

## 2024 AGM Questions

Question	Answer
A number of questions asking about the store rotation programme with specific stores mentioned including Liverpool, Aylesbury, Solihull and Princes Risborough and some concern about M&S leaving city centres for out-of-town locations. Why is M&S moving away from city centre locations, in some cases abandoning the city completely?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 24:02.</p> <p>We are not abandoning city centres and have lots of stores on city high streets and in shopping centres.</p> <p>Store rotation is about making sure M&amp;S has the right stores, of the right size in the right place and the strategy is working with brighter, fresher, better renewal stores achieving double digit sales uplifts.</p> <p>Liverpool is a good example. We relocated from an old store requiring significant investment into a modern city centre renewal, reducing C&amp;H space by 39%, Food space by 18% and yet customer numbers increased by almost 25% in C&amp;H and we saw bigger baskets across Food and Clothing.</p> <p>So, the right location is important for customers and for our business whether that's city centre, high street, shopping centre or retail park.</p> <p>At the AGM we announced two brand new city centre M&amp;S stores in Bristol and Bath - a £38m investment in these great cities. This demonstrates that where we can develop the right stores for customers we will stay in city centres.</p>
Why did the store in Ruislip high street close?	Our store rotation programme is all about making sure we have the right stores in the right locations and sometimes that means we have to take difficult decisions to close stores. That's never a decision we take lightly but as we reshape M&S for profitable growth it is the right thing to do for shareholders. We do still have a Simply Food store in Ruislip.
Please can you update the AGM on café closures in stores? We've had a question about closures of the café in the Blandford store	This question was answered live in our broadcast at 28:37.

<p>and another around why there isn't a café in the new Chesterfield store.</p>	<p>We know many customers love our cafés, but we will always prioritise the right Clothing &amp; Home and Food space before looking to offer a café.</p> <p>M&amp;S is one of the largest high-street coffee retailers in the UK, with over 300 cafés, serving over 32m customers per year. We have individually trained 1800 master baristas who annually make 25m+ cups of coffee.</p> <p>In some stores we have chosen not to offer a café option, whereas in others there may be different types of proposition depending on the size, location and profile of the stores.</p> <p>Unfortunately the Blandford café closed last year and we have no plans to reopen it.</p>
<p>The main M&amp;S store in Aberdeen is to be closed at the end of 2024 and millions poured in to the smaller (even with new extension) store in Union square. A large number of customers using the main store are elderly people (at least half) they use the bus to get to and from the store. Most will not go to the out of the way store in Union square. I realise the existing main store requires upgrading also Aberdeen council are probably charging exorbitant rates, however even they realise closing this the last main store off Union Street is not good for business. Talk to them about a reduction in rates and keep this store open.</p>	<p>Our store rotation strategy is all about having the right stores with the right space in the right place and Aberdeen deserves to have one of the largest stores in Scotland and one of the most modern.</p> <p>The challenges with modernising the current building at St Nicholas are considerable and given how busy Union Square has become, it makes sense that if we only have one store in Aberdeen that it is located there, where we can provide a modern store fit for the future.</p> <p>It was reported earlier this year that First Bus may consider amending routes so that more buses stop at Union Square.</p>
<p>Is it too late to protect your green credentials now and future-proof against private motoring becoming inevitably less advantaged by closing the car-dependent Fosse Park store in Leicester instead of the multiply-accessible city centre store?</p>	<p>Our store rotation strategy is all about making sure we have the right stores with the right space to deliver a brilliant shopping experience for our customers. That means opening new stores but also sadly closing others.</p> <p>Our extension of the store at Fosse Park will increase the size of the store by 11,500 sq and enable us to offer an expanded product range across food, clothing, homewares, and beauty. Work is currently underway at the site and is</p>

