Fundsmith LLP

Fundsmith LLP
33 Cavendish Square
London
W1G 0PW

T +44 (0)20 3551 6337
E enquiries@fundsmith.co.uk
W www.fundsmith.co.uk

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Dear Fellow Investor,

This is the third annual letter to owners of the Fundsmith Sustainable Equity Fund ('FSEF', 'Fund').

The table below shows performance figures for the last calendar year and the cumulative and annualised performance since inception on 1st November 2017 and various comparators.

% Total Return	**1st Jan to 31st Dec 2020**	**Inception to 31st Dec 2020 Cumulative**	**Annualised**	**Sharpe ratio[5]**	**Sortino ratio[5]**
Fundsmith Sustainable Equity Fund[1]	+18.0	+53.3	+14.4	0.92	0.78
Equities[2]	+12.3	+35.9	+10.2	0.53	0.49
UK Bonds[3]	+4.6	+11.0	+3.4	n/a	n/a
Cash[4]	+0.3	+1.9	+0.6	n/a	n/a

[1] I Class Acc shares, net of fees, priced at noon UK time, source: Fundsmith LLP
[2] MSCI World Index, £ net, priced at US market close, source: Bloomberg
[3] Bloomberg/Barclays Bond Indices UK Gov. 5–10 yr., source: Bloomberg
[4] 3 Month £ LIBOR Interest Rate, source: Bloomberg
[5] Sharpe & Sortino ratios are since inception on 1.11.17 to 31.12.20, source: Financial Express Analytics

The table shows the performance of the I Class Accumulation shares which rose by +18.0% in 2020 and compares with a rise of +12.3% for the MSCI World Index with dividends reinvested.

However, I realise that many or indeed most of our investors do not use these as the natural comparator for their investments. Those of you who are based in the UK may look to the FTSE 100 Index ('FTSE 100') as the yardstick for measuring your investments and may hold funds which are benchmarked to this index and often hug it. The FTSE

100 delivered a total return of -11.5% in 2020 so our Fund outperformed this by a margin of 29.5 percentage points.

For the year the top five contributors to the Fund's performance were:

PayPal	+4.5%
IDEXX	+3.2%
Microsoft	+2.4%
Starbucks	+1.8%
Intuit	+1.8%

Microsoft and Intuit are making their third consecutive appearance whilst IDEXX is putting in an appearance for the second time. Someone once said that no one ever got poor by taking profits. This may be true but I doubt they got very rich by this approach either. Starbucks, which we discuss below, was purchased after sharp falls in March.

The bottom five were:

Marriott International	-1.0%
Sage	-0.9%
Amadeus	-0.8%
Intertek	-0.4%
Becton Dickinson	-0.3%

We hardly need to discuss the reasons for the poor performance of Amadeus and Marriott International. Airline and travel reservations and hotel management have not been happy places to be in the past year, although it is worth noting nowhere near as bad as investing in actual airlines or hotels. Amadeus's share price fall of -13.5% in 2020 compares with a drop of -27.9% for the Bloomberg World Airlines Index. Marriott's share price fall of -15.0% compares with a drop of -35.1% for the Dow Jones US Hotel and Lodging REIT Index. This illustrates the virtues of Amadeus's and Marriott's business models in contrast to the industries they serve.

However, in both cases whilst they face a difficult situation, we are pleased that management has spent its time and effort managing liquidity and costs in an effort to ensure that they survive these events rather than pointlessly speculating about the likely timescale and course of recovery. In both cases we believe that they should not only survive but also strengthen their competitive position.

