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H1 2026 Corporate Finance Update

Strong buyer demand continues for specialist UK businesses

Bishop Fleming's Corporate Finance team has advised on a series of completed sell-side transactions in the first half of 2026, spanning technology, logistics, hospitality and infrastructure. Across these deals, a consistent theme has emerged: high-quality, well-positioned businesses continue to attract strong interest from both UK and international buyers.

Our H1 activity reflects a market where buyers remain selective, but competition is strong for businesses that can demonstrate specialist capability, clear strategic value and attractive long-term growth prospects. Technology has been a particularly active area, while strategic and cross-border acquirers continue to play a significant role across sectors.

A resilient market for quality assets

The UK M&A market remained active through the opening months of 2026. While buyers have remained disciplined, demand has continued for businesses with strong market positions, recurring revenues and clear opportunities for growth. Strategic acquirers, including those backed by private equity, remain active in using acquisitions to strengthen capability and accelerate growth. International buyers continue to view the UK as an attractive source of specialist expertise and innovation.

H1 2026 highlights

- Multiple completed lead advisory, sell-side transactions.
- Strong activity in technology and technology-enabled businesses.
- Continued demand from strategic and international buyers.
- Buyer focus on specialist, resilient and well-positioned businesses.
- Range of deal drivers including growth, succession and strategic alignment

Technology remains a key area of interest

Three of our completed H1 transactions were in the technology sector, underlining continued buyer appetite for software, data and specialist technology-enabled businesses.

The sale of Goonhilly Earth Station to Nasdaq-listed Intuitive Machines highlights demand for strategically important, highly specialised assets.

Alongside this, the sales of Brightwell Systems and Motasoft further demonstrate the appeal of differentiated platforms operating in increasingly data-driven and operationally critical sectors.

Across these transactions, buyers were focused not simply on earnings, but on strategic capability, market position and long-term growth potential.

"We greatly valued the support provided by Bishop Fleming throughout the transaction. Their commercial, proactive and hands-on approach were instrumental in helping us deliver a successful outcome. The team worked seamlessly alongside management, providing clear guidance and maintaining momentum at every stage of the process."

Remko Bijtjes, CFO, Goonhilly

Strategic fit continues to drive value

Beyond technology, our H1 activity highlights strong demand for high-quality businesses with clear strategic relevance.

The sale of Dart Marina Group to Premier Marinas illustrates how complementary assets can drive value and accelerate growth. This transaction, alongside the structured sale of Brightwell Systems (including a property carve-out), reinforces the importance of preparation and tailored execution in achieving successful outcomes.

For business owners, this underlines a key point: value is driven not only by performance but also by how clearly the business's strategic relevance is articulated to the right buyers.

"The Bishop Fleming team were fundamental to the successful acquisition by the Premier Marinas Group of three long-standing privately owned businesses on the River Dart. The sale process was conducted at an incredible pace, with completion achieved in just three months. This required a highly focused and responsive approach by all parties, and the Bishop Fleming team played an integral part in achieving a positive outcome."

Paul Downing, Managing Director, Dart Marina Group

International buyers remain active

Cross-border appetite remained evident during H1. The sale of Kings Heavy Haulage to Groupe Capelle demonstrates the continued attractiveness of niche UK businesses to international acquirers, particularly those seeking specialist capability and strong market positions.

International demand continues to be an important feature of the market, particularly for businesses that can demonstrate differentiation and long-term growth potential. Access to a broad buyer universe remains key to achieving competitive outcomes.

Different shareholder objectives, similar success factors

The transactions completed during H1 2026 were driven by a range of shareholder motivations from growth capital and succession planning through to full exits.

Despite differing objectives, the strongest outcomes consistently shared common characteristics:

- Clear strategic positioning
- Alignment with the right buyer
- Thorough preparation
- Disciplined, well-managed processes

Across our H1 transactions, outcomes included full exits, strategic partnerships and transactions involving international and listed acquirers.

Completed advisory projects during H1 2026 include:

- Goonhilly Earth Station – acquired by Intuitive Machines (US)
- Kings Heavy Haulage – acquired by Groupe Capelle (France)
- Dart Marina Group – acquired by Premier Marinas (UK)
- Brightwell Systems – acquired by Bohr Group (UK)
- Motasoft – acquired by ClearCourse (UK)

What this means for business owners

Our H1 deal activity reinforces several clear messages. Buyer demand remains strong, but increasingly focused on businesses that are well prepared, clearly positioned and able to demonstrate strategic relevance. Specialist capability, defensible market positioning and a credible growth story remain key drivers of value.

For owners considering an exit over the next 12–36 months, early preparation can make a material difference. The most successful transactions are typically those that are carefully planned and proactively positioned, rather than opportunistic.

Looking ahead

As we move into H2 2026, we expect demand to remain strongest in sectors where businesses can demonstrate specialist expertise, resilient earnings and clear growth opportunities. Competition for high-quality assets remains healthy, particularly where there is a strong strategic rationale for acquisition.

Considering your next move?

Whether you are planning an exit in the near term or simply want to understand how your business may be viewed by buyers, an early conversation can make a meaningful difference to outcomes.

Bishop Fleming's Corporate Finance team would be pleased to share insights from recent transactions and help you position your business for future opportunities.

Get in touch to start the conversation.

Charles Davey
Partner and Head of Advisory
T: 07870 842985
Email Charles

Martyn Fraser
Corporate Finance Partner
T: 07966 947474
Email Martyn

Taj Lalli
Corporate Finance Partner
T: 07717 302554
Email Taj