

Causeway Farm

Middleton residents may be aware from reports in the Newsletter that the tenants of Causeway Farm will be retiring toward the end of this year. The farm, which covers roughly 100 acres of marsh and higher ground, occupies much of the land around the village. It is owned by Suffolk County Council which is now considering its future. The Middleton Parish Council has approached the council to ascertain if there is any scope for the village to become engaged in the decision-making process for the eventual benefit of its residents. The County Council has subsequently invited representations.

Whilst probably not capable of providing a full-time living to a tenant engaged only in mainstream agriculture, Causeway Farm has significant potential for wildlife conservation. In its north-west corner it runs along the Minsmere River and is contiguous with the Darsham Marshes reserve of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Informal inquiries have been put to the Trust as to whether it might wish to become involved in the future management of part or all of the farm.

The drier, higher ground could possibly be utilised for some form of horticultural or niche enterprise, or by a tenant with an additional source of income beyond the farm itself. In either case it would be hoped a tenant could be found who would be sympathetic to the various conservation measures currently being promoted by the government through the restructured agricultural grant schemes.

Causeway Farm also includes the field adjacent to the Village Recreation Ground behind the new Hastoe housing on Back Road. This field could well be appropriate for the creation of a community woodland or a conservation project, or additional development along back road if that was deemed a priority by the village.

It is possible the County Council may be open to suggestions for new permissive paths to be established. It may also be open to proposals for using the land and buildings for wider social purposes, perhaps related to education or health and care issues. There are many examples of farms being involved in this kind of activity. At this stage any option can be considered.

Alternatively the County Council may wish to break up the farm by letting to a number of tenants or indeed by selling the house and/or land in various lots. In this regard the farm does of course have considerable development value which the County Council may seek to realise to augment its budgets. However, it is to be hoped it will be guided by input from the Parish Council and village residents, and by its own recent review of policy regarding the County Farms portfolio (see link below).

The Parish Council therefore invites input from residents with a view to holding a public meeting at 7pm on 18th March at the Village Hall if there is sufficient interest. In particular the Parish Council hopes to discover the general feeling of residents to the following questions:

- Would it be a good idea for the Parish to be involved in the management, or possibly ownership, of part or all of Causeway Farm, for instance the Hastoe field?
- Do residents think it would be a good idea to develop a care farm or similar social enterprise at Causeway Farm?
- Should the Suffolk Wildlife Trust be invited to play a part in the management of part or all of the farm?
- Is improved public access (e.g. permissive paths) and/or rights of way of any interest?
- What is your feeling about further housing development and/or the possible sale of the farm buildings for conversion?
- Should Causeway Farm be re-let as a farm/smallholding?

It should be emphasised here that this community consultation is merely a preliminary step in presenting the views of the Parish to the County Council which as owner will have the definitive say.

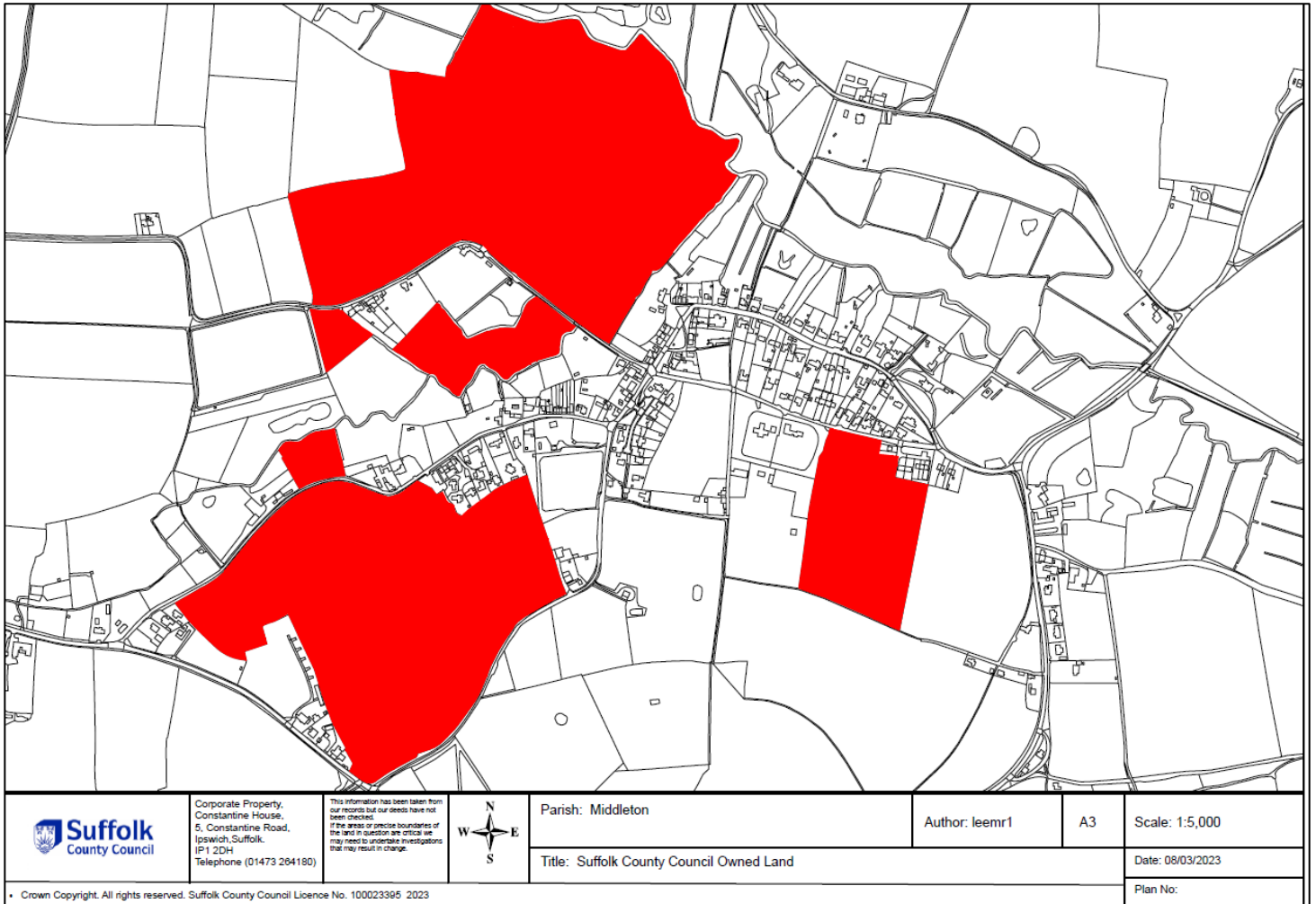
Any comment prior to the meeting can be made via the village website ([Contact - Middleton cum Fordley, Middleton, Saxmundham](#)) or direct to Rachael Salcombe (Middleton Parish Clerk) at parishclerkmiddleton@gmail.com

A map of Causeway Farm is printed below (page 3).

Link to details on Village website [Causeway Farm - Middleton cum Fordley - Middleton cum Fordley, Middleton, Saxmundham](#)

Suffolk County Council's farms policy <https://shorturl.at/cloqw>

Map of Causeway Farm



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