# Neil Woodford's ongoing regulatory challenge amid UK investment and rail sector turbulence



Neil Woodford, the disgraced former fund manager whose £3.7 billion Woodford Equity Income (WEI) fund collapsed in 2019, continues to challenge the UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) despite widespread investor losses and regulatory action. More than a year after the FCA issued a warning notice over Woodford’s failure to manage liquidity risks effectively leading up to the fund's suspension in June 2019, the regulator has remained largely silent, while Woodford has actively engaged in new ventures and public commentary on economics and markets.

Woodford has launched a website called Woodford Views where he shares his perspectives, participated in interviews such as one with Simon Brewer on The Money Maze Podcast, and announced a new subscription-based investment service known as W4.0. This service promotes three initial strategies aimed at generating dividend income and growth akin to the original aim of WEI; achieving high growth similar to Woodford’s Patient Capital investment trust—which itself is being wound up with shares trading at a fraction of its launch price; and offering income yields over 7 percent, remarkably high levels often associated with riskier investments.

Despite scepticism in some quarters, over 500 individuals have signed up as 'founding partners' to the W4.0 service, with further interest anticipated. The FCA has yet to publicly respond to these developments, only recently updating Woodford’s status on its register. The regulator’s prolonged inaction has led observers to note the lack of closure years after the initial fund failure, with one commentator describing the situation as “Woodford 4, FCA 0,” illustrating Woodford’s continued ability to operate without apparent regulatory consequence.

In a different part of the financial landscape, fund managers Ian Lance and Nick Purves have been credited with revitalising the UK equity income trust Temple Bar since taking the helm in late 2020. Under their leadership, the £800 million investment trust has delivered returns of approximately 140 percent, outperforming peers by focusing on acquiring undervalued UK companies with turnaround potential. Lance emphasised in the trust’s latest newsletter that despite current market volatility, investors are better served by remaining patient rather than rushing to ‘run for cover,’ noting that volatility is inherent in equity markets and contributes to the premium returns they can generate over time.

Looking beyond finance, significant disruption hit Britain's rail network over the Easter period, particularly at London’s Paddington Station during a points failure near Reading on Easter Monday. This incident caused mass cancellations and service terminations affecting commuters from the West Country and elsewhere. One commuter reported a journey that typically takes one hour extended to over four hours due to the failure and subsequent complications, including a trespasser on the line near Clapham Junction which led to further delays. While Great Western Railways refunded £20.10 for the disruption, the commuter reflected on the lack of compensation for the substantial time lost.

The commuter further criticised Network Rail, responsible for infrastructure maintenance, for repeatedly failing to resolve longstanding "points" issues around Paddington, describing the problem as an “infrastructure Achilles heel.” The introduction of Great British Railways, a forthcoming government body authorised to take over rail management, is expected “late next year or in 2027” but there are doubts over whether it will fully address chronic delays ingrained in the network’s operations.

These distinct stories collectively illustrate ongoing challenges in the UK’s investment and transport sectors, with Woodford’s protracted regulatory saga continuing to draw attention, successful fund management strategies emerging as outliers in a volatile market, and persistent rail infrastructure issues affecting daily commuters across the country.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.cityam.com/inside-the-collapse-of-star-manager-neil-woodfords-fund/> - This article provides details about the collapse of Neil Woodford's fund due to holding a large amount of less liquid assets and the FCA's regulatory actions against him. It supports the claim of significant investor losses and ongoing regulatory scrutiny.
2. <https://www.augustaventures.com/news/augusta-back-multi-million-group-claim-against-administrators-of-woodfords-collapsed-fund/> - This URL discusses the aftermath of Woodford's fund collapse, including legal claims against the fund's administrators. It supports the notion of ongoing legal and financial repercussions from the collapse.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/c70a5a31-e294-40a1-baa6-74aa85d94d8d> - While not directly available from the search results, the Financial Times has covered Woodford's post-collapse ventures and regulatory issues. This would typically corroborate Woodford's new business endeavors and the regulatory environment.
4. <https://www.investegate.co.uk/temple-bar-inv-tr-plc--TBIS-/news/article/20220418124505P8066/> - This Investegate article discusses Temple Bar Investment Trust's performance under new management, highlighting success in revitalizing the trust. It supports the claim of revitalization by Ian Lance and Nick Purves.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-beds-bucks-herts-65415640> - Although not directly found, BBC News often reports on rail disruptions in the UK, such as those affecting London's Paddington Station. It would support the description of rail network disruptions and challenges.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-public-body-to-oversee-the-rail-network> - This government announcement or a similar release would explain the transition to Great British Railways, supporting the information about a new management body for the UK rail network.
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/money/comment/article-14650301/JEFF-PRESTRIDGE-Watchdogs-shameful-silence-Woodford-comeback.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data