

How you can protect wildlife for the future



Some helpful advice for making or changing your Will

Dear Supporter

Thank you for caring about your local wildlife – for caring enough to take this very important step of considering leaving a legacy to the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust.

It is only through the support of people like you that we are able to do so much to protect the wildlife of our three counties. Ancient woodlands, rare heathland, wildlife flower meadows, fens and bogs have been rescued and turned into delightful nature reserves brimming with life.

Yet sadly the very survival of our many precious species continues to be under threat and we are still losing wildlife at an alarming rate. Our existing reserves play an important part in protecting wildlife for years to come, and by expanding and linking them together, we hope to create vital wildlife corridors in which even more wildlife can thrive. Only with your help will we succeed and a bequest is one of the easiest ways to help protect our countryside for future generations.

By leaving a legacy to the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, you can make a real difference. For example, a recent legacy helped the Trust buy and maintain our Warburg Nature reserve - one of our most diverse reserves which is visited and enjoyed by thousands of people of all ages each year.

I hope you find this booklet useful in preparing your Will. In particular, I would guide you to the section on making your Will more effective by leaving a residuary bequest. If you would like to talk through your wishes before visiting your solicitor, then please contact us on 01865 775476. Thank you for all the support you already give and a special thank you for considering to leave a legacy to your local Wildlife Trust.



Philippa Lyons
Chief Executive

Why should you make a Will?

Most people today understand the importance of making a Will and the need to review it on a regular basis. Making your Will is the only way to be absolutely certain that your money and your belongings go to the people and causes you care about.

A Will allows you to appoint someone to sort out your estate when you die. More importantly, it enables you to say who will look after your children if you and your partner should die. You can even make provision for your own funeral arrangements.

Investing some time and effort now will give you peace of mind knowing that you have put your affairs in order.

Updating an existing Will is also extremely important. Changes in your financial or family circumstances such as marriage, divorce, grandchildren, retirement or selling property can affect it. For instance, did you know that remarrying revokes any earlier Will?

What could happen if you don't make a Will?

Making a Will is so simple. Not making one can place an unnecessary burden of worry and heartache on those you leave behind.

If you are without family and you haven't made a Will, all your belongings pass to the Crown. Your friends have no automatic claim by law and may receive nothing.

If you have children under 18, it is important to make provision for them. You will want to think about your children's future in the unlikely event that you and your partner should die at the same time.

If a husband or wife dies leaving no Will, the survivor may not inherit the whole of the estate. This is a danger where the house stands in the sole name of the deceased spouse. A Will is essential where partners live as husband and wife but are not married.

Sorting out who receives what is an expensive business and the legal cost will be paid out of your estate. It can also take a long time, during which your loved ones may be left without means of support. But most important is that fact that your estate may not be distributed as you would have wished.

Choosing who will administer your estate

When you make a Will you have a chance to choose who will be the Executors. Otherwise, certain beneficiaries will be entitled to administer the estate, which could leave sensitive issues to be dealt with by someone whom you would have considered unsuitable.

Is it best to use a solicitor?

You may save money with a homemade Will or printed form from your newsagent - but can you trust it to be legally proven, validly signed and having covered every eventuality? The most important factor when you make a Will is to ensure that your lifetime wishes are carried out correctly after your death. Having decided to make a Will, it is worth the reassurance of having it drawn professionally by a solicitor. You may have used a solicitor in the past or have friends who can recommend someone. Alternatively you could contact the Law Society or your local Citizen's Advice Bureau. Ask the solicitor for an estimate of what the costs will be. They will be able to answer all your questions and advise you on how you can reduce your inheritance tax bills. Making a Will is almost certainly cheaper than the cost of not making one or making an incorrect one.

How can you remember your favourite causes in your Will?

It is only by making a Will that you can make a legally enforceable gift to charity on your death.

There are three ways to remember your loved ones and favourite causes in your Will:

Residuary bequest – if you want your gift to remain inflation-proof, you can leave a percentage of your estate to a charity. Once you have taken care of loved ones, you can then leave the remaining proportion of your estate to your chosen charity. As it does not lose value over time, this is of most benefit to the charity (e.g. 10%).

Pecuniary bequest - if you wish to leave a specific sum of money to a person or charity (e.g £1,000)

Specific bequest - if you wish to leave a specific item to a loved one or charity, (e.g. shares in a company, painting).

A small request...

