two-day course, in partnership with the Chartered Insurance Institute (CII), has been designed to equip underwriters with the knowledge required to carry out their role effectively.

The course will be interactive with several group discussions and case studies for attendees to consider, discuss and apply the knowledge and skills gained from the course. It has been designed for trainee underwriters, mortgage advisers that wish to broaden their skillset and those employed in a product development or risk capacity.

Cost: *£895 (VAT exempt) - BSA members and associates*
www.bsa.org.uk/underwriting

Advertise your event on the BSA website

As well as advertising BSA events, Associate members are able to advertise up to 5 of their own events per year free of charge. Visit **www.bsa.org.uk/AssociateAdvertising** for more information.

Non-members are also able to advertise on the BSA website for a fee.
Further details can be found by visiting **www.bsa.org.uk/Non-memberAdvertising**