



Britain Yearly Meeting
of the Religious
Society of Friends

Legacy information sheet

Thank you for considering leaving Britain Yearly Meeting a gift in your will. Quaker work depends on this type of gift. Currently gifts in wills pay for a fifth of the work we do on behalf of Quakers in Britain.

Types of gift

There are three types of gift you can leave in your will:

1. **A residuary gift** – a share of your total estate after all the other payments have been deducted. Because a residuary gift is a simple percentage of your estate you can be reassured that the gift will hold its value and you don't need to worry if your circumstances change.
2. **A pecuniary gift** – a gift of fixed amount. This value of the gift will be subject to inflation and may need reviewing from time to time, as it may end up being worth less than you originally intended.
3. **A specific gift** – a gift of personal possessions, property or shares.

Leaving a gift in your will: some key questions answered

Q: Do I have to use a solicitor?

A: *No, but we strongly advise that you do. Although it is possible to draft a will on your own, or with assistance from a will-writing kit or even online, a will is a legal document and a solicitor will help you make sure that it meets all the requirements of the law.*

Q: Can somebody who benefits from my will also be an executor?

A: *Yes. There is no rule against appointing somebody as an executor to carry out your wishes, and also leaving a gift to them in your will.*

Q: What if I want to add to, or amend, my will?

A: *You can do this by writing a codicil. This is a formal document, signed and witnessed like a will, that details the changes from the original will. For suggested wording see below.*

Q: Can I support a particular Quaker project?

A: *Yes, in one of two ways. You can specify in your will what work you want your legacy to support. Or you can leave a general gift to the Society in your will, and make it known to your executors what your wishes are through a 'Letter of Wishes'. This means that, if our work or projects change, we can use your gift in a way which mirrors your wishes as closely as possible. We are always delighted to receive a legacy for particular work. But times and needs change, so we ask that your earmarking is fairly broad, or that the bequest contains the words "without creating a binding obligation". We will always apply the money to the nearest possible purpose to the original intention, but this gives us flexibility and makes sure that we can always use your legacy gift well.*

Q: Do I have to tell the Society about my legacy?

A: *No, although we would like you to. We recognise that a gift in your will is often the biggest you'll ever make, and we'd like to be able to thank you, and to keep in touch with occasional updates about our work, as you wish. There's no obligation to give us any details about your legacy, nor to tell us if you change your mind.*

Suggested wording

Britain Yearly Meeting suggests these wordings in good faith but we do not accept responsibility for any steps taken as a result. We strongly advise Friends to take legal advice on the wording of their will. It is most helpful if the legacy is left to be used as needed.

A bequest to Britain Yearly Meeting for general funds

"I give, free of taxes, as a charitable bequest, [either a specific sum, or a proportion of the residuary estate] to Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, Registered Charity Number 1127633, or its successor in title, to be used as to both capital and income for the general purposes of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain. I direct that the receipt of the Finance Secretary for the time being, or other duly authorised officer, shall be a full discharge to my executors."

A bequest to Britain Yearly Meeting for a specific area of work

"I give, free of taxes, as a charitable bequest, [either a specific sum, or a proportion of the residuary estate] to Britain Yearly Meeting, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, Registered Charity Number 1127633, or its successor in title, for the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain, with the wish, but without creating a binding obligation, that it be used as both capital and income for the work of [name of project, or kind of work]. I direct that the receipt of the Finance Secretary for the time being, or other duly authorised officer, shall be a full discharge to my executors."

A bequest to local or area Quaker meeting funds

"I give, free of taxes, as a charitable bequest, [either a specific sum, or a proportion of the residuary estate] to Friends Trusts Limited, Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ, registered charity number 237698, to be used as to both capital and income for the benefit of the Religious Society of Friends [name of meeting] [Local or Area] Quaker Meeting, or its successor in title. I direct that the receipt of the Secretary for the time being, or other duly authorised officer, shall be a full discharge to my executors."

What is Friends Trusts Limited?

It is the denominational trust corporation which can act as custodian trustee or nominee for the Society and other related organisations. It is based at Friends House. As a registered charity, it has a charity number and clear charitable status. Legacies to local or area meetings should be left to Friends Trusts, which will pass on the gift to the meeting you have named in your will.

Glossary of terms when writing a will

Beneficiary

Somebody who receives something under the provisions of your will. This can be a person or an organisation, charity or cause to which you have left money or other goods.

Bona vacantia

Latin phrase that means 'goods with no owner'. If a person dies intestate and without a spouse, civil partner or close relative, then their estate is considered to be *bona vacantia*. The whole of it will pass to the state.

Codicil

A separate document that adds to or changes your will. You can add a codicil at any time, if the provisions of your existing will need a minor change or addition.

Estate

The sum total of everything you leave in your will, including money and possessions.

Executor

In your will, you should specify who will carry out your instructions, such as ensuring that your property is given to the people you nominate. These are your 'executors'. They can be people you know personally, such as relatives or friends, or they can be professionals such as your solicitor.

Intestate

If you die without making a valid will then you will be 'intestate'. Since there is no statement of your wishes, your estate will be distributed among your spouse or civil partner and your other relatives in proportions laid down by law – and not necessarily how you would wish.

Legacy

This is not a legal term, but refers to any gift that you leave for a particular purpose or to a person or organisation. For Britain Yearly Meeting and other charities, it reflects the importance that we place on the benefits we receive from people in their wills. Legacies are the biggest source of income for many charities, and guarantee that our work can continue.

Pecuniary gift

A gift of fixed amount. This value of a pecuniary gift will be subject to inflation and may need reviewing from time to time as it may end up being worth less than you originally intended.

Probate

The formal process that establishes that your will is valid and that the executors are therefore allowed to administer your estate as you have specified.

Residuary gift

A share of your total estate after all the other payments have been deducted. Because a residuary gift is a simple percentage of your estate the gift will hold its value.

Specific gift

A gift of personal possessions, property or shares.

Testator (m) or Testatrix (f)

The person making the will.

Witness

Your signing of the will must be witnessed by two other people, neither of whom can be a beneficiary of the will. Your solicitor will advise and may be able to provide independent witnesses.

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