

# MIDDLETON CUM - FORDLEY



# NEWSLETTER

*April 2024*

Editorial

Spring is here and this month's front cover photos feature some of the wealth of daffodils around the village. The ones on the Playing Field and the ones around the Village Hall carpark are the result of the free offer back in the Autumn from East Suffolk Council, all planted by volunteers. Thanks to Steve/Bev Chamberlain for taking some of those photos. ~~At the time of writing I don't have any news on The Bell reopening but hopefully it won't be long.~~ If there's anyone who hasn't heard - both the Bell and the Eels Foot have been closed since March 17<sup>th</sup>. **STOP PRESS – Bell is now open again.**

Next month the newsletter will have a guest editor – Mandy from Manor House – so if you remember to send your articles directly to her email (see below) that would be great. (Don't panic if you forget as I can always forward them on.)

Contributions for the next edition by email preferably as a WORD doc please to [mobilemandy@me.com](mailto:mobilemandy@me.com) or dropped in to **Manor House, Leiston Road** by **Tuesday 23rd April** .

Spare paper copies will be in the church porch as usual. Also to be found on the Parish website. [www.middletoncumfordley.org.uk](http://www.middletoncumfordley.org.uk)

Donations may be made to: HSBC  
Middleton Newsletter  
sort code 40-28-33  
account number 61054236

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**FOUND**  
Dress ring found on footpath by the Playing Field - phone 07821848997



Thank you Mark for sending in the photo of the Summer Winers who have repaired and erected the owl box on Watermill farm field.



Mabel is currently in Cats Protection foster care in Middleton & is looking for her forever home. Mabel is classed as a 'barn' cat which means she is an outdoor girl who is not used to indoor life, or cuddles.  
Mabel was found living in a busy warehousing & transport yard, so not ideal & certainly not a safe location.  
We would love to find her an outdoor home where Do you have a shed or other outbuilding that she is safe & can receive regular daily meals.  
Mabel, or other 'barn' cats could call home? If  
you can help or would like further information, please contact Cats Protection on 01728 723499.


**Jill Near**

Just a big thank you to all those who were able to attend Jills funeral in early March. I know Jill would have been chuffed to bits to see that so many of you were able to make the journey down to Colchester.

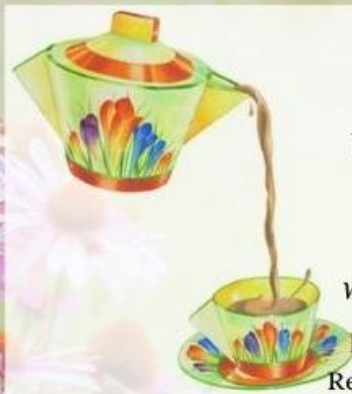
The family would also like to thank everyone for their condolences and messages of support.

Coincidentally, we have topped £1000.00 in donations for St Elizabeth Hospice, so thank you to all those who donated for your kind generosity.

Brian Near



# Enjoy a Weekend of Treats in Middleton April 6th-7th



## Charity Tea

in aid of **The Eve Appeal**

UK gynaecological cancer charity

Saturday from 10am - 12:30  
at Hill House

*What better way to spend a Saturday morning?*

<https://www.justgiving.com/team/hillhouse>  
Rebecca 0777689428 curlyreynolds@gmail.com

Middleton-cum Fordley Community Council  
**presents an entertaining talk by local residents**  
Neill from Fen Lodge and Mandy & Steve from Manor House

**The Principles of Planting Design &  
The Evolution of a Garden**

**Middleton Village Hall**  
**Saturday 6th April - 7pm start**

Cheese & Wine Refreshments

Entry is free, but donations are gratefully received

Start your **Sunday** with a **Pop-up Brunch 10-11:45**

Read the paper, solve a crossword, catch up with a friend or neighbour.

Enjoy coffee, sausage rolls or something sweet

Treat yourself & socialise  
at **Holy Trinity Church**

Amanda 07990602563 or  
Camilla 07740427414



Middleton Community Council

Bursary supporting young people in pursuing their hobbies and interests.

MCC are delighted to announce the awarding of the grant for 2023 to MJ Bridge of Causeway Cottages.

“MJ is delighted to have been given the bursary – there are loads of books that MJ would like to do with their Old Norse and Old English studies and this money will be a fantastic contribution towards them.

MJ is really focussed on their A-level studies just at the moment, but we’ll find a good time to look at books together and start spending the money. We’ll let you have a photo of books when we have them.

Many thanks again to all the community council”

Simon Bridge.

# HOLY TRINITY – MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY



## Church Services during April

**Sunday 21 April** 11am PCC led service.

**Sunday 28 April** 11am Holy Communion

*The Benefice service this month will be at Westleton on Sunday 7 April at 10am*

*Please come along*

## Holy Trinity, the year so far...

It is good to report that Holy Trinity has had a hopeful start to 2024 enjoying a mixture of services which included a welcome return of 'poetry and pastries'. The church was also privileged to host an enchanting wedding in February and a baptism in March for which we offer our warmest congratulations; the sun shone on both occasions and now, as we journey through Lent together, mindful of all that is broken in our world, we remember that Easter is in our sights...

Rita and the PCC

### HOLY TRINITY ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

**The Holy Trinity Church, Middleton APCM will be held on Wednesday 1st May at 2.30pm in the Church. Everyone is welcome.**

Muriel Macrae – Middleton Moor

Holy Trinity PCC wish to extend their condolences to Gwen and family on the death of their mother, who passed away on March 8<sup>th</sup> aged 96. Our thoughts are with you.

