

2023 AGM Questions

Question	Answer
A face-to-face AGM is a good opportunity to chat personally to management rather than hiding away behind a camera. Would M&S consider bringing back physical AGMs?	<p>This question was answered in detail during the live broadcast at 36:09.</p> <p>We are aiming for M&S to have the biggest and most engaging AGM in the country. A meeting which is accessible to all shareholders, no matter where they live, or where they hold their M&S shares. Our fourth digital AGM continued to attract three times as many shareholders as our last physical meeting as we welcomed Shareholders who attended in person into the room and took our first questions from shareholders who, as part of our Share Your Voice campaign, reached us through the interactive investor platform.</p>
Why was the choice made to pay a bonus rather than a dividend? And when will a dividend be paid to shareholders again?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 38:34.</p> <p>Our end goal is to restore M&S to sustainable, profitable growth and every decision and action we make is geared towards us achieving that. This includes rewarding our people for a strong performance.</p> <p>With the business generating an improved operating performance and having a strengthened balance sheet with credit metrics consistent with investment grade, the Board plans to restore a modest annual dividend to shareholders starting with an interim dividend with the results in November.</p>
Whilst the interruption to a dividend is fully understandable, and may yet continue, could shareholder loyalty have been acknowledged by maintaining shareholder perks in the form of the discount voucher that used to be issued?	<p>Our priority has been to invest in our transformation & trusted value for customers. For this reason we stopped running the voucher scheme for shareholders in 2020 but we know a number of shareholders are also Sparks customers and will regularly receive treats and rewards simply by shopping with Sparks. It's great for you and great for the business.</p> <p>As you'll have seen in May improved performance, strengthened balance sheet means Board plans to restore a modest dividend alongside our Half-Year results in November.</p>

<p>On page 103 of the annual report, no explanation is given as to how the KPI for drive shareholder returns has been achieved. Please provide the details.</p>	<p>The table on p103 illustrates how each of the strategic priorities are incorporated into the remuneration framework. The details of the Total Shareholder Return measure are shown on page 121 and the vesting outcome detailed in Figure 17.</p> <p>The PSP is structured to take into consideration a range of measures (EPS, ROCE, TSR and strategic measures) to ensure executives are focused on delivering earnings and returns to shareholders whilst also investing money wisely to support the transformation and return to sustainable profit growth. The measures have been selected to balance one another and to ensure executives don't overly focus on one area to the detriment of another.</p> <p>20% of the PSP awards are based on total returns to shareholders and the vesting outcome is relative to the other retailers in the peer group. None of this portion of the 2020 PSP awards vested, reflecting the overall shareholder experience over the performance period.</p> <p>Executives are expected to build significant shareholdings from appointment and so they too are aligned with shareholder interests and the desire to drive returns. The progress made in strengthening the balance sheet, the investments in technology, the supply chain and modernising the store estate are all part of the groundwork to do this, meaning M&S is now in a position to restore dividends and so shareholders will see the returns coming through.</p>
<p>The real Living Wage, as established by the Living Wage Foundation is the minimum hourly rate necessary to ensure that workers earn a wage that truly meets the cost of living. It is currently £11.95 per hour in London and £10.90 throughout the rest of the UK. I was pleased to see that, this year, M&S announced an increase to the base pay of 'Customer Assistants' to £12.05 per hour in London and £10.90 in the rest of the UK. However, the company currently still falls short of guaranteeing</p>	<p>In February, we announced an almost £60m investment in colleague pay with hourly rates rising to £10.90 for colleagues in stores outside of London, £12.05 for stores in London – as you say, in line with and above the Real Living Wage. This followed a £46.5m investment in store colleague pay during the 22/23 financial year, representing a 20% increase in pay over the last two years. We offer a competitive pay package for colleagues alongside industry leading financial and wellbeing benefits including a 20% M&S discount, generous pension commitment and colleague share save scheme.</p>

