



Canal &
River Trust
Making life better by water

Write the future of canals with a gift in your Will



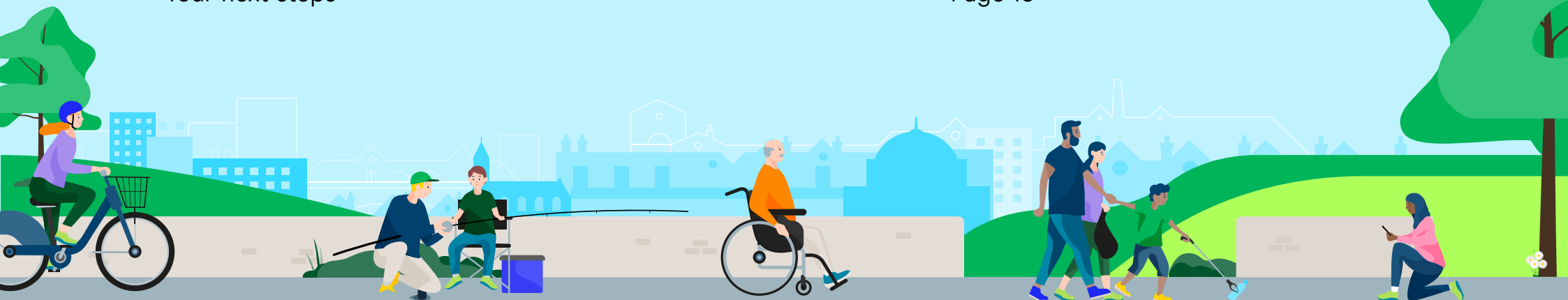
Maintain and revive our canals | Protect our industrial heritage | Give wildlife a home

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3,000

heritage sites
protected including
49 scheduled ancient
monuments and
five UNESCO World
Heritage Sites.



Will you help shape the future of canals?

We are the charity that cares for 2,000 miles of 250-year-old canals. This national treasure is one of the finest examples of working industrial heritage in the world. But their very age means they are vulnerable, fragile and increasingly difficult and costly to maintain. At a time of volatile climate change, rapidly rising costs and funding cuts, the risk of canals falling back into decline is real. You only need to go back just a few decades to see how quickly our canals can crumble.

That's why today, we need your help to keep our canals alive. Perhaps you'd like to consider leaving a gift in your Will to our canals to keep them thriving and to protect our history so future generations can learn about our past.

Your gift is also an amazing way to support UK wildlife too, with waters, banks, towpaths and hedges along canals, offering a unique mix of habitats that support thousands of species at a time when so much of the UK's wildlife is disappearing.

Just as they were the catalyst for the Industrial Revolution, our canals can help to shape a positive future for us all. If the history, beauty or tranquillity of canals has enriched your life, please consider how a gift in your Will could shape an exciting future for our wonderful canals.

“We spend around £200m a year to operate and maintain our historic canal network but our costs are rising rapidly due to inflation, the impact of climate change and the increasing challenges of caring for an ageing network, much of which is 250 years old and still functioning as it did then.

In addition, we are set to see a reduction in funding from Government by over £300m in real terms over the next twelve years. If we all do what we can to help to keep our canals alive, they can continue to make a major contribution to our future, transforming places and enriching lives.”

Richard Parry
chief executive



As vital to our future, as they were to our past

Over hundreds of years, canals have been vital to our nation. And though their use and purpose is constantly evolving, their importance has never declined.

Canals are as vital to us now as they were in the past. Let's look at how canals have changed over time.



© Alamy

1700s

Coal, crockery and cotton

The building of the Aire & Calder Navigation to carry textiles from Leeds to the Humber was the earliest example of textile merchants creating a new waterway to carry goods in bulk to our ports.

But famously, it was the Earl of Bridgewater who began the 'canal mania' of the 1700s. The Bridgewater Canal was soon followed by Shropshire Union, the Trent & Mersey and many more.