Rita  
Church Warden



## Holy Dusters

New dusters always welcome, of all faiths and none

3 April: Rob

8 May: Trish and Graham

12 June: Nicola and Margaret

17 April: Amanda and Paul

22 May: Camilla and Val

26 June: Paul

## Thought for the Month

'God, please help me not to be an asshole is about as common a prayer as I pray in my whole life.'

Rev Nadia Bolz-Webe



**Pop-up Brunch**  
**Sunday 7 April 10-11.45am**  
**Holy Trinity Church**

### Earth Hour

In case anyone wondered why the church was not illuminated on the night of Saturday 23rd March.

As part of the worldwide observance of EARTH HOUR Holy Trinity turned off the church floodlight.

## Chutneys, Jam and Cakes 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024

We are looking forward to another open gardens event. Last year we received some delicious contributions from people of the village, and we would welcome these again this year. Please do let us know if you are happy to help in this way.

Please contact : Christine Burgess Tel: 07826840478 or email: [christineburgess29@gmail.com](mailto:christineburgess29@gmail.com)

*Major fundraiser for Holy Trinity church & donations this year to Suffolk MIND, who offer mental health services throughout Suffolk and Project40seven (IP17) who provide a space that offers positive ways to engage and help the local community*

### MIDDLETON OPEN GARDENS

## CAN YOU HELP HOSTING MUSICIANS?

We occasionally need to offer overnight hospitality to musicians coming to play for Concerts at Cratfield during the summer months and sometimes we are unable to host them all at our house. Might you be able to offer visiting musicians a reasonably comfortable bed from time to time? Please contact me via email ([grahamingham@ymail.com](mailto:grahamingham@ymail.com)) or leave a message on 648673.

Many thanks

Graham and Jonathan

## Concerts at Cratfield

presents



## Cratfield Young Artists at The Cut

The Cut Arts Centre, Halesworth, Suffolk, IP19 8BY



RYAN CORBETT  
SUN 21ST APRIL 2024  
AT 3PM



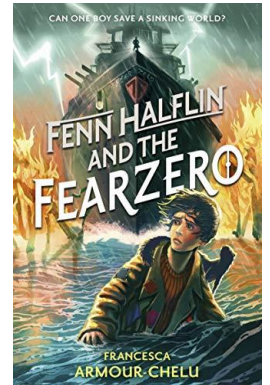
MELOS SAXOPHONE QUARTET  
SUN 12TH MAY 2024  
AT 3PM

All Tickets £15  
Box Office and  
Booking Tickets  
[boxoffice@thecut.org.uk](mailto:boxoffice@thecut.org.uk)  
0300 303 3211  
or via our website  
[www.concertsatcratfield.org](http://www.concertsatcratfield.org)

The Melos Saxophone  
Quartet was formed in 2019  
at the Guildhall School of  
Music and Drama. Their  
concert includes two world  
premieres and works by  
Bozza, Escaich and Dvorak.

WI News

At our March meeting we welcomed Francesca Armour-Chelu, a local author of children's books to talk on "Pen to Published" a personal journey. Francesca was born in Suffolk, the youngest of 4 to Ian Armour-Chelu and Angela Burfoot, both artists. Her earliest years were lived in Westleton and then the family moved to Wisset to a very large dilapidated with lots of animals. Francesca used the word bohemian to describe her childhood, they would roam freely and barefoot! She went to school in Halesworth and remembers her teacher, Jill Perry, who inspired her to write poetry for which she won a prize. After leaving school she lived in Mendham in one of the "Beeching cuts" abandoned railway carriages on a water meadow. She worked and studied and eventually did an English and Drama degree at Goldsmiths. Returning to Suffolk she was for a time the education officer at Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich. She now lives in Halesworth with her husband and 3 children and works as a librarian part time while pursuing her writing career. Earlier while raising her children and doing 2 jobs she was always submitting stories and books to publishers. The book that was eventually published took her 10 years to write! In 2013 she submitted it to a children's novel competition held by Mslexia magazine and it was long listed for the prize. This caught the attention of an agent/editor at Foyle's who gave her a month to rewrite/redraft the book before being published as "Fenn Halflin and the Fearzero", a dystopian novel set in a future landscape that is almost completely flooded. It is a good vs evil adventure story with Fenn being pursued by the land grabbing Terrafirma. Boats and structures looming high above the waters feature. Francesca, as a child spent many hours playing at the harbour in Aldeburgh and remembers the old fishing smack "Ionia" stranded in the mud in Slaughden. This inspired the boat in her novel and other bits were inspired by stories of the boat people and the Maunsell forts off the Kent coast. The publishers gave her a 3 book deal. The 2nd is "Fenn Halflin and the Seaborn" which had to be written quite quickly. Her 3rd is a fantasy novel "The Butterfly Circus" set in Corsica about 2 sisters and their journey to find each other.



Francesca gave us an insight into getting published. An agent will see your manuscript, then ask you to rewrite, then rewrite, then maybe rewrite again as they act as editor. Then there is submission to the publisher, then a redraft which then goes to the marketing people who have the final say to offer a contract. She also gave us a bit of insight to her writing. The plotting is hard but she is good at characters and that will help to get the story going if she is lucky. She also mentioned that she has a strong mental visualisation to help her story telling!. We very much enjoyed Francesca's talk which gave us a glimpse into an author's journey.

