Unlock the possibilities
A guide to leaving a gift in your will
Making a will - now there’s a thought

Some people think that wills are a tricky business. But they are so important, easy to do and can do the world of good. A will can give you and your loved ones peace of mind that your wishes are considered once you are gone.

Whether you already have a will or are making one for the first time, this guide aims to help you ensure that everything is in place according to your wishes. As a valued supporter of the Vegetarian Society, this guide will also give you a little more information about unlocking the possibilities for a kinder future by leaving a gift in your will.

Our vision for our living planet

At the Vegetarian Society, our vision is a world in which everyone is vegetarian. By working positively towards vegetarianism, we can all look forward to a world with better health and wellbeing, greater food stability, less pollution and all species living alongside each other on our planet.

Making the world a kinder place for all isn’t going to happen overnight. However, as a community, we can all play our part to educate and inspire the next generation to make choices not only for ourselves, but more for our living planet.

Whether you care about the Earth, your pets or a future where all living beings can happily lead healthy lives, there is no better way to ensure that your values live on by leaving the Vegetarian Society a gift in your will to make our vision come to life.

The difference you can make

We are so grateful for all the financial support that we receive, and with approximately 38%* of our income being from gifts in wills - the largest single proportion of our income - you can see how significant this is in the continuation of our projects.

We have some big plans, detailing how we can make a vital difference. We have already started on some of this work and with your support, can ensure it continues long to the future.

We are working hard to equip people and companies catering for vegetarians with the most up-to-date information available. Your gifts in action enable us to provide thousands of people each year with our ‘Going Vegetarian’ starter pack, Our Enquiries and Advocacy service, a growing area of our work, also provides information for those unsure of where to turn.

The Vegetarian Society works to educate the next generation of compassionate citizens through expanding our network of speakers in school, showing how easy, fun and rewarding being a vegetarian can be.

Sometimes all people need is a flash of inspiration. We’re delivering this by providing free cookery school courses to students and community groups who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to learn about vegetarian cookery. This wouldn’t be possible if it wasn’t for gifts from caring people like you.

You could hold the key to inspiring audiences to make a change to a compassionate alternative. If you would like to read more about our plans, please visit www.vegsoc.org/aboutus

*Figures for financial year 2013 - 14.
The charity you can trust since 1847

The Vegetarian Society has been a community of members and supporters since 1847. With the strength of nearly 170 years of experience, we are known as the founding and leading organisation of vegetarians. We are ideally placed to truly understand how we can make a difference to our world together. As a charity with no government funding, we therefore rely on the support of companies joining us in the advancement of vegetarianism, our members and donors, and gifts in wills in order to fund our work.

Our promise to you

We pride ourselves on the ethical way that we do our work, and it underpins all our activity. If you are considering including the Vegetarian Society in your will, you can count on us to keep our promises.

- We will treat your wishes with respect and promise to not intrude on your privacy by communicating with you about this way of giving if that is your preference.
- We absolutely recognise that your next of kin’s interests are important as is making sure that loved ones are provided for.
- We will respect and celebrate your wishes by making sure that we keep in communication with your loved ones at suitable points if appropriate.
- You have no obligation to tell us your wishes, but if you keep us involved, it will allow us to say thank you and plan for the future.
- We understand that personal circumstances may change and there may come a time when you will have to review your will.
- We promise to use your gift wisely and discuss with you the options available and how our work can provide a good fit to ensure your wishes are respected.

The gift that you may choose to leave us will be nurtured and looked after by us through our work, as we will continue to put marvellous plans into action.

If you’d like to have a chat with us about your intentions, we would be happy to talk at a time convenient to you. Feel free to contact us, our details are at the back of this leaflet.

Inspiration made possible thanks to gifts in wills

“...The Vegetarian Society Cookery School helped me so much. I want to have my own restaurant serving Caribbean food when I finish college. I’m amazed that so many traditional Caribbean dishes work so well in vegetarian and vegan versions.”

- Grant, a student from Trafford College, who was awarded a free place at our cookery school, thanks to a gift in a will.

“...My course taught me that there is some great vegetarian food out there and it is great to know that it is so accessible.”

- Helen, who benefitted from meat-free tuition as part of a community project, thanks to a gift in a will.

“...It [The Vegetarian Society] has provided fantastic advice, guidance and support when needed. The helpline is staffed by very knowledgeable, friendly staff so help is always at hand.”

- A member of the Vegetarian Society, who has used our enquiries services. With a gift in your will, our information provision can be advanced for future generations.
A few handy phrases

When making a will, there can be a lot of legal jargon, so to help you through this, here are a few helpful terms to get you started:

**Estate**
All of your assets - this can be property, shares, savings, cars, your trusty copies of ‘The Vegetarian’ - anything and everything that you own. You can leave any of these as a gift in your will to the Vegetarian Society.

**Executor**
The person/people named in your will that you have nominated to ensure that your affairs are taken care of once you are gone. This can be a loved one, a spouse or a solicitor - anyone you deem trustworthy and responsible.

**Intestate**
When a person dies without making or completing a will and their estate passes into the hands of the government.

**Legacy/Bequest**
Individual items/requests that make up the contents of your will.

**Legatee/Beneficiary**
Someone/something/organisation that is left a gift in your will.

**Legator/Testator**
A person who leaves a gift in their will; in other words you!

**Probate**
The point where your executors can carry out their duties to your will, accompanied by a procedure to confirm that your will is valid.

**Pecuniary Legacy**
A gift in your will of a specified financial amount. The amount will be deductible from the full value of your estate. You can read more about this on page 10.