© Waterways archive

1800s

Powering the industrial revolution

Fortunes were made and lost in the canal-building age, as some schemes succeeded, and others failed. Working boaters spent so much time afloat, entire families soon made a home and a living aboard.

At its greatest extent, the inland waterway network stretched to over 5,000 miles and gave us the wonderful feats of Victorian engineering that we protect to this day.



© Waterways archive

1900s

Rail, road and restoration

As rail was soon followed by road transport, the commercial heyday of canals began to rapidly fade.

Damage, neglect, lack of investment and the arrival of motorways meant that, by the 1960s, the role of canals had to change.

The foresight of the restoration movement helped protect canals and give them a new purpose for leisure boating.



2000s

A new purpose

Use and enjoyment of our canals and rivers continued to grow. Our charity, the Canal & River Trust, was established in 2012 to protect and preserve our canals for future generations to enjoy.

It soon became clear that to give canals a brighter future, we needed to involve millions more people who live close to them and use our towpaths every day, to help care for canals.



The Future

Keeping canals alive

You can help write a new chapter in the history of our canals and rivers.

By keeping canals alive we can not only protect our heritage but use them to transform our future and enrich the lives of everyone who uses them. From maintaining and creating tranquil, peaceful places full of wildlife, to providing renewable energy, canals can play a vital role in helping to shape a brighter future for us all.

The impact of gifts in Wills on our canals

In 2023/2024, gifts in Wills contributed an incredible half a million pounds to our work, helping to maintain our canals and rivers, protect our heritage and give wildlife a home. We track every penny we spend, so here's just some examples of the amazing ways gifts in Wills are shaping the future of canals.

£476,750
generously given
in gifts in Wills
in 2023/24

1. Bringing history back to life in York

Molly Brocklesby's legacy will protect canal heritage by restoring historic lamps at Naburn Lock, on the River Ouse.

2. Protecting canal wildlife on the Llangollen

We invested almost £23,000 of legacy income to install Eel screens on the Llangollen Canal to help these fish reach spawning grounds upstream.

3. Caring for favourite river spaces in Cheshire

By repairing the two crossings at Newbridge, we've remembered Douglas Hulme and his late wife Kathleen. A nearby bench is planned in their memory.

