

CG AJ Bell Responsible Screened Growth

As at 31 March 2026

Market commentary:

March was dominated by the outbreak of conflict in Iran, which caused significant market upheaval and brought an abrupt end to what had been a broadly positive start to the year. Rising geopolitical risk had already been a defining feature of the early months of 2026 – first with the US intervention in Venezuela, and then with President Trump’s posturing towards Greenland – but the escalation in Iran swiftly eclipsed both to command global attention.

The principal channel through which the conflict has affected markets and the wider global economy is oil prices. Initial market reaction centred on the implications for inflation; however, as the conflict has dragged on, the consequences for economic growth have increasingly been reflected in forecasts.

Bond markets have faced a challenging reversal in 2026. Expectations of inflation returning to 2% targets have required meaningful upward revision in light of sharply rising oil prices, and central banks have responded with a notably hawkish tone – moving swiftly to convince markets of their willingness to raise interest rates decisively. This has prompted a broad repricing across fixed income. Whilst the most pronounced volatility and yield rises have been concentrated at the shorter end of the yield curve, it is longer-dated bonds that have delivered the weakest total returns.

Equity markets have been volatile throughout the quarter, responding to an unpredictable flow of news regarding the trajectory and potential escalation of the conflict. Whilst most markets have felt its effects, first-quarter returns have also been shaped by how individual markets were positioned heading into the crisis.

In the US, a softer start to the year somewhat obscures what has been a degree of relative resilience since the conflict began. Japanese equities delivered strong gains after a decisive election result provided a clear mandate for the continuation of economic reform. Within emerging markets,

South Korea has been a standout performer, benefiting from growing appreciation of its role within the AI supply chain. Closer to home, UK equities have outperformed, supported by the market’s heavyweight exposure to the energy sector, with the major oil companies buoyed by rising crude prices.

As with any event that dominates market attention, the range of potential outcomes is wide and largely contingent on political decisions that are, by their nature, difficult to forecast. Scenarios span from a relatively swift de-escalation – which would provide immediate relief to risk assets and take pressure off energy prices – through to a prolonged conflict that continues to weigh on growth expectations and keeps central banks in a difficult position. The latter would present the more challenging environment to navigate: one in which policymakers face the unenviable task of responding to inflation driven by factors largely outside their influence, whilst simultaneously managing the risk of tipping economies into recession.

In the near term, oil prices are likely to remain the key variable for both inflation dynamics and market sentiment. Beyond energy, however, the conflict has reinforced a broader reassessment of supply chain vulnerabilities, defence spending trajectories, and energy security – themes that are likely to shape investment narratives well beyond the immediate volatility.

Ultimately, against a backdrop of elevated geopolitical and event risk, ensuring that portfolios are resilient across a range of scenarios – and positioned to deliver an appropriate journey for clients – feels more important than ever.

Equity performance - last quarter



Fixed income performance - last quarter



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Portfolio commentary

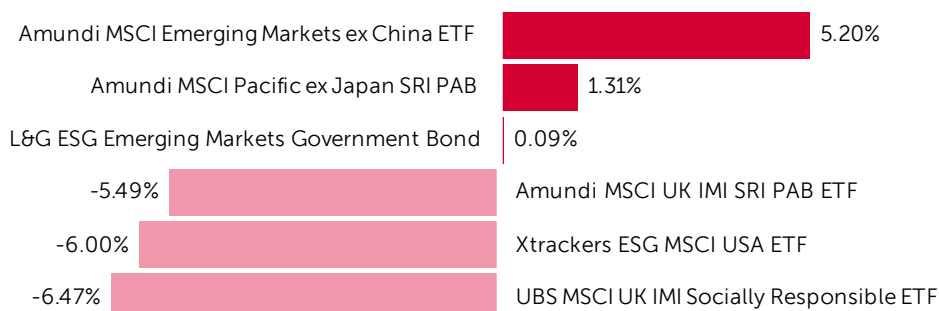
The first quarter of 2026 proved challenging for the AJ Bell Responsible Screened Growth fund as some of the most profitable areas for markets, such as defence and non-renewable energy, do not fit into responsible indices. Oil stocks created some of the biggest returns this quarter due to the US-Iran war, but the Responsible Fund could not benefit from these boosts.

