

## Minsterley Parish Council & MINSTERLEY MEADOWS

### Community purchase of a SSSI site by Middle Marches Community Land Trust

#### Background

Minsterley Meadows SSSI site are nationally important and are amongst the best flower grasslands in Shropshire. They support over 5,000 Green-winged orchids, a species which has severely declined over the last 100 years. More than 90% of Shropshire's Green-winged orchids are now in these two hay meadows.

Meadows came up for sale on the open market in late December 2023 and were brought to the attention of Middle Marches Community Land Trust (MMCLT) by Marches Meadow Group (MMG). A hastily organised public meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025 saw over 100 local residents turn up to indicate their support to try to purchase the meadows on behalf of the local community.

The meadows are now owned by the [Middle Marches Community Land Trust](https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/), a local community-led Trust dedicated to helping to create an ecologically healthy and sustainable countryside. The [Marches Meadow Group](https://www.marchesmeadowgroup.com/) will help manage and look after the meadows with a local management group..

Key Champions	Initiative	Outcomes
<p>MMCLT <a href="https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/">https://middlemarchescommunitylandtrust.org.uk/</a></p> <p>MMG <a href="https://www.marchesmeadowgroup.com/">https://www.marchesmeadowgroup.com/</a></p> <p>Minsterley Parish Council <a href="https://minsterley.org.uk/">https://minsterley.org.uk/</a></p> <p>Local community in Minsterley and Pontesbury</p>	<p>Public fundraiser campaign to raise the funds to purchase the meadows launched in January 2025.</p> <p>Support of local Parish Councils secured (Minsterley, Pontesbury and Westbury) Shropshire Local Authority alerted to the campaign and endorsed.(LNRS lead authority)</p> <p>Negotiation with vendor a timeframe to raise the funds needed.</p> <p>Campaign and public awareness initiatives organised throughout 2025. Working group established drawn from local people.</p> <p>Talks on BBC radio and other publicity materials developed alongside a series of events organised throughout 2025 specific to Minsterley alongside MMCLT events and working group meetings securing public engagement and interest.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Saturday 11 May, 1.30 – 3.30 pm Public meeting Minsterley Parish Hall</li> <li>2. Sunday 9 June, 10.30 – 3.30 Formal launch of the appeal</li> <li>3. Friday 5 July, 10-1.30 Hedges &amp; Meadow Walk &amp; Talk</li> <li>4. Sunday 7 July, 10-3 The Natural Garden with Nancy Lowe</li> <li>5. Tuesday 23 July, 7-9 SSSI Meadows and their importance: A talk by Simon Cooter</li> <li>6. Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September Barn Owl talk</li> </ol>	<p>£158,000 raised from public donations predominantly from the local community.</p> <p>Fantastic community engagement with over 350 doners.</p> <p>£224,000 awarded from National Heritage Lottery Fund which covers a contribution to the purchase of the meadows, the ongoing work to manage them, and funds to support local people to care for them and engage with young people to learn about them. This includes a local art project, activities and events as well as working closely with local primary and secondary schools</p> <p>£10,000 grant from Defra was facilitated by Shropshire Hills National Landscapes staff.</p> <p>Contracts exchanged 8<sup>th</sup> November 2025.</p>