CHETWOOD
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT

CORE DECUMULATION PORTFOLIOS

QUARTER 3 2024 REPORT

Quarter Insights

- Most investment asset classes enjoyed positive returns over the quarter, despite several bouts of market volatility.
- US equities posted strong second-quarter earnings, with good results expanding beyond large tech stocks, signalling healthier market environment.
- A surprise rate hike from the Bank of Japan led to the largest single-day drop in Japanese equities since 1987.
- On the other side of the world, The US Federal Reserve started its long-awaited rate-cutting cycle, reducing rates by 0.5%. The Bank of England also cut rates for the first time in four years.
- While inflation cooled, the focus shifted to slowing economic growth, with a weaker July US jobs report.
- The Israel-Hezbollah conflict escalated, adding to geopolitical risks, but markets absorbed the volatility relatively well.
- As the quarter closed, China announced a new stimulus package to encourage growth, leading to a positive response from Chinese equities.

Market Review

The third quarter of 2024 was, on the whole, a constructive period for the markets, though it wasn't without its bumps. Volatility picked up toward the end of July, triggered by a surprise rate hike from the Bank of Japan. This move, combined with softer economic data from the US called into question the strength of the US economy. The triggering of the Sahm Rule, a common indicator of recession risk, didn't help the mood.

Yet, amid the uncertainty, bonds reminded us of their historical role as a refuge. The yield on the 10-year US Treasury, which started the quarter near 4.5%, fell to 3.8% by early August, reflecting renewed demand. This fall in yield meant prices have risen. For much of the past two years, as inflation dominated market concerns both asset classes moved together.

> *But with inflation starting to ease bonds have started to increase in price during periods of equity market stress.*

In tandem, "bond proxy" sectors like utilities and real estate, which offer steady earnings, also saw strong performance.

On the interest rate policy front, the US Federal Reserve held off on raising interest rates during its July meeting. Critics began to argue that the Fed might be behind the curve on cutting rates, much as it was accused of being late to address inflation in 2022. By contrast, the Bank of England took a more proactive stance, cutting rates by 25 basis points in August, marking its first rate cut in over four years.

By September, with inflation nearing the Fed's 2% target, the central bank took action and cut rates by 50 basis points (0.5%), bringing the federal funds rate down to 4.75%. Signs of a cooling labour market likely influenced this pre-emptive move to avoid more serious disruptions.

Meanwhile, equities posted broad gains, supported by robust earnings reports, especially in cyclical sectors and smaller companies. China's announcement of a 3% GDP stimulus package added further support, though concerns linger about its structural issues. Still, markets remain focused on the near term, with stimulus measures sparking a significant surge in Chinese equities.

