

A photograph of a row of terraced houses. The houses are painted in various colors: light blue, cream, and white. A balcony with a black wrought-iron railing is visible on the right. In front of the houses, there are several potted plants, including small evergreen trees and a larger bush. The text 'MIDDLETON®' is overlaid in white, with a red horizontal line underneath it.

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Middleton news.  
Property views.

**Summer 2025**

# WELCOME TO OUR 2025 NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome to our summer 2025 newsletter

This year, two of our long-standing advisors – Ben Horne and Ashley Wilsdon – reflect on how the prime property landscape has evolved since they joined Middleton in 2015, offering insights from both the London and Country markets. We also share a round-up of our most-read articles from the past 12 months, and explore why realistic pricing remains the most effective sales strategy.

We are very grateful to our client, Karen Stacey, for sharing her perspective on her involvement with the important work of Childline.

Elsewhere in this edition, Hollie Byrne discusses how our Estates & Special Projects team continues to support clients well beyond the initial transaction. And in June, the whole Middleton team came together once again for a day of volunteering at Camp Mohawk – a tradition we value greatly.

As ever, thank you to our clients, business partners and fellow professionals for your continued support.

Mark Parkinson

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# 10 YEARS, TWO MARKETS, AND WHAT'S CHANGED FOR BUYERS

*Ben Horne – head of our Country Buying department, and Ashley Wilsdon – head of London Buying, both joined Middleton in 2015. They sat down for a chat to mark their 10 years with the business.*

## **Your journeys prior to joining Middleton couldn't have been more different.**

**BH:** "I did study at the Agricultural College, Cirencester, which is quite a typical route into country property – but I then had a 17-year diversion with the British Army via places like Iraq and Afghanistan."

**AW:** "If you think fighting for your country sounds tough, my ten-year career as an estate agent began a year before the financial crisis!"

**BH:** "I wouldn't have believed that the business world could afford a similar sense of teamwork and accomplishment that I felt in the Army, but I think we've created something very special at Middleton."



**Ben Horne**  
Head of Country Buying

Some of the clients who I first worked with are coming back with very different briefs because they're at a new stage of life, and it's so satisfying to feel you are part of their journey."

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*"...the core dynamics are the same – the best houses are sold off-market..."*

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**AW:** "When I set up the London department in 2015, the challenge was explaining to our clients why they needed a buying advisor. While London and the country are very different markets, the core dynamics are the same – the best houses are sold off-market, and value is a



**Ashley Wilsdon**  
Head of London Buying

far more complex equation than simple pounds per square foot. Ten years on, it's become harder than ever – even for a savvy buyer – to navigate. An increasing percentage of property across all price points is sold privately, via a quite fragmented array of selling agents, brokers and intermediaries."





**You've both bought family homes in the last 10 years. Did you make good 'clients'?**

**BH:** "I definitely did what I would advise any client to do. If there is a property that you absolutely love and you can get to it before it comes to market, that is incredibly valuable. I'd have very likely lost my house in competition. Now that I've been there a few years, it feels like fantastic value in retrospect."

**AW:** "Property agents make the worst buyers and sellers – I was a nightmare! Not having representation to help me navigate the emotional side of the transaction reminded me of the importance of having

someone in your corner who can be objective during moments of high stress."

**What would you change about the property business?**

**BH:** "Some of the restrictions on listed buildings are so costly and carbon counterproductive. And secondly, I might be the only business-person in the country crying out for more regulation, but the industry needs to become more professional across the board."

**AW:** "Legislation – around planning and building regulations, which is implemented without proper consultation with industry. And I'd overhaul the current legal process in the UK for buying

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*"...clients who I first worked with are coming back with very different briefs because they're at a new stage of life, and it's so satisfying to feel you are part of their journey..."*

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a property – one of the most archaic in the world."

**If you were trying to convince each other to swap London for the country, where would you recommend?**

**BH:** "Ashley thinks everyone in the country spends their weekdays on the train and their weekends cycling head-to-toe in



Lycra, which is ironic because he grew up in the Cotswolds, so I'd only encourage him if he could also keep a flat in London."

**AW:** "If Ben lived in London, it would probably be a turret in the Tower of London or somewhere near the river, although I don't think you're allowed to fish in the Thames."



