

## MIDDLETON HALL & GARDENS



## January Volunteer Newsletter 2025

Despite being closed for winter, the team have been extremely busy preparing for the new year ahead.

Spring bulb preparations are ongoing, with a BIG thank you to all volunteers helping Daniel with his first of many big plans for 2025.

Along with spring bulbs, Middleton will also be filled with lots of new faces this year. We have onboarded over 14 new volunteers since our last open day in December, that will each bring something new and vibrant to the Hall's offering !

Our team will also be growing, as we are due to have two new members of staff joining the team this March, 1x Part-time Gardener Role & 1x Part-time Visitor Assistant. Expanding our team will give the Hall the opportunity to grow as a horticultural and heritage site, which we are excited to be part of.

<https://www.middleton-hall.co.uk/jobs>

New roles for volunteers will be advertised below, if you are wanting to develop your skill set this 2025, meet new members of our team, want to learn about the history or horticulture of the garden, or maybe just fancy showing off your baking skills - get in touch - we will have a role for you.

**The rota for February - March is linked below ! If you are a new volunteer, put your name next to one on the list & you can shadow for the morning or afternoon before having your till training.**

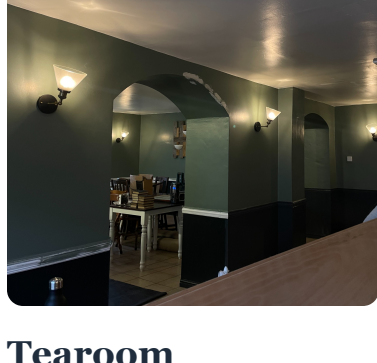
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ys5FNw3XogXP0NB9H1Z-CZ6TgtGNvZB1pUX\\_1fE/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ys5FNw3XogXP0NB9H1Z-CZ6TgtGNvZB1pUX_1fE/edit?usp=sharing)

If you would like to come along to a tour of the Hall, if you are new or just fancy a refresh on your history of the Hall - Please email me with which date suits you !

Thursday 6th March 11am  
Wednesday 19th March 11am

### NEW VOLUNTEER ROLES - 2025 -

<b>BOOKSHOP</b> VOLUNTEER	<b>TEAROOM / BAKING</b> VOLUNTEER	<b>WEDNESDAY GARDEN</b> VOLUNTEER
September we reopened our second-hand bookshop which has made over £500 since opening its doors. We are looking for volunteers for stocking shelves, selling books, book displays & story telling sessions.	Those interested in starting volunteering in our new tea room please come along to our meeting on 11.03 in the South Dining Room at 11am. Please get in touch if you are planning on attending.	Garden volunteering is now opening up to 3 days a week ! This allows for new volunteers to get involved in the ever changing garden at Middleton. Wednesdays will be the same time as Thursday - 11-1pm.
<b>HISTORY RESEARCH</b> VOLUNTEER	<b>LIVING HISTORY REENACTOR</b> VOLUNTEER	<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b> VOLUNTEER
If you are interested in history, research, archives, collections or exhibitions the group will be the place for you. The history group meet once a month - either virtually or in person.	Want to give something new a try this year? Ever thought of getting involved in reenactment, traditional cooking, acting or camping out at the Hall? Get in touch with <a href="mailto:steve.davies@middleton-hall.co.uk">steve.davies@middleton-hall.co.uk</a> to find out more!	Social media volunteers can be involved in anything from <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Videos promoting the Hall</li><li>• Stock images</li><li>• Tiktok, Instagram or Facebook engagement</li><li>• Capturing images from events</li></ul>
<b>TIDY UP TEAM</b> VOLUNTEER	<b>Longbow</b> VOLUNTEER	<b>TRUSTEE</b> VOLUNTEER
Tidy up rota is ready for sign ups, bring your manbags & any cleaning equipment you like ! : <a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EUTXy0EOabXkG1dAI7p4UCz8XvnuwvDCs0qC8s/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1EUTXy0EOabXkG1dAI7p4UCz8XvnuwvDCs0qC8s/edit?usp=sharing</a>	Join the team in teaching Longbow to our visitors ! To find out more email <a href="mailto:steve.davies@middleton-hall.co.uk">steve.davies@middleton-hall.co.uk</a>	To become a trustee, visit our website - <a href="https://www.middleton-hall.co.uk/become-a-trustee">https://www.middleton-hall.co.uk/become-a-trustee</a> & get in touch via <a href="mailto:enquiries@middleton-hall.co.uk">enquiries@middleton-hall.co.uk</a>



#### Tea room decoration is underway!

Thank you to Craig who has transformed the tea room in a matter of days !

We are opening our tea room this year at every opportunity we can & looking forward to new volunteers joining us for the new venture !

