A gift in your Will could protect the beauty and wildlife of Sussex – forever.
We have achieved so much in the past 50 years.

With your legacy, we can do even more for decades to come.

On 21st January 1961, a group of local naturalists met to discuss how to halt the decline of habitats and species across Sussex. On that day, the Sussex Wildlife Trust was born.

Since then, the Trust has made a fundamental difference to our county, purchasing land to safeguard vital wildlife habitat, re-introducing vulnerable species and connecting people with nature.

This is just the start. Over the next 50 years, we aim to create and protect large areas of forest, countryside and wetland that are managed by nature rather than human intervention.

It will be an environment that is wildlife-rich in every corner. You can be part of this vision, by making a gift in your Will to Sussex Wildlife Trust.

1961
The Sussex Naturalists’ Trust was set up and meetings took place in Trust members’ homes.

1966
Woods Mill, with 15 acres of land, was given to the Trust, providing a headquarters and meeting place.

1978
We successfully opposed proposals to pump drain the grazing marshes of Amberley Wildbrooks.

1988
We appointed our first Community Wildlife Officer, to encourage people to become involved in the environment.

white admiral ©Roger Wilmshurst
Woods Mill ©David Ball
redshank ©Tom Marshall
©Sue Cumock
You can make sure your loved ones come first in your Will, and also leave a gift to help some of our most important and inspiring projects. For example, a legacy gift could help us to:

- Establish a resilient ecological network to make Sussex a truly living landscape
- Rebuild the vital connection between people and the natural world
- Make sure that habitats and rare species in Sussex thrive once again

Any gift you make, no matter how large or small, will make a crucial difference. For instance, just £2,000 could help to buy cattle to graze our land in the most natural way possible for conservation.

1993
We bought 220 acres of land adjacent to Pevensey marshes to create a large nature reserve for wetland habitat restoration.

1998
The Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan, a partnership we led, helped to form a shared nature conservation agenda across the county.

2009
Our joint campaign to designate the South Downs as a National Park was finally successful, safeguarding 1,000km² of Sussex countryside.

These are just some of our milestones. None of them would have been possible without gifts in Wills from our supporters.
Saving wildlife

From otters to nightjars, from butterflies to bats, legacies have helped us to protect vulnerable species
In just 50 years, Sussex Wildlife Trust has managed to protect some of our county’s best-loved wildlife.
For instance, the nightjar was in serious decline, but thanks to our heathland restoration projects in Graffham and Iping Commons, more and more birds are nesting again on lowland heath. The otter was nearly wiped out in our county, but thanks to our campaign to clean up rivers and waterways, otters are now returning to Sussex.

Your legacy will help us reintroduce key species across our county
Your gift could help us protect other key species in Sussex. For example, legacy gifts have helped us to develop the West Weald Landscape Project, in order to improve the ‘naturalness’ of the area. Following our work, the population of the Barbastelle bat, one of Britain’s rarest mammals, has doubled around our nature reserve in just ten years. Other bat species are living there too, as well as the lesser spotted woodpecker and the wood white butterfly.

In the next 20 years... we aim to protect more vulnerable species
We are showing landowners how to best manage their land to encourage wildlife to return. In the next 20 years we will engage even more landowners in wildlife-sensitive land management, aiming to make a crucial difference across over 70,000 hectares of land. Your gift will make this possible.

A gift of £15,000 could help us to develop a special project to encourage the return of a declining species like the stone curlew back into Sussex.
Protecting landscapes

We have purchased vital habitats that were under threat, and are carefully managing them for wildlife. Habitats across our county are in serious decline. For instance, 80% of Sussex’s wetlands have been damaged or destroyed since 1960. But there is something we can do. The Trust has purchased important pieces of land to protect key habitats in our county, including at Rye Harbour, that wonderful Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Protection Area for birds, the chalk grassland of Malling Down with its rare flowers and butterflies and the scarce heathland habitat of Iping Common.

Your legacy will help us save more key landscapes like wetlands and wild forests
A gift in your Will could help us create another success like Woods Mill, with its streams, marshland, lake and ancient woodland. We have carefully managed this crucial landscape, establishing an education centre that has been host to hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren over the years, helping them learn and experience wildlife first hand.

In the next 20 years... we will introduce wetlands to all river catchments in Sussex
We have exciting plans for the years ahead. We want to secure a further 6,000 more hectares of land to re-establish vital wildlife habitats, and help to create near-naturally functioning wetlands on all our river catchments. They will be a vital home for wildfowl and waders, playing host to hundreds of thousands of birds. Your gift will make this possible.

A gift of £35,000 – 10% of a £350,000 estate – could help us to purchase a special piece of land like Malling Down and protect its habitat and rare species forever.
Reconnecting people with nature

We are helping children and adults experience and learn about the natural world
Right from the start, Sussex Wildlife Trust has been helping people experience the natural world on their doorstep. At our centres like Seven Sisters, we have helped hundreds of thousands of children learn about and experience wildlife first hand. We also run nature-based community projects like Wild About Brighton, connecting residents to the wildlife and habitats around them.