We sold our stakes in Clorox and Reckitt Benckiser and one as yet undisclosed position and purchased stakes in Starbucks, Colgate, Zoetis, Procter & Gamble and an as yet undisclosed position. Clorox and Reckitt Benckiser traded strongly due to the rush to purchase

increased quantities of household cleaning products, personal cleaning products and OTC medicines. We felt that in both cases the ratings achieved did not reflect the pedestrian nature of these businesses in more normal circumstances or the issues they face which may come back into focus if or when the COVID related boost fades. Moreover, at the same time as these two stocks were enjoying an unusually good performance, Starbucks, which we admire, saw share price falls of over 40% at the height of the panic over COVID. They are probably familiar to you as the world's leading coffee shop brand. Starbucks has high returns on capital and a good growth rate — two characteristics which we seek. Whilst it is easy to see the challenge to the lockdowns for Starbucks's urban outlets which partly rely on seating and coffee collected on the way to the office, this is far from their only format. The sometimes spectacular queues and resulting traffic jams at Starbucks drive-through outlets both illustrate another format and testify to the continued loyalty to the brand as does the rise in loyalty club members in 2020. During this period Starbucks's main competitor in its second largest market — Luckin Coffee in China — was exposed as a fraud in yet another illustration of the rule that it is only when the tide goes out that you find out who has been swimming naked.

After the COVID lockdowns we also purchased a stake in Colgate-Palmolive, Procter & Gamble and Zoetis. Colgate-Palmolive is the leader in oral care and liquid soap and has a speciality pet food business (Hills Scientific). Procter & Gamble is the world's largest Fast Moving Consumer Goods ('FMCG') business with leading positons in laundry and cleaning products, baby and feminine care, beauty and grooming. Zoetis is the leading animal drug company which is also developing a business in diagnostic testing.

We continue to apply a simple three step investment strategy:

- Buy good companies
- Don't overpay
- Do nothing

I will review how we are doing against each of those in turn.

As usual we seek to give some insight into the first and most important of these — whether we own good companies — by giving you the following table which shows what Fundsmith would be like if instead of being a fund it was a company and accounted for the stakes which it owns in the portfolio on a 'look through' basis, and compares this with the market, in this case the FTSE 100 and the S&P 500 Index ('S&P 500'). This shows you how the portfolio compares with the major indices and how it has evolved over time.

Year ended	Fundsmith Sustainable Equity Fund Portfolio				S&P 500	FTSE 100
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2020	2020
ROCE	28%	29%	29%	23%	11%	10%
Gross margin	63%	65%	65%	61%	44%	39%
Operating margin	26%	28%	26%	21%	12%	9%
Cash conversion	102%	95%	99%	102%	94%	95%
Interest cover	17x	17x	17x	16x	6x	6x

Source: Fundsmith LLP/Bloomberg. ROCE, Gross Margin, Operating Profit Margin and Cash Conversion are the weighted mean of the underlying companies invested in by the Fundsmith Sustainable Equity Fund and mean for the FTSE 100 and S&P 500 Indices. The FTSE 100 and S&P 500 numbers exclude financial stocks. The Interest Cover number is median. 2017-2019 ratios are based on last reported fiscal year accounts as at 31st December and for 2020 are Trailing Twelve Months and as defined by Bloomberg. Cash Conversion compares Free Cash Flow per Share with Net Income per Share. Percentage change is not calculated if the TTM period contains a net loss.

Returns on capital and profit margins were lower in the portfolio companies in 2020. This is hardly surprising in light of events in the economy, but the scale of the falls were hardly disastrous. When people have said to us, ‘You invest in non-cyclical businesses’ I always reply that I have never found one. It is the degree of cyclicality in our portfolio which we seek to control through our stock selection. As a group our stocks still have excellent returns, profit margins and cash generation even in poor economic conditions. As you can see the same cannot be said for the major indices even though they have the benefit of including our good companies.

The average year of foundation of our portfolio companies at the year-end was 1926. They are just under a century old collectively.

Consistently high returns on capital are one sign we look for when seeking companies to invest in. Another is a source of growth — high returns are not much use if the business is not able to grow and deploy more capital at these high rates. So how did our companies fare in that respect in 2020? The weighted average free cash flow (the cash the companies generate after paying for everything except the dividend, and our preferred measure) grew by 9% in 2020.

