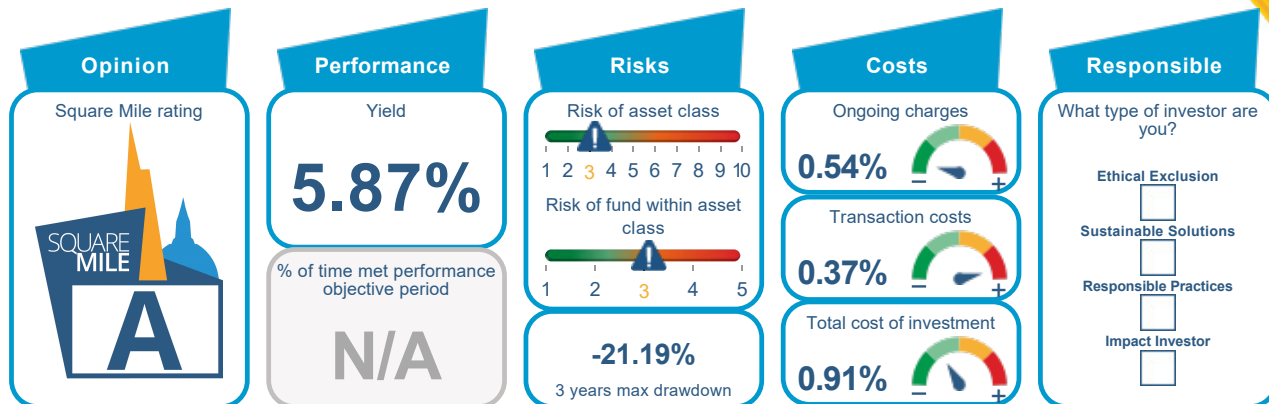


# Baillie Gifford Strategic Bond B Inc

January 2025



Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at: 31st December 2024.

## Overview

This fund invests mainly in corporate bonds across the credit rating spectrum, with a focus on providing income, although the level of income is not guaranteed and will vary depending on the market cycle. Through the process of identifying and investing in undervalued bonds, there is potential for some capital appreciation, however, this is a secondary consideration.

## Square Mile's Expected Outcome

We believe outperforming the fund's composite index, 70% ICE BofA Sterling Non Gilts/ 30% ICE BofA European CCY HY Constr. (hedged to GBP), on a rolling five year basis is a reasonable expectation for investors in this fund.

## Square Mile's Opinion

This fund provides exposure to corporate bonds across the ratings spectrum through a process which is both robust and slightly different to many of its competitors. The actual allocation to investment grade and sub-investment grade bonds will vary depending on where the managers see the most value, and is mostly a result of bottom-up stock picking rather than an asset allocation decision.

Due to the process used, the fund may look and perform in a way which is different to both the peer group and the benchmark. The focus on identifying and investing in undervalued securities means that performance can be somewhat more volatile than other funds investing in similar instruments, with the fund tending to underperform in a falling market and outperform in a rising market. The managers seek bonds which they believe to be undervalued and which they think will re-price. These opportunities may take some time to play out, therefore investors may need some patience at times in order to fully benefit from the strategy. The fund would be most suitable for investors who are looking for a level of income higher than that on comparable investment grade bonds, with the potential for some capital growth, and who are prepared to hold the fund over longer time periods (at least one full market cycle).

We like the approach taken by this strategy, where it focusses on both resilient businesses and undervalued bonds. In addition, we also like the collegiate team based approach employed. We believe the fund could be an attractive option for income-seeking investors. Baillie Gifford has an experienced credit team and we have confidence that the managers will continue to follow their process and generate a good level of income for investors.

## Fund Manager's Formal Objective

The fund aims to produce monthly income. Opportunities for capital growth are also sought, subject to prevailing market conditions.

<b>Outcome:</b> Income	<b>Domicile:</b> UK
<b>Active/Passive:</b> Active	<b>Benchmark:</b> Composite: 70% ICE BofA Sterling Non Gilts/ 30% ICE BofA European CCY HY Constr. (hedged to GBP)
<b>Asset Class:</b> Fixed Income	<b>IA Sector:</b> IA Sterling Strategic Bond
<b>Yield:</b> 5.87%	<b>Fund size:</b> £372M
<b>Fund Manager:</b> Lesley Dunn, Robert Baltzer, Theo Golden	<b>Distribution Pay Date:</b> January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December
<b>Fund Price:</b> 0.8 Pounds	<b>Dividend Frequency:</b> Monthly
<b>Currency of Share Class:</b> GBP	<b>Share Class Launch Date:</b> 26/02/1999

Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at: 31st December 2024

## Asset Manager Overview

Headquartered in Edinburgh, Baillie Gifford is a well established fund group that has a strong heritage of investing across fixed income and equities globally. The firm's most experienced and longest serving employees tend to progress to the partnership level, who ultimately own the firm. Indeed, the group is structured as an unlimited liability partnership, currently consisting of over 50 employee partners.