We will also be hosting a opening for the tea room in Middleton which would be lovely for volunteers to come along and enjoy some tea and cake! Date will be shared in February's newsletter.



#### Gardens are open from 15th February

Join us for the Spring Bulb display! Volunteers come free.

Wander through the gardens as they burst into bloom with an array of beautiful bulbs, showcasing nature's most stunning seasonal displays.

<https://www.middleton-hall.co.uk/visit/details/blossom-of-spring-a-celebration-of-bulb-garden-beauty-2025-02-15-11-00>

Bring friends and family along as it is a garden entry only so a reduced fee!



#### A pause on book donations

We are taking a pause on book donations, and releasing book donation days. We are so thankful to everyone that is donating books, but we cannot keep up with the rate of donations.

We will be allocating specific dates when our book team are in to sort through donations. Please do not drop books in the bookshop or at the Hall without a bookshop volunteer being present / on a non donation date.

Donation days will be shared via email or on our social media.



#### Liberty Jamboree - Helping with our Easter project



#### Tidy Up Sessions are back !



#### Lichfield Volunteer Fair

### Remembering

Elizabeth Harper

*Thursday Garden Volunteer & Wreath Workshop Leader.*

This month we received some heartbreaking news that Liz Harper, passed away on 31st January in the care of St Giles Hospice. Liz was a dedicated, strong willed and talented member of Middleton that shall be remembered by all who had the pleasure of meeting her.

This December Liz led what will now be her final workshops at the Hall, teaching over 35 people the art of wreath making.

Myself and Daniel were fortunate enough to see Liz the day before she passed.

Speaking about how those at the Hall care about her, reminiscing on her time at the Hall and sharing future plans for Middleton she can no longer be by our side for.

We are so very lucky to have volunteers that truly care about Middleton, giving so much of their time to help it's history live on. Each and every volunteer are part of Middleton's history, and will live on in our stories we tell.

The team feel very fortunate to work alongside each and every volunteer, meeting such inspiring people each with their own talents, stories and quirks.

We have not been informed of funeral arrangements or had contact from the family as of yet. If we receive any news, it will be forwarded through relevant streams to volunteers. I know contributions towards a way to remember Liz at Middleton are being donated to the office started by her fellow Thursday volunteers.

## The Gardens



January for me brings generally a feeling that catches me by surprise every year although it is very reliable and this is the sudden realisation of longer days. I can come to work with the sun rising and go home whilst there is still some daylight.

What also catches me by surprise every time is how much water can the little Langley brook accumulate by the time it reaches Middleton Pool. On 6th of January we were flooded, with a section of the orchard under water and all outflows of the dam engaged with some at full capacity but by the following day all was almost back to normal.

What still catches me by surprise although it happens just as regular as day and night is the determination of the garden volunteers to get the job done, every time, no matter what. Moving wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow of wood chips? No problem! Digging into frozen ground to move some plants around? Sure thing! And so it was.

This month we have been coppicing the hazel around the orchard, building more habitat piles, potting on and planting in, weeding and digging, doing preparation work on the cut flower border at the entrance into the Walled Garden, preparation on our soft berries beds. Not to mention work done in preparation for opening on weekends in February which has been tedious at times but will be rewarding.

On a personal front I have focused more time than ever before on admin, planning and preparation of different projects, some I will be referring to in next month's newsletter. Three big Poplars that have restricted the access onto the nature trail will be worked on soon but it took unexpected amount of hours on the phone and on emails to get this situation resolved.

I have been focusing my attention on the part time Garden Assistant hiring process, engaging with applicants and reviewing submitted application. I must say this is a very exciting opportunity that I cannot wait to see it take shape.

But as this newsletter contribution has many positive and exciting situations described, unfortunately January was not entirely all positive. As you would have already heard this month we have lost one garden volunteer, Liz Harper who after a difficult but short illness has passed away at the end of the month. Liz was a very regular garden volunteer probably best known for her wreath workshops and flower arrangements.

I would love to see Liz's contribution to Middleton continue so we are looking at planting a tree/shrub who's branches are to be used as wreath making material for years to come.

The specific plant has not yet been decided but it will be decided by the end of the month and once the volunteers plant them we will let you know of it's location.

I look forward to seeing you all back in the gardens soon as fingers crossed, warmer days approach.

Daniel,  
Head Gardener



### New Blacksmith George

I have set up my website with a coupon code for volunteers and staff at Middleton Hall to use. The code is **FORGE20** which brings the total to £100 per person for a full experience day, usually £125) and can be put in on the payment page. Please start to pass this out between yourselves. I have started the sessions to begin on the 6th of March as will be set up by then.

