MOLEWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

OUTLOOK

Autumn 2024

Please see our website
www.molewood.org.uk
for up-to-date information



Photo courtesy of Barry Goodey DroneShots

Chair's message from Emily White



It has certainly been an interesting few months! England kept us guessing during the Euros and the Great Britain Olympics team thrilled us with medals across rowing, equestrian events, mountain biking and swimming to name just a few. The General Election, although anticipated, has resulted in a new Government who have not wasted time in reviewing the outgoing Conservatives decisions and thoughts turn to how this may impact us as residents.

East Herts District elections in May 2024 resulted in the Green Party achieving a majority of seats but we also have County elections in May 2025 and it will be interesting to see if the recent results in the General Election ripple through.

Labour have already made announcements about reform to the planning system, the reintroduction of housing quotas and with an East Herts District Local Plan review underway we will be watching to see if there are any implications for Bengeo. Will a decision finally be made on the Durkan application for an additional 100+ new homes? (This is to be discussed at the East Hertfordshire District Council Development Committee Meeting on 18 September at 7pm.) We hope so as residents would appreciate an end to the uncertainty.

Our residents' evening and AGM was more strongly supported than ever and a huge thank you to residents, Councillors and the Police for attending and contributing to some interesting debate on key concerns. We will be publishing the date for next year's meeting in the Spring edition of Outlook.

Due to resourcing, we now produce two of these newsletters a year but have expanded the content of the copies we do issue. It does however mean that I have to mention the 'C' word! Our Christmas light competition will be running again. There is a £25 donation to a charity of your choice for the winning 'best lit' house and you get the glory of having your name in this publication. There have been some amazing winners and Bengeo looks beautiful of an evening in the weeks before Christmas.

I wish you all a happy and healthy end to 2024 and please do get in contact if you would like us to consider supporting events, specific concerns or if you are interested in joining us.

Our committee details are at the end of the newsletter, or you can email us on **enquiries@molewood.org.uk**.
Emily White, Chairman

Membership Payments

If you have not made your membership payment for 2024, then these 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 using the slip on the last page

We are very grateful for your support.

Report from our local councillor, Ben Crystall



Hello! I hope you have had an enjoyable summer. Here are some updates on local issues that may be of interest:

Bengeo Street

As you may know, I asked Highways to develop a proposal to help tackle pavement parking and speeding along the northern half of Bengeo Street (described in more detail further down this newsletter). This project has moved slowly but a consultation was finally held early in the summer and the results indicate a clear majority in favour, so Highways will progress this to the next stage. There could still be some adjustments to the final scheme but I'm hoping that it will be installed by the end of this financial year.

Rickneys Quarry

The quarry's owner is likely to submit a planning application to start working on the eastern extension of the site and has put in a 'scoping request' to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to establish the likely impact on the environment. You can find details on HCC's planning portal website by searching for application number PL/0401/24. At the time of writing this, the planning application itself has not yet been submitted.

Local Nature Recovery Partnership (LNRP)

The County Council is leading on a project called the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which aims to map areas of habitat across Hertfordshire, select local biodiversity priorities and to identify practical actions to enhance, recover or create new areas for wildlife. A survey has been set up in order to help understand what aspects of nature matter most to you: **https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/HNRPpublic2024/**.

The aim is to have the strategy finished by March next year when there should be opportunities to bid for grants to help boost wildlife around the county.

Help our bees and butterflies!



Around two thirds of these lovely insects have disappeared. If you would like to set aside a small area of your lawn next summer to encourage wildflowers and the insects that feed on them, now's the time to sow seed of two plants: Yellow Rattle and Birds Foot Trefoil. Yellow Rattle helps suppress grass growth to let bee-friendly flowers like Birds Foot Trefoil emerge. Once you have these two growing (next year) you can sow more wildflower seeds to bring a flash of colour to your garden AND help feed our valuable bees and butterflies.

I have small sachets of seeds from Yellow Rattle and Birds Foot Trefoil gathered from my own lawn which I'm pleased to share. Email me and I can drop a sachet through your door.

Town Council News

I want to thank Bengeo's own Councillor Vicky Smith for her hugely successful year as Hertford's Mayor, and welcome Councillor Rachel Carter from Castle Ward as our new Mayor. Two town councillors have however resigned: Councillor Josh Dean, due to his election to the House of Commons, and Bengeo North town Councillor Paul Williams who has resigned for personal reasons. This means there will be an election in Bengeo on 19 September for Paul's replacement. I want to thank Paul for all his hard work.