Our next meeting will be the 17th April at 7:15pm. Our speaker will be Linda Ginn. The title of the talk "It Made a Difference to That One" about a recent trip to Kenya with a charity. All are welcome. LV

**MIDDLETON COMMUNITY COUNCIL AGM**  
**TUESDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY 7PM VILLAGE HALL**

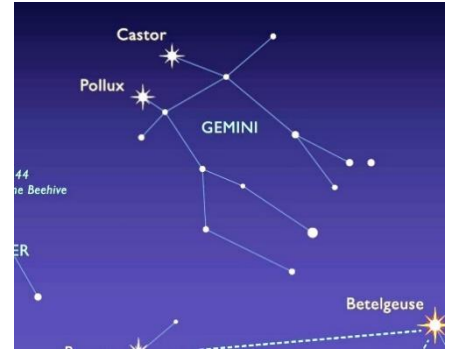
**MIDDLETON VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT**  
**AGM**  
**MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> MAY 7PM VILLAGE HALL**

# Middleton Dark Skies

## April Highlights

**Planets on View** Just as in March, Jupiter is the only naked eye planet this month and by the end of the month even it will have disappeared into the evening twilight, leading to the odd situation of no naked eye planets being visible. Don't forget to look for Jupiter's four largest moons and its cloud belts. A good pair of binoculars should show the moons and a small telescope will hopefully pick out the belts. Top tip for using a telescope on a tripod, if you are not using an equatorial mount, or you are but not sure how they work, let Jupiter move across the field of view, as this means you don't have to continually move the telescope to keep up with Jupiter's movement across the sky. It's surprising just how fast seemingly stationary objects move across the sky as the earth rotates. Jupiter will be sitting near to the crescent moon on the 10<sup>th</sup> out toward the west.

**Constellations** One that should be easy to spot, out towards the west on the 15<sup>th</sup>, will be **Gemini**, as the first quarter moon will be sitting close to its principal stars, Castor and Pollux, the twins from Greek and Roman mythology. Each of these stars represents the head of one of the twins. Possibly better to give the moon a couple of nights to clear that part of the sky before attempting to spot the remaining stars that make up the rest of the constellation.



## Gemini

**Comets** Comet Pons-Brooks has been tracking in towards the sun for most of this year, but is now steadily approaching its nearest point to it, which occurs on the 21<sup>st</sup>, when it will also be at its brightest. It is visible in the western sky after dark, and should appear as a fuzzy blob even to the naked eye and through binoculars there is a good chance of seeing its tail. The best chance of locating the comet, without too much searching, will be on the 12<sup>th</sup> at around 9.00 PM, when the comet will be just below Jupiter in the western sky. Just above Jupiter at the same time, although only visible through binoculars or a telescope, will be the planet Uranus.

**The Moon** Full Moon occurs on the 23<sup>rd</sup> this month, its name, although this is very much from native North American culture, is the Pink Moon, after the early flowering pink wildflowers. Other names also reflect spring time happenings, such as Sprouting Grass Moon and Fish Moon (fish coming back to rivers to spawn).

Look out for a thin crescent moon in the western sky just before dusk on the 10<sup>th</sup>, as it will have Jupiter for company

**Meteor Showers** There is a shower this month, The Lyrid shower, but as the peak is at the same time as the full moon, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, there is very little chance of seeing any of them.

Brian Near

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## Dark Skies

We live at Heather Cottage we overlook the Green and face east. We used to enjoy the benefit of the Dark Skies to the east and many of the rising stars from the from that direction. However I have noticed that since the work started on Sizewell "C" preconstruction sites have created so much light pollution that many of the stars have disappeared from view in the East. The only clear skies for observation of the celestial bodies can only be enjoyed towards the North.

Visitors have marvelled and commented on the amount of stars that can be seen from here.

This light pollution will obviously get a lot worse as works progress it would seem that we have lost seeing these celestial bodies etc for ever.

Was this ever discussed at the planning stages of Sizewell "C" and is there anything that can be done to prevent any further loss of even more sightings of the Planets. Not to mention viewing the passing Satellites including The Space Station that regularly passes over us and heads off to the East.

Has anyone else noticed this ?

Dennis Peel, Heather Cottage.

## April Nature Notes

Now that spring is underway, coots and moorhens will be readily encountered in watery places. Moorhens occupy every form of freshwater habitat from lakes, to muddy ditches and farm ponds, while coots are found on larger waters. Coots and moorhens are members of the rail family Rallidae, one of the most widespread families of bird in the world. Resident birds are boosted in numbers by thousands of winter migrants crossing the North Sea from Scandinavia which seems remarkable considering how weak their flight appears.

The coot has a blackish grey plumage, with black head and whitish wing bar. Adults have a white bill and frontal face shield with red eyes. The saying 'bald as a coot' refers to this frontal shield rather than the lack of feathers. The legs are greenish with long lobed toes. They feed on small fish, worms and aquatic vegetation which they obtain by diving. Coots are quarrelsome birds and at the slightest provocation will start aggressive behaviour especially in spring when they become territorial, not tolerating other coots encroaching into their territory. They fight viciously using their long claws as weapons, even driving off much larger birds such as geese and even swans.