4. Remembering much-loved volunteers in Coventry

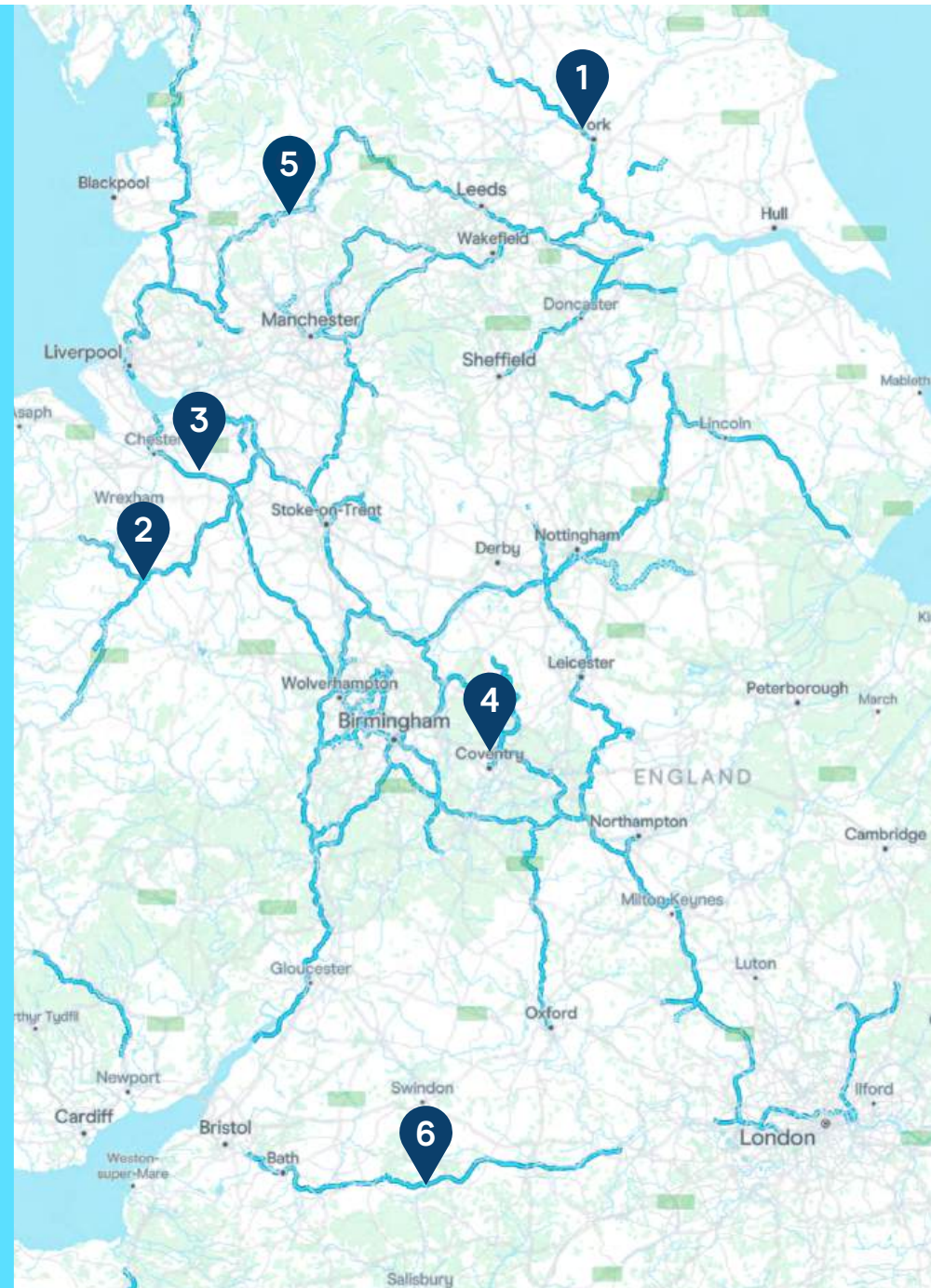
Lead volunteer, Ian Bagshaw, gave so much of his time to bring the Coventry Canal back to life. He kindly gave something back in his Will too.

5. Safeguarding native species in Lancashire

Legacies contributed £10,000 last year to clear fast-spreading, invasive floating pennywort on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal to protect native wildlife.

6. Growing canalside woods at Caen Hill

Long-term Friend, Barrie Barrett left a generous gift in his Will to protect the future of Jubilee Wood, close to the Caen Hill Locks.



Di's story

Much-loved Di Skilbeck MBE, was a leading light among many amazing volunteers at the National Waterway Museum in Ellesmere Port. Now her legacy will help to secure its future.



“Di cared passionately about inspiring children to love canals and their history.

She created awe and wonder, shared funny stories and celebrated amazing objects, with infectious enthusiasm.

Our team, and the museum will not be the same without her.”

Helen Evans,
learning and skills co-ordinator

A wonderful gift of £20,000 from Di's legacy will now be used to help protect heritage boats in our museum collection, along with thousands of other artefacts from thimbles to pocket watches to 'Roses and Castles' water cans. In her memory, we have renamed our trip boat to Diana Margaret in her memory.

“She devoted her life to creating a living museum, giving visitors the experience of canals as they used to be,” remembers Chris Kay, one of her fellow volunteers.

It all began in 1974, when Di became involved in the restoration effort, while still working as a teacher. In Di's own words: “I was horrified by the dilapidated state of the site. Desperate to do something I enlisted my students in the massive and muddy project. We pulled so much from the mud – a scooter, car doors, tyres, cans of oil. The parents were very understanding when the girls' clothes were beyond washing!”

It's clear that Di was always hands-on; her friends describe her as kind, caring and loyal, with a passion for children, education and working as a team. She led from the front, tenaciously committing to every project.