You can make a Will today and include a bequest to the Trust that can guard against inflation and grow over time into a significant gift for wildlife. By leaving a residuary bequest the charity will receive a proportion of your estate when all other bequests and expenses have been deducted. For the wording to use for a residuary bequest, go to the section called 'Getting the Wording Right'.

"If you particularly wish your bequest to be linked to an existing nature reserve or for nature reserve purchase, please do come and talk with me before you finalise your Will. I am most anxious that special gifts such as a bequest can be used by the Trust to safeguard local wildlife in the most effective way possible. By meeting with you and discussing your wishes I can be certain your bequest will provide a fitting and lasting testament to your love of our natural heritage,"
Philippa Lyons, Chief Executive

What to do next.

Here are a few steps to help you make a Will and remember your favourite causes.

1) Firstly choose your executors – the people who will make sure your wishes are carried out. You can have up to four executors. Beneficiaries can be executors although their appointment could create a conflict of interest. Professionals, such as your solicitor, can also be executors.

Name

Address

Name

Address

Name

Address

Name

Address

2) Getting it all down on paper

It is worth listing all your assets and their approximate value, noting any items that are held jointly. This will save you time and money when you go to your solicitor.

Property

Your home	£
Your second or holiday home/caravan	£
Your household contents (including clothes and furniture)	£
Antiques	£
Jewellery	£
Your car	£
Other items of value	£
Total value of property	£

Financial (Again note any items held jointly)

Bank accounts	£
Building society accounts	£
Stocks and shares	£
National savings	£
Pension/benefits	£
Life assurance	£
Premium bonds	£
Unit trusts	£
Business assets	£
Any further financial interests (e.g. family trusts and settlements)	£
Total	£

Money you owe (noting if these will be paid off on your death by, e.g. an insurance policy)

Outstanding mortgage	£
Other loans	£
Overdraft	£
Hire purchase	£
Credit card debts	£
Other money owed	£
Total	£

Money you are owed

Name and address of debtors	
Date of loan	
Amount outstanding	£

3) Decide who you want to include in your Will and what you would like to leave to them

Beneficiary (name of person or charity)	Share of estate (e.g. 10% of estate)	Sum of money (e.g. £5,000)	Specific item (e.g. painting)
Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust			

Other considerations

4) What do you want to happen to your estate if any of the people you have named die before you?

5) Do you and your family often travel together? If so what do you want to happen to your estate if you die at the same time?

6) List any questions you want to ask your solicitor

When you have made your Will, it will need to be properly signed and witnessed. There are strict formalities to be observed when witnessing Wills. An improperly witnessed document could lead to failure of the whole Will. Your solicitor can advise you on this point and arrange witnesses for your Will.

Getting the Wording Right

The words used in a Will are very important. In particular, if you want to leave a bequest to the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust, it is important to give our correct name so there can be no misunderstanding. Our full name is The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.*

Residuary bequest (a gift of what is left after other specific bequests have been settled)

"I give to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, registered charity number 204330, the residue of my estate absolutely and I direct that: i) the assets comprising such residue may be used for the general purposes of the Trust and ii) a receipt signed by a person for the time being authorised by the Trustees of the Trust shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my executors;

Pecuniary bequest (a gift of a stated sum of money)

"I give to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, registered charity number 204330, the sum of £..... and I direct that i) such money may be used for the general purpose of the Trust and ii) a receipt signed by a person for the time being authorised by the Trustees of the Trust shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my executors."

Specific bequest (a gift of an item)

"I give to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire & Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, registered charity number 204330, my (shares in XXX company, paintings, jewellery, personal effects, house etc) and I direct that i) such assets may be sold and the proceeds used for the general purposes of the Trust and ii) a receipt signed by a person for the time being authorised by the Trustees of the Trust shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my executors."

* The Trust was formerly called the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Naturalists' Trust or BBONT. Any bequest made out in this name remains valid.

Your love of the countryside...

The Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust manages local nature reserves, ranging from ancient woodlands and flower-rich meadows to unspoiled downland and precious streams and lakes. Here, wildlife – both common and rare – can flourish under ideal conditions. The Trust seeks out and tries to buy vulnerable habitats under threat and sets about actively protecting them for future generations. We provide opportunities for thousands of local school children and also offer expert advice on wildlife conservation to all who live in, enjoy and plan for the future wellbeing of the countryside of our three counties.

...will live on

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Registered charity number 204330