

#### MARKET UPDATE

2017 was a year that was dominated by Brexit and the activities of president Donal Trump. The global stock market increased by 20.4% in 2017 and the Euro finished \$1.20 with its best year against the dollar since 2003. In a recent report issued by Economist Jim Power, he notes that as we move towards 2018 the momentum in the Irish economy is strong and prospects for the coming year look promising and are boosted by strong tail winds from global economic improvements. However, the uncertainty relating to external factors such as Brexit negotiations, as well as global corporation tax developments present real challenges to the Irish economy over the next 12 months. With a forecasted rise in house prices of up to 15% in 2018, an increase in housing supply is identified as a critical issue that must be addressed to safeguard from a surge in debt levels, which could threaten overall economic stability.

#### PRODUCT IN FOCUS: CONVERTIBLE MORTGAGE PROTECTION

Mortgage protection is a necessary requirement when drawing down your mortgage. Straight forward mortgage protection cover decreases each year in line with your mortgage and in the event of a death the balance on your mortgage is paid off. This is the cheapest level of life cover available and for this reason is taken out by the majority of people in order to keep costs down. However, we all know that cheapest does not mean the best.

Convertible mortgage protection cover allows you the flexibility to convert to a life insurance policy, extend your level of cover or take out a new policy without the need for any further medical assessments. This protects your ability to get future cover and adapt to your ever changing needs, even if you suffer an illness. The plan also supports short term financial needs and can enable people in financial difficult to amend the term of cover to any extended mortgage term or amend the cover if they move to an interest only mortgage.

The mortgage protection cover that you took out when you drew down your mortgage may not be suitable to your needs now and this should be reviewed by you on a regular basis.

#### FRIENDS FIRST SALE TO AVIVA

Dutch cooperative financial group Achmea has agreed the sale of their Irish life assurance company, Friends First to Aviva group plc. This is subject to regulatory approval. We will contact our clients with further updates over the coming weeks once we receive more information.

#### NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

This year, instead of making resolutions that you probably will not stick to, set yourself some simple realistic goals that you will be well within your reach:

##### 1. FINANCIAL GOALS

Sit down and set out your financial goals. What do you want to do this year and how will you achieve that? What are your short term and long term financial objectives? Are you trying to buy a house, save for a car or looking at retiring? No matter what stage of life you are at it is always important to have a plan in place.

##### 2. SAVE

Whether you are looking at buying a house or thinking about your children's education, it is vital to save each month. Even if you start saving a small bit each month, this can make a big difference in the long term. Also this is an excellent habit to have! Ideally you should have a short term and long term savings plan in place.

##### 3. BUDGET

We all know our income each month but very few of us actually know how much we spend. However, budgeting is an important step in helping you achieve your financial goals. It allows you to put a realistic plan in place and helps you visualise your goals.

##### 4. PROTECT INCOME

Have you thought of what would happen if you were unable to work for a period or became sick? How would you or your family survive if you had bills to pay but no income if you were sick? Now is the time to look at protecting your income and we can help you look at the best option for your needs.

**Be sure to check out our new website at [www.olliemoranfs.com](http://www.olliemoranfs.com) for all your financial needs!**