One of her big passions was the heritage boat, Gifford, which she fought to restore, maintain and share with the public. Visitors would often find Di aboard, ready to tell its story with her faithful dog Josh beside her. The time, effort and pure passion she put into Gifford was repaid at her funeral when this same boat carried her along the canal.

What a gift in your Will could do for canals

Sustaining our future

21st century

Canals can distribute cleaner water, generate greener energy, and reduce our carbon footprint

Keeping history alive

3,000

heritage sites need your protection including iconic wonders like Pontcysyllte Aqueduct

Creating spaces for people

10.3 million

boaters, anglers, walkers, paddlers, and pedalers can find health and happiness by water with your support

Helping wildlife thrive

46%

of our canals are protected for wildlife. You could give kingfishers, water voles and otters a future

Looking after our canals

2,000 miles

of canals including thousands of locks, bridges, tunnels, and reservoirs need constant maintenance



Bryan's gift to canals

Bryan tells us how his thoughtful gift was made both in tribute to his late mother's love for canals and in celebration of the joy canals have brought to his own family

"My mother, Margaret, was quite extraordinary, with a real twinkle in her eye. She lived a full life, including driving ambulances in the Second World War. In 1969, our family moved to Somerset, close to the Bridgwater & Taunton Canal. I think that's where our family's love of canals began.

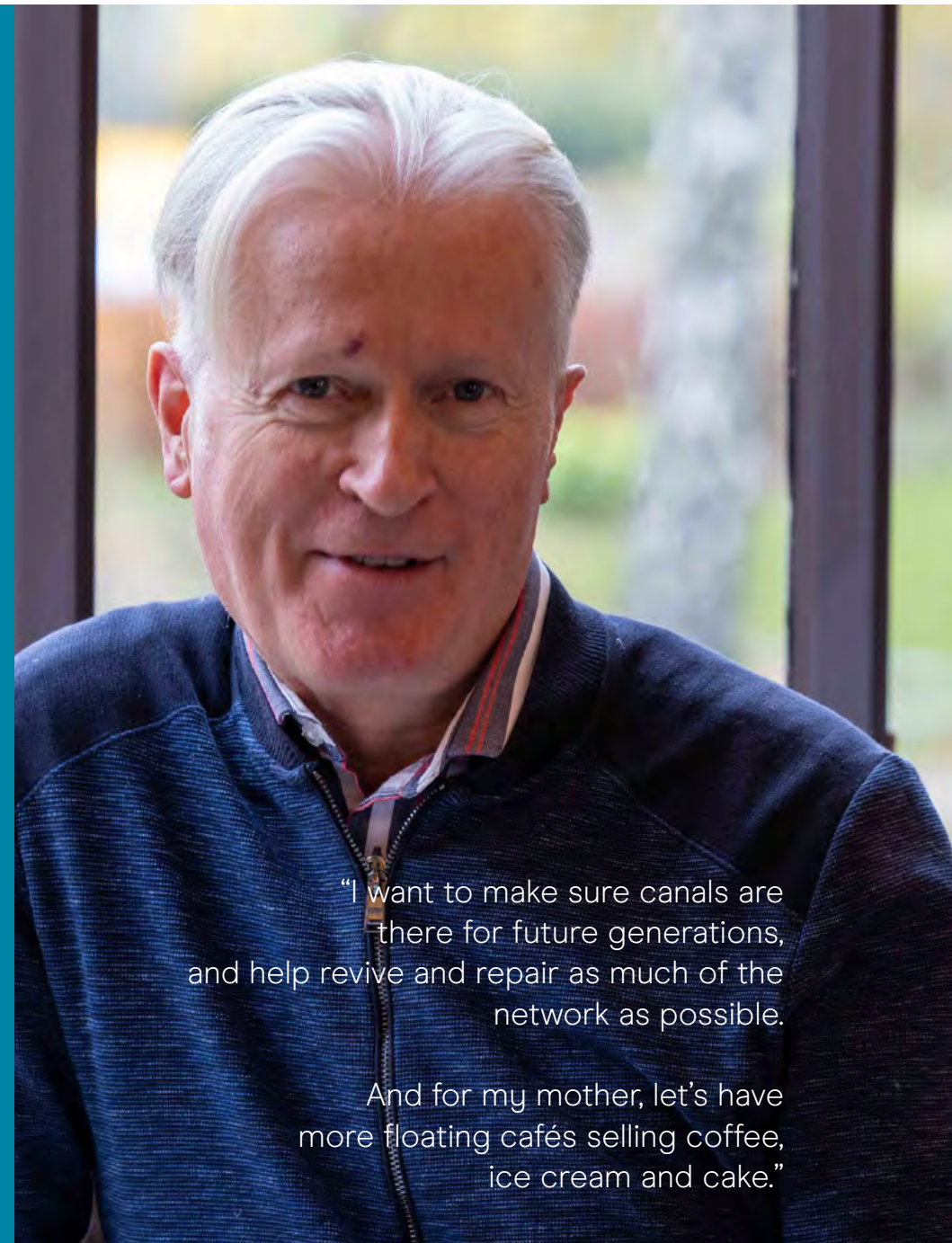
I believe they helped keep my mother grounded; somewhere quiet where she could feel a connection with the water, the air, the sky and the earth. But if there was a café with cake nearby, then all the better.

