

TIME FOR A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION?

Dec. 2009

Now that the Season of Goodwill has almost passed, our thoughts turn to making New Year's resolutions. Whilst many of us resolve to lose weight, drink less, make more time for the family, perhaps we should also think about making a Will.

If you don't make a Will, the law dictates where your Estate is to go and that may not necessarily accord with your wishes – in fact you could find that the very people you wish to benefit do not and distant relations, whom you may not even know, receive your Estate in its entirety.

Making a Will ensures that your wishes are complied with. Your Will should appoint Executors: these are people you trust implicitly to carry out your wishes and can be family members. Alternatively, our firm would be happy to act as your Executors. If you have young children you should appoint a Guardian to care for them. You might make specific gifts, such as sentimental items that you wish to be kept in the family. You might give cash legacies, perhaps to your favourite charity, local projects or trusted friends.

What remains after paying your debts, funeral expenses and taxes is called your "Residuary Estate". Quite often married couples give this to each other initially. However, there may equally be valid reasons for not doing so. Then you may wish to pass it on to children, if you have any, nieces and nephews, friends or your favourite charities. There are many ways of dividing your Estate and the lawyer drafting your Will will go through the options with you.

Making a Will need not be expensive and some charities operate "Will schemes". Will Questionnaires and Fact Sheets are available, free of charge, from our offices or can be downloaded from our website. You might like to contact us to speak to our specialist Wills & Probate solicitor.

Making a Will should not be a depressing or complicated experience - view it as sensible advanced planning. So, why not go ahead and make your New Year's Resolution to make 2010 the year of Good Will!

Elderly relatives

The elderly are very vulnerable at this time of year, particularly when ill health strikes. If, for example, one of your family members suffers a stroke, it may be necessary to obtain a Lasting Power of Attorney to assist in managing their financial affairs. A leaflet regarding Lasting Powers of Attorney can be viewed at our website.

If your family suffers a bereavement, one of the first things you will need to do is to obtain a Death Certificate by making an appointment to see the registrar. It is important to obtain several copies of the Death Certificate as you will need to show them to various organisations. We usually recommend obtaining at least 5 copies. You will need to be prepared to pay for them on the day and often in cash. You will also need to engage the services of an undertaker. All undertakers have emergency contact numbers and will be available to help you. As soon as possible thereafter you will also need to make contact with a Solicitor who can then guide you as to what to do next.

Alison Fielden & Co. The Gatehouse Dollar Street Cirencester GL7 2AN Tel: (01285) 653261
Monday – Friday 8.30am-5pm Saturdays 8.30am-12.30pm
www.alisonfielden.co.uk