The second leg of our strategy is to employ both negative Environmental, Social and Governance (‘ESG’) screening (not investing in high ESG risk sectors such as aerospace and defence, brewers, distillers and vintners, casinos and gaming, gas and electric utilities, metals and mining, oil, gas and consumable fuels, pornography and tobacco) and screening for sustainability in the widest sense, taking account of not only the companies’ ESG policies and practices but also their policies and practices on research and development, new product innovation, dividend payments and the adequacy and productivity of capital investment.

One of the key metrics we use to assess ESG risk is RepRisk data which provides a measure of the current reputational risk for each

company based on ESG factors and current “hot topics”. At the end of December 2020, the weighted average RepRisk indicator for our portfolio was 25.8, higher than it was at the start of the year but still well below the S&P 500 index score of 29.1.

At the end of 2020, the four companies with the highest RepRisk Indicator scores were:

Microsoft (54)
Johnson & Johnson (53)
Unilever (49)
Visa (49)

Microsoft’s and Johnson & Johnson have switched positions in this year’s ranking despite the RepRisk Indicator of both falling from 57 to 54 and from 58 to 53 respectively. Unilever has kept its position at third, although its score has increased from 46 to 49. Visa, replacing Marriott, is a new and somewhat questionable entrant into the list. It’s RepRisk increased by 15 in December after news it was suspending the use of its cards on Mindgeek’s site Pornhub, amid allegations of rape scenes, child abuse and private videos being shown on the website without participants’ consent. This is something that we would consider a positive impact, which reduces the investment risk of Visa.

At the end of 2020, the four companies with the lowest RepRisk Indicator scores were:

Kone (0)
IDEXX (0)
Waters (1)
Undisclosed Position (4)

Kone and IDEXX (which also appeared last year) are an elevator & escalator business and animal diagnostic testing business respectively, and therefore have unsurprisingly low scores. Waters makes liquid chromatography and mass spectronomy and other equipment used for testing by the food and drug industry.

We use the RepRisk Indicators as a proxy for the absolute negative impacts a company has on the environment and society. Environmental impacts are somewhat easy to measure and compare, assuming all companies report accurate statistics that are calculated using similar methodologies, which is an assumption that is becoming more true as each year goes by. With environmental impacts, one can calculate a number (e.g. GHG emissions) for a company and then compare how that has moved over time and with other similar companies. We can also aggregate data to assess the impacts of the entire portfolio.

Those of you who read the fund's monthly ESG factsheet will have noted that we report environmental statistics per million pounds of FCF for the portfolio and S&P 500. For non-reporting companies we estimate their environmental statistics by applying the average statistics for the company's respective subsector in proportion to their total assets.

Over the past few months, we have been refining our estimation model to make it more accurate and expanding it so that it can produce comparable numbers for the MSCI World Index, which contains significantly more companies than the S&P 500. This has meant that for a few statistics which most companies produce – how much waste and greenhouse gases they produce and how much water and energy they use – we can compare the negative impact on the environment of FSEF to an easily investable index.

These weighted average statistics are shown in the table below:

Metric	Unit	FSEF	MSCI World	Equivalent no. of UK households
Total waste produced	*Thousand metric tonnes*	197	8,628	188k
Hazardous waste produced	*Thousand metric tonnes*	14.3	609	n/a
Water withdrawn	*Millions meters cubed*	61	420	110k
Energy use	*Thousand megawatt hours*	3,036	26,352	804k
Greenhouse gas emissions	*Thousand metric tonnes*	886	5,876	43k

Weighted average is weight of a company in fund multiplied by environmental stat of a company

As you can see from the table above, owning units in FSEF has a significantly lower impact on the environment than owning the MSCI World. As the numbers by themselves can be fairly hard to imagine in real terms, I've converted the FSEF numbers into the number of average UK households it would take to emit this amount over a year, which is also shown in the table above.