<p>payment of the real Living Wage to third-party contracted workers. I ask the board whether M&S will commit to investigating and reporting the pay rates for on-site third-party contracted staff and whether the business will commit to a timescale for implementing the real Living Wage as a minimum for these staff members?</p>	<p>Our suppliers and contractor's rates are set independently and we work closely with them as part of our agreed global sourcing principles. Any supplier that works with us must always pay a fair wage and work towards the living wage and we keep this under constant review.</p>
<p>Who are involved in making paper bottles? Would M&S have an interest in this?</p>	<p>We are committed to transforming the way we make, move and sell our products as we work towards achieving our Plan A targets.</p> <p>Across 2022/23, we removed 75million units of plastic from across our Food business.</p> <p>While we have no new announcement on paper bottles today, we have passed your feedback to our ESG team.</p>
<p>Why are there only 2 sizes of adult male socks? Your colleagues agree with me when I ask them instore that this is not working.</p>	<p>While we try and stock a wide range of sock sizes from 4-141/2, some less in-demand sizes are not always available.</p> <p>Thanks for your feedback which we have passed on to the menswear team.</p>
<p>I understand there's been a real focus on Sparks and how customer incentives ensure repeat visits. Can you shed some light on how the Sparks+ trial performed and whether this is likely to become a permanent offering?</p>	<p>This question was answered during the live broadcast at 43:37.</p> <p>Sparks relaunched in 2020 as digital first scheme and has nearly doubled the number of sparks customers to 16 million in three years through rewards, personalised offers, special treats, and thankyou's and by ensuring we deliver the best of M&S for each customer.</p> <p>The trials that are currently underway across South Wales, the West Midlands and North East which gives every Sparks customer who shops with us at stores in these regions access to a lower price on some customer favourites.</p>

	<p>We are always innovating and trialling different ways to reward members and this is just one of many new initiatives or trials including Sparks Day Out, 12 Days of Sparks.</p>
<p>Any plans to reduce the amount of palm oil found in food, regardless of source?</p>	<p>This question was answered in the live broadcast at 1:15:14.</p> <p>We have set ourselves a Plan A target to reach 100% segregated RSPO certified palm oil in our own label products by 2025/26.</p> <p>Our 2023 Sustainability Report outlined we are currently at 98% across our own label food products, up from 90% last year.</p> <p>We have worked closely with our suppliers to reformulate and redevelop products and have detailed plans to achieve the final 2% by the end of next year.</p>
<p>My question is around the M&S Eat Well brand. I love M&S and I enjoy purchasing healthy nutritious food from my local M&S store and from Ocado online. I am also very aware of the increasing awareness of the harmful effects of Ultra Processed Food. I have looked at the information in the Social section in the Annual report about the 'Eat Well' brand which I applaud, along with the quality of the fresh produces. However, there are UPFs that carry the Eat Well brand. Is this is on your radar? Do you have any plans for leading the way in helping customers understand the difference between UPFs and non UPFs?</p>	<p>Our focus remains ensuring healthy choices are accessible and affordable across our Foodhalls and helping our customers to make informed choices.</p> <p>Our Eat Well range is based on strict nutritional criteria, developed in partnership with the British Nutrition Foundation.</p> <p>Our policy is to limit the use of artificial additives in food and drinks wherever possible and always prioritise the use of natural alternatives.</p> <p>We are continually improving the nutritional profile of our products and removing any unnecessary ingredients through our active reformulation programme.</p>
<p>Can you please advise how you are viewing the rumours that Amazon are to bid for Ocado retail? How will this impact on the M&S agreement?</p>	<p>It's not for us to comment on rumour and speculation, our focus is on growing our partnership with Ocado where we see plenty of opportunity for further growth.</p>
<p>Why are you running stores on a shoestring but asking customers to score us on queuing times? It is not about managing staffing better, we do not have sufficient staff.</p>	<p>We are committed to ensuring we have the right number of colleagues across our stores, so we can guarantee the best customer service for our customers.</p>

	In February this year, we received five stars for customer service in Which?'s annual supermarket survey however it is always a balance to manage staffing.
I was disappointed by the opening videos to the meeting, as they gave unremitting good news and upbeat assessments of how the business is performing. Who would know from those videos that Underlying profit before adjusting items was down and free cash flow was down vs the previous year? Is it appropriate for a business meeting to avoid the most basic facts of business performance?	<p>Thanks for your feedback, the introduction of the meeting covered our most recent market update with updates on performance from across the business from Archie, Stuart and Katie. This was followed by a wide range of shareholders' questions including on dividend restoration and capital allocation to food and Clothing & Home strategy.</p> <p>We have passed your feedback on to the AGM team for next year.</p>
Stuart apparently got 10,000 suggestions from employees - a long way to go. How many have been taken up?	<p>Since the launch of our Straight to Stuart CEO suggestion scheme, we've had a strong response from colleagues, with almost 10,000 ideas submitted.</p> <p>More than 220 ideas have been given a 'Yes' including the introduction of bowel cancer symptoms to toilet roll packaging and toilet cubicle doors and identifier symbols on name badges to help colleagues feel more comfortable.</p> <p>We've also broadcast four Straight to Stuart Live events for the business where colleagues can get an instant reaction from Stuart and the leadership team.</p>
From a member of Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. My question today relates to the fact that the success story of cleaning up our rivers in the UK has been totally put into reverse and now all of them are suffering from pollution, in some cases severely. Two companies, Avara and Noble Foods, source over 100 million chickens per year from intensive poultry units in the Wye catchment area. Scientists tell us that the manure from these millions of birds is being spread on farmland in quantities too much for the land to absorb. This is leaching into and polluting the Wye and its tributaries. I have spent much time online trying to find out who supplies M&S with chickens and eggs. Is it Avara and Noble or another source? If another source are their farms polluting water courses? It should be easy to find the answer to	<p>We do not take any shell eggs from Noble foods or Avara in the Wye Valley. We do take some ingredient eggs from Noble Foods and would of course be happy to meet the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust.</p> <p>All of our suppliers must uphold environmental standards in line with our Global Sourcing Principles, which state no contaminated or toxic wastewater should be discharged into the environment. In our most recent Sustainability Report, we included information about our Food supply chain and we also voluntarily host an interactive supplier map on our website.</p>