Moorhens or water hens as they are commonly known in Suffolk, are well-named as they are generally found near water and behave somewhat like a chicken. Their chicken-like feet enable them to scratch for food like a hen, and also allow the bird to perch in trees. The toes are widespread, thereby allowing the bird to walk on marsh and mud, and importantly they enable the bird to swim well, without the need for lobes between the toes as in the case of the coot. Moorhens are a timid birds lacking the aggression of the coot and given to flight across the water if disturbed. On land, at the first sign of danger, the tail is flicked to warn other birds before heading for the nearest cover running with its head held low down. Moorhens plumage is blackish brown above and grey below. There is a white line on the flank and white under tail coverts. The bill is red tipped with yellow and the adults have a red frontal face shield. The legs are greenish with a red band. Moorhens nest among the waterside vegetation, sometimes on a low hanging bough or in rare cases to avoid predators up in a tree. When in danger of flooding the nest is raised, and is used as a sleeping place for the young and moorhens unlike coots do not protect the nest and will abandon eggs if danger threatens.



A further Rallidae species found quite commonly in this area is the water rail. Water rails are smaller than coots and moorhens, they have a smart grey body, with black and brown streaked upperparts and black and white barring on the flanks. Their long red bill is very noticeable. Water rails tend to be found in reedbeds and other areas of wet densely vegetated habitat where they feed invertebrates and small fish. They are very secretive and rarely seen, but are quite noisy and are often heard – their unmistakable call is said to sound like a piglet squealing.

Peter Vincent

Graham Cooke *DipMIT MPTA*  
Piano Tuner/Technician

Tel: 01728 648900  
Mob: 07812 249654  
E-mail: grcooke@btinternet.com

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# MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024 AT 7pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

## 1 Attendance and Apologies

### Attendees:

Cllr Julian Cusack – Chair  
Cllr Graham Lacey  
Cllr Charles Macdowell  
Cllr Michele Kendall  
Cllr Giles Piercy  
Cllr Kathryn Rowe  
Cllr Steve Thorpe

### Apologies:

Cllr Lesley Taylor  
Cllr Chris Reynolds

### In attendance:

Rachael Salcombe – Parish Clerk  
District Cllr Sarah Whitelock  
County Cllr Richard Smith  
One member of the public

## 2 Councillors' Declarations of Interest          None

## 3 Public Forum.

Cllr Whitelock was thanked for the Energy Projects Update and ESC Councillor Update issued earlier today. It was reiterated that the District Council are against all energy projects proposed for the area, with current mitigation and compensation inadequate. Suffolk County Council, however, are not against the energy projects and thus causing a divide in opinion.

The confirmed Lionlink (UK/Netherlands) route runs through the parish of Middleton, into Saxmundham (location of proposed converter station site), onto Friston and west of there. The route will cross between the B1122/B1125 junction (just before Middleton Moor), representing the narrowest part of the route. It is believed that this route has been chosen because the Aldeburgh to Thorpeness route has been 'taken' by Sea Link (Suffolk/Kent) and is, therefore, effectively full. However, it is also understood that the chosen route is due to offshore conditions and the direction that Lionlink approaches the coast compared to that of Sea Link. Richard Rout of SCC wrote recently in the EADT that the council have not been provided with sufficient evidence of this.

Lionlink's first report back from consultation reflected that they should consult more and work closely with the other energy providers and yet this has not happened. Nothing has been said about how this route would work in conjunction with the Sizewell link road, which runs diagonally across it.

Unlike Sizewell, it was acknowledged that both Lionlink and Sea Link are 'faceless', providing no regular forums or monetary compensation.

Cllr Cusack confirmed that residents have raised concerns regarding Lionlink and the impact to the village.

It was noted that some of the landowners on the original route to Friston, adjacent to the substation site, were persuaded to sign non-disclosure agreements resulting in opposition being suppressed. As a result, it is felt that we, as a PC, should caution our landowners to think carefully before they enter into any agreements with Lionlink. Cllr Cusack advised the PC that we need to prepare our representations, in readiness for the public enquiry. (This will need to include detailed research on impact.)

Cllr Whitelock reminded the council of the SZC MDSF on Tuesday 16 April. Cllr Macdowell will have submitted two pre-prepared questions and confirmed that more can be asked on the day.

The District Council are having regular meetings with SZC, which provides an opportunity to raise issues, such as the speed limit problems on Lovers Lane, which have now been resolved. (It was noted that the County Council are reluctant to reduce speed limits.) **Action: Cllr Macdowell to email Cllr Whitelock the need for a 30mph speed limit for the full length of the B1122 (as stated in the DCO).** The next meeting of the DC and SZC should be within the next couple of months and Cllr Whitelock is happy to take questions.

Cllr Whitelock left the meeting at 7.15pm.

## 4. Minutes

The Council approved the minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 February 2024 and the extraordinary meeting held on 27 January 2024.

### a) Matters arising and Action Points.

- . The clerk has contacted PC Wakeup and request they dispose of the laptop.
- a. Northern Transport Forum slides are now available on the village website.
- b. A new section has been created on the village website for Sizewell C.
- c. Cllr Reynolds to furnish Cllr Macdowell with speed monitoring technology information, carried forward to next meeting.
- d. A meeting with Jane Etheridge has been agreed. Waiting for confirmation of date, time, and location.
- e. The Deed of Covenant with Sizewell has been returned to solicitors Herbert Smith Freehills.
- f. Advertising signs/Norwood House - no reply received to date.

7.30pm, County Councillor Richard Smith was welcomed to the meeting.