Social impacts, however, are much more difficult to measure quantitatively because they are far more dependent on an individual company and what it is capable of doing, in either a positive or negative way, and can rarely be quantified. It is so dependent on the context of individual companies that it is almost impossible to compare them against one another. This is one of the reasons why the majority of reported social statistics focus on diversity statistics, as they can easily be measured and tracked over time. However, this ignores a lot of the nuance and detail of the good and bad impact companies have,

which we will try to demonstrate through some of the positive impacts FSEF companies have had on society in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initially as the pandemic began, the companies in FSEF were quick to preserve cash by delaying dividends, cutting non-essential expenses and arranging additional debt facilities from banks. They were also quick to make their offices and factories safe for workers, while supporting those who were now working from home.

Post the initial outbreak, numerous companies in FSEF contributed positively in the fight against COVID-19 in more ways that just donating money and equipment, although many also did that. There were numerous initiatives to support FSEF company employees, local communities and businesses. Other FSEF companies had the expertise and resources to directly help the fight with innovation or R&D.

Overall, FSEF portfolio companies donated over $150m to support their local communities and employees through these difficult times. FSEF companies also provided support for local businesses, both big and small, which were affected by the crisis. Overall, FSEF portfolio companies offered over $900m in grants to small businesses. Some FSEF companies had the expertise and resources to directly support the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

At Fundsmith, we find the idea that one could reduce the wide variety of positive impacts made by FSEF portfolio companies in response to the pandemic to a single rating number fallacious. It overly simplifies something to the point that its meaning is lost. There is no way for anyone to quantify how much "better" it is for society for Johnson & Johnson to actually be producing a COVID vaccine compared to PayPal helping small businesses reopen faster.

This is why we report the good and the bad which FSEF portfolio companies do each month in the commentary on our FSEF ESG factsheet so that you and we can assess particular instances. Over time we find that these tend to give us a clear picture of a company's stance on sustainability, but it is one based upon informed judgment rather than box ticking or spurious precision.

We also, rather than relying on external rating providers, perform our own analysis of both the positive and negative impacts our portfolio companies have in the widest possible sense, accepting that in many cases the impact isn't going to be tangible. In contrast, the majority of the asset management industry rely on external rating providers to simplify their assessment of what they can and can't invest in.

However, in doing so, a lot of the actual net impact companies have is lost.

Further issues that arise from this need for simplified ratings is that it forces asset managers to look for things they can measure accurately (board and employee diversity) or whether a company has a policy towards social issues such as animal testing, human rights or modern slavery. These are, of course, good things to have and are signs of good transparent corporate governance, but just because a company has a policy toward something doesn't mean they actually behave in that way, and conversely, if they don't have a policy, it doesn't mean that they don't behave in a way that we would approve of. A policy does not equate to action, and reducing a company's net impacts on society down to a single metric overly simplifies the issue and too many of the good impacts that companies have are ignored or lost in the process.

This leads onto the question of valuation. The weighted average free cash flow ('FCF') yield (the free cash flow generated by the companies divided by their market value) of the portfolio at the outset of the year was 3.3% and ended it at 2.9%, so they became more highly rated. Whilst this is a good thing from the viewpoint of the performance of their shares and the Fund, it makes us nervous as changes in valuation are finite and reversible, although it is hard to see the most likely source of such a reversal — a rise in interest rates — in the near future.

The year-end median FCF yield on the S&P 500 was 3.7%. The year-end median FCF yield on the FTSE 100 was 4.2%. More of our stocks are in the former index than the latter and I will not repeat the explanation which I gave in my 2017 annual letter on why I think the FTSE 100 is not an appropriate benchmark or investment proxy for our investors to use. Moreover, the valuation disparity with the FTSE 100 has been widened by the portfolio's 30% outperformance of the FTSE 100 during the year. It's hard to outperform by such a wide margin without becoming relatively more highly valued unless the portfolio's cash flows have grown at a similar differential rate. What the market seems to be rewarding is consistency of performance which has been emphasised by economic conditions in 2020.

Our portfolio consists of companies that are fundamentally a lot better than the average of those in either index and are valued much more highly than the average FTSE 100 company and higher than the average S&P 500 company. It is wise to bear in mind that despite the rather sloppy shorthand used by many commentators, highly rated does not equate to expensive any more than lowly rated equates to cheap.