these questions. Will you promise to make your supply chain more transparent?	
In which areas can we learn from the practices from our best-in-class competitors such as Next?	<p>We are always open to inspiration which will support our transformation but we are pleased with the progress made so far at M&S. In C&H our style perception now third – up from fifth - & we have retained our leading positions in quality, value and sustainability.</p> <p>In Food we outperformed the market and customer perception for quality and value the highest in six years.</p> <p>However we are not sitting still as we know there is a lot to do to reshape M&S and deliver long term sustainable returns for shareholders.</p>
I am concerned that M&S general merchandise is losing its way and the cache that it previously held. I feel this is symptomatic of the Company decline and hence poor performance most notable by its exit from the FTSE 100. What steps are being taken to return M&S to its former glory?	<p>It has been one year since new leadership set the strategy to reshape M&S for growth and the business has delivered sustained trading momentum and positive growth.</p> <p>For example in C&H style perception has increased to third up from fifth, and we retained our leading positions in quality, value and sustainability. In Food our customer perception in quality and value is at its highest point in six years.</p> <p>At its heart, our plan is about protecting the magic of M&S - Our exceptional product, trusted brand and strong values – while modernising the rest of the business, so we are a simpler, faster and more digitally enabled M&S.</p> <p>Progress has been made but we know there remains lots to do to reshape M&S and make it a bigger, better and growing business.</p>
The pandemic and cost of living crisis has created a need to react, how do you create a sense of constant stress to drive further change?	<p>This question was answered during our live broadcast at 40:42.</p> <p>At M&S we say we are always positively dissatisfied, and look to create a sense of healthy tension and drive for change across the business.</p>

	<p>One year in to our strategy for reshaping M&S for growth and we have made good progress but we know we need to keep the pace up and maintain the relentless focus on delivering long term sustainable growth for shareholders.</p>
<p>Most Executives are new - ie 5 years or so service. Only Sacha is a 'lifer.' New talent has doubtless turned us around, but is it still possible for someone to start as a Saturday girl/boy and become a senior leader?</p>	<p>Our aim is to create a culture of high performance and ensure that every one of our 65,000 colleagues can feel and perform at their best.</p> <p>Talent ID and development is right at the top of our people agenda and to support this and the creation of a high performance culture last year we launched our Future Leaders programme with Build & Evolve and 200 colleagues now completed build (70% of which are women) and 50 completed evolve.</p> <p>We are also introducing a Fast-track learning programme in the year ahead. Investment and programmes like these ensures that the highest potential candidates from the business across all levels can develop and progress.</p>
<p>When will we expect a proper return from Ocado retail based on the price paid for 50% using shareholder funds?</p>	<p>This question was answered during our live broadcast at 46:10.</p> <p>Ocado Retail has grown revenue by 40% since 2019 and has a large, addressable market and substantial invested capacity to grow sales and to recover profitability in the medium term.</p>
<p>Are there any plans to expand M&S brand widely? Not large scale but small; with the knowledge and help of the employees who are not British, we can find the strategy to progress into the market. The government has made another advanced trading relationship with Japan, why don't we start from there?</p>	<p>M&S' objective is to grow international retail sales by leveraging its brand through capital light partnerships and a multi-platform online business with global reach. We have 27 franchise partners globally and through our omni-channel advantage, a growing online global presence in over 100 international markets, including Japan.</p>
<p>Is M&S considering buying and running (employing a farmer etc) its own farms to help its sustainability and supply chain as a new venture?</p>	<p>We know that our supply base make up 94% of our emissions and are a critical part of us achieving our net zero goal, and we are focused on supporting them to make the transition to local carbon operations and farming.</p> <p>We work with over 9k select farmers across the UK and our latest Farm to Foodhall adverts showcase the lengths they go to to make and source M&S</p>

