

Notes to the Financial Statements

8. Dividends

For the period	52 weeks to 30 March 2018 £m	52 weeks to 31 March 2017 £m
Equity – ordinary shares		
Final for the 52 weeks to 31 March 2017 – paid 11.68p per share (2017: 11.34p)	23.0	22.3
Interim for the 52 weeks to 30 March 2018 – paid 6.0p per share (2017: 5.83p)	11.8	11.5
Special dividend – nil p per share (2017: 10.0p)	—	19.7
	34.8	53.5

In addition, the Directors are proposing a final dividend in respect of the financial period ended 30 March 2018 of 12.03p per share (2017: 11.68p per share), which will absorb an estimated £23.7m (2017: £23.0m) of shareholders' funds. It will be paid on 31 August 2018 to shareholders who are on the register of members on 27 July 2018.

9. Earnings Per Share

Basic earnings per share are calculated by dividing the profit attributable to ordinary shareholders by the weighted average number of ordinary shares in issue during the period. The weighted average number of shares excludes shares held by an Employee Benefit Trust (see note 22) and has been adjusted for the issue/purchase of shares during the period.

For diluted earnings per share, the weighted average number of ordinary shares in issue is adjusted to assume conversion of all dilutive potential ordinary shares. These represent share options granted to employees where the exercise price is less than the average market price of the Company's ordinary shares during the 52 weeks to 30 March 2018.

The Group has also chosen to present an alternative earnings per share measure, underlying earnings per share, with profit adjusted for non-recurring items because it better reflects the Group's underlying performance. This measure is defined on page 151.

For the period	52 weeks to 30 March 2018 Number of shares m	52 weeks to 31 March 2017 Number of shares m
Weighted average number of shares in issue	199.1	199.1
Less: shares held by the Employee Benefit Trust (weighted average)	(2.1)	(2.5)
Weighted average number of shares for calculating basic earnings per share	197.0	196.6
Weighted average number of dilutive shares	1.6	0.5
Total number of shares for calculating diluted earnings per share	198.6	197.1

For the period	52 weeks to 30 March 2018 £m	52 weeks to 31 March 2017 £m
Basic earnings attributable to equity shareholders	54.7	56.4
Non-recurring items (see note 5):		
Operating expenses	4.8	3.4
Finance costs	(0.3)	0.6
Tax on non-recurring items	(0.8)	(0.9)
Underlying earnings before non-recurring items	58.4	59.5

Earnings per share is calculated as follows:

For the period	52 weeks to 30 March 2018	52 weeks to 31 March 2017
Basic earnings per ordinary share	27.8p	28.7p
Diluted earnings per ordinary share	27.5p	28.6p
Basic underlying earnings per ordinary share	29.6p	30.3p
Diluted underlying earnings per ordinary share	29.4p	30.2p