



# MINI MAYFLY

Please share with your friends and neighbours



## Whatever happened to the Marsh and Micklefield £1 million?

Nearly 10 yrs ago Marsh and Micklefield residents were announced as one of the lucky recipients of a £1m grant from the lottery to spend locally. It's now seven years since instalments of the money began to arrive, and those who volunteered to manage the money on behalf of us all set out on a journey into the messy world of community development.

The Mayfly brings you the inside story on what it's like to try and run a project like this, along with details of work so far, and the vital numbers.

**Most importantly there's an open invitation for everyone to share their thoughts on how the remaining £500k could best be used.**

It's a perfect opportunity to have your say. If you do one thing this week - do this.

Other good news is that, after a long and happy furlough, Ranger John is back on the job, warming us up for a winter of

nature loving with a homage to the humble blackberry, and news of how to sign up for outdoor events.

For anyone feeling creative, artist Dan Wilson shows how to get from blank page to animated Mickey cartoon in 3 easy steps. And Joy Langley issues each and every one of us a timely license to dream...

Read on, tell your neighbours, enjoy!



# How hard can it be to spend £1 million ?

The inside story from Marsh and Micklefield Big Local

Lisa Meaney, with Maddy Howe and Paul Willis

In 2010 the communities of Marsh and Micklefield were approached by the lottery with the offer of £1 million to spend locally over 10-15 yrs - as long as residents volunteered their time to spend the money, and manage the projects that came from it.

As part of this national 'Big Local' experiment into community led change, a total of £150m was divided between 150 different 'struggling' communities across the UK from coastal towns to dense inner cities, and everything in-between.

**Local Trust | Big Local**



Left: Map of UK Big Locals  
Right: M&M Big Local area

**It's easy to focus on the money and how it has been spent, but what it's like to volunteer to run a project like this is a story that remains largely untold.**

Paul and Maddy were both involved in the project from the outset: Paul led the residents group that formed to steer the project in 2012, and Maddy is currently in this role.

Paul described his early feelings about being involved:

*'I was cynical at the start, and saw it as an abdication by central government of their responsibilities; it seemed to me they were saying 'we can't solve some of the problems communities face, so we'll give you this money and see what YOU can do.'*

When the project started, even those running it at national HQ the 'Local Trust', were quite unclear about how it would work. Early meetings attracted council workers and charity leaders. But as it became clear that this money was to be spent by residents, they dropped off, and a small group of locals were left.

*'Off we staggered!' said Maddy. 'There was very little support, and no guidelines to follow, when there is no route map, no template....it's quite daunting.'*

From the start the group had a clear sense that they wanted to draw people together in a common cause and build a stronger sense of self-value locally. They invested in someone to research local need, asked school children to work with design students to create a logo, and delivered a community based adult education programme.

As local needs became clear, the enormity of the task they had taken on began to dawn. The responsibility of solving everything on everyone else's 'too difficult pile' from providing youth services to genuinely connecting with our busy communities, at times tipped the project from exciting opportunity to unfathomable burden.

As the years went by, it became apparent how complicated the central idea of the project, that residents would step up and lead change, actually is.

Maddy explained: *'In the UK there is a strongly established system that disempowers people; there is an expectation that it is someone else's job to pick the litter up - there is not a strong sense of citizenship. The 'Big Society' idea: that there is this capacity everywhere, that people will just come forward, is not the case. People need to have the time and confidence to do this, and they have to be interested.'*

Paul added: *'Essentially, Big Local is about communities coming together to develop a vision and find the confidence to take risks - all in the hope of physical, social and personal transformation'*



Above: Paul Willis, original leader of residents steering group, with his wife Gill  
Below: Maddy Howe, current leader

Maddy describes how things have changed: *'We have earned our stripes - and are still learning. I still feel a huge sense of responsibility, but now I feel more confident about taking risks, clearer that this is an experiment. How will we ever know what will work if we don't have a go? We now have staff to help us, and we also know that we can't do everything.'*

As a UK wide experiment, it will be hard to know what has worked until the whole 150 projects are finished. There have been many positive developments; The Local Trust now provides fully paid, relevant training for Big Local communities, in everything from social media to leadership.