	products through nature-friendly methods while retaining the quality and taste we're famous for.
How is M&S' green agenda progressing in terms of power usage, recycling and waste disposal across the business?	<p>Our target is to be a net zero business by 2040 and in our most recent update we outlined that we are making progress against our targets but like other businesses we have a long way to go particularly in tackling our scope 3 emissions.</p> <p>Specifically on power usage we've delivered a 3% reduction in our Scope 1 & 2 emissions from fuel and electricity use in our stores and logistics network. But 94% our emissions coming indirect from suppliers (scope 3) so a long way to go.</p> <p>In recycling since 2008 over 36 million items of Clothing recycled through Shwopping c£23m for Oxfam. 93% of own brand food plastic packaging is widely recyclable. And in food waste we've reduced this by 46% meaning we're on track to halve all in-store waste by 2030 – a key issue with our customers.</p>
Can M&S agree to sell only free-range eggs and to regularly check that they are proper free-range eggs?	We're proud to have been the first retailer to move to 100% free range shell eggs 20 years ago. We only sell British, free range eggs sourced from trusted supplier partners. All of our suppliers are assessed annually, in line with our M&S Select Farm Standards.
Can M&S agree to use 100% renewable energy for all the coolant provision in store cold cabinets etc.?	<p>We are continuing our work to reduce our overall demand for energy and are exploring further self-generation opportunities to add to the existing solar arrays we have, both on stores and at our Castle Donington Distribution Centre.</p> <p>In collaboration with other retailers, we have called on the government to accelerate the greening of the grid as we know this will play a crucial role in meeting our net zero targets.</p>
When will M&S stop using plastic bags?	<p>This question was answered during the live broadcast at 56:45.</p> <p>Our customers expect us to do the right thing and make the most sustainable choices on their behalf. We encourage our customers to use fewer bags and reuse the bags that they already own.</p>

	<p>But for those times when you forget your reusable bag, we sell 100% recycled plastic Bags for Life - made from plastic waste collected in our own stores. At M&S you can return your Bag for Life for replacement or recycling when they wear out.</p> <p>We were the first retailer to charge for single-use plastic bags in 2008 and, since then, our carrier bag usage has declined by 90%. We no longer offer single-use shopping bags, and have also removed plastic single-use small produce bags from our Foodhalls.</p> <p>We are led by science and aim to do the right thing for the environment. For carrier bags, scientific opinion overwhelmingly considers that the correct choice is to use a closed-loop bag and encourage maximum reuse.</p>
<p>Human rights campaign Labour Behind the Label report a crisis point for Pakistan's garment workers, with 40% inflation of daily commodities making wages are unliveable and informality of employment undermining workers' rights. Workers from M&S supplier International Textile in Sindh province, Pakistan, have reported that piece rates are now being used to calculate wages in an effort to save costs and this is undermining minimum wage payment and progression. They also report that workers are not being registered for social security or formally contracted, due to the illegal use of labour agents who recruit workers into factories. These reported concerns are not uncommon in Pakistani suppliers. Q1: What is M&S doing to monitor and mitigate the increasing risk of worker exploitation around wages in the difficult economic situation for the garment industry in Pakistan? Q2. How will M&S ensure workers' access to social security and formal contracts is guaranteed per the law?</p>	<p>his question was answered in the live broadcast at 58:55.</p> <p>Ethical Trading is core to the way we do business and all our suppliers must adhere to our Global Sourcing Principles to ensure that our suppliers' employees are provided with safe and fair working conditions.</p> <p>The principles specifically state "All workers are entitled to fair and equal compensation, which at least meets the legal minimum wage, industry standards, or negotiated wages and includes all legally mandated benefits (medical insurance, social insurance, pension)" and that "All workers, regardless of employment on a permanent, temporary or casual basis, shall be provided with written employment contracts. Temporary labour arrangements must not be used to avoid obligations to workers under labour or social security laws and regulations arising from the regular employment relationship."</p> <p>In response to your second question, our first tier production sites are required to have an annual ethical audit, by a third party independent audit company,</p>