Turning to the third leg of our strategy, which we succinctly describe as ‘Do nothing’, minimising portfolio turnover remains one of our objectives and this was again achieved with negative portfolio turnover of -2.6% during the period. It is perhaps more helpful to know that we spent a total of just 0.038% (3.8 basis points) of the Fund’s average value over the year on voluntary dealing (which excludes dealing costs associated with fund subscriptions and redemptions as these are involuntary). We have held 17 of our portfolio companies since inception in 2017.

Why is this important? It helps to minimise costs and minimising the costs of investment is a vital contribution to achieving a satisfactory outcome as an investor. Too often investors, commentators and advisers focus on, or in some cases obsess about, the Annual Management Charge (‘AMC’) or the Ongoing Charges Figure (‘OCF’), which includes some costs over and above the AMC, which are charged to the Fund. The OCF for 2020 for the I Class Accumulation shares was 0.97%. The trouble is that the OCF does not include an important element of costs — the costs of dealing. When a fund manager deals by buying or selling, the fund typically incurs the cost of commission paid to a broker, the bid-offer spread on the stocks dealt in and, in some cases, transaction taxes such as stamp duty in the UK. This can add significantly to the costs of a fund, yet it is not included in the OCF.

We provide our own version of this total cost including dealing costs, which we have termed the Total Cost of Investment (‘TCI’). For the T Class Accumulation shares in 2020 this amounted to a TCI of 1.01%, including all costs of dealing for flows into and out of the Fund, not just our voluntary dealing. We are pleased that our TCI is just 0.04% (4 basis points) above our OCF when transaction costs are taken into account. However, we would again caution against becoming obsessed with charges to such an extent that you lose focus on the performance of funds. It is worth pointing out that the performance of our Fund tabled at the beginning of this letter is after charging all fees which should surely be the main focus.

Some commentators have attributed our recent outperformance to the performance of technology stocks accompanied by warnings that a ‘bubble’ is building in technology stocks rather like the Dotcom Bubble and that it may burst with similar ill effects. The technology heavy NASDAQ Index has provided a total return of +40.9% in 2020 and the MSCI World Information Technology Index delivered +40.2% so maybe they have a point.

I suspect that some of these commentators are the same ones who told you some years ago that our investment strategy was too heavily dependent on consumer staples stocks which they also viewed as

over-rated. However, it's always good to start with the facts. Our Fund's sectoral exposure was as follows at the year-end:

Sector	**%**
Healthcare	29.6
Technology	28.0
Consumer Staples	27.4
Consumer Discretionary	9.2
Industrials	4.1
Cash	1.8

Technology is the second largest sectoral exposure, but smaller than consumer staples and in fact if you take all our consumer stocks — discretionary and staples — together, they far outweigh our technology exposure.

Moreover, I am not sure that these sector labels are all that helpful in determining what we are really exposed to. For example, our Communication Services holding is in fact Facebook. Isn't that a technology company?

What do the following companies have in common? Amadeus, Automatic Data Processing, Intuit, Microsoft, PayPal, Sage and Visa? They are all owned by our Fund and they are all labelled as technology companies. Yet they span airline reservation systems; payroll processing; accounting and tax software; operating systems, distributed computing (the 'cloud'), software development tools, business applications and video gaming; and payment processing. I would suggest that the secular drivers of these businesses have some distinct differences and that their prospects are not governed by a single factor — technology. This one size fits all label does not help much in evaluating them.

There are also issues with the relative valuation of some technology businesses which — like a number of businesses of the sort we seek to invest in — rely on intangibles.

The main assets of the companies we seek to invest in are often intangible. Some examples of intangible assets are brands, copyrights, patents, know-how, installed bases of equipment which require servicing and maintenance and so produce customers who are locked-in to the supplier, software systems which are critical to a business or person and so-called network effects. They are distinct from tangible assets such as real estate, machinery and equipment, and vehicles.