The speed and responsiveness possible in Big Local communities has also shone through during the Covid Crisis - here, a local food delivery initiative with Hills Café was funded and set up within a week of lockdown, and children who became cut off from education were supplied with laptops, long before the government acted on 'digital exclusion'.

**In Marsh and Micklefield and across the UK, this remains a story of individuals doing what they can, with whatever time they have, to make the most of quite a difficult, if irresistible, opportunity.**

Maddy describes her hopes for the rest of the project: *'For myself I hope I can be open, find a clearer voice and speak up more effectively in my community, I feel optimistic that as residents, we will all go forwards with more confidence, and that people will understand more about the project and enjoy getting involved.'*

Anyone who lives in the area and is interested in helping make decisions about how remaining funds are spent is invited to drop Maddy a line for a chat. No qualifications or experience needed - you just need to care about where you live, and be willing to go on a bit of a journey!

[Chair@marshandmicklefield.com](mailto:Chair@marshandmicklefield.com)

[localtrust.co.uk](http://localtrust.co.uk)  
[marshandmicklefield.com](http://marshandmicklefield.com)

# Dream Catching

Flex your imagination muscle!

**Joy Langley**, therapist and emotional management coach based in Micklefield

Did you know that finding purpose and meaning can make us happier? Even if we are going through a tough time physically, emotionally or financially? Finding our BIG WHY helps us shine a light in a dark place. The easiest way to achieve this is to have better daydreams.

Children dream all the time, using their super-power to write stories, travel to magical kingdoms and cheer themselves up. Imagination rocks! So why did you stop daydreaming and shove your dreams to the back of the cupboard? When did the cynicism creep in? I know... disappointment and knock-backs. Even I stopped dreaming big, but even more so during the pandemic with all the worries about the future.

But hope is essential for happiness, so I want you to put on your 'L' plates and become a Dream Catcher in training. It's time to sprinkle a little bit of fairy dust over our families and community and let the optimism seep into our hearts and minds ...like butter seeping into warm toast. And when you get tired, ask your children to hold a bigger vision for this brighter future. Encourage the young dream catchers to confidently step into the world and make a mark with their bright ideas.

Start practicing daydreaming! Set aside 5 minutes a day, set the alarm and imagine what you would do if you had an extra £10, £100, or an extra £1,000. Imagination is a muscle, so the more you use it, the better you'll get at it.

Find your purpose, passion and meaning.

**"If you had no limitations plus your big vision, what would you give yourself, your family, your community and the world?"**

Why? Because you matter, and you can make a difference. Time to start dreaming big... again.

For more information visit :  
<http://catchathought.co.uk>

# Blackberries

One of nature's best treats



**John Taylor**, Marsh and Micklefield Ranger

Food always feels somehow fuller of flavour when in season and when you've picked or grown it yourself, and we have already seen the first flush of blackberries bursting from the hedgerows. These berries, as well as rosehips, sloes and damsons will then ripen on through the Autumn and many of us will be heading out along highways and byways in search of this seasonal bounty.



**Brambles (Rubus fruticosus)**

It's important, though, to harvest this humble abundance safely and responsibly. Take care not to damage habitats by trampling all over surrounding plants (also the sweetest berries are usually at the stem-tip), follow the laws regarding conservation and foraging and, although plentiful, please make sure you leave some for other foragers and remember that many species of bird rely on the Autumn supply of hedgerow fruits. Let's get berrying!



**Sloes (Prunus spinosa)**

Blackberries, or brambles (there are around 340 species of this member of the rose family in the UK), are a real delight and bring back childhood memories of stained fingers or clothes, freshly baked crumbles and the promise of jam to come. The plant has had other uses too. The roots give an orange dye, the leaves were used to treat burns or skin complaints and historically the plant was widely used as a medicine or charm against many illnesses.

**Ranger John is planning weekly activities starting on Friday the 25th September with a sculpture walk through Gomme Wood.**  
Email [John@marshandmicklefield.com](mailto:John@marshandmicklefield.com) or see [marshandmicklefield.com/environment](http://marshandmicklefield.com/environment)

## Apple and Berry Crumble

Makes 6 portions



### Ingredients

5 apples, cored and thickly sliced  
1/2 lemon zested and juiced  
65g caster sugar  
150g blackberries  
80g cold unsalted butter, diced  
125g plain flour

### Method

Preheat oven to gas 5, 190°C, fan 170°C.

