

NEWSLETTER



MAPLE
FINANCIAL

Nurturing Your Financial Growth

“ **Good financial planning starts with understanding figures. Great financial planning starts with understanding people.** ”

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM MAPLE FINANCIAL

Thank you for your continued trust and partnership. We look forward to supporting you throughout 2026 with clarity, confidence, and expert guidance.

You can find us at maplefinancial.ie.

Wishing you a prosperous and fulfilling year ahead.

The Maple Financial Team

WELCOME TO MAPLE FINANCIAL'S QUARTER 1 UPDATE!

At Maple Financial, we believe financial planning is about people, not just numbers.

With over twenty years of combined experience, our team delivers personalised guidance grounded in service, not sales.

We take the time to understand each client's unique needs, working closely with trusted advisors to ensure every step aligns with what matters most to you.

Wherever you are on your financial journey: building, reassessing, supporting family, or optimising your position. We're here to provide clarity, direction, and support every step of the way.

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Meet the team

Our team brings over twenty years of experience, but what truly sets us apart is our unwavering commitment to service over sales.

Kenny Morgan – Managing Director

Kenny brings over 25 years of experience in financial services, including senior roles with Bank of Ireland, before moving into his current position as a Senior Financial Advisor specialising in portfolio management. A Qualified Financial Advisor with a Master's in Business Practice (IMI), he is recognised for his strong technical expertise and values-driven approach built on integrity and long-term client relationships. Kenny is a natural connector who prioritises building trust and ensuring clients feel supported at every stage. Outside work, he is active in his local community, serving on his primary school's Board of Management and coaching juvenile teams, including the Meath GAA U20 Development Team.

Elaine McGee – Office Manager

With 27 years of industry experience, Elaine ensures Maple Financial runs smoothly and delivers an exceptional client experience. A Trinity College Dublin graduate, she has held senior roles in business development and mortgage advisory, and holds both the QFA and RPA qualifications. Elaine is recognised for her strong technical knowledge and supportive approach. Outside of work, she is active in her local community in Trim and is a long-time supporter of the Special Olympics programme.

Niamh O'Farrell – Paraplanner

Niamh joined Maple Financial in 2025, bringing a strong academic background and diverse experience across investment, wealth management and financial operations. She holds a Commrce degree from UCD, studied abroad in Brisbane, and is a qualified Financial Adviser. Niamh's career includes roles in private equity, sustainable employee benefits and trading and settlements operations, giving her deep insight into global markets and cross-border financial products. Outside work, she is an accomplished musician on piano and harp, performing with orchestras and at weddings and events. She is currently saving for her first home and developing a new creative interest in pottery.



Looking Back at 2025: A Year of Shifts and Surprises

As we close the chapter on 2025, the global financial landscape has undergone meaningful change.

Trade & Tariffs

U.S. trade policy emerged as a major global disruptor in 2025. A series of tariff increases (10% to 41%) disrupted global supply chains, raised costs, and created policy uncertainty. Despite the turbulence, global trade still grew an estimated 7% in 2025, reaching a record \$35 trillion

Inflation Trends

Inflation remained a key concern, though pressures eased from previous years. In the U.S., inflation stayed just under 3%, with moderate increases in energy and food costs. Globally, inflation was still above pre-pandemic norms, driven mainly by energy, housing, and services.

Exchange Rates

Currency markets were volatile in 2025, influenced by tariff announcements, slower growth in major economies, and shifting interest-rate expectations. The U.S. dollar weakened against most major currencies. Companies with international operations faced higher hedging and transaction costs as major currency pairs swung sharply through the year.

Market Movements

Equity markets showed a blend of optimism and caution. U.S. stocks posted strong gains. The S&P 500 delivered a 16.39% gain for 2025, supported by strong performance in technology and data-driven industries, though healthcare and some consumer sectors lagged. Global markets improved later in the year, supported by a weaker dollar and better valuations.

Key notes for clients

- For investors, changing trade policies and tariffs reinforced the importance of diversification and avoiding short-term reactions to policy noise.
- For households and long-term investors, moderating inflation provided some stability, but cost pressures remained uneven.
- Currency swings can impact international investments, travel costs, and global fund performance.
- Market ups and downs affect portfolio returns and may create opportunities to rebalance and stay on track with long-term goals
- Understanding this volatility helps clients make more informed decisions about diversification and long-term investment risk.

