


# Outlook

Molewood Residents' Association

Autumn Edition 2023

**Please see our website for up-to-date information http://www.molewood.org.uk**

## Chairmans' Report

One of the key items that will be on a lot of our residents' minds as I write this is the news that Durkan have submitted a planning application for 118 homes on part of the Bengeo Field bordering The Stiles. On speaking to a number of residents it is clear that there are very mixed views about this development. We are all entitled to our views and there are ways to get involved if you feel particularly strongly about this proposal. What we must not lose sight of is that we are all neighbours and in the same way that we welcomed residents from Buckwells Fields and The Stiles in to the Molewood Residents family we will also do so for any residents that may end up residing in these proposed new homes.




On a lighter note and feeling slightly nervous mentioning the C word in September we will be holding our annual Christmas lights competition again this year. One of my favourite tasks is walking the streets of Bengeo in mid-December to pick the best overall and children's favourite lighting displays. The prize is your name in this newsletter and a £25 donation to a charity of your choice.

If there are items you would like highlighted either in this newsletter or by the committee then do please get in contact.

Emily White, Chairman

## AGM and Social Evening

Thanks to all those that were able to attend our AGM in May. This was our first in-person AGM since 2019. It was a lovely evening and a great opportunity for us to meet with more residents. A number of issues were raised and discussed and it was an opportunity to meet with our local councillors, Ben Crystall, Alex Daar, Vicky Smith, Ann Woodward and Paul Williams.

## Membership Payments

Membership payments are now due. It is a £3 annual fee and all the funds collected go towards the work of the MRA in supporting local projects. To pay, you can do one of the following:

- Scan the QR code and follow the on-screen instructions
- Transfer to our bank account - account no 18411010, sort code 60-10-39 with your house number and road as reference
- Pay cash direct to Alan Sewell, the Treasurer or to the person who delivers your Outlook.

We are very grateful for your support.

# Report from our local councillor, Ben Crystall



I hope you have all had a pleasant summer!

I'm sure you know that there have been major changes to the local political landscape in the last few months and you have 3 new District Councillors; myself, Vicky Smith and Alex Daar. We are also your town councillors, as is also Paul Williams. Meanwhile Vicky is Hertford's Mayor with Alex as Deputy while I lead East Hertfordshire District Council, so many apologies if we are slower than normal in responding to emails – these new responsibilities have taken time away from our ward work but we will continue to do our best for you all. Finally I'm sure we all want to thank Peter Ruffles and Sally Newton for their hard work on behalf of the community over the years.

Updates from Hertfordshire County Council: It's good to see the zebra crossing on Sacombe Road finally in place, road surface repairs to The Avenue completed and in the coming year a section of the pavement along Cowper Crescent is due for repair. I know we have all felt impatient with the speed of road repairs. The sorry truth is that HCC Highways is struggling in the face of serious financial challenges and labour shortages (at both HCC and its contractors), made far worse by the extreme winter weather creating vastly more potholes and road damage than usual. I will continue to push for updates and local improvements. And the Sacombe Road/Bengeo Street mini-roundabout still appears on the repair list for this financial year, now probably during 2024.

Traffic: in 2020 I requested that Highways help tackle pavement parking and vehicle speeds on Bengeo Street, and although there are proposed designs using a combination of double yellow lines and dedicated on-street parking areas, I'm still waiting for final sign-off and for the promised consultation to start. I'm also waiting for news on an advisory 'Schools 20MPH Zone' on Sacombe Road and Bengeo Street alongside Bengeo School. I have also asked the Highways design team to propose improvements to Byde Street and Wellington Street to make it safer for pedestrians walking to and from the station and Mill Mead school. Residents in nearby streets will be consulted over any proposed changes.

East Herts Council: House builder Durkan has submitted its planning application for the development at HERT4 (for 118 homes) and it is on the East Herts Council planning portal for public comment. It is important that residents who aren't in favour understand the key objections that are valid in planning terms. Alex, Vicky and I, plus the MRA and BNAP teams, can help residents submit comments, and when the time comes, help put your views and arguments to the planning committee.