**Residual Legacy**
A gift in your will to be given to a nominated person/organisation, where the value is the remaining total of your estate (or percentage of the remainder), once the other gifts to friends and family specified in your will have been distributed and all costs dealt with. If you leave your whole estate as a gift, this is also known as a residuary legacy. This type of legacy is generally of the greatest benefit to a charity, due to its value increasing in line with inflation.

**Specific Legacy**
A particular item of value that has been left in your will, such as stocks and shares, property, life insurance policies or jewellery.

**Contingent Legacy**
A gift that is dependent upon the occurrence of an event which may or may not happen. For example, a gift to a charity which applies only if other beneficiaries named in a will die before the individual dies.

Making a will - where do I start?
The first step is to seek legal advice, and you can find a list of solicitors that are able to advise you on will-making on the Law Society website - the full details are on page 12.

My estate - what is it?
In order to make a will, it is always a good idea to make a list of the items that you own outright and a list of your commitments, compare the two and the remaining items are your estate. From here, you can start attributing beneficiaries for your estate - the people, animals or charities close to your heart.

A great way of showing a charity like the Vegetarian Society that you care is to leave a percentage of your estate, a cash sum, or treasured possession in your will, just to show that you are thinking of a very veggie future. It means a great deal to us to know that you are a part of our community, and whatever tribute you feel is most fitting will be cherished by future generations of the Vegetarian Society.
**What about my pets?**

Whether you have a dog, cat or whole family of chickens, you may choose to leave some of your estate to ensure that the animals that have always been there for you are looked after when you’re gone. Make sure that you ask your legal professional how best to do this.

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**What is inheritance tax and how do I calculate it?**

Inheritance tax is a percentage payable to the government on property or money acquired by gift or inheritance. You are liable to pay tax on an estate above £325,000 to the Government at a rate of 40%. By leaving a charity in your will, you may lower the taxable value of your estate.

**Example:** If you have an estate of £500,000, the tax payable is £70,000 (estate - £325,000, then working out 40% of the remaining £175,000 is £70,000).

However, if you leave a gift of £30,000 from your £500,000 estate to the Vegetarian Society, the tax payable would be £58,000 (estate - £325,000, then take off the £30,000. This leaves you £145,000 taxable estate, and 40% of this is £58,000).

In 2014, new inheritance rules set out some changes to who may inherit your estate if you do not have a will. You can read more about it on the internet, but to make sure that your loved ones are provided for, it is always best to seek legal advice.

For more information on the inheritance tax rules and how to calculate inheritance tax, please visit [www.gov.uk/inheritance-tax/overview](http://www.gov.uk/inheritance-tax/overview).
Words to suit your every wish

To make compiling a will easier, we have provided some words that you can give your legal professional as a guide to ensure that your wishes are respected:

Residuary Bequests
If you are intending on leaving the balance of your estate (after fees, taxes and specific gifts) or a percentage of the remainder to a person or organisation, this is the wording for you.

To leave the balance of your estate:
‘I bequeath to the Vegetarian Society (charity number 259358) Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4QG, the residue of my estate and declare that the receipt of the appropriate officer of the Vegetarian Society shall be sufficient discharge to my executors’.

To leave a percentage of the balance:
‘I bequeath to the Vegetarian Society (charity number 259358), Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4QG, X per cent of the residue of my estate and declare that the receipt of the appropriate officer of the Vegetarian Society shall be sufficient discharge to my executors’.

Pecuniary Bequests
If you are intending to leave a person or organisation a fixed sum of money, this is the section that applies to your wishes.

‘I bequeath to the Vegetarian Society (charity number 259358), Parkdale, Dunham Road, Altrincham, Cheshire, WA14 4QG the sum of X pounds and declare that the receipt of the appropriate officer of the Vegetarian Society shall be sufficient discharge to my executors’.

In order to link it to an index to account for the rise in the cost of living, you will want to include additional text to specify how you wish for the legacy amount to also increase over time. For more information on this, you can ask your legal professional about gifts linked to a cost of living index.

What if I already have a will?

If you have already made a will, it is good practice to review it over the years, as your circumstances may change. If you would like to make changes to your will, you can always use a codicil. Adding a codicil to your will ensures that you can easily remember the community of vegetarians that will need support into the future. If you would like a codicil, we can help you. We have codicil forms available for download at www.vegsoc.org/legacies or you can call 0161 925 2000 and we can pop it in the post.

Thank you for considering leaving a gift in your will to the Vegetarian Society - it can make a real difference.
Useful Contacts

If you’d like to discuss your wishes and how they can be celebrated within the Vegetarian Society, we welcome your call to us on 0161 925 2041 or you can email support@vegsoc.org or write to us at the following address:

‘Legacies’
The Vegetarian Society
Parkdale
Dunham Road
Altrincham
Cheshire
WA14 4QG

You can find information about how to find a solicitor in your area by visiting www.charitychoice.co.uk/legacies

The Law Society
The Law Society’s Hall
113 Chancery Lane
London
WC2A 1PL
www.lawsociety.org.uk
Telephone: 0207 242 1222

www.lawscot.org.uk
Telephone: 0131 226 7411

www.lawsoc-ni.org
Telephone: 028 9023 1614

The Society of Will Writers
http://www.willwriters.com/
Telephone: 01522 687888

Disclaimer: The Vegetarian Society is unable to give legal advice and the examples are for illustrative purposes only.

Registered Charity number 259358
Registered Company Number 959115 (England and Wales)
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