Your legacy will help us ensure that future generations know the joy of the natural world
With the help of legacies as well as other gifts, in 2003 we launched our outreach project to provide advice and support for local schools and young people’s environmental groups. The project has shown countless groups how best to use their grounds to benefit local wildlife. A gift in your Will could help us to further develop vital work like this.

In the next 20 years... we will encourage over 100,000 school children a year to connect with nature
Children should be able to play outside in a wildlife rich environment, local to their homes. We will champion the re-wilding of the children in our county, encouraging every child in Sussex to spend half a day a week learning outdoors. We will also develop five visitor centres that will engage with and interpret the landscape and wildlife of Sussex for over 750,000 visitors a year.

A gift of £25,000 could help us to develop a community nature reserve in an urban area, helping to reconnect local people with the natural world.
What do you want your legacy to be?

Gifts in Wills play a vital role in protecting the natural beauty on our doorstep
When future generations look back at this era, what will they think? Will they be grateful for the work we have done to save the countryside, or dismayed that we have let it disappear? A gift in your Will could help us protect what matters, and create a wonderful future. Otters thriving in our rivers, barn owls, skylarks and red kites in our skies, orchids and other delicate flowers flourishing once again on our chalk downland. That is the legacy you could leave.

Help us protect the places that are special to you
We all have particular favourite places. From the rolling South Downs to the wide landscape of the Low Weald, from the sands and shingle of the coastal plain to our teeming wetlands. Each of these habitats is rich and diverse, and absolutely crucial for our native wildlife. You could ensure that the places you love are preserved for future generations, by making a gift in your Will.

Please let us know your intentions
Legacy gifts help us to plan for the future and invest in land purchases and other special projects that we normally might not be able to afford. Of course, you don’t have to tell us you are planning to leave a gift, but doing so means we will be able to look forward with confidence to the future that will protect more habitats and enhance their biodiversity.

Whether you have already made a gift or are intending to do so, please let us know by completing the accompanying form or by calling our Legacies Officer, Gemma Pratt, on 01273 497 566 or email gemmapratt@sussexwt.org.uk.
If you have a question about how to make a gift towards our vital work, you should find the answer here. If you have any further questions, please feel free to get in touch with our Legacies Officer, Gemma Pratt, on 01273 497 566. Everything you tell us will be in the strictest confidence.
Why should I make a Will?

A Will is the only way of making sure that your dependants are provided for in the way you wish after your death. Verbal agreements made during your lifetime have no legal effect, so loved ones could suffer – especially if you and your partner aren’t married.

If you die without a Will – or ‘intestate’ – a court will appoint administrators to deal with the distribution of everything you own – your ‘estate’. They won’t know your wishes and will divide your estate according to strict rules your family will have no control over. Making a Will lets you choose.

Sorting out the affairs of someone who has died intestate is a long and complex process. During that time your loved ones would be unable to gain access to the money you intended for them. The resulting legal costs could even reduce the value of the estate itself. Making a Will helps them immeasurably.

If the estate you leave is more than adequate for your dependants, then you may also want to leave some money or property to a cause like Sussex Wildlife Trust that you have supported in your lifetime and are passionate about. This can’t be done without a Will.
How can I be sure my Will is valid and accurate?
It is always best to have your Will drawn up by an experienced solicitor. A Will is a legal document and trying to write your own can be difficult. One error can cause the whole document to be invalid.

How much will it cost me?
The cost of a straightforward Will is probably less than you think – normally around £100, though it’s a good idea to get quotes from two or more solicitors. If you don’t already have a solicitor, the best way to find a good firm is to ask friends and family for recommendations. The Law Society also provides a list of recommended solicitors – you can find out more at www.lawsociety.org.uk.

Valuing your estate
To work out the value of your estate, you’ll firstly need to add up all your assets. Think about your home and any money, savings and investments you have, as well as items such as cars and furniture. Then add up all your liabilities, including your mortgage, overdraft and any other loans. By subtracting all your liabilities from the value of your assets, you can work out the total value of your estate.
**What types of gifts are there?**

There are three main types of gift that you can leave.

**A residuary gift**
This is a gift of all or a percentage of what is left of your estate after taxes and debts are paid and all your other legacies have been distributed.

**A pecuniary gift**
This is a specific sum of money left to an organisation like Sussex Wildlife Trust.

**A specific gift**
You leave a specific item to the Trust, such as an object of value, property or land.

**Which type of gift is best for Sussex Wildlife Trust?**

Of course, we are always delighted to receive any kind of gift. A pecuniary gift can lose its value over time though due to inflation, which is why a residuary gift can often be most useful to us.

A residuary gift ensures that your family and dependents are provided for in exactly the way you want and we receive much-needed funds that will help us plan our work with confidence.