Following rumours of a solar farm last year, we have now been informed that GSK is working with a local land owner to submit an application for a solar farm on fields on the Ware side of Wadesmill Road. The overall aim is laudable: to supply renewable energy directly to the GSK site and to use the land below and around the panels to improve biodiversity far beyond what is present currently on this grazing land. GSK suggests it will also bring a new community benefit fund to help local causes if successful. However, the solar panels could end up being visible from the footpath on the Bengeo side of St John's Wood, at the far end of Bengeo Field and I'm sure that concerns us all. GSK is planning a public consultation event in Bengeo, probably at the community hall on Boundary Drive.

I always appreciate a chance to hear your opinions and discuss local issues: please call **0300 123 7551** or email me on **ben.crystall@hertfordshire.gov.uk**.

# Save Bengeo Field Update

The expected planning application for additional 118 homes on Bengeo Field, along Sacombe Road from the Orchard and down the Wadesmill Road, has now been submitted and The Save Bengeo Field Campaign gave us this update:

If you are reading this before 5th October you still have time to lodge your objection via the EHDC planning portal, email (planning@eastherts.gov.uk) or by letter (Development Management, East Herts Council, Wallfields, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8EQ). All the details can be found on savebengeofield.org.uk or on our Facebook page Love/Save Bengeo Field. Durkan's housing development application can be found on EHDC portal: **https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/, reference number 3/23/1642/FUL.**



*Picture courtesy of Barry Goodey*

There is also another planning application submitted by Durkan for an access road to be used to access the site to build the

houses, reference number 3/23/1643/FUL. The beautiful rolling landscape that the community enjoys is under threat and we need to act to save it. Every individual response counts, so please encourage your family, friends and neighbours to lodge their objections as well.

If you are reading this after 5th October then we will be waiting for the outcome of this application and the Save Bengeo Field team will keep the community up to date with the progress. You can also sign our e-petition to EHDC **https://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?id=53**

## Public Consultation for GSK Solar Farm

The Farm Energy Company, working in partnership with GSK, is preparing a planning application for the construction and operation of a solar power scheme to provide green, renewable power directly to the GSK Ware facility. Around one-third of GSK Ware's electricity usage would be supplied by the proposed solar farm scheme.

An online exhibition about the proposal will be available until 1st October at **https://farmenergyware.consultationonline.co.uk/**. In addition, a public consultation event will be held on Tuesday 19 September 3:00pm – 7:30pm at the Bengeo Cricket Club for anyone to attend.

A Community Benefit Fund would be set up as part of the project, providing £15,000 per annum for local projects (equating to £600,000 over the lifetime of the solar farm). The company is looking for views on how this could be spent in the local community.

Comments can be made direct to the company at their consultation event, via their online exhibition, or email to **feedback@consultation-online.co.uk**.

## Town Centre Redevelopment



The various developments in the town centre are now well underway and expected timescales are as follows:

• Hertford Theatre should be finished in Spring 2024 (with the cinema opening first and live performances and studio spaces opening in the Summer)

• Hartham Leisure Centre held it's Open Day on Saturday 9th September. The two-storey extension features a new gym, two new studios, soft play area and café.

• Lea Wharf (formerly Bircherley Green) – the car park is due to reopen in January and there will be 120 spaces available for the public. A number of businesses have been confirmed to be moving into the development – confirmed are Boots, Wallace House Surgery, Loco Gym, Card Factory, Lounge (a restaurant) and Vault (a wine bar and restaurant). The development is expected to be fully completed in 2024.

## Keeping Bengeo Beautiful



Residents expressed concern at the AGM about the usability of some of our pavements. Problems are parked cars, overgrown hedges, gravel from driveways and, at certain times of year, leaves and fruit from trees planted next to them. Obstructing the pavements is particularly problematic for wheelchair and scooter users, visually impaired people, and other vulnerable road users because it forces them into the road and potentially into the path of oncoming traffic. We can all do our bit to make our streets a bit clearer and safer by parking considerately (if possible avoiding pavement parking or at least leaving enough room for a wheelchair to pass), making sure our hedges are not overhanging the pavement and sweeping outside our houses when necessary. Any pavement defects, e.g. loose paving slabs, can be reported to the council to be repaired.

## Bulb Planting Day



We are holding a community bulb planting day on 7th October at 10am where we will be planting some daffodils and other spring bulbs on the communal ground opposite the shops on The Avenue. Please join us there (bring any tools you have or spare bulbs) and help us to bring some spring colour to Bengeo.

