



## MARKET COMMENT

### *Haringtons Prime Residential Spring Update:*

Markets require confidence and there was a hope within the prime property sector that 2026 would see a return to some form of stability following the chaos of the Labour party's first two years in government. The attack on wealth has not been seen for many years, some would say not since the 1970s and many have either left the UK with their hard-earned money or watched on in amazement at what has been happening. However, just as those of us who still see the UK as wonderful place to live have come to terms with the changes, things erupt in the Middle East, sending stock markets into a rapid decline. There really has been very little to encourage anyone to move out of their holding positions. Combine this with the aging population demographic and the result is a continuing lack of supply of best-in-class property as many just hold on, scared of making a decision. The fact is there is rarely a good time to buy and sell property and, like the stock market, as many have heard over the years, it is 'time in the market' not 'timing the market' that is important.

That said, Spring typically arrives with optimism in the property world. Gardens soften, days are longer and sellers who have waited through winter often decide it is time to test the market. Easter traditionally marks the turning point, with new properties coming forward and activity beginning to pick up. We expect the same pattern this year: gradual improvement as families plan ahead and seasonal momentum builds.

With children approaching exams and looking ahead to new horizons in September, many families naturally begin to reassess their living arrangements. A home office may suddenly need to double as a study, or proximity to excellent schools might take on greater importance than before. These kinds of life changes tend to drive property decisions far more reliably than the headlines.

The broader backdrop remains complex. Geopolitical uncertainty and tensions in global markets have reminded wealth-holders that risk is always present. Energy prices and inflation concerns continue to influence sentiment. Yet prime residential property in stable jurisdictions remains a long-term store of value and a place of personal utility. Savvy, well-advised buyers rarely purchase solely for investment returns; they buy for lifestyle, security and the quality of life that well-chosen homes provide.

Pricing in parts of the market has become more rational after the extremes of recent years. Sellers who accept advice on value and present properties well are attracting interest, while those anchored to outdated expectations are discovering that today's buyers are disciplined and analytical. This is not a distressed market, but it is a selective one.

Discretion is increasingly important. Off-market opportunities arise through relationships and local knowledge; a seller who would rather avoid the spotlight, or a family considering a move but not yet ready to list. For buyers, these situations can offer access to properties that never appear on portals and therefore face less competition. For sellers, they provide the chance to transact quietly with qualified parties without the pressures of extended marketing. The role of an adviser is to navigate these opportunities carefully, matching requirements with possibilities before they become widely known.

### *Prime Central London*

The prime London market continues to demonstrate resilience. Values in the most exclusive postcodes remain below their 2014 peaks, reflecting a decade of adjustment and improved affordability. For buyers this creates a more rational entry point than at many times in recent memory.

Demand is strongest for homes that combine location, quality and functionality. Properties with good light, outdoor space and flexible layouts are performing well, particularly those suited to hybrid working and modern family life. Conversely, properties requiring significant renovation or lacking usability can struggle unless priced attractively.

International buyers remain an important component of the market. London's legal system, education sector and global connectivity continue to attract wealth from around the world. While geopolitical tensions may influence timing, the long-term appeal of the city endures. Families value stability and access to world-class services, and London provides both.

For domestic buyers, the market is increasingly driven by lifestyle considerations. Schooling remains a major factor, and the spring season often marks the start of searches for families hoping to settle before the new academic year.

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If you are thinking about buying in London or the country, we would be delighted to help you make your move wisely.



### *Countryside and Secondary Markets*

Beyond the capital, demand for high-quality country houses remains strong, especially in areas that combine beautiful and protected countryside with the ease of the commute, now that we have returned to a more normal working week. Hybrid working has extended these areas for those in search of value and who value lifestyle as much as proximity to the office.

Prices in many secondary markets have adjusted from their pandemic peaks, creating opportunities for well-advised buyers. Exceptional homes in prime locations continue to attract interest, while over-priced properties attract nothing but tumbleweed.

### *AI and the Human Element*

Artificial intelligence is increasingly present in property search and analysis. It organises information, identifies trends and helps buyers navigate large datasets. These tools are valuable and will continue to evolve.

However, property transactions remain deeply human. Buying a home involves judgement, emotion and personal preference. Algorithms can filter listings but cannot sense the pause in a client's voice when a room feels slightly wrong, nor recognise the quiet excitement that signals genuine connection with a property. In off market deals especially, trust and timing are everything. None of this is to dismiss technology. AI is excellent at organising information and making the early stages of searching more efficient. Used well it improves the process, but it is a tool, not a mind reader.

Buying or selling a home is one of the biggest emotional and financial decisions most of us will ever make. Until algorithms can understand nostalgia, compromise, gut instinct and the deeply British habit of saying "It's fine" when we mean the opposite, there will always be a role for human judgement, empathy and experience alongside the machine.

Clients understand this. They seek advice, discretion and expertise rather than automated solutions. The role of a buying adviser is to interpret requirements, assess opportunities and provide judgement and access through personal relationships that machines cannot replicate.

### *The Long View*

Property decisions should be guided by long-term thinking. Markets move in cycles, but well-located homes with quality construction and enduring appeal tend to retain value over time. Attempting to time the market perfectly is rarely successful. Instead, the focus should be on buying well and aligning purchases with personal objectives. Homes are places to live, work and build memories while also representing tangible assets in a world of financial complexity.

In uncertain periods, stability and quality matter more than short-term speculation.

If you would like to discuss how we can help in either London or the country, please do not hesitate to get in contact with one of the team.

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# MEET THE TEAM

*“As one of the first independent buying agencies in the UK, you can expect a level of experience and expertise that no other firm of buying agents can provide. Whether London or the country, we are the most experienced buying team in the business.”*

*Jonathan Harington, Director*



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## YOUR COUNTRY TEAM

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