Cllr Smith spoke of Lionlink affecting Walberswick, as one of the two possible sites for landfall, the other one being north of Sizewell. Saxmundham, home of the converter station, are far from pleased with this proposal. The CC will be having a debate at its meeting next Thursday (21 March) regarding the accumulative effect of all these developments. The debate will be webcast live if anyone is interested. Cllr Smith confirmed the council's disappointment with Lionlink and their decision to remain the way that they are and that we must continue to fight.

## 5 Sizewell C

The B1122 will be closed for re-surfacing from 18 March to 14 April, 7pm – 6am. Particularly noisy machinery will not be used after midnight. Access will be possible for residents and an escort will be provided when and where necessary (emergency access will continue throughout). There will be one-way traffic lights during daylight hours. It is currently unknown which end of the B1122 work will commence, however, it is understood that a works tracker will be produced by the end of next week, which will then be updated daily. The PC will share these details with residents. The works will be undertaken between Mill Street junction with the B1122 to the south of Theberton. SZC were unable to confirm where traffic will be diverted when the works reach the B1122/B1125 junction and whether there will be a diversion from Westleton across to the A12, rather than the traffic being directed through Middleton.

The question was raised to SZC whether the resurfacing works will include tackling drainage issues along the B1122/25, unfortunately, this opportunity appears to have been missed by SZC. Cllr Smith agreed that this was a suitable opportunity to tackle drainage problems (budget dependant) and will investigate further with Steve Merry, SCC.

A letter was issued by SZC to 700 residents giving details of the official diversion, although it was questioned whether all village residents were issued with the notification. The official diversion is through Leiston to Saxmundham, south from Tesco's onto the A12 towards Yoxford.

The implementation of a 30mph speed limit between Yoxford and Leiston was raised again. Cllr Smith confirmed that if this requirement is in the DCO it will happen. This then raised the question, when will it happen? There is already an increase in traffic. Cllr Smith confirmed the PC should contact Steve Merry for further discussion.

**Action: Cllr Macdowell to write to Steve Merry re: speed limit implementation.**

Earth moving machinery has been seen on the B1125, are these SZC vehicles? Although SZC have been asked to identify their vehicles with stickers, it is yet to happen. The B1125 is not the agreed route for these vehicles. Cllr Macdowell raised the issue of stub roads and whether he should write to Steve Merry on this matter also. Cllr Smith agreed to this and asked that he be copied in on the correspondence. **Action: Cllr Macdowell to write to Steve Merry re: stub roads/fly tipping.**

Cllr Cusack reported, on Cllr Taylor's behalf, that she has been unable to download the second period of data for recording speeds along the B1122 and that there may be a problem with the memory bank. **Action: Cllr Taylor to investigate further.**

## 6 Councillors Reports

a) Village Hall. Cllr Smith advised the PC that £400 has been donated to replace the internal doors of the village hall.

b) Middleton Primary School. None

c) Highways, footpaths and trees. All actions still open, but currently on hold.

The hedging along Littlemoor Road is scheduled to be cut to 150mm in height by EDF to allow access for archaeological works.

d) Middleton Moor.

Pond. Barry Day & Sons Ltd are 'standing by' to carry out restoration works. However, following a response from the Rural Payments Agency advising that draining the pond should be a last resort (and if drainage is necessary an application to Natural England would need to be made), it was agreed that further advice needs to be sought before instructing the contractor. **Action: Cllr Cusack to contact Suffolk Wildlife Trust.**

It was agreed to continue with the National Lottery application for funding but to move the date back and increase the quoted figure by 10%.

It was agreed that should the PC be unsuccessful in obtaining a National Lottery grant, funds may be sought via the EDF Suffolk Community Foundation, once it is open.

e) Causeway Farm.

Cllr Smith confirmed that he has had discussions with colleagues about a range of options for the farm and that the council's position is that all options are open, except they must produce money. He further confirmed that a care farm would not be supported by SCC as there is already one near Beccles and the CC do not have the capital to fund one. Cllr Smith is happy to listen to the village residents and their preferences and to

continue discussions following the meeting on 18 March. Cllr Smith was questioned about the SCC policy stating that they actively endorse care farm initiatives, to which Cllr Smith replied that the finance is not there, there is already a care farm in the area and that we do not necessarily need more. The member of the public stated that the Beccles care farm comes under Norfolk County Council, to which Cllr Smith agreed, stating that SCC contract to send several people there. The member of public also shared that it is his understanding that the Norfolk County Council tenant provided much of the investment for the Beccles care farm.

Cllr Smith confirmed that he would be totally against having all or part of the farm used for new build, although he would be happy with a small area of social housing. It was reiterated that SCC have no plans to build on the land. When asked what Cllr Smith thought capital generating might be, he advised that they (SCC) need to test the market. Cllr Smith reiterated that, although SCC policy is against selling off land, they do 'chip' away at it for social housing. The farmhouse and associated barns could have some beneficial use, with the land being let separately.

When asked about maintaining the land after the tenant vacates in October of this year, Cllr Smith advised that he assumed it would be left during the winter months and it is hoped that by Spring there will be vacant possession and the land re-let.

Cllr Smith left the meeting at 7.55pm.