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**Naming executors**

In your Will you have to name the people you would like to administer your estate. One could be your solicitor or bank manager (they normally charge for this) – the other could be a relative or friend. Make sure they have agreed to it before you name them.

**Choosing guardians**

If you have children under 18 you should appoint guardians. This means they will be cared for if you and your partner pass away before they are 18. Make sure to check that the people you name as guardians have agreed to take on this responsibility.

**Witnessing your signature**

You have to sign your Will in the presence of two witnesses in order for it to be legal. They have to sign it too. They can't be beneficiaries of your Will, or related to beneficiaries.

**How do I know what to leave?**

Once you have calculated the total worth of your assets and made all deductions, you will know the value of your estate. You can now draw up a list of those whom you wish to benefit, by how much and in what way. At this point, you may also consider leaving the Trust a share of the residue that is left over once all major gifts have been made.
Why would I need to update my Will?
As your circumstances may change over the years, it’s important to make sure your Will is up to date. The main reasons for updating it are:

Marriage and divorce
Under English law, marriage revokes a Will and provisions in favour of a spouse normally cease to have effect following divorce. That means you will need to write a new Will.

Children and grandchildren
If there’s a new child in the family it’s important to review your Will. If relatives named in the Will separate or there’s a death in the family you may also need to change your Will.

Substantial inheritances
Make sure to check that your Will takes any inheritance you receive into account.

How do I change my Will?
Never write on your Will as that would invalidate it. If there have been major changes in your life, it’s probably best to write a new Will. However, if the changes are minor, you can make changes to your Will using a separate document known as a codicil. This has to be signed and witnessed, but not necessarily by the same witnesses as your Will. Make sure to keep your codicil and your Will together. You may be able to use a codicil to leave a pecuniary gift to a charity. If in doubt, contact your solicitor.
Can I use a gift to the Trust to reduce Inheritance Tax?

Inheritance Tax at 40% is payable on your estate on that part of its value which exceeds the combined ‘nil rate band’ (£325,000 at present), any transferable nil rate band and residence nil rate band. However, gifts to exempt beneficiaries, including charities like Sussex Wildlife Trust, are deducted from your estate before Inheritance Tax is calculated. This may even result in your estate paying no Inheritance Tax at all.

Where Inheritance Tax is payable, anyone leaving 10% or more of their taxable estate to charity will qualify for a reduced rate of Inheritance Tax of 36%, which could save a considerable amount. If you have any questions or would like advice about inheritance tax, please talk to your solicitor.

Can I make a gift towards a particular part of your work?

We are very grateful for every single gift we receive. Conservation needs and priorities change over time, so the most helpful gifts are those that are left with as few restrictions as possible, which mean we can use them wherever the need is greatest. If you have any specific requests or would like to leave a gift towards a particular area of our work, please get in touch to discuss it with us.

I’m thinking of leaving a gift to the Trust. What wording should I use in my Will?

For a residuary gift to the Trust:

“I give to Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SD (Registered Charity Number 207005) ......................... (1% - 100%, or stated portion) of the residue of my estate for its general charitable purposes and I further declare that the receipt of the Honorary Treasurer or other proper officer of Sussex Wildlife Trust for the time being shall be a full and sufficient discharge for the said legacy.”

For a pecuniary gift to the Trust:

“I give the sum of £X to Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SD (Registered Charity Number 207005) for its general charitable purposes and I further declare that the receipt of the Honorary Treasurer or other proper officer of Sussex Wildlife Trust for the time being shall be a full and sufficient discharge for the said legacy.”
How will you keep in touch with me after I have pledged a gift?
If you let us know that you intend to leave a gift, we will get in touch to thank you for your generosity. From time to time we will also invite you to events held solely for people who pledge a gift to the Trust, so you can have an exclusive insight into the work you will be helping to fund. Of course, if you would rather that we didn’t get in touch with you in the future, we will respect your wishes. Please just let us know.

Will you acknowledge my gift?
We like to acknowledge the gifts that we receive through legacies from our supporters. Unless you would prefer your gift to remain anonymous, we will mention it in our annual report and members’ magazine during the year we receive it. We can also arrange for an inscription in our Book of Remembrance.
“The future is much too important to be left to chance. That is why making a Will is one of the most important jobs that any of us has to do.

I am sure that, like me, you are concerned about the future of our planet. You too share a belief that it is important we leave a thriving natural world for future generations to know and enjoy.

Your support for the Sussex Wildlife Trust will help ensure that our children and grandchildren can continue to enjoy the wonders of nature.”

Sir David Attenborough OM FRS
President Emeritus The Wildlife Trusts

Sussex Wildlife Trust, Woods Mill, Henfield, West Sussex, BN5 9SD.

Legacy enquiries: Please call Gemma Pratt on 01273 497 566 or email gemmapratt@sussexwt.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 207005