When my mother moved back to Bridgwater in 2020, I adopted a stretch of canal for her and she was very chuffed. But as that was during lockdown, she sadly never actually saw it. On her 100th birthday in November 2021, we lost her.

Almost a year later, during Remember a Charity week, I decided to leave a legacy of my own to the Canal & River Trust. It seemed fitting as I've now inherited my mother's passion for canals.

I live close to the canal in Worcester. In lockdown, running on the towpath turned out to be a real lifesaver. I'm a musician, but I couldn't perform at that time, so getting outside was vital for my physical and mental health.

I guess my legacy is about our whole family's love of canals. My mother's, my own, and my grandchildren's who now come out on walks with me to spot kingfishers and other wildlife."



"I want to make sure canals are there for future generations, and help revive and repair as much of the network as possible.

And for my mother, let's have more floating cafés selling coffee, ice cream and cake."

It's easy to leave a gift in your Will to canals

Writing a Will is one of the best things you can do to make sure your wishes are respected, your loved ones are looked after, and the causes you care about most are recognised.

If you've spent your life by water and want to share all the joys of canals with the next generation, a gift in your Will is a wonderful way to help shape their future, protect our heritage and wildlife, and simply celebrate everything that canals mean to you.

As the following pages explain, if you need help to remember the Canal & River Trust in your Will we can help you write one quickly, easily and at no cost to you, thanks to our partners at the National Free Wills Network and Farewill.

We understand your loved ones will always come first and considering a gift in your Will is your personal decision to be made in your own time. But after you've looked after those you care most about, every gift, large or small, makes a difference helping to protect canals for years to come.

With your support we can make sure that our vital, but vulnerable canals, stay alive and thriving in the years ahead. Any gift you make will be used to make sure canals will always be there, today and for the future.



How to include Canal & River Trust in your Will

After you've made sure your loved ones are looked after, there are several ways you can choose to remember a charity such as the Canal & River Trust in your Will. Here's how they all work.

A fixed sum of money

Sometimes known as a pecuniary legacy, this can be any amount large or small, and is a simple, straightforward way to support the canals you love. However, it's worth bearing in mind that the value of any sum you name now could diminish over time, unless your Will specifically links the final amount to inflation rates.

A share of your estate

This is a percentage or share of what remains of your estate after all other payments and gifts have been made. Many people prefer to leave a residuary gift because it keeps in line with inflation and does not lose value over time.

A named item

This is a particular item, such as a piece of property, an item of jewellery, or perhaps even the value of any boat you own



Updating an existing Will

You don't have to write a completely new Will to add a gift to Canal & River Trust. Instead, you can quickly and easily write a 'codicil' which sets out changes to your existing Will and is read alongside it. Your solicitor can give you guidance on this.