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# TOP READS OF THE YEAR: ADVICE, ANALYSIS AND EXPERT COMMENTARY

As a Middleton client, you have access not only to the team assisting you with your search but also to a network of experts that our advisors have cultivated over 30 years or more in the business.

Over the past 12 months, we've drawn on this collective expertise to produce topical Advice Papers, regular Market Insight reports from researcher Yolande Barnes, and a webinar on Labour's planning policy. Whether you're buying a pied-à-terre or a landed estate, we're here to provide the hard information and professional insight you need to make good decisions with confidence.

## Market Insights – A New Generation

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Long-term demographic shifts – an ageing population, Gen Z's eco preferences and Gen Alpha's tech-driven lifestyles – will reshape demand across prime UK housing over the next 30 years.

*Published September 2024*



## Interior Design – Practical Tips for a Fresh Look

*(Advice Paper by Sims Hilditch)*

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From decluttering to strategic paint choices, this guide shows cost-effective ways to refresh interiors without major expenditure.

*Published January 2025*



## To Reinvigorate or Relandscape?

*(Advice Paper by Taylor Tripp)*

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Garden designer Nick Tripp outlines a four-step approach to decide whether to fine-tune existing landscaping or embark on a full redesign.

*Published January 2025*



## National Planning Policy Framework Changes: How They Impact You

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Our webinar recap sets out how the new 'Grey Belt', revived housing targets and pro-sustainability rules create both challenges and development opportunities for homeowners.

*Published March 2025*



## Market Insights – UK Real Estate: A Global Perspective

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Yolande Barnes explains why prime UK property is now 'good value' versus gold, the US dollar and other safe-haven assets, positioning it as a long-term 'buy' for global investors.

*Published May 2025*





## BEHIND THE SALE: THE CASE FOR REALISTIC VALUATIONS

*"We always keep an open mind as to whether selling 'offline' or 'online' is the best strategy," says Middleton's London sales Advisor, Tom Parsons.*

"But pricing your property at the right level from the beginning is absolutely critical – even more so at this moment in time. Buyers are out there, but with so much uncertainty around the world economy, they are not going to

be rushed, and they are certainly going to be conservative in how much they are willing to pay."

"Overvaluing, rarely pays dividends, and very often costs clients money and precious time, which, in turn, can mean missing out on a property they want to buy."

"Our strategy is to give clients a realistic, evidence-based valuation. Occasionally, that means we'll lose out to agents who go for a more client-pleasing valuation. But if you get that wrong, and your house stays on the market for longer than you expected, the only way the price will go is down. That, in turn, makes buyers wary."

"With today's digital footprints, it's very easy for buyers to see how long your property has been on the market and whether the price has changed at all."

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*"We lost six months of marketing after another agent convinced us they could achieve a very punchy price over and above the advice given by Middleton. Middleton went on to secure the sale at close to their original advice, which reflected the realities of the market at the time."*

**Middleton client, Penny Beer & Rikard Svensson**

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"Conversely, when you get the price right from the start, you are much more likely to attract multiple bidders. Competition is the single best way to push bids up," says Tom.



**Tom Parsons**  
London Sales Advisor

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# CLIENT STORY: CHILDLINE

*Karen Stacey is a Middleton client and the CEO of Digital Cinema Media. She explains why she is so proud to sit on the board of Childline – a charity that helps to change young lives.*



"I first got involved with Childline in 2012 when a business associate saw the need for a service for vulnerable children first-hand," says Karen. "I then joined the board in 2022 as one of a group of marketing professionals lending our expertise and creating fundraising opportunities."

"It's amazing to think that, when Childline was launched by Esther Rantzen in 1986, children would phone from a local phone box. Since

then, the charity has handled more than six million counselling sessions, earning it the nickname of 'the fourth emergency service' – yet it is still resourced primarily by volunteers."

"I'm so proud that our efforts as the Childline Board have helped to raise over

£33 million since 2004. The Childline Ball is a star-studded affair at The Savoy and our key fundraiser. Bringing it back in 2023 after a five-year break due to the pandemic was a highly emotional occasion where we listened to very moving survivors' stories."



"With help from the legendary Lulu, Jason Manford and Emma Willis, and the support of Media, Tech and Advertising leaders, we raised over half a million pounds in one night."