## 7 Finance

- a) The latest financial position was received and accepted by all.
- b) The Community Infrastructure Levy Statement for 23/24 was approved by all and signed by the Chair and Clerk. **Action: Clerk to send to ESC and put on village website.**
- c) It was agreed to donate £500 to Lighthouse Women's Aid. **Action: Clerk to make the donation from PC funds.**
- d) It was agreed to purchase new defibrillator pads. **Action: Clerk to order new pads and investigate defibrillator training.**
- e) The following payments were authorised.

Details	Payee	Amount	Power
Clerk Expenses	Rachael Salcombe	£224.61	LGA 1972 s.111
Clerk Overtime for January & February 2024	Rachael Salcombe	£360.00	LGA 1972 s.112
Defibrillator Pads	Active Med Supplies	£76.74	LGA 1972 s.111

The question of whether the PC should adopt a Donation Policy was raised and agreed. To be actioned later in the year, when considering the next budget.

## 8 Administration

The following documents were re-adopted by the PC.

- a) Model Standing Orders
- b) Financial Regulations
- c) Internal Controls
- d) Code of Conduct
- e) Risk Assessment
- f) Insurance Review
- g) Asset Register

It was agreed to review the Risk Assessment as an agenda item in June (add flood risk/drainage issues).

It was agreed that values need to be updated on property owned by the PC. To be completed in time for the next insurance renewal (September '24).

- 9 **Working with other parishes on Sizewell.** Cllr Lacey has spoken with Cllr Traci Weaver from Kelsale PC and both have agreed to meet to discuss i) the provision of unsuitable for HGV signs for either end of Fordley Road and ii) flooding problems.

- 10 **Flooding/maintenance/Emergency Plan.** Cllr Lacey has spoken with both Mason, Navarro Pledge and Price & Myers, large structural engineering companies with suitable equipment for drainage/water management, however the fees are considered too high. Cllr Lacey has sourced a company that work on a smaller scale and therefore more suitable for our requirements. Currently awaiting information on costs.

- 11 **Correspondence.** Nigel Smith, previous Chair to the PC, has made contact to advise that the Bell Pub, a village asset, may need to be re-registered/renewed. **Action: Clerk to investigate further and renew.**

- 12 **Items for Next Agenda.** None.

## 13 Next Meeting.

The date and time of the next PC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 9 April 2024, at 7pm, at the Village Hall. The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

### MIDDLETON CUM FORDLEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AS SOLE TRUSTEE OF THE MIDDLETON RECREATION GROUND TRUST

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024  
AT 8.20pm AT THE VILLAGE HALL

#### Attendance and Apologies

##### Attendees:

Cllr Julian Cusack – Chair  
Cllr Graham Lacey  
Cllr Charles Macdowell  
Cllr Steve Thorpe  
Cllr Michele Kendall  
Cllr Giles Piercy  
Cllr Katheryn Rowe

##### Apologies:

Cllr Taylor  
Cllr Reynolds

##### In attendance:

Rachael Salcombe - Clerk  
One member of the public

1. **To receive declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations.** None.
2. **Minutes**
  - a) Minutes approved of Trustee Meeting held on 13 February 2023.
  - b) Matters arising and Actions.
    - Cllr Kendall has sourced a quote for the picnic benches – see below.
    - Cllr Kendall reported that the Summer Winers have cleaned the train and that it is now ready for painting. Furthermore, the Summer Winers would like to build a wooden boat/pirate ship on the site of the, now removed, zip wire. Cllr Cusack reminded the meeting that the PC are obliged to employ a safety inspector once the projects are complete, to sign them off as safe.
    - Bookings and pavilion supervision. Advertisement for the newsletter – carried forward.
    - Cllr Lacey has requested a detailed breakdown of the original quote from Aspect Home & Garden Ltd regarding the church path/driveway, with a view to scaling the job down. (This item will now be moved to the PC Agenda/Minutes.)
3. **To review Safety Inspection Report**  
February's report not received to date.
4. **Correspondence.** None.
5. **Matters for discussion**
  - a) Picnic Benches. Cllr Kendall is in receipt of a quote in the sum of £1165 for 2 x round 8 seater benches, 1 x nursery 6 seater bench and 1 x wheelchair accessible bench. Purchase was approved and the paperwork was handed to the clerk. **Action: Clerk to order new benches.**
  - b) Survey Update. Cllr Rowe thanked Cllr Piercy for his input with the survey. Work still needs to be done regarding data protection (Cllr Taylor). It was agreed to carry out a test sample with 5 residents/playground users. It was felt that question 10 required clarity, in terms of whether dogs are allowed on the playground without a designated secure area. It was agreed that options will be made available to return completed surveys i) at the village hall ii) the pub and iii) the church porch. Sealed, labelled boxes will be made available at each location. There will also be an option to return completed surveys electronically, using a QR code. It was agreed that following completed data protection, the surveys may be issued.
  - c) Bookings and pavilion supervision. See above.
  - d) Church driveway update. See above.

**Items for the next Agenda.** None.

#### Next Meeting

Date of next meeting Tuesday 9 April 2024, to follow Parish Council meeting.  
Meeting closed at 8.30pm.



## **Future of Causeway Farm**

### **Background**

Following various discussions and email exchanges between Middleton Parish Council (MPC) and Suffolk County Council (SCC), MPC agreed to gather the views of Middleton residents regarding the future of Causeway Farm. The current tenancy comes to an end in October 2024. SCC are keen to hear the views of local people so that these may inform decisions they will make relating to the farm's management after that time.

A community meeting, attended by approximately 60 people, took place at Middleton Village Hall on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024. An overview presentation was shared with attendees link [here](#). All those present then divided into groups to discuss the issues they would wish SCC to consider when determining the future of Causeway Farm.

