



[www.thehanley.co.uk](http://www.thehanley.co.uk)

## CASE STUDY: The Hanley Economic Building Society – a community organisation

The Staffordshire Potteries Economic Permanent Benefit Building Society was formed in 1854. In 1930 it shortened its name to The Hanley Economic Building Society, and still carries this name today. The Hanley remains in the heart of the community in which it was founded and has five branches and an agency located within the North Staffordshire area. As a building society, The Hanley is heavily involved with its local community and this remains at the heart of the societies' ethos. Their community work has been recognised with numerous prestigious awards and they have been chosen by the North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Eurochambers to be one of ten examples of best practice for local community work seen in 29 countries across Europe.

The Hanley is determined to forge a successful, distinctive and deserved reputation as a progressive, customer focused organisation. This, coupled with verve and imagination, meant that they became amongst the first building societies to offer online voting to members. David Lownds, Head of Business Support – Senior Manager at The Hanley discusses how online voting has worked for them.

### **So, why did you decide to move to online voting?**

“The internet is obviously still a growth area and with this in mind we decided to undertake online voting. We have members who live outside of our 25 mile heartland and the online voting option was a good way to encourage these members to vote online without them having to fill in a form and post it back to the Society. There are also cost savings to online voting, as each member can only vote once, by voting online they won't be using the pre-

paid envelope to return their proxy form and this obviously saves on postage. In 2009 this allowed us to donate 35p for each online vote cast to a local charity.”

### **Why in particular did you select Howsons Electoral services to provide the online service?**

“We were initially impressed with the work that Howsons Electoral Services had already carried out for Britannia Building Society. In the initial discussions it was clear that the people at HES were easy to do business with and shared our own views in increasing our membership engagement. We also spoke to other suppliers but were not as impressed with their level of service and costing structure.”

### **What benefits has The Hanley seen since moving to online voting?**

“Since using online voting at The Hanley, our online voting numbers have increased year on year. This has directly led to the society receiving more and more votes; from 55 building societies we have moved from 38<sup>th</sup> in 2005 to 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2008. We have also received excellent feedback from our members who use the online channel to vote and have secured PR coverage in industry, consumer and local press.”

At a glance:

- ✓ Since moving to online voting, from 55 societies, The Hanley has moved from 28<sup>th</sup> in 2005 to 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2008
- ✓ 24% of members voted at the last AGM
- ✓ 18% of votes cast online (2008 AGM)
- ✓ Votes cast online almost doubled in 3 years

*“I wouldn't hesitate to recommend HES to any building society that was looking to offer online voting to members. Their ability to offer value and service has been excellent and I look forward to working with HES again for our next AGM.” David Lownds, Head of Business Support*

More information from: Pete Doyle, Commercial Director, Howsons Electoral Services, 50 Broad Street, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 5NS T: 01538 393605 M: 07973 906911 [pete.doyle@howsons-es.net](mailto:pete.doyle@howsons-es.net) [www.howsons-es.net](http://www.howsons-es.net)