On a final note, a reminder that I have a County Council locality budget and if you have ideas for new projects that can improve our area, or need ongoing support, please get in touch by emailing me at **ben.crystall@hertfordshire.gov.uk**.

Best wishes,
Ben

Message From Our Local Police Officer, James Parker



Hello Residents of Bengeo,

I hope everyone is well and has enjoyed the brief summer that we have had.

Unfortunately, I haven't been on the Bengeo ward as much as I would have liked in recent months. This is due to several events such as policing the Euros, helping the force with the very sickening events in Bushey and then being part of the national response to the scenes of violent disorder which luckily never occurred within Hertfordshire.

The positive bit of news I can give is that the prolific offender Michael Cakebread, responsible for the majority of theft from motor vehicles and multiple shop liftings in the Hertford area was arrested by myself and a colleague. He was sentenced at court for a period of 26 weeks and given an indefinite Criminal Behaviour Order. Sadly, he was released after 3 weeks and has since breached his order multiple times, which has been very frustrating for all the local officers. With this in mind, please remember to lock all your cars and take anything of value out of them (I gave some tips in the Outlook Spring newsletter).

Now that the national events have calmed down, I am hoping to spend more time on the beat in Bengeo. If you do see me out and about on the ward please do stop and say hello, but if I'm driving past on blue lights, I might be a little busy!

For now, please do take care of yourselves, enjoy what summer we have left, and if you ever need the Police you can contact us online, telephone 101 or 999 if it is an emergency.

Warm wishes,
PC James Parker

Josh Dean elected as our MP



Following the General Election on 4 July, Labour candidate Josh Dean was elected as MP for Hertford and Stortford. The night saw a large swing away from the Conservatives by many disaffected voters, with constituencies traditionally Conservative switching to another party.

Josh Dean won with a majority of over 4,000 votes, and it is only the second time since 1921 when a party other than the Conservative Party has won a General Election in Hertford.

The previous incumbent, Julie Marson, had not won the support from her constituency association's executive committee to stand at the election as the party's candidate, leading Julie to request a vote from all members to stand at the election, which she won.

At 24 years old, Josh Dean is one of the youngest MPs in parliament. He grew up around the area and went to school at Richard Hale. Of his win, Josh said: 'It's the honour of my life to be selected as Labour's candidate in the community where I grew up and where I call home'.

Save Bengeo Field Campaign Update



Photo courtesy of Rod Lewis

Local residents, walkers, runners, and nature lovers from outside Bengeo value the amenity offered by Bengeo Field and love the views from the path beside the Lonely Oak.

Durkan's application to encroach on this space to build an additional 118 dwellings is expected to be discussed at the East Hertfordshire District Council Development Committee Meeting on 18 September at 7pm.

The 'Love/Save Bengeo Field' group support building more affordable housing but not on a much-loved area of natural beauty that should be returned to Green Belt status.

We need more houses, but we need green spaces too.



Photo courtesy of Barry Goodey DroneShots

Consultation on Bengeo Street Parking Restrictions

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) opened a consultation on the proposed changes to Bengeo Street which any resident had until 4 July to comment on. Their aim is to introduce no-parking restrictions as well as parking bays on Bengeo Street between the junction with The Avenue and Gosselin Road, which the council say would:

'Remove inappropriate parking and improve sight lines therefore improving the flow of vehicles and safety for pedestrians and vehicles using this area'.

This stretch of Bengeo Street is typically used as on-street parking and is single lane traffic in many places, with the proposals formalising which areas can be parked on, providing areas for passing. In addition, there is quite a lot of parking on the pavement.

The plan can be found here: **https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/transport-and-highways/public-engagement-proposed-parking-restrictions-and-parking-bays-bengeo-street-bengeo.aspx**.

This public consultation exercise is the first part of a two-stage process. The comments received from residents will help finalise their proposals prior to a formal consultation and may help HCC decide whether they take the scheme any further.

Residents' Social Evening

On Thursday 23 May, local residents gathered at Bengeo Primary School to discuss neighbourhood issues with the MRA committee, local Councillors Ben Crystall, Vicky Smith, and PC Parker.

Pizza and prosecco were closely followed by some really informative talks and discussions - many thanks to everyone who contributed towards a thoroughly enjoyable evening.

No changes were made to the MRA committee seats, with Emily White, Kath Richardson and Alan Sewell remaining as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Many thanks to them and the MRA general members for all their hard work and continued dedication to our neighbourhood.



