



MARKET UPDATE

2018 saw the return of volatility to risk assets, particularly in equity markets. The year began with strong returns in January before a fall off in markets as concerns about escalating global trade tensions escalated. Within Europe, political risk was heightened once again, with Brexit, Italian fiscal policy, and French social unrest all evident. Economic growth expectations remained above long-term averages in 2018, but did begin to trend downwards from previous years. December saw the biggest falls with the majority of risk assets providing negative calendar year returns.

2019 will be an unpredictable year and we will need to prepare ourselves for higher volatility. Continuing tensions between America and China, the uncertainty of Brexit, continuing issues within European politics are all major areas of concern where there is no certainty of outcome. Global economic growth continues to remain positive; however at a much slower pace than previous years, with inflation looking to remain low. January has seen stocks make gains for the fourth week in a row, making it the longest stretch of weekly gains since August 2018. It is very important that you review your portfolio, especially if you have not done so in the last year.

PROTECTION DISCOUNTS!

This January why not let us review your protection cover. We will review your current life cover, mortgage protection, income protection and serious illness cover to help you understand exactly what you have, what you should have and if you are getting value for money on your existing cover.

Do you know how much life cover you have?
Do you know what type of life cover you have?
Have you recently stopped smoking?
Have you previously paid a higher premium due to health issues?
Did you take your policy out with your lending institution?
Is your life cover convertible – do you know what that means... if not then you should talk to us!

Since we deal with all the life companies on the market we can get the best type of cover for you at the best rate.

The good news is that we can offer significant discounts of up to 15% on life cover right now!! We can also offer large discounts across the full suite of protection cover.

FINANCIAL HEALTHCHECK!

Why not make this the year to get your finances in order. We will help you review your current financial situation and put a plan in place to achieve your financial goals – that may involve buying a house, saving for the kids education, setting up a pension or looking at retirement. Whatever it is feel free to give us a call to arrange a meeting!

MORTGAGE NEWS

While there is still a lot of talk about the high level of variable interest rates in Ireland compared to Europe; however Central Bank does not appear to want to take on this issue. It is expected that ECB will raise interest rates in the second half of the year, but what will actually happens remains to be seen. Lenders here are becoming more competitive in the switcher market offering various cashback offers. It is important that if you are looking at these offers that you also compare the attaching rates, as these are generally not the cheapest available on the market.

New rules introduced by the Central Bank to the Consumer Protection Code came into effect on 01st January. Lenders now have to follow new guidelines when communicating with borrowers. This means that lenders must now notify borrowers of the best rate available to them if their fixed rate is due to expire. If you have a variable rate they must tell you if you can switch to a lower rate due a change in your loan-to-value. There will also be a 10 day turnaround with regards to new mortgage applications. Also the process for switching mortgages will be streamlined making it easier for consumers to avail of better rates elsewhere. The aim of this change is to help borrowers look at the potential savings which can be made by switching to a lower rate with another lender. Previously switching was seen to be a long onerous process. The level of switching in Ireland is less than 1%. Hopefully the new rules will encourage borrowers to review their mortgage and make those savings!