Thinking Ahead Institute
An innovation network founded by WTW

SHAPERS
Conversations shaping the way we think

The Wealth Portfolio Shift

Featuring atomos

Session Notes

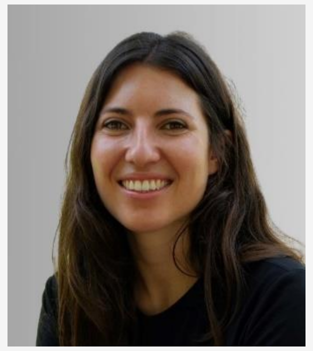
1 JULY 2026

Setting the scene

About SHAPERS

SHAPERS is a Thinking Ahead Institute series hosting conversations that shape the way we think. Each session brings together forward-looking organisations to share real case studies and insights.

Hosted by



Louisa Minter-Kemp

Communications & Engagement Director, Thinking Ahead

Guest Speakers

Eleanor Ingilby

Head of High Net Worth, atomos

Luke Apps

Senior Wealth Manager, atomos

About atomos

atomos is a UK-based wealth manager that provides investment management, financial planning and advisory services to high-net-worth individuals, families, charities and trusts.

Context

The wealth management industry is entering a period of profound change. Clients are more informed, technology is reshaping advice, and a historic transfer of wealth is altering expectations and priorities.

As traditional sources of differentiation come under pressure, our second Shapers session focused on real examples covering three main themes:

How client expectations are evolving — from ethical investing to intergenerational engagement, and what wealth managers are seeing on the ground

The impact of AI and technology — where it's genuinely transforming advice, and where human judgement still matters most

What trust looks like today — balancing digital convenience with the enduring need for personal relationships in managing wealth

Key takeaways

1. **The structural shift:** Information is increasingly commoditised, shifting the role of wealth managers from information providers towards judgement, interpretation and trust.

2. **Adviser roles are evolving:** The adviser is no longer a gatekeeper of information. As clients arrive with AI-generated insights, online research and competing opinions, the role is increasingly to provide context, challenge assumptions and turn information into informed decisions.

3. **Behaviour drives outcomes:** Helping clients navigate uncertainty is becoming an increasingly important source of value**.** Advisers often create the greatest impact by helping clients avoid mistakes during periods of uncertainty, volatility and emotional decision-making..

4. **Beyond the know-how:** Clients consistently value empathy, accessibility and continuity more than technical expertise alone. Long-term relationships and trusted guidance remain more memorable than knowledge in isolation.

5. **Wealth conversations extend beyond portfolios:** The transfer of wealth across generations is shifting the conversation from portfolio management towards stewardship, family dynamics and helping clients navigate life choices and future aspirations.

6. **Differentiation in the age of AI:** Artificial intelligence is improving efficiency and reducing administration, but its greatest limitation remains context. Human judgement, understanding and relationship-building continue to differentiate advisers.

Eleanor Ingilby

“ *The best way to think about AI is as a very intelligent graduate who knows a lot, but has a lot of gaps in their information and doesn't necessarily check its work.*

Luke Apps

“ *What people really care about is you being available and helping them through uncertainty. They value empathy, reliability and continuity more than pure technical expertise.*

Detailed summary

01 Redefining value in an information-rich world

Clients now have access to market commentary, investment research and AI-generated insights at their fingertips, changing how wealth managers create value. Increasingly, differentiation comes not from access to information, but from helping clients interpret uncertainty, make good decisions and remain focused on long-term goals.

02 The adviser as interpreter

The wealth manager is evolving from information gatekeeper to interpreter, sounding board and decision partner. As clients have greater access to online research and competing opinions, advisers play a key role in providing context, challenging assumptions and translating information into action.

03 Wealth transfer as both a financial and human challenge

The transfer of wealth across generations is reshaping client needs and conversations. The challenge extends beyond portfolio construction to helping families navigate inheritance, purpose, responsibility and stewardship. Advisers increasingly find themselves supporting conversations about values, family dynamics and what wealth should ultimately enable across generations.

04 AI is changing the economics of advice

AI is rapidly improving productivity by reducing administrative workloads, streamlining documentation and increasing access to information. At the same time, AI is exposing areas where human involvement remains important: applying context, understanding individual circumstances and building trusted relationships.

Practical examples: when human advice matters most

1 The market panic call

Client challenge

- Markets fall sharply
- Confidence deteriorates
- The instinct is to act

Where adviser adds value

- Provide perspective
- Reinforce long-term thinking
- Help clients avoid costly decisions

> *"Value often comes from stopping clients doing the wrong thing."*

2 Navigating inheritance choices

Client challenge

- Inheriting significant wealth
- Balancing responsibility and opportunity

Where advisers add value

- Facilitate family conversations
- Explore purpose and stewardship
- Support long-term planning

> *Wealth creates optionality, but also difficult choices.*

3 Interpreting information

Client challenge

- Endless research
- AI-generated advice
- Conflicting opinions

Where adviser adds value

- Apply context
- Challenge assumptions
- Translate information into action

> *The role is shifting from information provider to interpreter.*

4 During major life decisions

Client challenge

- Retirement
- Business sale
- Family changes

Where adviser adds value

- Understand personal circumstances
- Provide reassurance
- Help clients make decisions with confidence

> *Clients value empathy, availability and continuity more than expertise alone.*

What’s next?

Continue the conversation by exploring our Wealth resources and upcoming events

Wealth industry hub

Our dedicated hub brings together all of Thinking Ahead’s research and insights on wealth. Explore by clicking here.

Global Wealth Study 2025

Read the full report of our Global Wealth Study 2025, which gathered views of 250 global wealth management professionals via an extensive online survey conducted in July 2025 capturing more than 50,000 data points.

Podcasts

Tune in to conversations with leading investment thinkers on the future of the industry on our Investing for Tomorrow podcast series.

Upcoming events

Explore and join our upcoming events! See what’s coming up and register your interest.

Questions or want to get involved? Reach out to **enquiries@thinkingaheadinstitute.org**

About the Thinking Ahead Institute

The Thinking Ahead Institute is a global not-for-profit investment research and innovation network dedicated to helping investors navigate the future. Bringing together leading asset owners, asset managers, wealth providers and strategic partners, the Institute drives innovation through collaborative research and practical solutions. Since its founding in 2015, the Institute has convened more than 100 organisations to collaboratively design fit-for-purpose investment strategies, improve organisational effectiveness, and strengthen stakeholder trust. Learn more about how the Thinking Ahead Institute can support your organisation at thinkingaheadinstitute.org.

Led by Marisa Hall and Roger Urwin, the Thinking Ahead Institute connects our members from around the investment world to harness the power of collective thought leadership and develop innovative solutions for the investment industry.

Join the Thinking Ahead Institute
We seek collaboration with like-minded organisations to achieve our vision, so for more information about us please contact:

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