Wild Lawns on the Avenue and Cowper Crescent

The front and back lawns of 61 The Avenue and 109 Cowper Crescent have been embracing their wild side! Residents were pleasantly surprised when their gardener couldn't come...and their gardens were given the opportunity to showcase various different plants and grasses. These included the Colonial Bent, Autumn Hawkbit, Fox and Cubs, Common Selfheal, Yarrow, Birdsfoot Trefoil, White Clover, Yarrow and Perennial Cornflower grass!



Photo courtesy of Sally Paque

Help steer our cycling and walking infrastructure

The Government is looking to increase the number of journeys taken by foot or bike, by encouraging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). By increasing the number of journeys taken without a car, it is hoped there will be an improvement in carbon emissions and general health, as well as increased cycling safety. LCWIPs are being developed to allow local authorities over a 10-year period to:

- Maintain and improve existing local cycling and walking networks
- Develop new networks to encourage an increase in cycling and walking
- Provide better integrated routes for those with disabilities and health conditions
- Provide better links to schools and work
- Develop a wider green network of paths, routes and open spaces
- Use the data collected to inform development plans such as the District Plan

As part of the initiative, local residents have been asked to sign up to the East Herts LCWIP so that they can inform the local authority about existing travel patterns, as well as the current barriers stopping residents from leaving the car at home. Details on the LCWIP and how to sign up, can be found at **https://east-herts-lcwip-hertscc.hub.arcgis.com**. You have up until 20 September to have your say about the routes.

Meet your Neighbour – Clare (Task Woman Hertford)

Clare has been a local Bengeo resident for six years and is mother to two young children aged 6 and 3. She is also the 'Woman' behind 'Task Woman Hertford'.

Hi Clare – tell us more about your little business
'Task Woman Hertford' is all about being those extra pair of hands for those of us that do not have the time to get to the bottom of those to-do lists!

Previous jobs have included de-cluttering, wall papering, organising and re-styling rooms and light gardening. There really is no limit to the work I offer – it's basically anything you can do, but just don't have the time to do it!

What a great idea! How did this idea come about?
I was thinking about what work I enjoy and could do in my local area, which would also allow me to be there for my children. I am very hands-on and creative when it comes to doing things around the house and garden – and thought I could use those skills to help those that don't have the time to do things themselves!

There are things in my house which I haven't gotten around to doing – and think that is probably the case for a lot of people! I have been working for around 5 months – and no two jobs are ever the same!



I hear you've not long finished an interesting job...
Yes, I recently decluttered someone's shoe collection from 93 pairs down to 40! There were shoes squirrelled away all over the house, and even in the shed. We laid them all out and worked together to whittle it down to a more manageable, healthy collection.

How do people get in touch with you?
I am on social media (Facebook and Instagram) as 'Task Woman Hertford'. You can also contact me on 07540715598.



Photo courtesy of OnPoint Fitness

Bengeo Day at Bengeo Primary School

Bengeo Primary school held their annual parents' association (BPA) fundraising event on Sunday 7 July. It was a day of fun for all ages which included fantastic school performances, some wonderful local businesses, face painting and festival hair, coconut throwing and even a 'bar hang' competition (hosted by OnPoint Fitness). All funds raised by the BPA goes towards the 'extras' that enhance the children's school experience such as new play equipment, books for the library, equipment for the forest school and picnic tables. The BPA are currently fundraising for a pond for the Enchanted Garden, and a potential running track. If you would like to make a donation, or you would like further information on the BPA, please email **officers@bengeopa.org** or go to their website **https://sites.google.com/bengeopa.org/bengeo-parents-association/home**.

I Love Hertford

I Love Hertford is a social enterprise which has steadily been gathering pace over the last few years. The brainchild of Dan (a local dad and Bengeo resident), I Love Hertford aims to champion Hertford and champion the community. According to Dan 'There is no such thing as a perfect town, but Hertford certainly comes close.'

I Love Hertford came about in response to a notable increase in negative social media posts about Hertford, after Waitrose left town and the eventual closing of Bircherley Green. Dan felt that even though times were tough, the town centre still had so much to offer.

'When the big chains of old deserted Hertford, a number of smaller independent quirky shops and eateries arrived, giving the town a chance to reinvent itself as it had done many times before'.

Dan figured that the solution was to counteract the negativity with positivity - and embarked on an incredible journey to lift spirits and champion the town. I Love Hertford has so far amassed more than 30,000 followers on social media and continues to grow as a positive force for Hertford!

'People want to see the positive in things. The thing about positivity is it spreads just as fast (if not faster) than doom and gloom'.