	<p>which is based on the ETI Base Code and International Country Laws. We have a team of social compliance managers in each of our sourcing offices, whose roles are to follow up any findings from these audits and also implement capacity building and targeted social programmes for workers in those factories on a needs and risk basis. These programmes include health awareness, financial literacy, rights and responsibilities and worker voice in order to gain more feedback directly from workers on their working conditions.</p> <p>We commissioned a research project by external consultancy to understand living wages in our sourcing countries, including Pakistan.</p> <p>We continue to monitor any changes in legal minimum wages in Pakistan and verify compliance in our supply base through our factory monitoring programme.</p> <p>In January 2023, M&S signed the Pakistan Accord on Health and Safety in the Textile and Garment Industry, as part of our ongoing commitment to working conditions in our supply base.</p>
A lot of M&S clothing is of appalling quality. Are you ever going to go back to selling good quality clothes again?	<p>This question was answered in our live broadcast at 1:00:58.</p> <p>We have a simple commitment to give our customers a great everyday price without compromising on the quality and standards they expect.</p> <p>Our customers continue to rank M&S above the competition when it comes to quality and positive perceptions grew a further percentage point this year.</p>
Will you consider bringing back some 'Classic Collection' trousers as I am struggling to find decent fitting trousers anywhere. Please provide short and extra short length trousers for older ladies.	<p>When we disbanded 'Classics' five years ago, the majority of the range moved into the Collection departments.</p> <p>On Trousers, we have continued with our Ponte Trouser and the Crosshatch Straights – versions of these trousers would have sat within Classics.</p>

	<p>As with all of our core lines, we constantly review how they are selling, and continue to make changes to ensure that the range is relevant to our customer. All our trousers come in short length and go to all our stores.</p> <p>Extra short is currently online only across 20 of our lines. From AW23, we will also be trialling XS in selected stores.</p>
Why do you currently have no teenage department? They are the ones spending the most money in Zara and Primark.	<p>Our focus is on improving market share in existing categories, such as Kidswear.</p> <p>Having established a stronger value position, the aim is to build increased awareness and appeal of the range.</p>
Why are there so few garments in smaller sizes I.E sizes 10,12 and 14. I only ever see the large sizes available, and these always end up in the sale.	<p>This was answered in the live broadcast at 1:04:18.</p> <p>The merchandising teams continually monitor and review sizing, ensuring that lines are brought in the ratio they will sell best in.</p> <p>Customers will see a continued improvement in core sizes through AW23.</p>
I have felt for some years that M & S is concentrating on younger people and while I understand that this has to be - by default - within the retail ladies clothing areas, it has become increasingly difficult to find well cut clothing for older women. Can you consider providing a 'capsule' wardrobe for older ladies?	<p>The customer the womenswear team are designing for is centred around styles that fits with their body and life – whatever their age or life stage. Offering value, versatility, comfort style and quality will always be core to our design principles.</p> <p>We recently launched M&S Icons which is a curated edit of wardrobe staples, selected for its versatility and timeless styles.</p> <p>In our Autograph collection, we offer soft knits, statement dresses and standout prints and Per Una comprises classic pieces and modern but timeless looks.</p>
With increased food theft from stores being seen across many of our stores and highlighted by multiple shareholders, what are M&S doing to better protect our product?	<p>To deter and prevent theft across our stores, we have introduced new measures such as meat monitors in MFPDD and gap scanning procedures in ambient.</p>
Are there further opportunities for the food franchise business to serve our food in new environments such as schools and universities?	<p>We have no current plans to expand into schools and universities but we are always looking for opportunities to provide more people with access to M&S Food and it is something we are happy to consider in the future.</p>

<p>The magazines that you sell in your food halls do not get changed regularly. Unfortunately, on now three occasions I have picked up a magazine that was from the previous week. I get told it is due to staff shortages.</p>	<p>The magazines on shelves should be changed every week, we will investigate with our stores team.</p>
<p>In the late 60s we decided to use our big white anonymous food delivery lorries for PR and painted Marks & Spencer on them. Now we own Gist, why not do the same?</p>	<p>This question was answered in our live broadcast at 55:13.</p> <p>All of our dedicated M&S store delivery fleet has M&S branding to improve visibility of our brand. We retain some white fleet to enable us to provide maximum flexibility for our non M&S customers and to enable us to provide cost effective solutions for our peak operations where we will bring in additional fleet to support our requirements.</p>
<p>Why are all the additives of so-called spices/garlic etc being layered onto your meats etc. which in my view contaminate the meat, the only meat you have not done this to is beef and lamb and chops. please refrain from this practice, or add a sachet with said additives Let the customer decide!</p>	<p>Thanks for your feedback, it has been passed on to our product development team.</p>
<p>I am concerned that M&S 'Made Without' range is being decreased, apparently to make more space for Vegan products. This is a wrong approach. Food allergies are a form of disability, veganism is only a lifestyle choice. Therefore if you need more shelf space for vegan products, it should come from the 'regular' shelves, not from Made Without. Having achieved regular stocking of our preferred items at my local Havant branch, but only by attending an AGM in person and speaking to senior management, they are now disappearing again. Local management say stocks are supplied from Head Office, without regard to what they need. You should take more notice of local requirements.</p>	<p>This question was answered in our live broadcast at 50:44.</p> <p>In total we have 124 products in our Made Without range and have actually increased the number of products in our Havant store from 82 to 100 over the past year. Our supply chain team will check there are no availability issues in that particular store.</p>
<p>In light of the Government's plan to restrict multi-buy price promotion restrictions on food and drink high in fat, salt and sugar, from October 2025 Tesco has announced that it will</p>	<p>We do not have any multibuy deals on HFSS restricted products. Our focus is on ensuring healthy options are accessible and affordable and latest Family Matters Index shows 30% of families are looking to eat more healthily in the</p>