A summary of those discussions is set out below.

### **Fundamental question**

Recognising SCC's need for the farm to be financially sustainable, a fundamental question has emerged from all the investigations and discussions so far - is Causeway Farm viable as a stand-alone conventional farm? The current tenant until recently ran a nursery school (for 26 years) from the farmhouse and it is difficult to see a future for the holding unless there is some form of diversification or if someone is undertaking some specialised niche project e.g. cheesemaking or specialised horticulture.

Therefore, we believe SCC has three options:

1. Find a tenant to take on the farm in its entirety recognising that they would need to demonstrate clear plans for additional sources of income beyond conventional agriculture.
2. Break up the different parts of the farm.
3. A mixture of the two, recognising however that the more the farm is reduced the greater the challenge of running it sustainably as a single unit.

### **What are the options for diversification?**

We don't have a clear understanding of the options that SCC might be considering. At our community meeting local people expressed an interest in the following. These are not mutually exclusive and clearly to be viable any new tenant may need a variety of additional sources of income.

- Running a Care Farm. Typically, this would be where packages of day care services are offered. These would be commissioned by statutory providers such as Social Care departments or could be purchased by individuals acting as self-funders or using their personal budgets. There are many successful examples of these types of operations. SCC already has two County Farms that provide day care services.
- Opening a Farm Shop. There are other farm shops reasonably close by. However, a successful Farm shop existed at the other side of the village for a number of years
- Alternative energy / community energy (see below)
- Are there other options?

### **Break-up of the farm.**

If there is not a genuinely sustainable future for the farm, as a stand-alone agricultural unit, what are the options open to SCC and what are Middleton villagers' views on these?

- The different options:  
Development
  - There is general acceptance, albeit reluctantly, that there is a case for limited development along Back Road. (see map)
  - There is also acceptance that the farm's outbuildings on The Causeway present an opportunity for development.

- Causeway Farmhouse - if the farm were being broken up it seems logical that this should be sold with a parcel of land.
- Beyond this there would be no appetite in the village for further development
- Wildlife
  - There is widespread support for the marsh land alongside the Minsmere river to be managed with wildlife in mind (see map)
  - Related to this there is a request to SCC that they coordinate discussions with Suffolk Wildlife Trust and with the other landowners with adjacent land who are also considering partnering with SWT. This could allow for the creation of a wildlife corridor along both sides of the Minsmere river on what is now unproductive land.
  - It would also make sense to include, in any wildlife enhancing scheme, the parcel of land (marsh grazing) between The Causeway and Mill Street (see map)
- Permissive paths
  - Whatever happens with the land there are several suggestions the village has for permissive paths. The village would like these to be conditions for anyone taking on ownership or management of the land. Please see map for more details
    - A path along the north side of The Causeway
    - A path or paths connecting Mill Street to Title Road
    - A path across the field behind the Hastoe housing development to connect to the Recreation Ground
- Care Farm
  - We are asking that if a provider comes forward with interest in running a care farm, this should be given support by SCC.
  - Given the potential for contributing to making the farm financially sustainable and to addressing pressures on the local care system we believe that SCC should actively encourage potential care farm providers. It may be the case (as set out above) that a prospective care farm tenant might wish to keep much of the land, house and buildings intact as fragmentation might weaken their business case.
- Alternative energy
  - There was a great deal of support for this from the village. We are not sure about the viability for wind generation but possibly solar? The field to the north of The Causeway could be an option as could the field behind the new Hastoe Housing Development. The sacrifice of potentially high quality agricultural land would obviously need to be considered.
- Community Woodland Creation/ Wildlife Habitat (additional to marsh grazings)
  - The village would be keen for SCC to consider the creation of new woodlands on different parts of the farm. We understand there is potential for support from both the Forestry Commission and the Woodland Trust particularly if schemes are community led and accessible. We recognise this option will require expert advice but nonetheless we feel this option concurs with national policy and should be investigated.
  - The village would like SCC to consider the option of encouraging greater wildlife on the field behind the Hastoe housing development. E.g. through creating ponds, woodland plots, nest boxes and scrub for nightingales etc.
- Renting or selling different fields or plots of land individually
  - If the farm was being broken up there may be interest from specific individuals or groups for buying or leasing different parts of the farm. These would need to be considered by SCC. Potentially SCC could invite different groups to come forward with proposals for different parts of the farm.
- Lion Link
  - SCC need to be aware of the [Lion Link plans](#) as these have a high likelihood of impacting Causeway Farm.
- Community ownership
  - It is not clear if there is the capacity, within the village, to take on the ownership of Causeway Farm. However, this is an option we would be interested in exploring further. It would be helpful to understand if transferring ownership of the farm from the county council to the local community is something SCC would consider? This could be a powerful demonstration of the council's commitment to devolution and community empowerment. A strong case could be built that such a move would also deliver against the county council's "four ambitions":

