



The United Benefice of Hunsdon  
with Widford and Wareside  
*Knowing Christ and Making Him Known*



# Policy

## Wills and Legacies Policy

### **Why Every Christian should have a will**

For nearly five hundred years the Church of England has encouraged its members to keep their wills up to date. The Book of Common Prayer instructs clergy to remind those who are sick: “let him be admonished to make his Will, and to declare his debts, what he oweth, and what is owing unto him; for the better discharging of his conscience, and the quietness of his Executors. But men should often be put in remembrance to take order for the settling of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health.”

Every year many thousands of people die without leaving a will. This can cause unnecessary complications for their families and friends, and can often mean that their wishes are not carried out. Making a will and keeping it up to date is often a simpler and less expensive process than many people imagine. For everyone, it is part of good financial management and a practical expression of care for loved ones and charities who may otherwise lose out despite good intentions. For Christians, it is part of our responsible stewardship of the blessings God has given us.

As part of its commitment to care for parishioners, the Parochial Church Council of this church has resolved to encourage people to make and review their wills.

### **A Policy on Legacies**

Many people have clear ideas about the beneficiaries of their wills, and it is right and good that they should consider family members and charities to which they have personal connections. Throughout history, one charity which has benefited has been the church. Legacies have provided invaluable help in funding particular projects – e.g. for new buildings or specialist staff like children’s workers.

It is common for people to be anxious about giving money to any charity, because it is not always apparent how the money will be spent. It is, therefore, also common for people to dictate in their wills how any legacy will be used. Whilst completely understandable, this is not always the most helpful to the charity concerned, and regrettably there are many such legacies still awaiting use by charities which no longer exist.

If you are considering leaving a legacy to this church, we hope our policy helps:

The policy of the PCC is to use legacies to help fund significant development projects in the parish, whether buildings, equipment or staff. As circumstances change over the years, it may not be possible to fulfil specific donor requests, so prospective donors are encouraged to leave gifts in their wills for the general purposes of the parish. The PCC will discuss with executors the most appropriate use of the gift in the light of current projects and the donor’s known areas of interest in the church (e.g. children and youth, music, buildings).