	<p>expected to be complete in the autumn, with the store remaining open throughout.</p>
<p>Please can you update the AGM on the Marble Arch development? Hopefully you will be able to increase the investment you are making in the stores estate programme.</p>	<p>A new flagship M&amp;S development at Marble Arch will unlock capital for us to invest in the store rotation programme.</p> <p>The planning decision will now fall to a different Secretary of State in a new government. We hope they will consider the overwhelming evidence in favour of the M&amp;S redevelopment, including approval from the independent planning inspector and the verdict of the High Court earlier this year which ruled the previous Secretary of State's decision unlawful. Approval of the proposed scheme as soon as possible would deliver a much-needed boost for Oxford Street.</p>
<p>The partnership with Ocado did not achieve the results expected. I believe the loss was circa £40m. Could the Board expand on this? I also think funds were retained that Ocado believed they were entitled to. Could this ultimately end in litigation?</p>	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 31:21.</p> <p>We are committed to the turnaround strategy for Ocado Retail and positive about the potential of the JV.</p> <p>We are in the early stages of driving sales growth, which improved during the year driven by increased choice of M&amp;S products and better value for money.</p> <p>4,800 M&amp;S products are now on Ocado which is +20% on last year, while sales of M&amp;S products grew +15% in Q4.</p> <p>Profitability is clearly not where we want it to be, and Ocado Retail is behind plan. The next 18 months are important as ORL moves on to Ocado Group's new technology platform which has been delayed and delivers more automation.</p> <p>On the contingency payment to Ocado Group we are clear that the payment was linked to performance targets for ORL and our advice remains that these</p>

	<p>targets have not been met. The performance target is binary meaning it is either payable or not.</p> <p>Discussions with Ocado Group are continuing and there is a mechanism for reasonable adjustments. We continue to rate the accounting value of the payment as zero. If it came to legal action we are confident in our position. This does not impact the running of the business.</p>
<p>The Gist acquisition looks successful on the surface as a transaction. How does Gist's cost base compare to other logistics operations and how will the cost to serve be lowered further?</p>	<p>Gist has delivered savings of £70 million which means the payback on this acquisition is well ahead of our plan.</p> <p>However, the network is old and a high cost to serve. This year will see the first steps in new capacity investment as we develop the longer-term network plan.</p>
<p>The last several years have seen challenging increases to the costs of essential goods and services and those cost-of-living pressures place the most painful pressure on those on the lowest wages and incomes. We know that M&amp;S has continued to pay the real living wage to all directly employed staff in the last year. However we again urge the Board to commit to guarantee that on-site third party contractors who are vital to the company's operations as well, also enjoy the dignity of the real living wage. So we invite you to listen to shareholders and stakeholders, including customers, and commit to make this step well before next year's AGM.</p>	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 40:57.</p> <p>This year we made our biggest ever investment in retail pay - £89 million – to at least £12 per hour, in line with the Real Living Wage, as well as investing in improved maternity and paternity policies as part of our broader reward package. Since March 2022 we have increased our standard hourly rate by more than 26%; significantly ahead of inflation. Our third-party contractors, as separate businesses, set their rates independently but they must comply with our ethical standards. We continue to have constructive, active dialogue with ShareAction and wider stakeholders, most importantly our colleague representative network BIG, with the feedback we are given informing the decisions we make on pay.</p>
<p>I'm glad the company is doing well and seems to have turned around years of struggling clothing lines. However was disappointed with the really low dividend payment. Can you explain the decision to pay only a 3p dividend?</p>	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 49:43.</p> <p>We've returned a modest dividend to shareholders and that's right for where we are with our transformation. There have been too many boom and bust turnarounds at M&amp;S. Our objective is to reshape to be a growth business,</p>

	<p>investing for long-term sustainable and profitable growth which will create more sustainable value for shareholders in the future.</p> <p>We are seeing strong returns on our investments but need to keep investing in future growth.</p> <p>We have increased our capital allocation to c£500m (net of disposals) which breaks down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £300m in store estate</li> <li>• £100m supply chain</li> <li>• £100m Digital &amp; Tech</li> </ul> <p>All of these investments should deliver returns in the medium and long term.</p>
<p>Whilst shareholders are often referred to as lenders of last resort, your report suggests that they are also last in your remuneration consideration. Please explain the level of directors' remuneration against these statements from the report?</p>	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 51:45.</p> <p>Our objective is to reshape M&amp;S to be a growth business, investing for long-term sustainable and profitable growth which will create more sustainable value for shareholders in the future.</p> <p>The management team has done a good job, now delivering 12 consecutive quarters of sales growth and growing profits and market share. They have also kept a tight rein on costs and as a result the financial health of the business is as strong as it's been in decades.</p> <p>Director's remuneration is directly linked to performance and, because we pay a large proportion of any bonus in shares which are deferred and subject to lengthy holding periods, it is also aligned with the interests of shareholders.</p> <p>When the business does well, we all do well.</p>
<p>As a shareholder for over 25 years - now that M&amp;S are back in the FTSE100 why is the share price still under £3? When profits are</p>	<p>We have now delivered 12 consecutive quarters of sales growth, grown market share and profits and returned to paying a modest dividend for the first time in 4</p>