The website address for looking is <https://www.forgingahead.co.uk/experience-days>

**SAVE 20% TODAY!**

## New Year at Middleton Hall

Our brand-new guidebook has arrived! Expertly compiled by the indefatigable Debbie Jordan, this edition is brimming with fascinating insights, stunning photographs, and rich historical details. It's everything a visitor needs (and more!) to make the most of their experience when visiting us at Middleton. Available now for £5, with a special discounted price of £4 for our valued volunteers—pick up your copy from Visitor Welcome.

A heartfelt thank you to our incredible garden volunteers! Their hard work over the winter is now coming to life in spectacular fashion. The spring bulb display is already shaping up beautifully, with vibrant bursts of colour set to transform the gardens once again. Be sure to take a stroll and admire their efforts next time you visit!

We're also thrilled to announce two fantastic new job opportunities. We're looking for a part-time Garden Assistant and a Visitor Assistant, both working three days a week. If you're passionate about history, heritage, and horticulture, we'd love to hear from you! Full details are available on our website: Middleton Hall Jobs.

In other exciting news, we're delighted to welcome George, our new full-time blacksmith! Not only will he be showcasing his craft on-site, but he's also offering exclusive, discounted courses for Middleton volunteers eager to try their hand at blacksmithing. This is a fantastic chance to learn from a skilled professional! You can find out more by visiting his website, and using the code **FORGE20** to obtain a special discount! George will also be crafting bespoke items to enhance our site and visitor experience.

With so much happening, 2025 is shaping up to be an incredible year! On behalf of the entire team, thank you for your continued support—we can't wait to share this journey with you.

Steve,  
Site Manager



## Middleton Hall Values

We would like you to help shape our organisational values. ...

What are organisational values?

Organisational values illustrate the purpose of an organisation – that is what they exist to do, what they stand for and the culture they embody. They underpin the direction the organisation takes, steer decision-making processes and ensure we stay true to who we are and deliver on our overarching ambitions.

Why are we creating values for Middleton Hall & Gardens?

The staff and trustees are currently working on updating our strategy and creating a vision for the future of Middleton Hall & Gardens. We are in the early stages of developing this vision and we will invite you to contribute your thoughts at pivotal moments during the process.

The first step is to develop a set of organisational values, and we would like you to be involved. All volunteers and staff play a core role in delivering the Trust's ambitions; therefore, we're keen to capture your thoughts and feed your insights into this process.

So, why are we doing this and why now? Most of us already have a personal sense of what Middleton is all about and what our organisation is here to do. We're not looking to change the direction / purpose of the organisation, however, as we look ahead to the future and refine our strategy, it's important to have set values in place. By formalising a set of organisational values, we ensure that our aims for the future, anything we deliver and the partners we work with (aka our strategy!) consistently align to and serve our values as an organisation. They keep us all in the same boat and rowing in the same direction. Plus, it is a simple way to demonstrate our identity, purpose and aims to external audiences (i.e. possible funders, visitors, partners).

Examples of organisational values

The examples below are the values of some other organisations. These are examples only and are not intended to influence the answers you give in the survey.

City of Sanctuary

The organisation and network are committed to the following values:

We welcome and respect people from all backgrounds, place the highest value on diversity and are committed to equality.

Openness

We are committed to a culture of working collaboratively across the City of Sanctuary networks and in partnership with others.

Participation

We work with people seeking sanctuary and value and recognise the contribution of all. We aspire to ensure people seeking sanctuary are involved in all decision-making at all levels and are supported to become leaders in the organisation, networks, and the wider movement.

Inspire

We work with enthusiasm and positivity and are determined to surpass what has already been achieved to welcome refugees and people seeking sanctuary. We act as a catalyst for change by being open to new and innovative ideas and through sharing knowledge gained with others and working in partnership.

Integrity

We aspire to high standards of honesty and behaviour, and always to act in the interests of people seeking sanctuary.

The National Trust

[https://www.nationaltrustjobs.org.uk/files/5116/1789/0753/Our\\_values.pdf](https://www.nationaltrustjobs.org.uk/files/5116/1789/0753/Our_values.pdf)

How you can have your say -

To share your thoughts on our organisational values, please complete this short survey by Friday 28th February (it should take between 5-10 minutes). We will collate your contributions and discuss them at the board meeting in April. Link to survey: <https://form.jotform.com/25034658232052>

There are three questions to answer, which are as follows:

1. Please tell us what you believe are the core purposes that Middleton Hall & Gardens stands for. What are we here to do and who are we here for?

2. Please tell us about the organisational culture\* you would like our values to underpin.

3. If there's anything else you'd like to share, please add it here.

\*By organisational culture, we mean the behaviours and attitudes that an organisation embodies i.e. respect, inclusion, innovation.

If you have any questions, please contact [amy.haynes@middleton-hall.co.uk](mailto:amy.haynes@middleton-hall.co.uk)