maintain its own voluntary commitment to avoid volume-led promotions for less healthy food and drink, and focus on ways to offer their customers value. Sainsbury's has also phased out use of multi-buy promotions of less healthy food and drink. Does Marks & Spencer have similar plans to commit to the restrictions, despite the Government's pause on the regulations, for the good of their customers' health and finances?	coming months. As part of our recent investment in value, we have dropped or locked the price of over 50 Eat Well products. Eat Well are products meeting evidence-based nutritional criteria, developed by M&S nutritionists in consultation with the British Nutrition Foundation.
What is the future of warehouse estate (as per the store estate strategy)?	<p>Modernising our supply chain is a key pillar of our plan to reshape M&S for long term growth. Our aim is to create a lower cost network which prioritises the timely flow of products over storage and stock holding.</p> <p>In C&H we are planning a five-year programme of investment which includes creating a logistics network to support the omni-channel offering, largely using existing assets, and investing in automation and new capacity to improve availability and speed up delivery and returns.</p> <p>In Food we completed gist acquisition taking control of our logistics network for the first time which means now have ownership of decisions which help reduce costs to serve through a more efficient supply chain operating model including property.</p>
Are you planning on opening food stores in Europe as you did previously (Spain, France...) or is that too complicated now due to Brexit?	<p>This question was answered live in the broadcast at 01:19:20.</p> <p>We have no plans to open new food stores in Europe. Our focus is on continuing to grow International retail sales through capital light partnerships and a multi-platform online business with global reach.</p>
Can we have an update on store closures and the store rotation plan? My local store seems run down.	<p>This question was answered in the live broadcast at 1:11:30.</p> <p>Our store rotation and renewal programme aims to build a more productive estate of brand defining stores in growth locations.</p>

	<p>Over the last year we reduced the full line estate by three stores and grew our owned Simply Food stores by five.</p> <p>New stores – such as our Chesterfield relocation - are performing really well. In many cases we are on track to double sales and pay back on the capital invested is averaging 3-4 years, including closure costs.</p> <p>Our priority is to invest in bigger, better stores while making sure we have the right stores, in the right place, with the right space. This year the plan is to open 8 full line stores, and 10 Food stores while closing around 20, of which 10 will be relocated.</p>
Why is pop music played continuously in the Colliers Wood store? The staff on the food tills tell me they hate it too. Please could we just shop in silence?	<p>We've been playing music in many of our stores for a number of years, and our playlists feature a selection of songs covering multiple genres. We have generally received very positive feedback from colleagues and customers, but we will of course take your comments on board when reviewing our future approach.</p>
The new system of ordering in M&S cafés via touch screen boards (or via mobile phone) is very impersonal and seems to be putting people off. I understand that one of the reasons the new system was adopted was to deal with the issue of long waits in queues. However, would M&S consider adding an interaction with a member of staff as an alternative means of ordering, perhaps at specific times of the day?	<p>This question was answered in the live broadcast at 1:08:13.</p> <p>We have introduced digital ordering to help reduce queueing into our cafes and improve service.</p> <p>Previously we were struggling to show off our full Menu on our traditional cardboard menu, however the new screens allow us to show bigger bolder pictures of our range which customers have loved.</p> <p>Our digital cafés are the top cafés in the business so we know they are, on the whole, being well received. Customers can now have everything delivered to their table rather than have to wait in a queue to order, pay, and collect drinks. However we recognise that there is an opportunity to have another means of ordering and paying with a colleague, such as for customers with visual or audible impairments, or customer who want to use alternative payment</p>