now rising - when will we get back to the glory days of £4 a share - the price we bought them at!	years. There is lots more to do and lots of opportunity but we have a clear strategy to reshape M&S for growth. Delivering against this strategy will help grow sustainable returns for shareholders in the future.
My question is what are you doing to help the poorest in our society have access and be able to afford healthy and sustainable food?	<p>We know that value is front of mind for millions of families across the country and we are committed to continuing to deliver on our trusted value promise – offering the best possible quality at the best possible price.</p> <p>We've invested significantly in value in recent years. Over half of Remarkable Value products – a range we launched in 2019 made up of over 100 everyday staples - have the Eat Well health seal of approval, meaning they meet criteria developed by M&amp;S nutritionists in partnership with the British Nutrition Foundation.</p> <p>To support families in need, last month, we announced a £1m investment to donate over 1.5m freshly prepared meals through FareShare – the UK's largest charity fighting food insecurity and waste. This is a brand-new initiative to combat food poverty – redistributing food directly from our supply chain. The nutritionally balanced meals use surplus ingredients from within our existing supply chain which might otherwise go to waste.</p> <p>We also partner with Neighbourly to redistribute surplus food from our stores.</p>
As a coeliac customer, I have been disappointed to notice a reduction in gluten free ready-made sandwiches and wraps in your 'food on the go' range. Is there a reason why you're no longer catering to this food allergy? I was also extremely disappointed when I visited the café, as there were no savoury gluten free options and only a couple of sweet options.	<p>We treat this dietary requirement very seriously and in April we added a new made without farmhouse cheddar and tomato sandwich to sit alongside our made without cheddar new yorker sandwich, made without chicken and bacon sandwich and made without chicken fajita wrap. We have also recently launched a made without sandwich platter for customers catering events. If you can tell us which store you have noticed a reduction in the range, we will investigate.</p>

	<p>In the Café, we have the GF Cheese &amp; Tomato Toastie, we also have the GF Iced fruit bun, GF New Yorker (cheese sandwich) as well as some biscuits.</p> <p>We are working on future new products, particularly focused on savoury breakfast GF buns (Bacon roll and Sausage roll). If you have specific ideas on savoury snacks that you would like to see in our range, it would be great to hear your suggestions.</p>
Will we be seeing improvements in availability of the existing M&S products stocked at Ocado, or increase in the variety of ranges and products available at Ocado?	<p>4,800 M&amp;S Food products were available on Ocado.com by year end, a 20% increase on last year, with sales of M&amp;S products growing +15% in Q4.</p> <p>Availability has improved considerably, but there is further opportunity on the most important lines and at key event periods.</p>
What plans do the Board have to increase food sales?	<p>We have a clear ambition for our Food business - to offer our customers delicious, exceptional quality food where, when and how they want it. Our plan is to deliver this through leveraging product quality and innovation and the trusted M&amp;S brand, driving profitable growth across categories and channels and improving operating margins through fixing our backbone. Ocado Retail also plays a valuable role in growing M&amp;S Food.</p> <p>This financial year, we grew market share to 3.7% (from 3.55%) but we set ourselves the target at our Capital Markets Day in November to grow market share by +1% between FY23 and FY28. Our volume growth in Food was plus 6.8% and that was against the market down to nearly 1%.</p>
Thank you for fruit and veg being available loose, and nearly all food packaging now being recyclable. At last, boxes to take back soft plastics are in store, but only intermittently - please could you make the boxes always available, and obvious to customers? And provide recycling facilities in your stores!	<p>Thank you for the feedback on our soft plastics recycling units and overall efforts to reduce plastic. We removed 140m pieces of plastic from our packaging last year on our way to a target of removing 1bn pieces by the end of 27/28 (from 2016/17). Not all of our stores have space for soft plastic recycling units but wherever we can offer them we try and locate them conveniently for customers.</p>
Why are there so few smaller sizes available to buy? Why has the quality of your clothing deteriorated?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 1:12:04.</p>

