**Middelfart Municipality:**

**Cultural activities and sustainable communities**

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## 1. Presentation - Middelfart Municipality

Middelfart Municipality is a municipality on Funen that covers an area of 297 km² with approx. 41.000 inhabitants. Located on the west side of Funen with two bridges which connect Middelfart to Jutland. Middelfart is Denmark's green growth municipality. As the Funen part of the Triangle area Middelfart is located in Denmark's entrepreneurial centre with more than 400.000 jobs within an hour's drive.

In Middelfart Municipality we focus on thoughtful growth with a development-oriented approach businesses within, for example, food, transport, and tourism. One modern business life, welfare with citizens at the centre and forms of learning that give all children opportunities to learn what they can.

## 2. Cultural strategy and political ambitions

Middelfart is a city of bridges, that is why we have named the vision of Middelfart Municipality: ”We built bridges – Vision of the city council 2030”. This vision is based on four ”bridge pills”, one of them is about cultural life. Here it says: When it comes to community and everyday life - associations and experiences, culture and nature – we stand together. An important premise for development is - in this context - a strong "we". The City Council wants to involve as many actors, partners and citizens in this development, so that: "social welfare, great experiences and green transformation is something we create together".

Towards 2030 Middelfart Municipality will, among other things, strengthen the framework so that both cultural, sports and association life (also the unorganized and sometimes spontaneous cultural life), can develop and create fertile ground for sustainable communities. It must be easier for citizens, associations, and companies to take the initiative for activities that promote communities. And also find new ways in which culture, leisure and association life can play a role in everyday life - for the benefit of all citizens.

[As a municipality we must take the lead in creating the best conditions to strengthen commitment and initiative to participate in active and healthy communities. Middelfart Municipality support associations and cultural players, because they are the foundation for our cultural and leisure life.](https://www.google.com/search?safe=active&sxsrf=APwXEdc_iGtFf4RtY64nPXw5M1tRwogv7w:1686147164349&q=As+a+municipality,+we+must+take+the+lead+in+creating+the+best+conditions+to+strengthen+commitment+and+initiative+to+participate+in+active+and+healthy+communities.+We+must+support+the+associations+and+cultural+factors,+as+they,+individually,+in+collaboration+across+the+board+or+in+interaction+with+the+municipality,+companies+and+other+stakeholders,+are+the+foundation+for+our+cultural+and+leisure+life.&spell=1&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjWlJTWq7H_AhVwiYsKHb9MDe4QBSgAegQIBxAB)

In Middelfart Municipality we want all citizens to feel pride of where they live and work. That all citizens have a feeling that something special is happening in their local area and that it’s possible to get involved. Therefore, cultural and leisure life must be based on local communities. This is where things start, and this is where pride takes root, when something unfolds and suddenly reaches far beyond municipal or national borders.

## 3. Popular cultural attractions

Middelfart Municipality offers a full range of cultural and leisure opportunities. We have a strong cultural profile with many popular cultural attractions.

### CLAY ceramic museum

CLAY Ceramic Museum is the Nordic region's largest museum for ceramic art. The museum has recently been transformed from a small museum located in a beautiful old villa – near by the sea and the forest - to also including a spacious, modern building. This new building offers a lot of square meters situated both above and below ground level. CLAY Ceramic Museum presents ceramics from traditional to contemporary. CLAY is an independent institution that receives subsidies from Middelfart Municipality and private sponsors. In addition to a permanent staff, CLAY Ceramic Museum is run by more than 65 volunteers.

### **Bridgewalking**

One of our main tourist and cultural attraction is Bridgewalking on the Old Little Belt Bridge, built in 1935. Bridgewalking is a collaboration project between Middelfart and Fredericia Municipality. Bridgewalking currently employs over 60 people, including the administrative team, the Bridgewalking’s Welcome and Call Centre staff and 46 guides, who take visitors up the bridge structure – 60 metres above sea level. The Old Little Belt Bridge is located in the middle of Denmark’s largest marine nature park. Since its opening in May 2015, more than 325.000 visitors have walked on the bridge. The project aims to establish a tourist lighthouse to boost tourism and raise awareness of the area and to provide unique, authentic experiences.