The return on intangible assets is higher as they mostly need to be funded with equity not debt and attract an appropriate return. Lenders seem to crave the often false security of lending against tangible

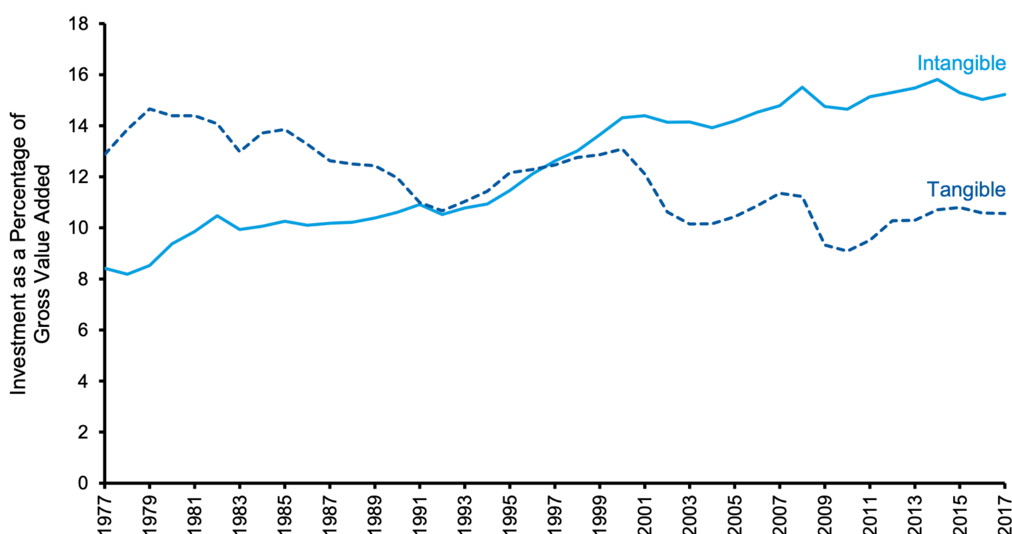
collateral. Intangible assets can also last indefinitely if they are well maintained by advertising, marketing, innovation and product development and the duration of an asset is an important factor in figuring out its real returns.

However, there are obvious problems in comparing businesses which rely on tangible assets with those that rely mostly on intangibles. Tangible assets appear on a company's balance sheet. Cash is expended to purchase them or liabilities are assumed (debt or leases) and the assets are placed on the balance sheet. Only the depreciation charge, if any, enters the profit and loss account and there may be no impact on cash flow after the purchase. In contrast, intangible assets are mostly built through spending which goes through the profit and loss account and cash flow. Although some software development is capitalised, most is not and neither is brand development nor most research & development. Of course acquisitions skew this picture.

The net result is that for any given level of investment in assets, the profitability of a company building an intangible asset is likely to be depressed versus a company building or buying a tangible asset. This makes a mockery of the comparison of their valuations which are done by some commentators and investors who simply compare their price-to-earnings ratios ('PE').

In addition, the degree to which this needs to be taken into account in making such comparisons has been rising. The chart below shows the rise of intangible investments by US corporations:

