

My name is Lynn Brook, I am here on behalf of the Middleton Community group – Save swimming in Middleton (Sswim) and am a resident of Middleton. My colleagues are Mr Bill Crann, former Headmaster, Mr Ken Hepples and Ms Marie Ingledew, who are also residents of Middleton .

The people of Middleton are fully opposed to any proposed pool closure and handing over of dry side facilities to the voluntary sector.

To have a drastic proposal such as this has clearly not taken into consideration a number of very important factors. Middleton is an area of great social deprivation. The percentage of the school population that is resident in the 20% most deprived areas of the country for 2007/08 range from 53% for Sharp Lane Primary School to 95% for Windmill Primary School, both users of the pool. However, in spite of these statistics a number of schools have achieved the National Healthy School Standard in 2005-6 and 2006-7, which will be re-evaluated every three years.

The pool itself is ideal for teaching swimming and is a safe haven for children and parents alike to use during their leisure time. It will prove an invaluable resource to Middleton when the introduction of free swimming for the under 14s and over 60s arrives in Leeds, but without it will plunge an already deprived area into a further bleak future. In spite of its size it has produced swimmers who have gone on to elite status and Olympic selection.

Middleton undoubtedly provides community swimming for all, but also for some very specific groups. It is accessed on foot by a number of primary schools in the area, which not only results in our children achieving a healthier lifestyle through additional exercise, but also promotes the council's climate pledge in reducing CO2 emissions by not using transport to reach the centre, and saves the schools money which would have to be used on transport to take the children elsewhere. It is used by a variety of other groups with physical and learning disabilities, amongst them are Moorend Day Centre, Broomfield School, and groups with visual disabilities. It is also used by Surestart, Blenheim and Vine, Asian Women's groups and residents of Middleton who are both able bodied and

have disabilities such as arthritis and other complaints which benefit from the facilities which are provided at the centre, many of whom are sent through local doctors referrals. The pool provides an ideal environment for all those who use it, with them being able to achieve an easy and dignified access and exit via the graduated steps whilst feeling comfortable with the size and warmth which creates a relaxing and welcoming atmosphere. The unconventional size of the pool is exactly what attracts people to return and use it time and again.

According to the report of 2nd September, 'A Draft Vision for the Council's Leisure Centres', a number of facilities require substantial investment to enable refurbishment and modernisation. We do not disagree with this in any way, indeed in 20 years the only major investment in Middleton has been to refurbish the roof this year. It lacks in the new changing facilities and bright interiors which new centres are providing, but this position is not irretrievable. Indeed what it lacks in aesthetic beauty is more than made up for in the welcoming atmosphere, community spirit and fantastic staff who understand the needs of the public who use it.

The presentation at the well attended consultation meetings said that the vision was to provide somewhere inviting to go, that has the facilities you want, adjacent to Town and District Centres on main arterial routes. Middleton has all of these. The pool is the classic big thing in a little package, it has achieved in excess of 100,000 users in 2007 – 2008, accounts for the greatest part of the revenue achieved by the centre and has a 2 year waiting list for private swimming lessons. This is in spite of little promotion of the centre and poor signage. Indeed, although there are potentially 1000s of new customers as a result of the New Forest Village estate being built close by, very few people who are new to the area actually know of its existence.

The dry side facilities will better serve the community by remaining under council control, as we fear that by expecting a voluntary group to take over its running would only lead to this not being achieved and ultimately to its closure.

We would ask that all of the points referred to are given the utmost consideration, but most of all the clear message from the people of Middleton is to allow our centre, the heart of our community, to remain open in its entirety, to continue to provide a much needed leisure facility to further promote and provide a healthy future for us and our community.



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National Healthy School Standard

Description

The National Healthy School Standard provides a model of partnership working between the health service and schools, with the aim of promoting a healthy lifestyle, schools will be re-evaluated every three years.

Results

Change Comparison | Export to Excel

	2006/07
Clapgate Primary School	Awarded 2005-6
Middleton Primary School	Awarded 2006-7
Middleton St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	Awarded 2006-7
Sharp Lane Primary School	No Data
St Philip's Catholic Primary and Nursery School	Awarded 2006-7
Westwood Primary School	No Data
Windmill Primary School	No Data

Date: 18 November 2008

Source: Education Leeds, Infobase School Data

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