### MIND museum

In Middelfart Municipality we also have a local museum specialized in the history of Mental Health. Currently a new museum is under development, MIND Museum. Not a traditional museum, but a multifunctional museum. By establishing facilities that supports development of networking and volunteering, MIND will become an inspiring and innovative place, where you can gain knowledge about mental illness and mental health. MIND will be established in the old beautiful buildings at the Old beautiful Mental Health Hospital in Teglgårdsparken.

### **KulturØen**

At Middelfart modern waterfront you will find KulturØen. A large cultural centre with a cinema, library, concert and lecture hall, café, restaurant and tourist information. KulturØen is designed with the vision of creating an open modern cultural meeting place for all citizens. Cultural activities at KulturØen are either partly or fully created through co-creations with other cultural partners: music school, art school, music associations, local organisations, associations, artist etc.

## 4. Significant events

In Middelfart Municipality we also have a full range of significant events, which is often initiated and run by volunteers.

### Rock Under the Bridge

Rock Under the Bridge is Denmark's largest one-day festival. With the water and the New Little

Belt Bridge as its backdrop ’Rock under the Bridge’ offers some of the best Danish and international soloists and bands. A Festival for all ages, mostly young and adults. The festival started in 1989. Rock under the bridge is a support association for Middelfart Gymnastics & Football Club, and all profits go to them. All the employees of Rock under the Bridge are volunteers.

### Strib Winter Festival

Strib Winter Festival was also established in 1989. The festival is organized by the association GUF, (Good Entertaining Folk Music), which was formed in 1987 by a group of folk music enthusiasts in the area around Strib and Middelfart. Strib Winter Festival attracts many guests. Members of GUF also organizes Folk Music Concerts in Middelfart (at KulturØen) all year round.

### The Triangle Festival Week

Every year at the end of August there is a festival throughout the Triangle Region, 10 days with more than 300 thoughtful, remarkable and entertaining events within art, music, theatre, dance, lectures and children's culture around the seven municipalities. The Triangle Festival week – ’Trekantområdets Festuge’ - is for everyone. This week is one big taste of what cultural life in the Triangle Area has to offer - with the addition of strong national and international spices. What makes The Triangle Festival Week special is how we co-create. All part of the events has been created in a collaboration between the area's citizens, associations and cultural institutions, who have joined forces across municipal boundaries to create an event for the festival.

### The People’s Climate Festival

Another big event taking place in late august is ’The People’s Climate Festival’ a festival that has a focus on Climate action now. A non-commercial event and a unique platform with open debates, where politic meets citizens, businesspeople, and organisations meet under informal forms. A festival with plenty of cultural activities: concerts, street theatre, children’s events, workshops and so on. Last year The People’s Climate Festival had more than 200 debates & workshops, 70 cultural events and activities and 21.000 participants. It is free to participate. Special about this event is that anyone can submit content for the program, the program is open until 1st of June.

## **5. Cultural activities and communities throughout the municipality**

Throughout the municipality we have plenty of cultural activities and communities. In Harndrup - for example - you will find ‘Humlemagasinet’, which, among other things, offers historical exhibitions, a Christmas display and a beautiful garden. We also have a Festival in Balslev, a one-Day music festival for the whole family, with family friendly prices.

In Middelfart Municipality we have four public libraries, in Strib, Nørre Aaby, Ejby and Middelfart/KulturØen. The Danish public libraries are municipal institutions that are run in accordance with the Danish Act Regarding Library Services. The purpose of the public libraries is to promote enlightenment, education, and cultural activity by making books, magazines, music, and digital resources available, and ensuring free and equal access to knowledge.

In all our libraries you can borrow books outside of regular opening hours, for example if you don’t get off work until late. All you need to do is scan your library card at the entrance. When you get inside, you can borrow or return books in a self-service machine. You can also meet other people, arrange cultural activities, in or outside of regular opening hours.

All our libraries are constantly developing new activities to keep up with the times. We might - for example - offer a joint dinner between the bookshelves or make an exhibition about sustainable life together with local grassroots.