	<p>methods such as cash. We are working with IT currently on how we can enable this in our digital cafes while still maintaining the benefits the ordering screens give, and we hope to have a solution deployed later this year.</p> <p>In the meantime we will ensure that the digital entry screens are hosted by one of our Café team full time during the opening period and at peak times to help our customers through the experience.</p>
Noting that M&S are allowing men with gender identities to use the same changing rooms as women, this means that all changing are effectively mixed sex. What safeguarding measures is M&S putting in place to protect women from covert filming and voyeurism, and what protocols are in place for the regular checking for hidden cameras? (I ask this as a camera was placed in the toilets at my former place of work)]	To ensure every customer feels comfortable trying on clothes in our stores, our fitting rooms are located within our womenswear and menswear departments for customers of that gender and are made up of individual lockable cubicles to ensure customer privacy, with a colleague on hand.
Why do you feel the need to financially support a political party?	The Company did not make any political donations or incur any political expenditure during the year ended 1 April 2023. M&S has a policy of not making donations to political organisations or independent election candidates or incurring political expenditure anywhere in the world as defined in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.
Your website states that 'Doing the right thing in our communities is part of M&S's heritage'. Given this commitment can you explain why as part of Ocado Retail you have sought to impose a 24-7 distribution centre next to a primary school and a residential community in Tufnell Park despite strong opposition from the school, local community and Islington Council and continue to pursue multiple applications, legal actions and planning appeals to impose it? Given Section 172 of the 2006 Companies Act requires you to have regard for the 'impact of the company's operations in the community and the environment' why have Ocado and M&S not published a full disclosure of the social and	Our partners at Ocado are committed to having a positive impact on the local community. This would be the greenest and quietest grocery facility in the UK, and they would commit to using a 100% electric van fleet – replacing the vans that currently deliver in the area – and install a green ‘living wall’ along the boundary (with the school). It would also create around 300 new jobs for the local economy.

environmental impacts of this proposed site nor sought the transparency of a full public planning application?	
Do we still have a Community Affairs dept that seconds Managers to charities for a year, supports the Arts and matches store chosen store fundraisers?	<p>Doing the right thing in our communities is part of M&S's heritage and as part of how we operate we always look to drive action that makes a meaningful difference in the communities that we serve.</p> <p>This year M&S donated over £5.5m including over £1m to 1,000 local causes through the “Gifts that Give” Christmas campaign, in partnership with Neighbourly. The causes that were supported covered the length and breadth of the UK and included a youth brass band, a community animal rescue centre, and the Kaotic Angels, a community group of serving and former military personnel, police, firefighters, ambulance workers and other front-line emergency responders.</p> <p>We also donated over £2m through customers, colleagues and partners including supporting Macmillan Cancer Support, through our headline sponsorship of the World’s Biggest Coffee Morning and year-round activations such as Sparks donations, raising more than £1.6m.</p>
Why is the company overtly supporting the politically-motivated Pride campaign under the guise of a homeless charity that itself appears aimed exclusively at LBGT young people?	<p>We’re proud to support the LGBTQ+ community and we want M&S to be a place where all colleagues and customers feel they belong.</p> <p>For the third year running, throughout June we will be doubling all Sparks donations to akt – a charity who supports LGBTQ+ young people who are facing or experiencing homelessness or living in a hostile or abusive environment - because no young person should have to choose between a safe home and being who they are.</p>
Can we have an update on staff pay please? We used to be number one or two in retail. Now the discount retailers pay more.	<p>We have rewarded the hard work of all our colleagues by investing significantly in colleague pay – over £100m in the last 2 years.</p> <p>In February, we announced our biggest ever investment in frontline colleague pay - £57m.</p>

	<p>Want to ensure our reward offer reflects what matters most to colleagues and feedback from store teams is that base pay is most important.</p> <p>Over last two years, base pay has increased over 20% - well above inflation. Investing in our people helps ensure we remain competitive as an employer brand and can retain and attract talent to continue our progress of transforming M&S.</p>
Your staff at our local branch (Surbiton) have done a fantastic job throughout the pandemic and recently. What are you doing to recognise their efforts and to improve their working conditions in a small and busy store?	Thanks for your feedback and for recognising the hard work of our colleagues during the pandemic and beyond. We recognised their hard work by making a 15% payment to frontline colleagues during Covid and have recently made our biggest ever pay investment of £57million to take hourly store colleague pay in London to £12.05 per hour. We have also recently taken steps to secure the long term future of the Surbiton store and have plans in place to modernise it over the next year.
In light of the current cost of living crisis will the board consider offering those pensioners with long service (ie in excess of 15/20 years) the benefit of staff discount for those NOT currently receiving discount?	Every M&S colleague with significant service to the business is eligible to retain their colleague discount which reflects their long service and contribution to the business.
What is happening with Chargecards? I still have one and it seems bizarre that it does not have chip and pin technology.	While existing M&S Chargecard customers can continue to use their card, it hasn't been offered to new customers since 2011. The M&S Credit Card was introduced in 2003, becoming the main M&S Credit Card offering, it is available with chip and pin, digital wallet, and mobile banking functionality. Existing Chargecard customers can get in touch with us to enquire about taking out an M&S Credit Card if they would benefit from the additional digital functionality.
M&S Bank claims to be a bank but appears to be either incapable of or unwilling to provide the customers' transaction details in a downloadable Excel file. I think it is time to catch up with the rest of the banks in the UK and provide this service.	This feature is expected to be available as part of a future update to our Internet Banking Service.
In the Annual Report, reference is made to shareholders votes against last year, suggesting this was to do with Steve Rowe's	Following the voting outcome for the 2021/22 Remuneration Report, we actively consulted with shareholders to understand the concerns that influenced their