## Local Events

**Bengeo Coffee Pot:** Pop-up café in Duncombe Road Church Hall to raise funds for local charities. Thursdays, 10.30am-12pm

**Bengeo Health Walk:** (Grade 3 walk) meeting at the shops on The Avenue, Bengeo on Tuesday mornings at 10am and on Wednesday evenings at 7pm in May – a 1 to 1.5 hour walk. Free

**Bereavement Café:** Drop-in session to meet and chat with others who have been through a bereavement. 1st Wednesday and 3rd Thursday of the month at the Secret Garden Café, Bengeo. Weds – 2.30-4.00pm, Thurs – 6.30-8.30pm.

**Bengeo Parish Church Hall, Duncombe Rd:**
Mondays: Keep Fit, Church lunches twice monthly, Brownies
Tuesday: Hertford Adult Learning Group, U3a Tai Chi, U3a Simply Fit, Bounce
Wednesday: Craft Club monthly, U3a Ukulele Band, WI monthly, Move it, Tiger Cheer
Thursday: Bengeo Coffee Pot, U3a Pilates, Evening Pilates
Friday: Morning Pilates
Saturday: Dance school, Children's parties / Family Celebrations
Sunday: Bounce, Children's parties / Family Celebrations
If you would like to book the hall please ring Wendy on **01992 580538**

# Local businesses

**Wednesday Market:** New bakery stall outside the White Lion pub, Wednesdays 9am – 11am.

**Good News:** 6.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, 7.00am – 5.00pm Saturday and 8.00am – 12.00pm Sunday.

**The Secret Garden Café:** Open 8:00am- 2pm, Tuesday to Saturday.

**Headlines:** is open from 7am on Tuesdays – Fridays. Check their website for more details **https://headlineshertford.co.uk/**.

**Walton Lodge Vets:** is open 9am- 5pm Mondays to Fridays.

**The Avenue Pharmacy:** is open 9am - 6pm every weekday and 9am - 1pm on Saturday.




# MRA Committee meeting

Our next two committee meetings are on 12th October and 7th December at 138 Cowper Crescent.

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Hartham Lane, Hertfordshire, SG14 1QN

# Your Association

The Molewood Residents' Association was formed in the late 1960s and represents residents of the Molewood estate, Bengeo. This is the area north from The Drive and west of Bengeo Street and Sacombe Road.

**We need an injection - of new members - to keep the residents of Bengeo informed of local news/concerns! Are you Interested in local affairs and want to find out more about what is happening in Bengeo?**

**Can you spare a few hours every 6-8 weeks to attend a meeting with like-minded residents? We have just the opportunities for you, enquiries@molewood.org.uk.**

The aim of the association is to support Molewood residents and enhance their enjoyment of the Molewood neighbourhood. The association contributes to community events arranged by residents and to community projects. The Association issues 2 or 3 Outlook newsletters annually.

Copies of old newsletters are on our website. If you have any old copies, documents or photos of the estate, we'd love you to share them.

Annual membership of Molewood Residents' Association costs £3 per household a year.

## How to pay for your subscription

**Account name:** Molewood Residents Donations Account
**Sort Code:** 60-10-39 **Account no:** 18411010
**Reference:** your name and house number

## Committee details

**Chair:** Emily White, 27 The Drive
**Treasurer:** Alan Sewell, 16 The Avenue
**Secretary:** Kath Richardson, 138 Cowper Crescent
**Editor:** Rebecca Novavi, 1 Butterfield Drive

## General Members

Nick Gough, 11 Lys Hill Gardens
Marie Archer, 55 The Wick
John Edwards, 8 The Wick
Rachel Ogier, 23 Trinity Grove
Aska Pickering, 168 Sacombe Rd
Jess Chan, 124 Cowper Crescent
Mark Harley, 76 Buckwells Field
Chris Simmons, 6 The Wick
Linda Pryor, Lys Hill Gardens
Catie Geering, 46 Buckwells Field

## Website Manager:
Paul Ogier

## Outlook Graphics:
Jim Martin

**If you want to support MRA complete the slip and put it through the letter box of our treasurer, Alan Sewell, 16 The Avenue.**

*Please tick appropriate boxes below*

☐ I/we want to support the Molewood Residents' Association for 2023.
☐ I/we have paid our subscription by online banking *(details highlighted above)* or
☐ I enclose my £3 per household payment for this year's subscription.

My/our name is.....

and I/we live at.....

I/ we would be happy to be contacted by email about local issues by the residents' association so here is my email address

.....