Danish libraries play an important and unique role for local communities and cultural activities, also in promoting awareness about climate change and a sustainable future.  Libraries have been around for centuries, and so has their model for loaning and sharing access to resources. This approach is perhaps one of the earliest recorded means for reducing and reusing materials. Instead of people buying individual copies of a book or magazine, libraries offer a sustainable alternative where communities can share access to the same resources.

## 6. CASE STUDY

In Middelfart Municipality we have a strong collaboration between the municipality, the city’s cultural players, the business sector, from established culture to the grassroots. In the below some examples of how we, as a municipality, work with cultural activities and sustainable communities.

### Local sustainable communities

In Middelfart Municipality we have a special focus on sustainable local communities. An effort adopted by the City Council in 2018. The project started up in 2019, where 12 local committees in Middelfart Municipality was settle. A local committee covers a specific geographical area in Middelfart Municipality. Local committees were set up on the recommendation of the local area and on the basis of general conditions set up by the City Council. The aim of the local sustainable communities is to create an active development agenda for all local communities, to strengthen local communities, to develop all local communities into even better places to live and work, and to develop experiments that help bring the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals to be accomplished.

Based on the local forces and potentials, the local communities find common goals and initiatives that strengthen the local communities and that have a focus on social, cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability. It all comes together in a local development plan (LUPs), which sets the direction for the development of the local community. Central to the effort is co-creation and local democracy, where citizens and the City Council work together to have development plans drawn up.

The City Council invites the local committees min. once a year for a dialogue meeting. The dialogue meeting covers both the local communities' plans and efforts as well as Middelfart Municipality's plans and specific wishes for cooperation with the local committees. The local communities receive 8.000 DKK pr. year to support the committees work, meetings, and initiatives.

Below some examples of sustainable and community-building initiatives:

* **Fælleden i Føns'**: The old schoolyard in Føns is transformed into an attractive cultural gathering place for people of all ages. Here, the local community can meet across ages, where there is room for play, physical exercise, cultural events, and social gatherings.
* **Outdoor facilities at Varbjerg Strand (Brenderup):** A working group is working on establishing a year-round bathing bridge and house as well as a sauna facility for winter bathing.
* **Welcome to new citizens in Fjelsted-Harndrup**: A working group prepares a welcome flyers and organizes welcome events for newcomers.

### Crazy Nice Sunday

’Sindssyg God Søndag’ – Crazy Nice Sunday – is one of the events taking part of the Triangle Festival Week in late august. It’s a one-day-festival that takes place in Middelfart, in ”Teglgårds-parken” at the old Mental Hospital (in the backyard of MIND Museum). The festival was established in 2016 and has focus on mental illness and mental health. The main goal is to gather people and to de-taboo mental illness. The organizers behind ”Crazy Nice Sunday” is MIND Museum, the Library (Middelfart Kultur & Bibliotek) and the Mental Health Services in the Region of Southern Denmark.

Crazy Nice Sunday is a day full of cultural activities: concerts, walks, readings, debates, art exhibitions, street theatre, workshops etc. Everyone can participate: Children, young people, adults, patient groups, relative etc. Many voluntary organizations also take active part in this festival. The festival is financed with funds from the Mental Health Services in the Region of Southern Denmark and cultural funds from the Triangle Area.

### Trækbanen (towpath)

Middelfart Municipality seeks to support all kinds of local initiative. Last year, in 2022, a local couple got the idea to transform an urban space, an old towpath, into cultural and sustainable space for all citizens passing by. With help from local sponsors and local committees fruit trees and wildflowers were planted, mural artworks were established, and now the work and development of this urban space continues with more art and more citizens’ involvement.

## 7. Involvement in the Micropolis project

Cultural life and sustainable communities are in constant movement by experimenting with new forms and ways, and Middelfart municipality wants to be a part of making innovative ways. We like to be inspired by other people’s great ideas, whilst sharing our own knowledge. This is one of the reasons why a global outlook and partnerships with other cities is important.

From KulturØen, the culture team participates, which works with a number of different cultural activities and events throughout the municipality. The team organizes, among other things, the Triangle Festival Week, the cultural program for the People’s Climate Festival, activities at the libraries, etc. At the town hall is the department for culture and sports, which works with events, leisure activities, NGOs, associations, and the development of the local communities throughout the municipality.

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