<p>departure. Rather it was to do with bonuses being paid when results did not warrant a payment. A question was asked last year on the link to shareholder value in last years payments but no response has been received. Can we have that detail please?</p>	<p>voting decisions. As a result of the feedback received, we are confident that the majority of those who voted against the Report did so because of the specific circumstances relating to the outgoing CEO (Steve Rowe).</p> <p>Any discussion by the Remuneration Committee involving executive director incentive awards considers the appropriateness of the award in the context of the shareholder experience, the general health of the business, as well as pay outcomes experienced by colleagues across the business. Based on the strong financial performance during 2021/22 with PBT of £522.9m, a bonus award was triggered under the Annual Bonus Scheme, which was the first payment to colleagues and executives since 2017.</p> <p>Our end goal continues to be to transform and return M&S to sustainable, profitable growth and every decision and action we make is geared towards us achieving that. In 2022 we continued to prioritise reinvesting back into the business and, instead of paying a dividend, the decision was made to focus on upgrading technology systems, supply chains and addressing legacy store estate as three key areas – as well as maintaining investment grade metrics. Due to improved performance and a strengthened balance sheet, the Board has announced its plans to restore a modest dividend later this year.</p>
<p>The proposed Annual Bonus Scheme and Performance Related Pay for next year are far too generous with no increase in share price still generating substantial payments, despite the current heavily devalued share price. A link needs to be built in to ensure shareholder return in terms of price and dividend yield are factored in. You use a panel of companies for comparison on directors pay and a similar panel should be used to ensure acceptable levels of shareholder returns. Please review.</p>	<p>The design of the discretionary bonus and PSP received strong shareholder support of 97.14% when our Remuneration Policy was approved in July 2020. Opportunity levels are aligned to market levels and our variable pay approach enables the Remuneration Committee to make awards which are competitive and reflect performance. While the Remuneration Policy allows a bonus award of up to 200% of salary, the average award over the last five years has been c. 70% of salary. Similarly, the average PSP vesting over the same period has been c. 19% of the amount granted.</p> <p>The PSP is structured to take into consideration a range of measures (EPS, ROCE, TSR and strategic measures) to ensure executives are focused on</p>

	<p>delivering earnings and returns to shareholders whilst also investing money wisely to support the transformation and return to sustainable profit growth. The measures have been selected to balance one another and to ensure executives don't overly focus on one area to the detriment of another. 20% of the PSP awards are based on total returns to shareholders and the vesting outcome is relative to the other retailers in the peer group. None of this portion of the 2020 PSP awards vested, reflecting the overall shareholder experience. The progress made in strengthening the balance sheet, the investments in technology, the supply chain and modernising the store estate are all part of the groundwork meaning M&S is now in a position, to restore dividends and so shareholders will see returns coming through.</p>
<p>In view of Capita's recent careless protection of personal information, is M&S content with just supplying with 2 years subsidising Experian as a solution. AND should Capita remain in charge of this administration?</p>	<p>The M&S Pension Scheme was one of many Capita clients impacted by a major cyber security breach. Capita took immediate steps to secure its systems and prevent any further unauthorised access to personal data.</p> <p>Capita cannot be certain that this data has been accessed. It has no evidence that any information potentially accessed has been misused or that it is available online illegally. It has and will continue to monitor the web closely.</p> <p>The Pension Trustee takes the responsibility of protecting members' personal data very seriously and has sought information about what Capita has done to improve the security of personal data and avoid a future incident. The Trustee will receive a detailed report from Capita of the investigation it has completed and, with independent expert advice, the Trustee will consider whether any further steps need to be taken.</p> <p>The Trustee has reassured members that their pension remains secure.</p> <p>A member Q&A has been published within the update it has provided on the Scheme website at www.mandspensionscheme.com/news</p>

The growth of home delivery items and percentage of returns is high across the retail sector. The £60 order value for free delivery to avoid the delivery charge encourages customers to order numbers of items with intention of returning items. This is costly in delivery and collection of unwanted items and the environmental impact.

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