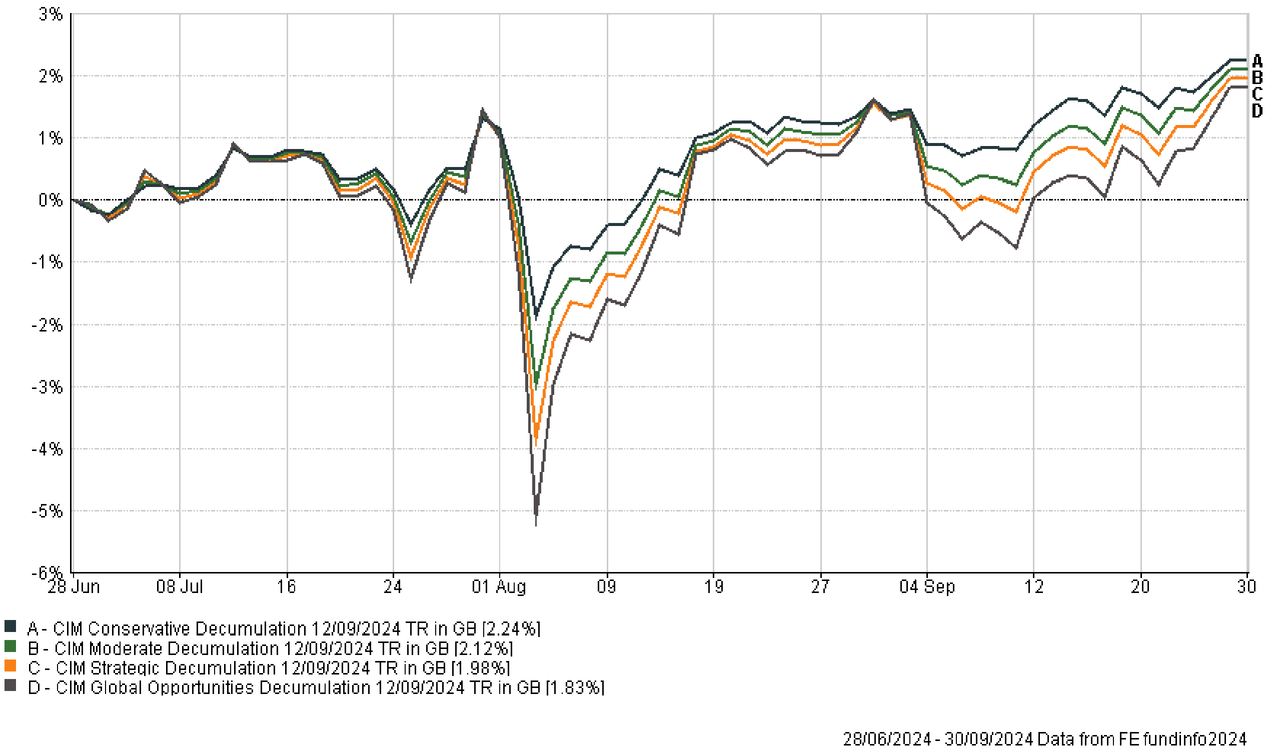
Portfolios performance

Portfolio / Comparator	3 months
CIM Conservative Decumulation Portfolio	2.24%
ARC Sterling Cautious PCI	1.91%
CIM Moderate Decumulation Portfolio	2.12%
ARC Sterling Balanced Asset PCI	1.81%
CIM Strategic Decumulation Portfolio	1.98%
ARC Sterling Steady Growth PCI	1.81%
CIM Global Decumulation Opportunities Portfolio	1.83%
ARC Sterling Equity Risk PCI	1.71%

Index Returns[1]	3 months
UK Equities	1.75%
UK Government Bonds (Gilts)	2.36%
All Country World Equities	0.49%
Pacific Equities (ex Japan)	7.66%
Emerging Market Equities	1.98%
US Equities	-0.28%
UK Headline Inflation	0.30%

Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance; and the value of investments, as well as the income from them can go down as well as up, and investors may get back less than the original amount invested.

Performance graph



Key Funds and Trades over the Quarter

Top 3 Model Funds	3 months
Invesco S&P 500 High Dividend Low Volatility ETF	8.00% ▲
Vanguard Global Credit Bond Hedged	5.04% ▲
JPM Global High Yield Bond Multi-Factor ETF	4.74% ▲