Outlook for 2026: What to Watch

As we step into 2026, several key themes are likely to influence financial planning and investment decisions.

Trade Policy & Global Supply Chains

Trade growth is expected to slow in 2026 as global demand eases and uncertainty around U.S. tariff policy continues. Companies are likely to diversify suppliers and reduce reliance on single markets to manage rising geopolitical and tariff risks.

Inflation & Interest Rates

Inflation should ease gradually in 2026, though it may remain slightly above central-bank targets due to tariffs and sector-specific pressures. Central banks are expected to move cautiously, with modest rate cuts in the U.S., while Europe and the U.K. remain more conservative.

Currency Dynamics

Currency markets will remain sensitive to policy announcements, geopolitical events, and changing interest-rate expectations. The U.S. dollar may soften, while the euro and yen could see mild gains. Emerging-market currencies may benefit, though pockets of volatility are likely.

Market Performance

Equity markets enter 2026 on strong footing, with supportive economic growth and ongoing momentum in technology and AI-driven sectors. International and emerging markets may benefit from better valuations and a softer dollar. There is projected U.S. equity earnings growth of roughly 13.5%. International and emerging markets may outperform, bolstered by cheaper valuations, a weaker U.S. dollar, and improving fundamentals

Key notes for clients

- Currency movements may influence international investment returns.
- A more fragmented trade environment can increase market volatility.
- Shifting rates affect borrowing costs, bond returns, and long-term asset allocation.
- Market strength can support long-term growth, but short-term swings remain likely.
- A balanced mix of equities and fixed income can help manage inflation and interest-rate risk.
- A disciplined, diversified strategy helps clients stay aligned with their goals regardless of near-term fluctuations.

Auto-Enrolment: What It Means for Employers and Employees

Ireland's Auto-Enrolment retirement savings system is set to reshape how workers prepare for the future

Auto-Enrolment is a new retirement savings system launching in Ireland on 1 January 2026, designed to make pension saving simpler and more accessible for workers. If you're aged 23 to 60, earn over €20,000 per year, and don't already have a workplace pension, you'll be automatically enrolled into the MyFutureFund scheme.

Your contributions will be deducted directly from your pay, and the best part is that your employer and the State will contribute too — for every €3 you put in, a total of €7 goes into your retirement fund. This aims to help more people build a secure financial future without needing to take action themselves, though you can still opt out after the first six months if you choose.

While Auto-Enrolment will benefit many workers, it won't suit everyone and understanding your options is essential.

For Employees

- Automatic inclusion helps ensure long-term retirement savings.
- Employer and government contributions boost the value of each euro saved.
- It provides a structured, consistent approach to building financial security.

For Employers

- Businesses will need to integrate auto-enrolment processes into payroll systems.
- Employer contributions represent an investment in staff wellbeing and retention.
- Clear communication with employees will be essential to ensure employee suitability, understanding and engagement.



Auto Enrolment – Is it the right solution for you?

We help you determine whether it aligns with your financial goals and long-term retirement plans

However, Auto-Enrolment isn't the only option available.

If you'd prefer more control over your pension, you can choose to set up a Personal Retirement Savings Account (PRSA) with a selection of providers instead and we can help you with that.

- A PRSA offers greater choice of investment funds, giving you more flexibility and control over how your money is invested.
- It also allows valuable tax relief on your contributions, which can be especially beneficial if you're a higher-rate taxpayer, as contributions qualify for income tax relief at your marginal rate.
- PRSAs are also portable, flexible, and not tied to any employer, meaning you can carry them with you throughout your career.

If Auto-Enrolment doesn't feel like the right fit for your long-term financial plans, just get in touch with us.

We'd be happy to talk you through setting up a PRSA and choosing the option that best supports your financial future.



The Power of Planning: Turning Wishes Into Achievements

It's often said that 'a goal without a plan is just a wish'

Financial planning transforms hopes into actionable steps. Whether you're saving for retirement, buying a home, investing for the future, or protecting your family, having a structured plan gives you clarity, confidence, and control.

We believe planning is the most powerful tool you have. And we're here to help you build a roadmap that supports your ambitions.

When your finances are organised, your goals stop feeling distant and start feeling achievable.

At Maple Financial, we combine expertise, transparency, and a genuine commitment to your success, helping you move forward with purpose and peace of mind.

Let's build the future you've imagined — together

Visit us anytime at maplefinancial.ie



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