**"My mantra in life is 'we learn, then earn and return'. Childline is one of my ways of returning."** Karen Stacey



## CHILDLINE FACTS:



A young person contacts Childline every **45 seconds**.



1,100 trained volunteers carry out around **160,000 counselling sessions** every year.



The Childline Board has **raised £33m** since 2004.

**Rebecca Wilcox** – Esther Rantzen's daughter – is now Deputy President of Childline.

Childline – established in 1986 – is a **free counselling service** for anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through.



**childline**

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## WRITING THE BOOK ON PRIME PROPERTY JOURNEYS



*Executive, Hollie Byrne, talks about the approach of our Estates & Special Projects department – one chapter at a time.*

“While many Estates & Special Projects clients come to Middleton for a single transaction in the first instance, our job is to think laterally, long-term and strategically,” says Executive Hollie Byrne, “and that may play out over several years.”

“Owning and managing an estate or farmland is more complex than ever, and clients come to us with such a variety of motivations. It’s absolutely

essential to be able to step back and take a holistic, long-term view.”

“In one case we helped a client identify and purchase a 450-acre farm in the South of England, and since the purchase, we’ve built an entire creative team of architects, landscape designers, planning consultants, interior designers and rural surveyors to support them as they develop the estate, while Middleton helps coordinate the project with regular consultancy support.”

“In another case, we’re effectively acting as trustees, helping with strategic planning for a client who wants to acquire additional land, as well as housing for a growing team of staff on or close to the estate that we originally helped them acquire.”

“These projects can happen years after our initial buying work and are dependent on absolute trust and discretion. We’re bringing broader expertise – not just in property, but in rural affairs, strategic land management, and commercial farming viability.”

“Just as important,” adds Hollie, “is our book of contacts – our own directory which gives Estates & Special Projects clients a shortcut to a team of trusted professionals, all of whom have been endorsed by our own network.”



**Hollie Byrne**  
Estates & Special  
Projects Executive

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# MIDDLETON MENTIONS

*Our advisors are regularly asked to comment on economic factors, trends and events impacting the property market. Here's a selection from the last few months.*



***Oliver Sanhaji on Bloomsbury's quiet revival.***

"The area has long been overlooked, but it remains possible to find great properties, with rare Georgian townhouses and excellent access to central London offices."



***Ashley Wilsdon on why buyers need advisors.***

"We carry out thorough due diligence and have a detailed understanding of local market values. Knowing when to walk away from a purchase is crucial."



***Ben Horne on January's property market sweet spot.***

"Traditional property seasons are all mixed up. Our buying client numbers have suddenly increased, making January the ideal time to sell to meet demand."



***Gemma Maclaran on the Cotswolds' best-kept secret village.***

"Ebrington feels like a real place, not too manicured, with a strong community and plenty of wholesome village activities beyond the pretty cottages."



***Ed Sainter on how Oxford's traffic filters affect the property market.***

"The filters aim to reduce car trips while improving journey times. Properties well within the city limits will become most sought-after."



***Hollie Byrne on a new generation of farmers.***

"We are seeing an ever-increasing trend of clients wanting to buy farms, who want to manage that land with improving the environment as their priority."



***Mark Parkinson & Tom Hudson on the latest buyer trends.***

"It's now virtually impossible for unrepresented buyers to see everything, meaning a buying agent is a necessity these days."



## BUILDING TOGETHER AT CAMP MOHAWK

*On 18th June, the entire team at Middleton Advisors took a day out from business as usual to support charity Camp Mohawk, helping to prepare their woodland centre for the busy summer season.*

As in previous years, Middleton donated the equivalent of our summer party budget to the charity. All 30 team members spent the day digging and building part of a new assault course, laying down astro turf, painting the play area, and lending a hand wherever needed.

Camp Mohawk, based in Wargrave, Berkshire, provides an essential safe space for children and young people with special needs, offering a place to play, learn, and connect with others in a supportive environment.

“It’s one of the most rewarding days in our calendar,” says Mark Parkinson, Managing Director. “It’s a practical way to give back – and a day that always brings the team together with a shared sense of purpose.”



If you'd like to support **Camp Mohawk**, you can donate directly by scanning the QR code.





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