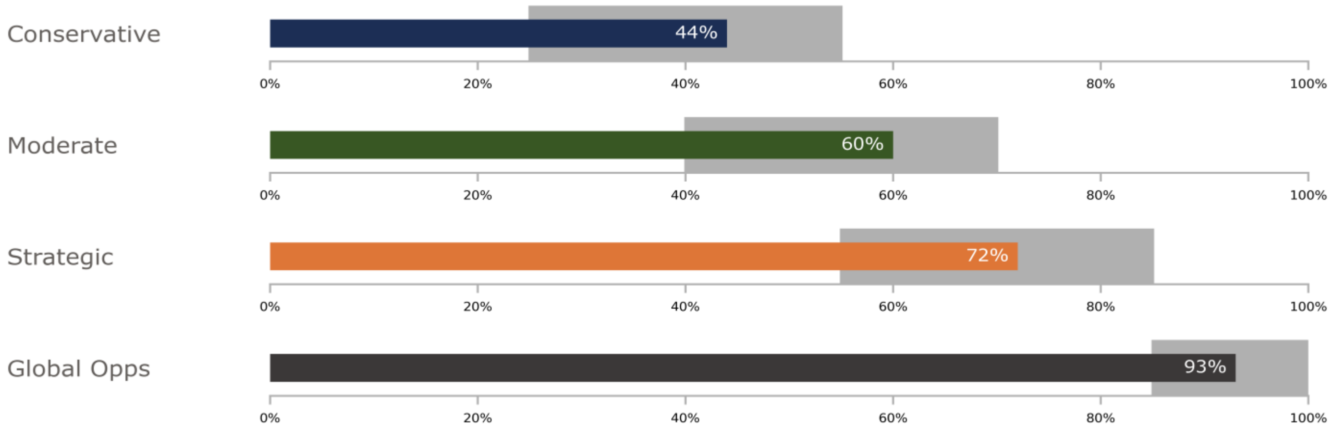
Bottom 3 Model Funds	3 months
JPM Emerging Markets Income	0.03% ▼
Liontrust European Dynamic	-0.56% ▼
Man Alternative Style Risk Premia	-2.16% ▼

Source FE Analytics to 30th September 2024

Key fund	Commentary
Invesco S&P 500 High Dividend Low Volatility ETF	This fund holds high dividend-yielding US stocks, which results in a heavy bias towards interest rate-sensitive sectors such as utilities and real estate. These sectors rallied when it became clear that the US Federal Reserve would cut interest rates. Additionally, utilities benefited from growing expectations that the AI boom will drive higher electricity demand, particularly from new data centres, further boosting performance
Amundi Index Global Aggregate Bond Hedged ETF	This fund tracks a broad index of investment-grade bonds from around the world, predominantly issued by governments and corporations. The performance of global bonds was helped by expectations of interest rate cuts. We intentionally hold a share class of the fund that hedges out the foreign exchange risk, meaning performance was not impacted by the relative strength of Sterling over the quarter.
Vanguard FTSE All World High Dividend Yield ETF	This passively managed fund holds a portfolio of global stocks that pay a relatively high dividend. These types of stocks faced a headwind when interest rates and inflation were rising, but are now benefitting from both falling, as their relatively high dividend is viewed as more attractive to investors seeking income. The fund achieved a 2.4% total return in Q3 despite a flat overall performance from global equities.
Amundi Prime Japan ETF	The Japanese stock market fell in early August following a surprise interest rate hike from the Bank of Japan, which sent the Japanese Yen sharply higher. A more reassuring tone from BoJ officials later helped Japanese stocks to pare losses. When translated to Sterling, the fund managed a gain of 2.4%.

Asset class review

Equity Exposure



Conservative

Ten largest fund holdings (%)

Man Alternative Style Risk Premia	12.8%
Amundi Index Global Agg Hedged ETF	11.8%
Lyxor Core UK Government Bond ETF	11.0%
JPM Glb HY Corp Bond Multi-Factor Hdged	9.5%
Vanguard Global Credit Bond Inst Hedged	9.3%
JPM Emerging Markets Income	7.9%
Liontrust European Dynamic	7.8%
Vanguard FTSE All World High Div Yield	7.3%
Amundi IS Prime Japan ETF	7.2%
Invesco S&P 500 High Div Low Vol ETF	6.9%
Assets in top ten holdings	91.5%

Ten largest asset class exposures (%)

Government Bonds	19.3%
Corporate Bonds	12.8%
Other Alternatives	12.8%
North American Equities	10.1%
High Yield Bonds	9.5%
European Equities	9.2%
Japan Equities	7.8%
UK Equities	7.0%
Asia Pacific ex Japan Equities	6.8%
Emerging Market Equities	2.3%

Cash includes cash held in underlying funds plus GBP held in model.