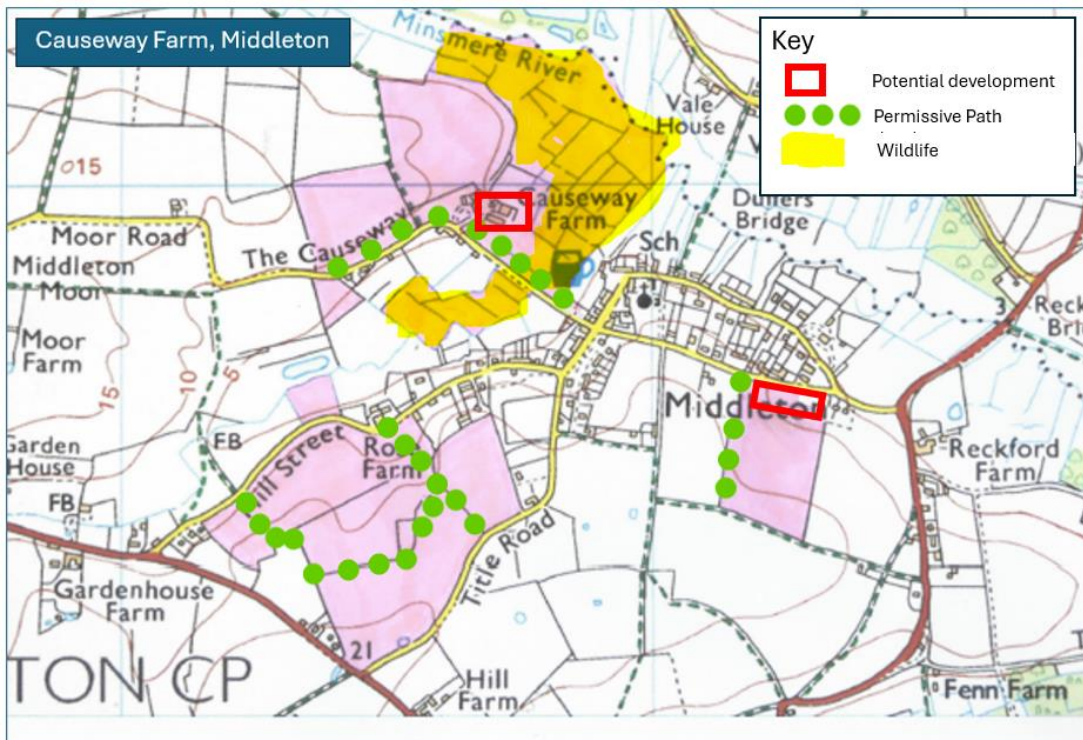
1. Looking after our health and wellbeing;
2. Strengthening our local economy;
3. Protecting and enhancing our environment;
4. Providing value for money for our residents"

## Summary

As is clear from the above the residents of Middleton have a real interest in the future management of Causeway Farm. We hope it is also clear that collectively the village has a deep understanding of the farm and its potential. There is a great deal of expertise amongst residents relating to many of the different options for the future of the holding. Consequently beyond helping to determine the future direction of the farm we believe there is significant potential for the village to help in supporting its successful operation.

We welcome the invitation from SCC to be involved in shaping the future of the farm and we acknowledge that this invitation demonstrates that SCC recognises the value our involvement will bring. We are also aware that the current tenancy expires in October and appreciate the pressure this creates for some quick decisions. It may be that a temporary holding arrangement becomes necessary in the short term, perhaps by way of annual licence. We would be happy to meet with Council representatives as soon as is practical to discuss this paper and agree the nature of future village involvement in the decision making process.

Regardless of what happens we would like to ensure that the village remains involved in supporting the successful future of the farm beyond the date when any new tenancies are in place. We believe having the village as an active partner in running / overseeing Causeway Farm or its constituent parts (if broken up) is essential.



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## DIARY DATES 2024

### April

Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b> (PROVISIONAL)
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Charity Vintage Tea Party, Hill House, Title Rd. <b>10am -12.30</b>
Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup>	MCC cheese & wine with Garden Design Talks. Village Hall <b>7pm</b>
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup>	Pop-up Brunch <b>10-11.45am</b> Holy Trinity Church
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Village Hall - Supper, + Linda Ginn - "It Made a Difference to That One"

### May

Wednesday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Holy Trinity APCM <b>2.30pm</b> in the church.
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup>	MCC AGM Village Hall <b>7pm</b>
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Parish Meeting <b>6pm</b> and Annual Meeting <b>7pm</b>
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup>	WI - V. Hall - 'Contemporary Hemporary' Claire Sullivan. Working hemp traditionally
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Village Hall Management AGM , <b>7pm</b>

### June

Saturday/Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup>	Open Gardens
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup>	80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Village Hall - 'Laughter and Tears' Malcolm Knott, a lifetime in law
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Community Council Midsummer Outdoor Quiz, Playing Field

### July

Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Summer boules tournament, playing field, <b>10am</b>
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Garden Party (Venue TBA)

### August

Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Village Fete, Playing Field, <b>2pm</b>

### September

Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Village Hall - 'Blood, Sweat & Fears' Mary Newton Pathologist

### October

Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup>	MCC Autumn Fair,
Wednesday 16 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Village Hall - 'The True Cost of Fish', Andy Malcolm ~The Fishermen's Mission

### November

Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Village Hall - Cheese and Wine evening + AGM

### December

Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	"Squit Night" - live music at The Bell - from <b>8pm</b>
Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup>	"Santa Boules" tournament - Playing Field <b>10.am</b>
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Parish Council Meeting , Village Hall, <b>7pm</b>
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup>	MCC Christmas Party - Village Hall
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	WI - Village Hall - End of Year Celebrations Martin & Annie ~ Sizewell Gap musicians
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Trinity Carol Service 6pm
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Midnight Mass, Holy Trinity , 11.15pm