	<p>We know there is lots to do to improve availability with plans underway to modernise our merchandise and range management technology.</p> <p>We are reducing options where it makes sense to do so. This will enable us to increase volume on our best-selling lines and invest in improving availability.</p> <p>Quality is at the heart of everything we do especially when it comes to sourcing and making our products. We want customers to trust that the products they buy from us are made well and made to last. By concentrating our supply base with fewer but more strategic partners, we're further able to hone in on the quality of the product from the fabrics we use to how it is made. The work we're doing to invest in the quality of clothing has meant our lead on quality perception among customers has widened.</p>
<p>I am very disappointed in the styles of ladies dresses etc. I still have clothes (in the loft) bought many years ago and the styles then were so different and lovely compared to present day ones.</p> <p>Look forward to your comments.</p>	<p>Thank you for sharing your feedback. Maddy and the Womenswear team would love to hear more on this, and which styles have disappointed you.</p> <p>The design focus across our ranges is about broadening, not shifting appeal – finding that sweet spot and creating pieces that both mum and daughter would want to wear.</p> <p>We're informed by trends, but we always try to interpret them in a way that is right for the M&amp;S customer.</p>
<p>Why did M&amp;S decide to pull out of big ticket furniture items, I still work in the furniture manufacturing industry and remember the multi million pound turnover that was achieved with Westbridge.</p>	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 38:05.</p> <p>We want to focus on the products our customers want to buy most, offering great value, quality and style.</p> <p>Looking at growth across our home business we believe the biggest opportunity lies in Core Home where we have a fairly small market share of 4.7% but are seeing strong growth (up 40bps LY). We will expand categories like home textiles, bedding and home fragrance and stop selling larger furniture items. We will still sell some branded furniture online.</p>



<p>Why was the decision made to change the post-retirement colleague discount policy to impose a 25-year service qualification up from 10 years?</p>	<p>This was answered live in our broadcast at 1:01:22.</p> <p>We always aim to be fair and consistent to all. The M&amp;S discount policy is a discretionary benefit and we're proud that it is one of the most popular benefits we offer, so we wanted to ensure that we continue offering it for years to come.</p> <p>To be able to do this, we had to make some changes and simplify the programme as it had become incredibly complicated and harder to track.</p> <p>We still think it's a really competitive and industry leading benefit and we absolutely wanted to continue to recognise our long service colleagues which is why we retained leaver discount for those who have 25 years of continuous service and who leave the business for any reason, not just retirement.</p>
<p>I worked for the company for 30 years and retired in 1998. My question is:- During the 1960s and 70s men were paid more than women for doing similar jobs! I do believe this was going to be addressed but haven't been notified of any result in this matter. If some recompense is going to be made this will surely affect what pension we should have received. Is this matter going to be resolved before we all pop our clogs.</p>	<p>We have checked with the Pension Scheme Trustees and this isn't an issue they are aware of. If you would like to provide more specific details we would be happy to follow up with them.</p>
<p>Those of us who deal with the M&amp;S Pension Scheme are experiencing a distinct lack of customer care and focus. The M&amp;S Alumni FB page demonstrates that many of us cannot access our accounts and correspondence, due to the shortcomings of the log in system. In my own case, I have been waiting since the end of April for a response and still nothing. A situation made more difficult due to my overseas location. It is ironic that the hackers of the pension scheme have had more luck than pension scheme members themselves. I would be grateful if the business could</p>	<p>We were made aware in April that some of our members were experiencing issues accessing the online member portal.</p> <p>The administrator of the Scheme acted quickly to resolve the technical issues and have since conducted a full investigation into the cause and reported back to the M&amp;S Scheme Trustee, to make sure they're not repeated.</p> <p>The Trustee has been and will continue to monitor the standards of service provided by the administrator.</p>

<p>bring some pressure to bear on the service provider and make life less frustrating for members. Thank you.</p>	<p>For any members who are continuing to have trouble accessing their account, please contact the administrators for further support.</p>
<p>Plan A used to be a major advantage for our business and we talked about the environment and sustainability more than any of our competitors. Now when I go into store, I hardly see it anywhere. It's become virtually invisible. What can we do to talk more to customers about the work M&amp;S is doing in this area?</p>	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 54:11.</p> <p>We know that we have more work to do to tell the Plan A story to our customers and it is a focus for the Board in the year ahead.</p> <p>In future you are going to start seeing much more on Plan A and the progress we are making across all our channels - not just in stores.</p> <p>For example, in May, we opened our Washington Galleries store which sets the standard for communicating with our customers about Plan A in store. It has really clear messaging throughout, highlighting key initiatives and the progress we've made as a business.</p> <p>Just last week, we launched our clothing repair service partnership with SOJO to give clothes another life attracting widespread coverage in the media and across our digital channels.</p>
<p>a) The drive by M&amp;S towards a Net Zero CO2 target which can only be achieved via costly energy and environmental costs prompts the obvious question: Is M&amp;S aware that fossil fuel burning by the entire human race produces just 4% of ALL CO2 emissions (IPCC AR5), with the UK contributing just 0.03%? The remaining 96% of global CO2 emissions are from natural sources. And if you were unaware of such scientific facts, will you now abandon your Net Zero policy and concentrate on your core business to help my poorly performing M&amp;S investments recover back to where they were ~20 years ago?</p> <p>b) By pledging to become Net Zero by 2040, is M&amp;S in such a financially strong position to enter into what is a very costly and</p>	<p>We rely heavily on the climate and natural resources to operate our business, so being able to ensure we have the most resource efficient (as well as cost efficient) way of working is important.</p> <p>Net zero isn't something that we can achieve alone but requires us as a business to work with the wider industry, suppliers, non-governmental organisations and trade associations. The UK government has a net zero ambition by 2050, and the retail sector (through the British Retail Consortium's roadmap) has a 2040 net zero ambition.</p> <p>This is not just an issue for M&amp;S but it's important we play a part, particularly given climate change is one of our core business risks, so there is also a level of mitigation within our targets.</p>