Moderate

Ten largest fund holdings (%)

JPM Emerging Markets Income	10.8%
Man Alternative Style Risk Premia	10.8%
Liontrust European Dynamic	10.7%
Vanguard FTSE All World High Div Yield	10.0%
Amundi IS Prime Japan ETF	9.8%
Invesco S&P 500 High Div Low Vol ETF	9.4%
Schroder UK Equity Income Maximiser	8.9%
JPM Glb HY Corp Bond Multi-Factor Hdged	7.5%
Vanguard Global Credit Bond Inst Hedged	7.3%
Amundi Index Global Agg Hedged ETF	6.6%
Assets in top ten holdings	91.8%

Ten largest asset class exposures (%)

North American Equities	13.9%
European Equities	12.6%
Government Bonds	10.8%
Other Alternatives	10.8%
Japan Equities	10.6%
UK Equities	9.6%
Asia Pacific ex Japan Equities	9.4%
Corporate Bonds	9.3%
High Yield Bonds	7.5%
Emerging Market Equities	3.1%

Cash includes cash held in underlying funds plus GBP held in model.

Asset class review

Strategic

Ten largest fund holdings (%)

JPM Emerging Markets Income	13.1%
Liontrust European Dynamic	13.0%
Vanguard FTSE All World High Div Yield	12.1%
Amundi IS Prime Japan ETF	11.9%
Invesco S&P 500 High Div Low Vol ETF	11.4%
Schroder UK Equity Income Maximiser	10.8%
Man Alternative Style Risk Premia	9.2%
JPM Glb HY Corp Bond Multi-Factor Hdged	4.7%
Vanguard Global Credit Bond Inst Hedged	4.6%
Amundi Index Global Agg Hedged ETF	3.7%
Assets in top ten holdings	94.5%

Ten largest asset class exposures (%)

North American Equities	16.8%
European Equities	15.3%
Japan Equities	12.9%
UK Equities	11.6%
Asia Pacific ex Japan Equities	11.4%
Other Alternatives	9.2%
Government Bonds	6.1%
Corporate Bonds	5.7%
High Yield Bonds	4.7%
Emerging Market Equities	3.8%

Cash includes cash held in underlying funds plus GBP held in model.

Global Opps

Ten largest fund holdings (%)

JPM Emerging Markets Income	16.8%
Liontrust European Dynamic	16.7%
Vanguard FTSE All World High Div Yield	15.6%
Amundi IS Prime Japan ETF	15.3%
Invesco S&P 500 High Div Low Vol ETF	14.6%
Schroder UK Equity Income Maximiser	13.9%
Man Alternative Style Risk Premia	5.2%
Assets in top ten holdings	98.1%

Ten largest asset class exposures (%)

North American Equities	21.6%
European Equities	19.6%
Japan Equities	16.5%
UK Equities	14.9%
Asia Pacific ex Japan Equities	14.6%
Other Alternatives	5.2%
Emerging Market Equities	4.8%
Cash	2.0%
Other	0.7%

Cash includes cash held in underlying funds plus GBP held in model.