However, broader UK and European equity allocations contributed positively. The US, where we hold selective position through socially responsible ETFs, faced headwinds from tech sentiment as well as turmoil from the war.

A bright spot for the fund was emerging markets excluding China, with Korean and Taiwanese tech companies driving returns. The fund's small bond allocation, focused on ESG-compliant high yield and emerging market debt, navigated a turbulent rate environment as inflation expectations shifted sharply.

While the quarter ended slightly in the red, three months is a short time in the world of investing. On a five-year view and one-year view, the fund has returned 30.9% and 11.6%, respectively.

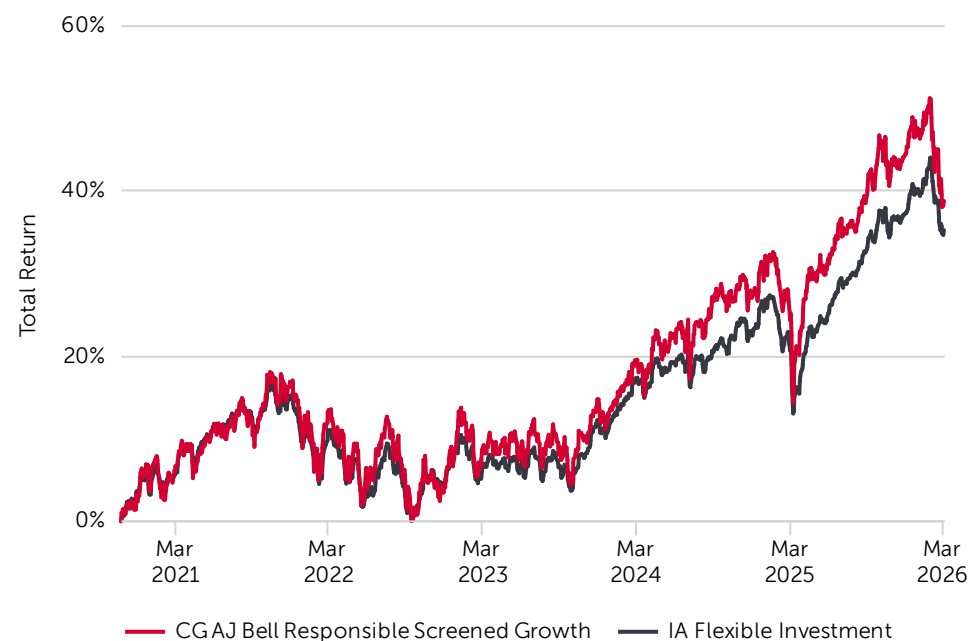
Q1 2026 best/worst performers



Performance

Cumulative (%)	3 months	6 months	1 year	3 years	5 years	Since inception
CG AJ Bell Responsible Screened Growth	-3.98	-0.54	11.62	27.66	30.85	38.82
IA Flexible Investment	-1.49	1.68	12.13	26.99	28.06	35.29

The above table displays the total return of the fund on a cumulative basis. This is taken from the most recent month end.



Past performance is not indicative of future performance. The value of investments may go down as well as up and the income generated by investments is not guaranteed and may fluctuate. You may receive back less than the amount that you invested.

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Portfolio snapshot

Number of holdings	13
Inception date	23 Nov 2020
Fund size	£187.46m
ISIN	(I Acc) GB00BN0S2V92