completely unnecessary form of virtue signalling? And do you really have enough spare cash in your coffers to indulge in such frivolity while long-suffering shareholders have seen years of pathetic returns?	
<p>In 2020 M&amp;S banned alpaca wool from its products due to welfare concerns regarding alpacas farmed and shorn for wool.</p> <p>In early June, M&amp;S reversed this ban, and presumably plans to reintroduce alpaca products. It justifies this volte face on the basis of the introduction of the Responsible Alpaca Standard (RAS) in 2021. However, the RAS only requires annual inspections of alpaca farms and there is no oversight on what happens the rest of the time.</p> <p>Given that welfare supervision remains wholly inadequate in alpaca wool supply chains, and M&amp;S doesn't inspect the farms directly to rule out animal cruelty, would the Board please consider reintroducing the ban?</p>	<p>We don't have any alpaca yarn in our products but updated our policy last year after a careful review of the updated industry welfare standards reassured us that should we reintroduce it in the future, our strict animal welfare requirements would be met.</p> <p>We take animal welfare seriously right across our business and lead the way in many areas such as chicken where we are the only national retailer to meet the high standards of the Better Chicken Commitment and dairy where all our fresh milk is RSPCA Assured.</p>
<p>I am representing Radnorshire and Herefordshire Wildlife Trust and our partner stakeholders in the River Wye catchment. I have 2 questions for you today –</p> <p>a) Can you please detail the actions you are undertaking to ensure clean water supplies, with any particular focus on the River Wye catchment.</p> <p>b) We know that you source and have producers within the Wye catchment. Could you please publicly support and detail any actions you could take against points 2 and 4 in the recently published Manifesto for the Wye, which is supported by 15 NGOs within the catchment (Point 2: establish a recovery fund to resource a fair and fast transition to river friendly farming and nature based solutions; and Point 4: ensure supermarket pricing</p>	<p>The issue of water quantity and quality associated with farming is hugely complex. We source a variety of produce from the Wye &amp; Usk area and, as is the case for all of those we work with, farmers and suppliers are required to act responsibly in terms of the production, transportation and application of manure used as fertiliser.</p> <p>All M&amp;S Select Farms must have manure management plans, including the Red Tractor Poultry Litter Management Module or equivalent if using poultry manure.</p> <p>We have been helping to fund the Wye &amp; Usk Foundation's Agri-Food Partnership project and continue to work with, support and engage the suppliers we source from.</p>

rewards river friendly farmer and that consumers are powered with honest and clear labelling).	
Please promise that having made such a good turnaround you will keep on at this aim. How will you ensure that all colleagues remember the old adage, "Customer comes first"?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 56:34.</p> <p>Building a high-performance “sleeves rolled up” culture is central to reshaping M&amp;S for growth and getting closer to customers is at the very heart of that.</p> <p>We set out a vision to be the most trusted retailer and strongly believe this is about quality, price, service and protecting the magic of M&amp;S. Our store colleagues are at the forefront of this and we are investing more in helping them provide great service. Being on hand to help customers better than we are today.</p> <p>In 2022, we launched our Closer to Customers programme to bring Store Support Centre colleagues closer to the front line. Every colleague is now required to spend seven days every year working in store. But the programme is more than Store Support Colleagues offering a helping hand; it is about ensuring the central gravity of the business is close to our customers in-store; breaking down barriers; giving our store colleagues a strong voice in the business; encouraging better teamwork; and helping to solve problems that get in the way of delivering for customers quicker.</p> <p>Lots of work done, and lots to do in changing the culture.</p>
How do you achieve a perfect crisis mode in the business so that it always strives to improve?	<p>We're creating a very different M&amp;S, a culture that is sleeves rolled up, even closer to customers and closer to colleagues, an M&amp;S where if we say it we do it. And we always aim higher and tell it as it is. It's our mantra of being positively dissatisfied.</p> <p>This year, we made progress on ‘hardwiring’ sustainable change – how and when we execute our strategic priorities – with progress in store rotation and supply chain. But we need to move faster and be ruthlessly challenging on the</p>