Asset Class	Portfolio Views
Fixed Interest	A shift in rate expectations lifted bonds in Q3, but markets may be overestimating the pace of cuts in a soft-landing scenario, potentially limiting near-term gains. We prefer UK government bonds, given their higher yields versus other developed markets. Emerging market local currency bonds also appeal, with opportunities from easing inflation and currency strength.
UK Equities	UK equities appear attractively valued and well-positioned to benefit from lower interest rates and increased political stability. The economic recovery is gaining momentum, with improving consumer and business confidence. Additionally, robust M&A activity, driven by these low valuations, should support market performance.
US Equity	US corporate earnings are strong, and economic growth is slowing but remains healthy, though volatility is likely, especially with November's election. Encouragingly, the long-anticipated "broadening out" of returns is taking shape, offering opportunities beyond the dominance of large-cap tech. We continue to emphasise diversification, as many tech stocks are priced with limited margin for safety.
Japan Equity	We maintain our positive view on Japanese equities. Japan is benefiting from steady growth and inflation nearing target levels, creating a supportive macro environment. Positive earnings revisions, alongside a rise in stock buybacks and dividends, signal increasing shareholder returns. Structural reforms in corporate governance continue to act as a tailwind supporting the long-term investment case.
Asia and Emerging Market Equity	Asian equities rallied late in September as new stimulus measures from Chinese policymakers boosted sentiment. Valuations across the region remain appealing, and earnings growth is expected to stay robust into 2025. With supportive policies and attractive fundamentals, we maintain our overweight position.
Alternatives	Alternatives provided valuable diversification when bonds and equities showed a positive correlation over the past year. However, with correlations now turning more negative and a growing range of opportunities within equities, we continue our underweight stance.

Outlook

As we move into the final quarter of 2024, it's clear the market's concern over inflation is now fading into the background. The focus has shifted to the overall health of the economy. In our view, the most likely scenario remains a soft landing, an economy that's slowing but still continues to grow. Inflation is coming down, and while the unemployment rate has ticked up, we see this as more a reflection of an expanding labour force than a sign of trouble. In fact, we should see it as part of a normalisation process, rather than a reason for alarm.

> *Even if the economy weakens more than anticipated, central banks are well-equipped to provide additional support. With interest rates relatively high, they have the flexibility to cut rates if needed.*

Looking at corporate earnings, reports covering the third quarter will be closely watched. Expectations have been tempered, but it is curious that while Q3 estimates have been revised lower, full-year 2025 estimates remain strong. We will likely hear more about this as we listen to management commentary during results season. We have also seen a notable broadening of market participation beyond the largest tech stocks particularly as the Fed eases and China's stimulus kicks in.

As ever, there are plenty of potential sources of volatility in the months ahead, from geopolitical tensions to Fed decisions and the US election. Overall, we think the positive momentum in economic data, lower interest rates and support from China should keep markets on solid footing, even in the face of potential headwinds. Our current analysis is that the fundamentals for growth remain solid.

Thoughts for the quarter ahead...

- Investors will likely focus on signs of a weakening global economy, as this will be critical in determining whether major central banks proceed with anticipated rate cuts.
- If UK interest rates remain higher than those of other countries, we could see upward pressure on Sterling, which we are monitoring closely.
- We're paying particular attention to third-quarter earnings, watching for further signs of broadening earnings, which would support our current positioning.
- Historically, the fourth quarter tends to be strong for equity market returns. With policy easing on the horizon and solid earnings growth, the environment looks favourable for risk assets in our view.
- The upcoming US Presidential election in November may trigger market volatility, which we will aim to capitalise on. A split Congress is typically seen as beneficial for US equities.
- The Labour Budget, set for October 30th, could have a notable impact on UK markets, and we are closely following this development.

Important information

[1] For the comparative index returns, we have used the total return performances of the following ETF's:

Comparative index	**ETF Name**
UK Equities	ISHARES CORE FTSE 100
US Equities	ISHARES CORE S&P 500
European Equities (ex UK)	ISHARES MSCI EUROPE EX-UK
Emerging Market Equities	ISHARES CORE EM IMI ACC
Japanese Equities	ISHARES CORE MSCI JAPAN
Pacific Equities (ex Japan)	ISHARES CORE MSCI PACIF X-JP
UK Government Bonds (Gilts)	ISHARES CORE UK GILTS
Global Bonds (GBP hedged)	ISHARES CORE GLB AGG GBP-H D
Commodities	ISH DIVERS COMMOD SWAP ETF