## Fund Manager/Team Overview

This fund is co-managed by Lesley Dunn, Robert Baltzer and Theo Golden who all sit on the credit team. Lesley is Head of the Credit Team at Baillie Gifford, having joined from Aberdeen Asset Management in 2016 and has over 20 years' investment experience. She is a member of the Multi Asset Income Leadership Group and the Sustainable Income Portfolio Construction Group. Robert is head of Credit Research and is a member of the Investment Grade, Crossover and High Yield Portfolio Groups, having joined Baillie Gifford in 2001 on the graduate scheme. Theo Golden was promoted to Co-Manager of the strategy on 1st January 2025, previously working as a credit analyst. Mr Golden is also chair of the corporate credit macro group and prior to joining Baillie Gifford in 2021 was a financial journalist. The managers can also draw upon the expertise of the wider investment resources at Baillie Gifford, which include four portfolio managers specialising in investment grade and high yield credit, three credit analysts, one dedicated ESG analyst, two income research specialists and two investment risk professionals.

## Investment Philosophy & Process Overview

Baillie Gifford believe that the corporate bond markets are inefficient and often fail to reflect all relevant information. This, combined with the segmented nature of the markets, frequently causes bonds to move away from their fair valuations, creating opportunities for investors who can analyse the relevant information and take advantage of such mispricings. As active managers, the corporate bond team at Baillie Gifford seeks to benefit from opportunities in the market, closely analysing a company's creditworthiness and the characteristics of individual securities in order to identify suitable

opportunities. The credit analysis scores companies on the basis of the perceived resilience of their business models, their compatibility with a sustainable economy, the strength of their capital structures and how attractively bonds are valued. The team is prepared to go against market consensus in order to follow its investment philosophy.

Through their analysis, the team members invest into credits across two broad buckets of Income and Capital appreciation. There are then four sub segments - Steady, Compounding, Accelerated and Event Driven. The Steady bucket would tend to hold bonds which in the teams view are rock solid credits which are typically higher rated but lower yielding. The team see credits in the compounding bucket as an important source of value. These are attractive, resilient businesses which are paying attractive income which will compound over time. Accelerated and Event driven typically comprise of credits which are trading below their fair fundamental valuations and where there is more room for capital appreciation. In the event driven bucket, there is normally an identifiable catalyst that will trigger a market revaluation in the teams view.

Position sizes vary from 1% to 5% depending on the relative risk of the bond, the size of the misvaluation, the conviction which the team has in the catalyst occurring and the correlation of the position to other positions in the portfolio. The turnover of the portfolio tends to be low as it generally takes some time for the identified catalysts to occur and for bonds to return to fair value. The portfolio tends to be fairly concentrated with around 60 to 85 issuers.

The fund can invest in both investment grade and sub-investment grade corporate bonds. Allocations across the rating spectrum are a result of bottom-up positioning and are not specifically targeted, but the neutral allocation would be 70% investment grade, 30% high yield. There is always likely to be a focus on the BBB and BB rated parts of the markets; this is usually where the greatest mispricings occur as the line between investment grade and sub-investment grade bonds becomes blurred. The fund will usually be underweight lower quality bonds (those with CCC ratings), as the risk-adjusted payoff is often lower for such securities. Interest rate risk tends to be maintained relatively near to that of the fund's composite index.

## ESG Integration

### Fund ESG Integration

The team use an analysis of environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors to help control risk and identify opportunities. The materiality of ESG factors will vary depending on a company's sector, region and the maturity profile of its bonds. Saorla Whelan is the dedicated ESG resource for the Credit Team. The team receive support from a centralised specialist ESG resource.

Part of the analysis undertaken on each company is an assessment of how compatible the company is with a sustainable economy. Within this assessment the team breakdown individual sustainability elements into sub-factors and note positive or negative developments in any factors relevant to the company. ESG factors are therefore a relevant part of the investment process, accounting for one fifth of the overall research framework. The sustainability output contributes to the decision making process, and often helps identify milestones for the ongoing monitoring of any investment brought into the portfolio.

## Risk Summary

This fund's managers invest in fixed income instruments, and so the main risks are likely to be interest rate risk and credit risk. Although the managers look to mitigate these risks through careful security selection as well as some active asset allocation, investors should be aware that, over time, they are likely to be significant. >

The managers invest across the ratings spectrum in both investment grade and sub-investment grade credit. Increasing default rates in these areas of the market are therefore likely to have an adverse impact on the fund. Indeed, whilst any impact should be softened by the extensive credit research which the team undertakes, there is always a possibility that a bond in the fund could default on its obligations. However, as the fund is relatively well diversified, the impact of any individual bond defaulting should be small.>

The interest rate risk of the fund will vary over time, however interest rate risk will always be present through the fund's holdings in higher quality, investment grade corporate bonds. >

Overall we believe that the managers are very capable of balancing and managing the risks inherent in the fund in the best interests of investors.