	<p>areas where progress has been slower, building a more effective digital and technology infrastructure, accelerating the move to a truly personalised customer experience, and resetting priorities in International.</p>
<p>I want to know how M&amp;S recognises and rewards the consistently good performance of the smaller stores such as my local Surbiton shop. They have maintained excellent standards over the years including staying open all hours during COVID. I would like to see a recognition system that customers can contribute to.</p>	<p>It's always wonderful to hear stories of how our stores and colleagues are supporting local customers and communities. We'll be sure to say thank you to the team.</p> <p>Thank you for the suggestion of a recognition scheme that customers can contribute to, we'll take that away and look into it.</p>
<p>Is this the longest "turnaround" in corporate history? With the entire leadership changed (with the exception of Archie Norman) the share price is still lower than it was 10 years ago... despite most of the traditional high street competition disappearing (BHS, Debenhams, Arcadia etc). When can we expect to see a decent return for long term shareholders?</p>	<p>Our objective is to reshape M&amp;S to be a growth business, investing for long-term sustainable and profitable growth which will create more sustainable value for shareholders in the future.</p> <p>The management team led by Stuart has done a good job, now delivering 12 consecutive quarters of sales growth and growing profits and market share.</p> <p>They have also kept a tight rein on costs and as a result the financial health of the business is as strong as it's been in decades.</p>
<p>It was once said that our biggest competitor will ultimately be Amazon, do you agree and are we meeting the challenge?</p>	<p>Competition is good for us and it's good for our customers so of course we watch others, but we try to stay focused on what we are doing. Our strategy is to deliver exceptional quality, style and trusted value for customers whenever, wherever and however they want to shop with us. We've made some great progress with lot's done but lots to do.</p> <p>Despite recent good performance there is no room for complacency, and we know the competition is constantly looking to catch up. We must remain positively dissatisfied and never think our transformation is complete.</p>
<p>Congratulations on a good set of results. However as a shareholder, we do very poorly compared to Next. Their shares continue to rise and are almost at £100 and give healthy</p>	<p>Healthy competition is a good thing, but we try not to focus too much on what others are doing. We have a clear strategy which is focused on delivering exceptional quality, style and trusted value for customers whenever, wherever and however they want to shop with us.</p>

dividends. Is it possible to recruit a former Next executive to become a non-executive director?	We have a very talented Board with a diverse set of experiences and a top management team across the business which is making a difference to our performance.
International performance has been poor this year. What is the problem and what can you do to improve performance of M&S overseas?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 1:08:18.</p> <p>International is a big opportunity. We haven't achieved the growth we want but we're hopeful we will change that in the medium/longer term as we introduce new leadership and work with our experienced international partners.</p>
Living in East Yorkshire there is not one Marks and Spencer clothes store. Why? Not everyone wants to buy online, in fact everyone I know, friends and relatives now buy in other stores such as Next. A very disgruntled customer, I used to spend a lot in Marks but I am now unable to.	<p>We want to ensure we have the right stores with the right space in the right places. Sometimes that means making tough decisions to close unprofitable stores, relocating within an area where we can. And it will mean some places won't have a clothing store.</p> <p>Online is growing with two thirds of new C&amp;H customers coming through the online channel.</p> <p>Using Click &amp; Collect our East Yorkshire customers can choose to collect their clothing from our Food halls in Hull Anlaby, Beverley and Hull Kingswood as well as choosing home delivery.</p>
Why are staff refusing to refund online orders at the tills it would be helpful if you offered a choice as other retailers do, your stance deters me from ordering.	<p>This shouldn't be the case in our Clothing &amp; Home stores, please do share further details on your experience so we can resolve this with the store directly.</p> <p>Customers can refund online orders at the till point in our Clothing &amp; Home stores for an immediate refund. While this isn't possible in Simply Food stores, customers can scan and drop online orders in a collection box for a refund.</p>
I am wanting to know why you are not covering up food in your hospital shop at the Royal Free Hospital. The bread rolls and Victoria sponge muffins are left out for everyone to cough and touch. What are your H&S standards? Any Victoria sponge,	Customers have told us that they like to see our bakery products unpackaged in the fresh market environment of our stores. Please be assured that we take hygiene very seriously and our colleagues adhere to very strict rules and regulations to make sure our products are safe to consume.