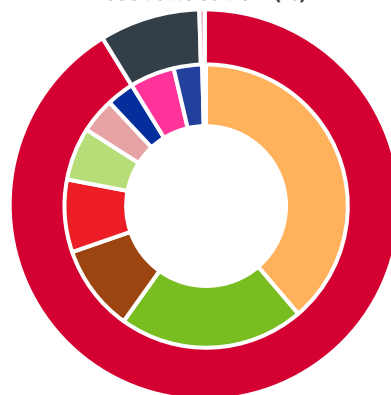
Top 10 holdings

Holding	Weight (%)
Xtrackers ESG MSCI USA ETF	25.42
iShares MSCI USA SRI ETF	13.32
UBS MSCI UK IMI Socially Responsible ETF	10.96
Amundi MSCI UK IMI SRI PAB ETF	10.17
Amundi MSCI Europe SRI PAB ETF	9.86
Amundi MSCI Emerging Markets ex China ETF	8.27
iShares MSCI Japan SRI ETF	6.05
UBS MSCI China ESG Universal ETF	4.01
Invesco Global High Yield Corporate Bond ESG Climate Transition UCITS ETF	3.28
L&G ESG Emerging Markets Government Bond	3.23

Risk profile

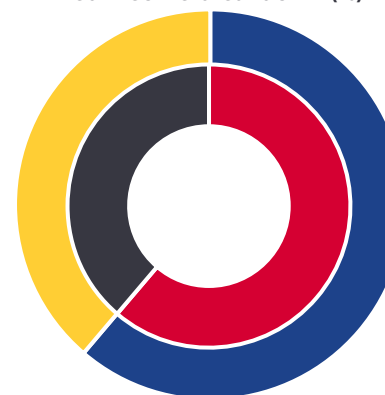
For investors who favour a higher allocation to equities and understand the risk reward relationship that entails over the short, medium, and long term. The fund predominantly invests in funds, and exchange traded funds (ETFs), using a defined strategic asset allocation process to deliver returns while meeting the targeted level of risk.

Asset allocation (%)



Equity	91.23
North America equity	38.74
UK equity	21.13
Europe ex-UK equity	9.86
Emerging markets ex-China equity	8.27
Japan equity	6.05
China equity	4.01
Asia Pacific ex-Japan equity	3.16
Fixed Income	8.33
Global high yield bonds (GBP hedged)	5.10
Emerging market debt	3.23
Cash	0.45
Cash	0.45

Fixed income breakdown (%)



GBP Bonds	61.24
Global high yield bonds (GBP hedged)	61.24
International Bonds	38.76
Emerging market debt	38.76

Equity breakdown (%)



Sector	
Technology	22.12
Financial Services	20.41
Industrials	13.63
Healthcare	11.40
Consumer Cyclical	9.67
Communication Services	8.44
Consumer Defensive	5.15
Basic Materials	3.60
Real Estate	3.56
Utilities	1.47
Other	0.55

The Ongoing charges figure (OCF) includes the underlying OCF, the annual management fee, and the costs for running and administering the fund structure. The annual management fee is variable, as it consists of the fixed OCF, minus all other costs.

Transaction costs represent the net costs incurred by the fund in buying and selling underlying investments. These are the gross costs offset with any pricing mechanisms used by the fund to protect investors from the cost of transactions (such as swing pricing). In some instances this may result in a negative number.

Due to its multi-asset nature, no financial instrument or index represents a fair benchmark for the Fund. The Fund does not aim to track the IA sector as a benchmark. Performance is calculated on a net of fees basis.

Totals may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Currency Risk: The Fund invests in overseas markets and the value of its investments and may rise or fall as a result of changes in exchange rates.

Emerging Markets Risk: The Fund invests in less economically developed markets (i.e. emerging markets) which can involve greater risks and fluctuations in valuations compared to developed market places.

Index Trading Risk: The performance of any passively managed funds may not exactly track that of their indices. This is referred to as 'Tracking error'.

Interest Rate Risk: Fluctuations in interest rates may affect the value of the Fund and your investment.

Liquidity Risk: The Fund invests within underlying funds and there is a risk that these suspend or defer the payment of redemption proceeds, which may impact the Fund's ability to meet redemption requests.



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Where practical the Responsible Screened Growth fund invests in products tracking MSCI Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) indexes for equity exposure. These indexes exclude companies with certain controversial business involvements and also utilise MSCI's Environmental Social Governance (ESG) ratings and ESG Controversy assessments. For further details please see MSCI's latest SRI Indexes Methodology document.

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