## Additional Information

**Annualised Return:** -0.74%

**Annualised Volatility:** 6.33%

**Max Drawdown:** -21.19%

**Max Gain:** 5.59%

**Max Loss:** -11.59%

**Sharpe Ratio:** -

**Sortino Ratio:** -0.19

(3 years data to last month end unless otherwise stated)

## Qualitative Risk Assessment

	Significant	Potentially Significant	Not Significant
Equity Risk			
Interest Rate Risk			
Credit Risk			
Exchange Rate Risk			
Liquidity Risk			
Emerging Markets Risk			
Derivative Risk			
Manager Risk			

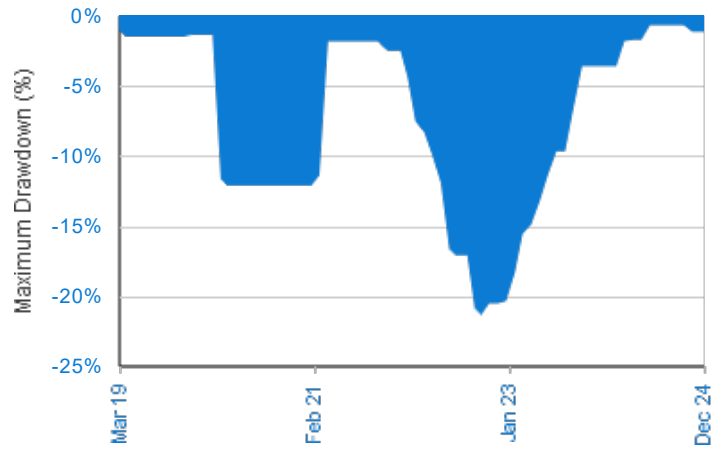
For the full summary of the risks, [click here](#)

### 3 Year Rolling Sector Outperformance



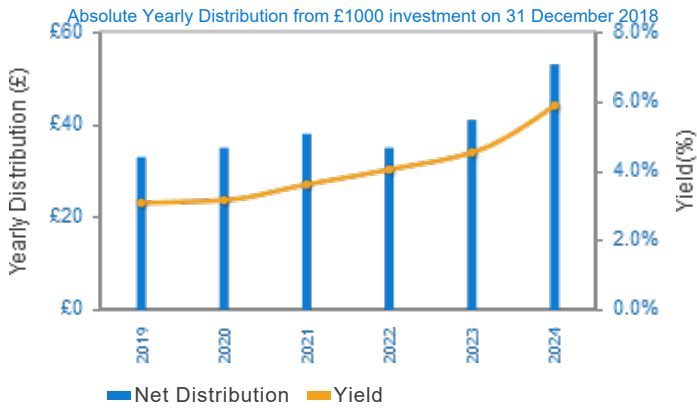
Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at: 21st January 2025. Share price total return.

### Maximum Drawdown (Rolling 12 Months)



Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at: 20th January 2025

### Income



This graph assumes that income is distributed to shareholders and not reinvested.  
Yield represents share price fluctuations.

Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at:

### Calendar Year Performance To Quarter End

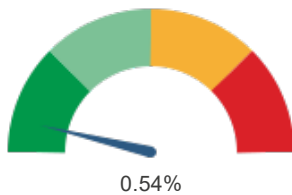
Period	Fund (%)	Sector (%)
2024	7.1	4.4
2023	9.4	7.9
2022	-15.9	-12.0
2021	-0.3	0.9
2020	6.0	6.4

Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at: 30th January 2025

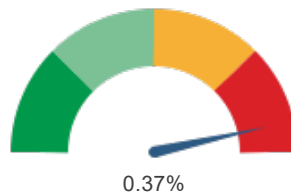
### Value for Money

The total cost of investment (TCI) of this share class is below the sector median and represents, in our opinion, good value for money. Corporate bonds require a high level of analysis and due diligence and the fact that Baillie Gifford provide this, with access to a well-regarded analyst team and a robust process, should be attractive to investors in our view.

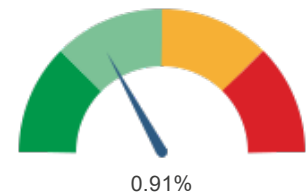
OCF v Peer Group



Transaction Costs v Peer Group



TCI v Peer Group



Source: Square Mile and LSEG Lipper (all rights reserved), Data as at: 31st December 2024.

The Square Mile ratings are reviewed every 6 months. For full details on the methodologies, [click here](#).

For a full list of all Square Mile rated funds, [click here](#).

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