passion fruit / walnut / lemon drizzle cakes are put under a globe cover – why this serious disparity and resultant health hazard?	
M&S has a policy not to provide toilets for customers in stores where there is no café. Your store in Chesterfield has several toilets that the former store provided for its customers. They are not available for M&S customers! Please comment.	We offer toilets where we can but some store profiles are not designed for them, however please talk to one of our colleagues and they will do what they can to help you.
When the founder of the Noise Abatement Society gave M&S an award for being a "Haven of Peace on the High Street" I accepted it. Now I have to listen to screaming divas singing, nay shouting! Do we really think this is needed?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 38:50.</p> <p>Thank you for the feedback. We do play music in some stores some of the time and we try to ensure a selection that is popular with customers and colleagues and play it at an appropriate volume.</p>
Given the phenomenal successes of GB News in the recent TRIC TV awards both this year and last, and the rapid increase in viewing figures, I am at a loss as to why M&S continues with the left-inspired boycott of this very popular TV channel.	We always want to make sure our advertising targets our customers most effectively to maximise reach and provide value for money so we work with independent media buyers who use detailed insight and analytics tools to get the best possible return on investment.
<p>Some years ago the USP's for Marks &amp; Spencer were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St. Michael merchandise</li> <li>2. Over 99% of items made in the UK</li> <li>3. The quality of Staff and Store presentation / upkeep.</li> </ol> <p>What is the USP today? (to me there does not appear to be one).</p>	<p>Our vision is to be the most trusted retailer, doing the right thing for customers, with quality products at the heart of everything we do. And we are unswerving in our commitment to trusted value, making sure we offer customers exceptional quality at the very best price.</p> <p>Research undertaken over the past year has shown that we lead the market when it comes to customer perceptions of quality.</p>
Why are vouchers not personalised? Why don't they follow shopping habits?	If this question refers to Sparks rewards, we do try and make these relevant and useful to customers, but we know we have more to do on personalisation and work is underway in our data and digital team to improve this.
<p>In the last three months I have received poor service from written letters sent to Waterside House.</p> <p>I firmly believe the current fine reputation of M&amp;S is further enhanced by efficient corporate communications.</p>	Sorry to hear about your experience. We hold ourselves to high standards when it comes to customer service and have targets in place for response time. We apologise that on this occasion these standards haven't been met and will look into this further.

What further action has Stuart Machin taken to ensure that all customer communications are dealt with in an efficient manner?	
Last year Stuart Machin was explaining the problems caused by Brexit but he was silenced by the Chair. Please could we hear the full answer.	<p>The key post-Brexit issues that remain a challenge for the sector and our business relate to movement of goods between the UK and EU – including Ireland where we operate stores. A veterinary agreement that agrees food standards between the EU and UK would do away with the need for export controls when moving goods between the UK and EU countries. This would reduce costs for M&amp;S and make sure we could move product between our suppliers and stores more quickly. It would also remove the need to label products in Northern Ireland with ‘Not for EU’ which again removes cost and complexity.</p> <p>The current proposals will result in ‘Not for EU’ labels being applied to product across Great Britain. This is confusing for customers and adds costs as well as potentially harming trade with the EU which is no good for British suppliers. We have called on whoever forms the next government to make changes.</p>
Why does the Notice of Meeting 2024 start by announcing the 23rd of Marks and Spencer Group plc? I first attended an AGM in 1992. This is more than 23 years ago.	<p>This was the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting of Marks and Spencer Group plc. Although you may have attended previous M&amp;S AGMs, these will have been of our previous listed entity, Marks and Spencer plc.</p> <p>Marks and Spencer plc was previously the company listed on the London Stock Exchange. In 2002 M&amp;S underwent a capital reorganisation. Marks and Spencer plc was delisted, and Marks and Group plc listed on the London Stock Exchange.</p>
Virtual AGMs are not legally recognised in the UK. Apart from including a physical address in your notice of AGM, please could you explain how M&S’s ‘digital first’ / ‘digitally enabled’ AGM is compliant with UK legal requirements and best practice guidelines laid out by regulatory bodies, governance and proxy advisory agencies who advocate for hybrid AGMs?	Our digital meetings are compliant with our Company’s Articles of Association and UK legal requirements (shareholders approved the changes to the Articles with 99.93% of the vote in favour (2017) and with 99.98% (2021)). We believe a well-executed online broadcast provides as many shareholders as possible, no matter where they live, with the opportunity to join the meeting in a way that best suits their need. This year we have provided shareholders with the



