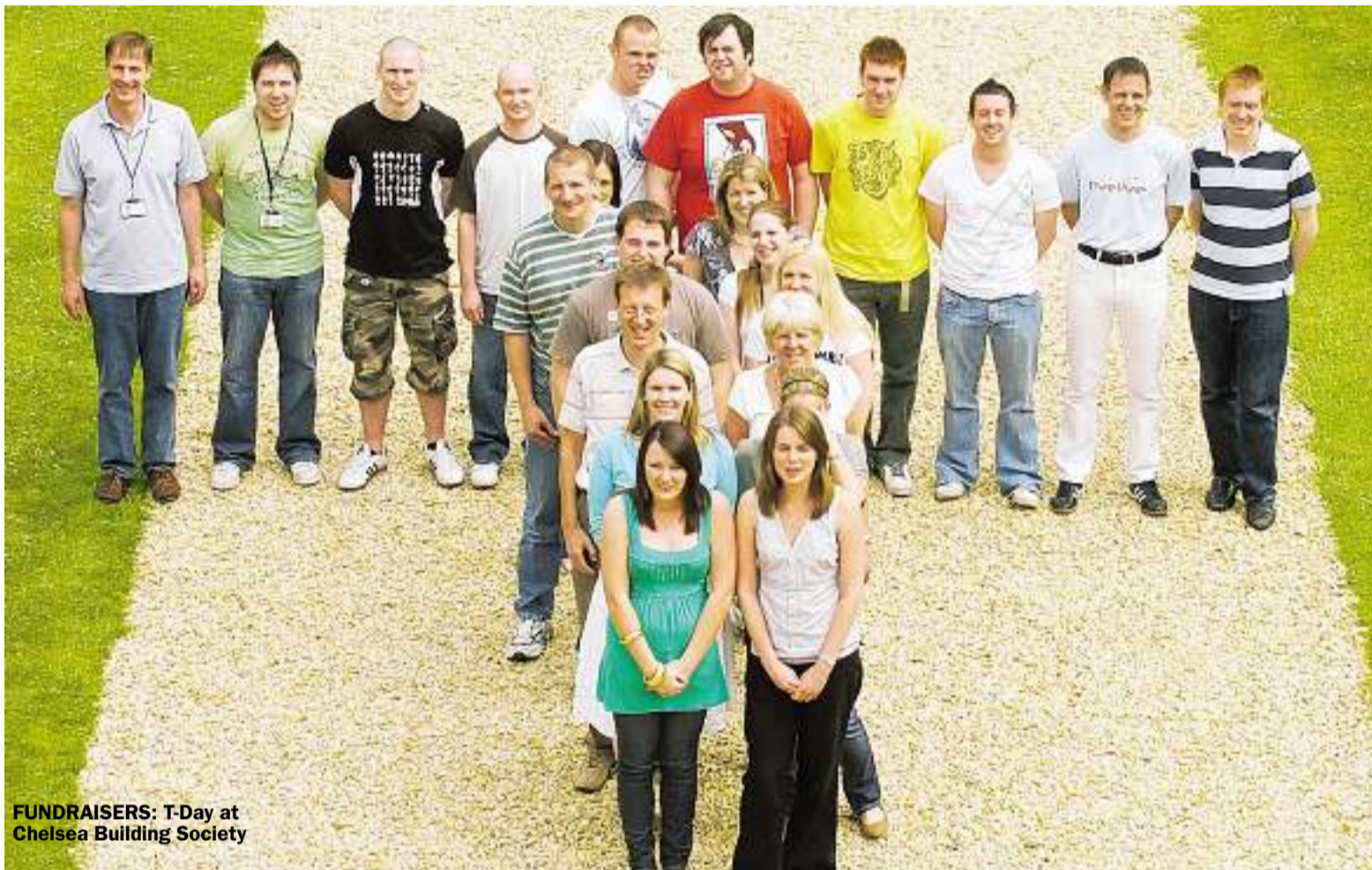


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Top 100, 2008



FUNDRAISERS: T-Day at Chelsea Building Society



CHALLENGES: Richard Hornbrook, director and chief executive



POSITIVE: Peter Walsh, director and deputy chief executive

Society rises to the challenge

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Chelsea Building Society

Building society

Number of employees in Gloucestershire: 758

County base: Cheltenham

Turnover: £732.2m

Chief executive: Richard Hornbrook

Assets: in excess of £13 billion

Staff charity fundraising: £8,000 – so far

FROM floods to financial slowdown, Chelsea Building Society has proved in the last year that it can rise to the challenge and ride out the storms thrown its way.

The UK's fifth largest building society, based in Thirstaine Road, Cheltenham, now has assets in excess of £13 billion and a turnover equivalent to £732.2m.

But that record belies a testing 12 months for the firm.

Chief executive Richard Hornbrook said: "No-one could have predicted how challenging our year would be.

"In July we were affected by the Gloucestershire floods and despite these unprecedented conditions we maintained business as usual for our customers.

"This was a real testament to the determination, commitment and enthusiasm of our staff,

particularly as many of them were also experiencing difficult conditions at home". After sourcing a fire engine from Doncaster and water supplies from out of the county, the firm maintained business as usual.

Chelsea's Cheltenham High Street branch was one of the only financial businesses with uninterrupted opening hours during the crisis – a credit to the staff's determination to put customers first.

Just a short time later, Chelsea was hit by another unprecedented event – "the credit crunch". This tested the resilience and business models of everyone operating in financial markets but Chelsea was well placed to meet the changing market.

Its 758 staff based in Gloucestershire have also fitted charity fundraising into their day jobs.

They are committed to the national and local charity days such as Comic Relief, Children in Need and T-day, and are also working hard for their staff charity of the year which this year is Winston's Wish.

So far, more than £8,000 has been raised thanks for staff wearing items beginning with W to work, holding beach parties, white water rafting and donating unwanted Christmas gifts to a bring and buy sale.

And the company's commitment to staff and employment matters is also paying off.

Richard said: "In a recent survey over 87 per cent of staff were proud to work for Chelsea and 93 per cent were pleased with their decision to join the company.

"As a building society, Chelsea is run for its members. It's our aim to deliver a first class customer experience and we believe that motivated staff will achieve this."

Chelsea Building Society has roots dating back to 1875 with 34 branches predominantly in the south of England.



CHILDREN IN NEED DAY: left to right, Sophie Gaylard, Mike Addle, Mike Browning, Selena Balster and Catherine Tilley



CAR WASH: members of the legal and compliance team washed cars for CIN



LAUNCH: Winston's Wish is the society's charity in 2008. The charity's Meg Jackson with Richard Hornbrook