The Rise of Intangible Investments in the US, 1977-2017



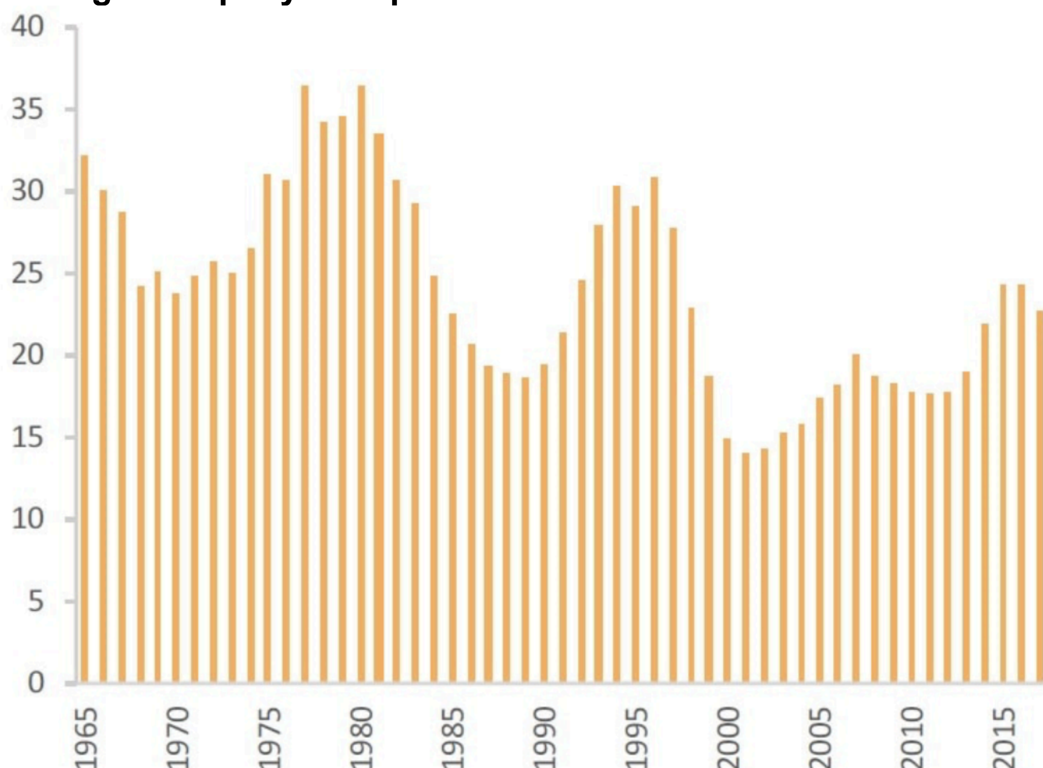
Source: Morgan Stanley (2020), Corrado and Hulten (2010)

As you can see intangible investments have been rising inexorably since the mid-1970s and overtook the proportion of investment in

tangible assets in the 1990s — not coincidentally as the internet age hit full pace.

This not only makes comparisons between different types of company difficult, it also makes assertions about market valuations over time — such as the Cyclically Adjusted PE (or CAPE) difficult. A simple illustration of this is that in 1964 the average (median) tenure of a company that was in the S&P 500 was 33 years. By 2016 this had fallen to 24 years:

Average Company Lifespan in S&P 500 Index



Source: Innosight analysis based on public S&P 500 data sources. www.innosight.com. Years, rolling 7 year average

They are not the same companies and at least in part not even the same sort of companies.

I lived through the rise and fall of the Japanese equity market. When it reached its peak in 1989 with a PE of over 60 we were told that this was because Japanese company accounting was much more conservative than western companies. In fact, their shares were just expensive. So I am wary of explanations for why we should accept high valuations, especially if they are based upon theories about accounting. But whilst Sir John Templeton did say that the four most dangerous words in investment are ‘This time it’s different’ (which is actually five words before anyone points this out) sometimes it really is different and if you miss such inflection points it is to the detriment of your net worth.

It is impossible for me to report on 2020 without mentioning COVID. I hope you agree that our portfolio performed well, both in terms of the share price performance and the fundamental performance of the companies, which is just as important.

It is also important to note that our operations were not impaired by the lockdowns and travel restrictions. Whilst the performance of the fund is important, it is also important that if you wish to contact us you can and are dealt with promptly and efficiently. You should be able to get any information you reasonably require which should be accurate and up to date. Perhaps most importantly, if you wish to deal — including redeeming your investment — we can execute for you. All of these vital functions continued seamlessly throughout the depths of the lockdowns. We have long been managing the dealing, operations, portfolio management and research across a number of widespread geographies, much to the amazement of some people who felt this could only be accomplished in a few London postcodes. So the need to Work From Home and an inability to travel were not major obstacles for us.