	<p>opportunity to attend the meeting in person and consider the meeting to be hybrid.</p>
<p>I understand that hundreds of shareholders used to attend your AGMs. How many shareholders attended your 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019 AGMs? Given the historic high attendance numbers and clear interest from shareholders to attend in-person, has the company considered continuing to cultivate this tradition as well as offering the option to attend online?</p>	<p>This was discussed live in our broadcast at 46:59.</p> <p>Prior to giving shareholders the chance to join online, we had seen a significant fall in engagement with our AGMs. Our physical AGM attendance figures had been declining rapidly in the 10 years before we went digital – in 2009 we had 1,466 shareholders in attendance, 766 in 2014, 593 at our last physical/hybrid meeting in 2019. Engagement has trebled since we first took a digital approach with 1,759 individual shareholders participating in 2023 (whilst market-wide attendance at AGMs has typically been down between 50% and 60%).</p> <p>1,806 people have engaged with the 2024 AGM so far (with the broadcast now available to watch online), which is a 2.6% increase on last year's engagement (1,759) and more than 200% up on our last physical AGM in 2019 (593). Of the 1,806 shareholders who engaged there were 40 shareholders who attended in person, with a handful of guests in attendance.</p>
<p>You have a 'leading radio and television broadcaster, Anita Anand, acting as shareholder advocate to ensure shareholder views and questions are put to the Board. Is Ms Anand an M&amp;S shareholder and was the role of shareholder advocate advertised so that other shareholders could apply for this? What is the criteria for being a shareholder advocate?</p>	<p>The shareholder advocate role represents shareholder views by posing a mixture of pre-submitted and live questions to the Board. To ensure our Board is appropriately held to account and not 'hiding behind' the digital AGM format, we wanted to ensure we asked a credible shareholder advocate to join us in 2021, 2022 and 2023 and introduce some independence to the process. We think it is best for the role to be held by an independent representative, who has no connection to the Company or its shareholders. This pushes the Board to provide robust, transparent answers to shareholder questions. This innovation has been praised by ShareAction, amongst other stakeholders.</p>
<p>'Digital first' AGM costs: Is Ms Anand receiving payment for her role as shareholder advocate? If so, what is the cost for this, and how is this cost justified given that customarily the Chair of the Board is also the Chair of the meeting and has the responsibility of presiding over the session and ensuring that shareholders'</p>	<p>The digital first approach has saved the business on average c.£200k compared to 2019 costs. The shareholder advocate is paid an appropriate fee for the time commitment. Using a shareholder advocate rather than the Chairman to host the Q&amp;A introduces some independence to the process, to ensure the Board is clearly held accountable and is not 'hiding behind' the digital AGM format.</p>

views are put to the board? Also, what is the cost for setting up and running your 'digitally enabled' AGM, including studio and production costs?	
In reviewing your 2023 and 2024 Annual report, I remark that as of 1 April 2023 M&S had 131,726 registered holders, and that as of 30 March 2024 this had gone down to 122,264. Please could you explain what happened to the 9,462 holders that came off your register between 2023 and 2024, and are they private individuals or nominees / institutions? Also, given M&S' advocacy for shareholder democracy, including last year's Share Your Voice campaign led by Chair, Archie Norman, how would you expect all your effort to be reflected on your share register?	<p>Our share register is constantly changing with holders buying and selling every day. Any reduction in the total number of shareholders indicates an increase in the number of shares held by each holder.</p> <p>In 2023, we noted in our Share Your Voice campaign that nominees make up 40% of the total shareholder market and investment platforms are experiencing annual double digital growth. At the same time, certified shareholder numbers are declining. We would therefore expect a reduction in private investors holding shares directly and an increase in the number of shares held by nominees.</p>
Bearing in mind what's happened with Tesco and Sainsburys bank, what is the future for M&S Bank?	<p>This question was answered live in our broadcast at 1:06:11.</p> <p>We signed a new 7-year deal with HBSC earlier this year which is focused on M&amp;S' credit offering, payment solutions and bringing together digital payments and loyalty.</p> <p>Over the past year we have also launched the digital payment solution, Sparks Pay, for use across all M&amp;S stores, M&amp;S.com and app.</p> <p>We're excited about the opportunities this new deal will unlock for customers.</p>