We're here to help

If you have any questions at all, we'd be delighted to help. Simply contact our friendly gifts in Wills team:

Call. 07917 078121

Email: Emily.Ding@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk/giftsinwills



The wording your solicitor needs

In order to leave the Canal & River Trust a gift in your Will, your solicitor will need to include the following information:

Name: Canal & River Trust

Registered charity number: 1146792

Address: National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FW

If you'd like to leave a gift to particular canal or project, please get in touch before writing your Will, for advice or guidance.

Write a Will in five easy steps

If you are starting to think about writing or updating your Will, it's worth knowing what's involved. Here are five easy steps you can take to make the whole process as simple as possible.

Step 1: Think through what you own

When you add up the value of your home, savings, investments or possessions you might surprise yourself. Taken together, all these assets will add up to your 'estate'. It's worth taking the time to draw up a list of everything you own and estimating its value. This will save your solicitor time and minimise their fees.

Step 2: Add up what you owe

Your estate will have to pay off any debts you leave behind. So knowing what you owe helps you understand how much might be left over for your loved ones or any charities you wish to support. Think about any mortgage you owe, loans or bills that may be outstanding. Of course, things change over time, but it's worth making a rough calculation now, so you know where you stand.

Step 3: Decide who you would benefit from your will

Your solicitor or Will writer will need a list of all the family, friends or charities you want to remember in your Will. It's worth knowing for instance, that unmarried partners won't automatically benefit from your Will unless you specifically mention them within it. Think about who you'd most like to help and how much you'd like to give to everyone.

Step 4: Choose your executors

An executor is the person you entrust with carrying out your wishes, as set out in your Will. Often people will ask a solicitor to do this, but you can also name a trusted family member who you'd like to be involved. It's only polite to ask their permission first as it can be a big responsibility.

Step 5: Keep it safe and up to date

Your Will is an important document. Keep it safe and make sure anyone you name as an executor knows where to find it. Many people choose to leave it in the care of their solicitor. Whatever you choose, keep your own copy for safety's sake. Circumstances do change, so you will need to update your Will from time to time.

Add a gift to Canal & River Trust to an existing Will

You don't have to write a completely new Will to add a gift to our charity. All you need to do is write a 'codicil' which sets out changes to your existing Will and is read alongside it. Your solicitor can give you guidance on this.



Write your Will for free

If you're ready to leave a gift in your Will, then we are ready to help you. It's easy to write and amend a simple Will for free.

If you prefer to speak to a local solicitor, then the [National Free Wills Network](#) can help. Simply [sign up on our website](#) and they will send you all the details you need to book a face to face appointment to help:

- Explain the benefits of writing or amending a Will
- Value your estate and outline any tax implications
- Explore how to look after your family and friends
- Consider any provision you want to make for charities like ours

We can also help you write a quick and simple free Will online with Farewill, trusted by over 100 charity partners:

- Sign up online at [Farewill](#) using the code **CRTFRIENDS**
- Simply answer a brief set of questions on their website or ask questions of your own with live chat or phone support
- Your Will is then checked by their legal experts who approve it
- Then you just need to print, sign and have it witnessed
- There's no easier way to look after loved ones or support your favourite charity



Already left a gift in your Will, or thinking of doing so?

We'd love to know about any pledge you've made, so we can say a personal thank you and invite you to join our community of gifts in Wills supporters.

Every year we invite our legacy pledgers to iconic sites on the network at our gifts in Wills events, where our experts take you behind the scenes to share how we care for canals, heritage and wildlife.

Apart from being a great day out, each event is a wonderful opportunity to see how a gift in your Will could help to shape the future of our canals and talk to our gifts in Wills team face to face if you have any questions about legacy giving.

Over recent months we welcomed gifts in Wills pledgers to Islington Tunnel, running beneath some of London's busiest streets. We also went behind the scenes at Bradley workshop in the Black Country to see how lock gates are made. Gifts in Wills pledgers have also dived into the collections at the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port to discover how we're using 3D photogrammetry to preserve precious canal artefacts.