One of the mantras which has been regularly trotted out by commentators is that the events of 2020 are unprecedented. Whilst that is literally true, as Mark Twain observed, history doesn't repeat itself but it often rhymes. It is certainly true that most of us have never experienced anything like it, yet it may not be strictly true that the events of 2020 are without precedent.

There have been six identifiable pandemics over the past 130 years:

Recent Pandemics	**Estimated Deaths**
Russian Flu (1889–90)	1m
Third Plague (1894–1922)	12m
Spanish Flu (1918–19)	50m
Asian Flu (1957–58)	2–5m
Hong Kong Flu (1968–69)	1–4m
Swine Flu (2009–10)	0.5m

We might be able to draw some parallels from these past pandemics as a guide for what may happen as a result of COVID.

One of the conclusions that you might draw from the economic effects of pandemics is that they do not so much cause new trends but rather they accelerate some existing trends.

The most obvious comparator — and one which people have most frequently alighted upon — is the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918–19. The death toll of at least 50 million people caused a reduction in the workforce which may have been a factor in the subsequent widespread adoption of assembly line techniques for mass

production. The assembly line was not invented as a result of the Spanish Flu pandemic — the Model T Ford was put on an assembly line in 1913 — but it accelerated its adoption.

The increase in productivity this delivered helped to fuel an economic boom as the cost of production of items such as cars and household electrical appliances were reduced as the volume of production rose so that they became affordable by the middle classes for the first time. This helped to fuel the economic and stock market boom of the Roaring Twenties.

Might something similar happen as a result of COVID? Obviously, I do not know, and fortunately my predictive capability is not the basis of our investment strategy. However, there are some clear signs that existing trends have been accelerated by COVID. For example:

- E-commerce
- Online working from remote locations using the cloud or distributed computing
- Home cooking and food delivery
- Online schooling and medicine
- Social media and communications
- Pets — which have become more important in isolation and when their owners are at home more
- Automation and AI

The result is that many people have become more productive. Salespeople can visit many more clients if video conferencing is acceptable and at virtually no incremental cost. We receive reports of factories which we are told are operating with 50% staffing due to social distancing rules but which have more or less maintained production. I wonder what conclusion that leads to.

Of course not all businesses benefit from these developments. The airline industry, hospitality, bricks & mortar retailing and office property may all have some very difficult problems to face, just as you wouldn't have wanted to have been a saddler when Henry Ford and his competitors hit their stride.

I became increasingly bemused listening to or reading various commentators predict that the economic recovery from the COVID lockdowns would be V shaped, or shaped like a U, an L, a W, a bathtub or like the Nike swoosh (I'm not making this up). But just when I was bored of this entire meaningless alphabet soup of predictions, I came across one that I thought might be correct and help to explain what may happen. It was that the recovery may be shaped like a K. A K shaped recovery occurs when different sectors of the economy

emerge from a downturn with sharply differing trajectories — like the arms of the Roman letter K.

Imagine if you had been told this time last year that there would be a pandemic and that the measures taken to contain it would so affect the world economy that US GDP would fall by 9% in the second quarter of the year and the hospitality and travel sectors would be devastated by the measures as would large segments of traditional retail activity. Considering this would you have predicted that the MSCI World Index would deliver a return of 12.3%, slightly above its ten year average? Hopefully this illustrates the dangers of forecasting and market timing even when you know what major events will occur.

I will leave you with this thought: What are the similarities between a forecaster and a one-eyed javelin thrower? Answer: Neither is likely to be very accurate but they are typically good at keeping the attention of the audience.

Finally, may I wish you a happy New Year, a COVID free 2021 and thank you for your continued support for our Fund.

Yours sincerely,

Terry Smith
CEO
Fundsmith LLP

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Sources: Fundsmith LLP & Bloomberg unless otherwise stated.

Portfolio turnover has been calculated in accordance with the methodology laid down by the FCA. This compares the total share purchases and sales less total creations and liquidations with the average net asset value of the fund.

PE ratios and Free Cash Flow Yields are based on trailing twelve month data and as at 31st December 2020 unless otherwise stated.

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