BURFIELDS HOUSE
WEALTH MANAGEMENT



View From the Plain Newsletter August 2026

So, why have you received this newsletter by post? For those of you who usually open your emails, you will have received this View From The Plain newsletter in the normal way. For those of you who, according to our read receipts, haven't opened them … you have this one in an envelope!

Of course, technology has its flaws and, if you do regularly read our emails but have also received a copy in the post, my deepest apologies in advance.

But why have I gone to the trouble? Because occasionally, we really do need to get in contact. So, if only this once, please read on.

Why is communication so important?

As you all know, we at Burfields House are here to help you get the best out of your money with:
1. Pension Planning
2. Investment Planning
3. Inheritance Tax Planning

And sometimes, we need to communicate with you collectively because something genuinely important has changed.

For example, remember our communications about Transitional Tax-Free Amount Certificates? These related to pensions held outside St. James's Place and information we needed from you to ensure that you weren't disadvantaged by HMRC's changes to the tax-free cash rules.

I am hoping that, because this one has arrived in an envelope with a stamp on, it would have reached you and you will have the chance to cast your eye over it.

The Financial Conduct Authority and financial education

The Financial Conduct Authority, our regulator, likes the fact that some financial advice firms offer educational events to help keep their clients informed. We are one of those firms that run these educational events at our Tenterden office, with an online option for those who are unable to travel.

If we send you an email and this gets missed, you could miss out on these valuable opportunities.

I completely understand that we all receive far too many emails. But please ensure that our emails are not falling into the spam/junk folder which can happen. They are sent because we are trying to keep you informed and, hopefully, help you make better financial decisions.

We have been here before…

I am sure many of you remember the media campaign a few years ago heavily criticising SJP over value, service and the circumstances of some Partner Practices. Some of that criticism was justified, some of it certainly wasn't.

Unfortunately, firms like ours that weren't the problem still paid the price in many different ways. And isn't that frustrating? A few bad experiences can change the perception of what is, generally, a very good relationship.

"That's life," as they say, but it has made me and the Burfields House team more determined than ever to prove that we do a great job and offer considerably more than most firms in our industry. Our very positive client retention rate would suggest that you agree.

Why don't we just post everything?

Well, because the numbers are rather frightening! A second-class stamp is currently 91p. Multiply that by around 2,000 clients and we are looking at £1,820 per month or approximately £21,840 per year. And that is before printing, envelopes and someone's time to put it all together!

Email is considerably more efficient, considerably cheaper, kinder to the trees and, generally, much more reliable in terms of delivery. But don't expect every communication to arrive through your letterbox, this is a one-off attempt to get your attention using the old-fashioned method!

Our client events

Something else I would like to touch on is that our client events are not arranged or paid for by SJP. They are our choice, our time and our expense. Frankly, we love getting a room full of clients together; it becomes as much a social event as an educational one.

This month, we held an event covering pension legislation and Inheritance Tax changes. It wasn't particularly well attended, however, the feedback from those who did attend was extremely positive and, importantly, we know that some of those clients will now be able to achieve better outcomes as a result of what they learned.

A very good point was made afterwards: It was August! You may have been working, on holiday, or perhaps on "grandchildren duty". In hindsight, maybe August wasn't the best month to hold it? Point taken!

What about your family?

Many of you have family members who don't know us. The longer-term clients amongst you will know that, over the years, we have always encouraged you to introduce us to those closest to you. Why? Because one day we will probably meet your children, friends or family, and unfortunately, that meeting isn't always under the circumstances we would choose.

As Will writer Graham Beagles rather brilliantly puts it: "We're all in the queue, but we don't know where we are in it."

Which brings me to something rather important: we must all have a Will. You can't dodge that bullet.

Many years ago, I made what was intended to be a slightly tongue-in-cheek statement: "I'm fed up with meeting your family or closest friends just after you've died."

It sounds rather brutal, but it got people thinking and slowly but surely, we started being introduced to family members while everyone was still alive and well!

"Die tidy"

Another bit of Burfields House wisdom is: "Die tidy." Losing someone you love is difficult enough, then discovering that there is a financial mess to sort out, a Will nobody can find, assets nobody knew about or, worse still, no Will at all, isn't exactly the surprise anyone wants.

We want the best for you, but we need to work together. We are not just here to invest your money, far from it. Once you become a Burfields House client, I like to think you effectively have a club membership for your family, too. I know many of you talk about us to your friends and family as our referrals from existing clients are currently at an all-time high. So, thank you, it means a huge amount to all of us.

You told us what you want to know

In my last View From The Plain newsletter, I asked you to help us understand what you would like us to cover at our mini-seminars and the responses were fascinating.

The most requested subjects were:
1. Understanding the benefits of Trusts
2. Inheritance Tax planning
3. Understanding Wills and Lasting Powers of Attorney*
4. Long-term care planning
5. Arranging care at home when circumstances change
6. Navigating your way through the long-term care maze
7. Pensions through all their stages — particularly with most pensions becoming assessable for IHT from April 2027 and changes to when they can be drawn.