We've been delighted to see, meet, and talk to so many legacy pledgers this year, and we're grateful that even more people are planning to remember canals in their Will. If you'd also like to make that pledge now, simply complete the form on page 14 or get in touch with the team with any questions. We'd be delighted to help.

It's easy to get in touch

Call: 07917 078121

Email: Emily.Ding@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk/giftsinwills



Frequently asked questions

Here's some quick and easy answers to the questions our supporters considering gifts in Wills, ask us most often.

Do I really need a Will?

Making a Will is great for your peace of mind. It's the only way to make sure you know exactly what happens to your property, money and personal possessions. Although there's no law that says you must make a Will, it makes all the legalities much easier for those you leave behind. Dying without having an up-to-date Will means it is up to the law to decide how your estate is distributed, which might not reflect your wishes.

Are there any tax benefits if I leave a charitable gift in my Will?

A gift to charity is taken out of your estate before it's decided how much inheritance tax must be paid. Over and above supporting a cause that's important to you, some people choose to leave a gift to charity as a way to reduce how much tax is owed. Contact HMRC or a solicitor for advice about the current Inheritance Tax thresholds and payment rates.

I don't have a lot, is it worth leaving a gift in my Will?

You don't need to be wealthy to leave a gift to charity in your Will. Each and every gift makes a difference. No matter the size or amount, your gift can transform canal spaces and enrich lives by water.

How can I find out more about leaving a gift in my Will?

You may like to join us at a gifts in Wills enquiry event to see first-hand the impact your gift could make. Please contact us for full details of events taking place near you.

Can I leave a gift in my Will to a specific project or stretch of canal?

Unrestricted gifts are incredibly important as it gives us the flexibility to direct funds where the need is greatest at the time. Not all of our future needs can be envisaged today, as priorities and work may change. However, many of our supporters wish to support a specific area of the network and you are, of course, very welcome to specify that your gift be for use at a particular site or region. If you are considering doing this, please contact us so we can advise you on how to fulfil your wishes.

What details do I need to include Canal & River Trust in my Will?

Your solicitor will need to include the following information:

Name: Canal & River Trust

Registered charity number: 1146792

Address: National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FW

Who should I get in touch with if I have any questions?

Please email giftsinwills@canalrivertrust.org.uk and a member of our friendly team will get back to you



Your next steps

Leaving a gift to the Canal & River Trust in your Will is your choice. You don't have to let us know about your intentions, but if you have already left a gift, or if it is something you are considering, we'd love to hear from you so we can say thank you, answer any questions you may still have, or give you more information about our exciting plans for the future of canals near you.

We'll make a note of your intention and keep your details private. Just so you know, anything you do tell us does not form part of your Will and is not legally binding in any way.

Please let us know where you stand by completing this interactive form and returning it to us using the email address below. You can also choose to tell us by phone. Or simply print out, complete and return this form by freepost.

Email: Emily.Ding@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Call: 07917 078 121

Complete this form and send it free of charge to:

Freepost
RUCS-UHCS-HAXG,
Canal & River Trust
Bumpers Way
Bumpers Farm
Chippenham
SN14 6NG

I have left a gift in my Will to the Canal & River Trust

I intend to leave a gift in my Will to the Canal & River Trust

I'm considering leaving a gift in my Will to the Canal & River Trust

I'm no longer considering a gift in my Will and do not want more information

Your details:

Title: _____ First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

We'd love to keep you updated on the work of the Canal & River Trust, including how your gift will make a brighter future for canals. Please let us know if you'd be happy to be contacted:

By email By phone By SMS By post

If you wish to change how we contact you, please let us know by calling **0303 040 4040** or emailing supportercare@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Thank you for considering a gift in your Will

We hope you found our guide useful and informative.

If you have any questions, our friendly team will be delighted to help.

Call: 07917 078121

Email: Emily.Ding@canalrivertrust.org.uk

Visit: canalrivertrust.org.uk/giftsinwills