Put the apples, blackberries, lemon juice, zest and 15g sugar in a 20-22cm tray.

Rub the butter into the flour until it forms large clumps.

Add the rest of the sugar into the crumbs and scatter over the fruit.

Cover dish with foil and bake for 30 mins. Then remove foil and bake for a further 30 mins.

Serve with homemade or shop bought custard.

# HOW TO DRAW Mickey IN A FEW EASY STEPS!

WHAT??? I CAN'T DRAW! YES YOU CAN, YOU GOT THIS!  
WITH THIS FAB GUIDE, YOU TOO CAN DRAW MARSHA'S BELOVED PET, A CERTAIN CRAZY COOL PINK CARTOON CAT.

INSPIRED BY HOBBS, GARFIELD, AND ROOBARB & CUSTARD (A 1970'S CARTOON), MICKEY'S UNIQUE PERSONALITY GROWS EVERY TIME HE IS DRAWN. SO WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? BREAK OUT THE PENCIL CASE AND GET SCRIBBLING!

Marsha woz ere

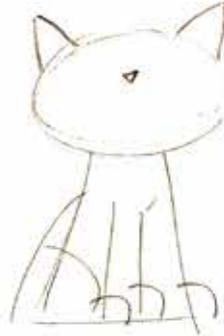
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## 1. SKETCH OUT

LIGHTLY DRAW THE SIMPLE SHAPES WITH A SOFT PENCIL:

WHERE YOU PUT THE TEENY TRIANGLE NOSE WILL SET WHERE MICKEY IS LOOKING THEN DO BIG EYES, A LITTLE W MOUTH, AND TRIANGLE EARS.

FLESH OUT SHAPES MORE, LIKE LEGS, CHEEK FLUFF (MORE TRIANGLES) AND TAIL. RUB OUT AND RE-DO TILL ROUGH SHAPE AND PROPORTIONS ARE OKAY.

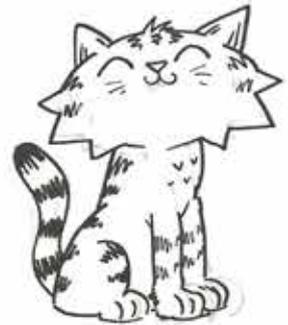


## 2. Ink him up!

START GOING OVER YOUR LINES, IMPROVING SHAPES, LEAVING OUT BITS, TAKING A BIT MORE TIME.

FOR STRIPES I ADD SQUIGGLES: 3 ON THE FOREHEAD, A FEW DOWN THE BACK & LEGS, AND TAIL OF COURSE.

DID YOU NOTICE THE TUFT OF HAIR ON HIS HEAD IS AN 'M'?!



## 3. Colour him in

KEEP WITHIN YOUR LINES MOSTLY BUT DON'T BE TOO PRECIOUS!

BRUSH PENS AND MARKERS ARE BEST AS THEY FILL QUICKER - GOOD IF YOU HAVE LOADS TO DRAW.

YOU CAN ALSO COLOUR IN DIGITALLY. IT CAN BE JUST AS QUICK AND EASY IN AN APP! MICKEY'S CO-CREATOR & PRO-DODDLER WANIEL DILSON SOMETIMES USES PHOTOSHOP TO COLOUR IN, AS WELL AS FELT TIPS.



## KEEPIN' ON IT

TRY DIFFERENT EXPRESSIONS AND POSES, DOING SILLY THINGS. COPY OTHER CARTOONS AND IMAGES FOR REFERENCE. USE DIFFERENT PENS & PAPER, DRAW LOADS.

DEVELOP YOUR TECHNIQUE AND MAKE YOUR PRACTISE YOUR OWN.

BEFORE LONG, YOU'LL BE CREATING YOUR OWN WHOLE WORLD OF CRAZY COOL CHARACTERS TOO!



WELL DONE! YOU'VE DRAWN YOUR VERY OWN MICKEY :-D

Mickey & Marsha by Clark & Wilson.