Interestingly, nobody specifically asked for investment management. Why? Perhaps because you have been with us for so long that you simply take it for granted? Or perhaps it is because you have confidence that we are doing what we should be doing?

Either way, it made me smile, because without good investment management, none of the above really matters. No money…no choice! 😳

Don't become complacent

I am very conscious that when markets are performing well, it is very easy for all of us to become complacent. But markets don't always behave themselves and returns are not guaranteed. Investments can rise and fall in value, and will vary depending on economic conditions, time, and individual circumstances, meaning you could get back less than you invest. However, this last year has delivered double-digit returns for many equity-focused investors and positive returns make clients happy. Why wouldn't they?

Many of you have known me personally for decades, some for more than 40 years, and I hope you trust that I and the team don't simply sit back and admire the numbers, we follow the performance of the SJP contracted independent fund managers, but we also look outside. We have to keep an eye on the competition! 😉

Who exactly is Burfields House?

Burfields House was created by me in 1998 and has evolved considerably since then. Some clients from my previous life, which began in 1982, followed me and, I am delighted to say, are still with me today.

Until 2018, anyone wanting to join us had to attend one of our seminars. Why? Because we wanted to take people on a life journey, rather than simply talk to them about investments.

Part One — Building it
We talked about:

- Inflation and how it erodes wealth
- Helping to create and build wealth
- SJP's distinctive approach to investment management
- Diversification, risk and reward
- Saving tax throughout your working life
- ISAs and pension contributions
- Structuring investments for future income and capital needs
- Possible trust planning

Part Two — What do you do once you've got it?
This is where things become rather more interesting.

- How do you spend it?
- How do you protect it?
- Can you afford to spend it if you might need it later?
- How can cash-flow modelling help?
- How do you protect your wealth from "predator attack"?
- Can you afford to gift money away?
- What happens if your children divorce?
- And, perhaps the big one…Is HMRC your largest single beneficiary?

All of these questions should matter to you, but the answers will depend on your age, your objectives and, sometimes, your health.

But the important point is this: If you don't know what you should be planning for, or when you should be planning for it, it can be too late. You can't take out house and contents insurance after your house has burnt down. Sadly, some people experienced exactly that in the last month.

We work with you, not just for you

That original seminar structure gave people a good overview of what we were about and, importantly, how we would work together. I have always believed that clients need to understand that we are working with them, not simply working for them. Long may that continue.

Since 2018, we have also acquired a number of retiring Partner businesses. Most clients like and trust what we do for them because we offer a much broader range of services, supported by specialist advisers, than they may previously have experienced.

Some of you joined us directly, others came to Burfields House through a retiring Partner. However, Burfields House isn't going to be sold. We have younger advisers coming through the business and succession planning is very much at the heart of our plans for the future.

I am certainly not suggesting that your previous advisers were not good, far from it. In fact, the reason they chose us was because they believed we were a good fit for YOUR future. Advisers care about their clients, your previous adviser was no different. They trusted us with you, and we don't take that responsibility lightly.

This is the third time I have said this!

We are here for you.

We want better outcomes for you, we take your affairs seriously, and provided you give us accurate and complete information, our advice is designed to be appropriate for your individual circumstances.

But advice is a two-way street. We need information from you, and we need you to engage with us. Which brings me neatly to…

Home visits. Yes, that one again!

Firstly, thank you to everyone who has visited one of our four locations for their annual review since my last newsletter. We appreciate that some clients may prefer a home visit, and if you are genuinely unable to travel, don't drive, or have a disability that makes travelling difficult, we will of course visit you.

However, for most of you we will arrange for you to meet with your adviser at one of our offices in Goudhurst, Cranbrook or Tenterden, where we can provide the same high level of advice and service.

So, when we contact you, we will be asking for two things:

1. Please provide us with all the financial information we need to properly advise you prior to the meeting.
2. Please come to one of our offices for your annual review, so that we can focus, without distraction, on you and your affairs.

So, why this newsletter?

And we finally come back to the reason this arrived through your letterbox. I wanted, on this occasion, to put it all down on paper. Not because we want to lecture you. Not because we think you are doing something wrong. But because I want you to understand why we try so hard to do the best possible job for you. We are passionate about what we do.

We have built Burfields House around relationships, knowledge, communication and, hopefully, common sense. We want to help you and your family make better decisions, and sometimes that means telling you things you may not necessarily want to hear!

Finally…

We are fortunate to work with so many wonderful clients, and we are incredibly grateful for the trust and support you place in us. For most of our clients, communication is already a real strength of the relationship, and that helps us do our very best work on your behalf.

However, we know life gets busy, and it is easy for emails to go unread, events to be missed, or important changes in your circumstances to slip your mind when it comes to letting us know. The reality is that we can only act on the information we have, so the more we stay in touch, the better equipped we are to provide the right advice and support when you need it.

At the heart of everything we do is helping you make the most of what matters most:

You.

Your money.

Your family.

Your future.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support, trust and friendship. And please…open the next email! 😉

Yours sincerely,

David and the Burfields HouseTeam

*Will writing and Powers of Attorney involve the referral to a service that is separate and distinct to those offered by St. James's Place and along with Trusts are not regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

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Principal Partner Practice

St James's Place