As well as numerous daily positive posts and beautiful photos on social media, I Love Hertford also delivers a number of projects each year for Hertford, which include:

- The I Love Hertford Community Awards
- Seasonal 'Shop Local Saturday' events
- Self-published free Christmas Books for school children
- Visits to town from Santa
- Film projects promoting Hertford, and lots more!

Visit I Love Hertford on social media platforms for more information on all the brilliant work it does, future plans and projects...it seems there is no stopping the I Love Hertford movement!

Bulb Planting

Keep Saturday 19 October free between 10am – 12pm! Hopefully this year we will have had some rain, and the ground will be soft enough for us to plant some bulbs on the green opposite the shops on The Avenue (unlike last year when the ground was too hard). If you can spare some time to come and help, even for half an hour that would be fantastic. Any donations of bulbs would be very much appreciated. Please bring along a trowel/bulb planter and let's make the green look lovely next Spring. I look forward to seeing you there – the more the merrier! Many thanks, Linda Pryor

St Leonard's Church

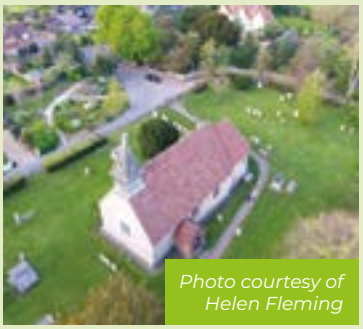


Photo courtesy of Helen Fleming

St Leonard's Church is the oldest building in Hertford and dates back to the late 11th/ early 12th century. It is one of the two churches (with Holy Trinity on Bengeo Street/ New Road) that belong to the parish of Bengeo. It is Grade 1 listed because of its special historical and architectural interest. It is described by Pevsner as 'a rare example of a virtually intact Norman village church'. Guidebooks are available for self-guided tours to 'wander and wonder, and personal or group guided tours can be booked on request via **secretaryfriendsofstleonards@gmail.com**.

Friends of St Leonards

The Friends of St Leonards have for the past forty years organised events at St Leonard's to promote interest in, and use of the church. We host concerts, special services and children's events. You can find out more about the Friends and the history of the church at Friends of St. Leonard's – St Leonards Church Bengeo Website (**parishofbengeo.com**).



Sunday Tea and Cake 2.30pm – 5pm

For several years the church has opened its doors on Sunday afternoons in the summer for homemade tea and cakes. This is thanks to some amazing volunteers who give their time and their baking skills. We are open on Sundays from July to September between 2.30 and 5pm and everyone is welcome to drop in - even if you don't fancy tea and cake, you can take a look at the building. We have colouring in and a treasure hunt if you want to bring the family.

Concerts

On Saturday 7 December we have a traditional winter wassail with Magpie Lane. Book early at **boxoffice@parishofbengeo.com** to avoid disappointment! We welcome everyone to St Leonard's and would be glad to expand membership of the Friends. Please drop in and see us.

Article courtesy of Helen Fleming

Bengeo Community Garden Project



The Bengeo Community Garden is a residents-led initiative to create and maintain the green space on the corner of Tower Street and Duncombe Road, in Bengeo, Hertford.

A water tower used to be situated on this site, which had become overgrown. A small group of local residents and Councillors worked together with East Herts District Council, Hertford Town Council, Mudlarks, and local residents on clearing the area and turning it into a community garden.
Cockleshell paths have been laid around garden - cockleshells are a by-product of the food industry, and are usually discarded once the cockle is shelled and prepared for consumption. Using cockleshells instead of alternatives such as gravel or pebbles is far more sustainable as gravel extraction requires quarries, and pebbles are removed from natural environments.

The formal opening of the garden took place on 14 July - where the organisers met with the wonderful Mudlarks, the local charity supporting adults with learning difficulties, who transformed the garden. Many thanks were given to all those who donated and supported the project so far.

New children's book written by local resident



Bryan Lovell, a local resident who was the geological expert behind the 'Stop Bengeo Quarry' campaign, has turned his hands to writing a children's book.

'Gorgeous Goldie Gryphaea: The tale of a Jurassic oyster' tells the story of a Jurassic fossil oyster from 184 million years ago to the present day, describing changes caused by the climate, and how that relates to the landscape we see around us today.

The book was published by Cove Design Studio and can be downloaded free via **http://covedesignstudio.co.uk/gorgeous-goldie-gryphaea-book-by-bryan-lovell/**, or alternatively a hard copy can be purchased from the Hertford Museum for £5, where all proceeds go to the museum.

Charity: Miss Understood



Miss Understood is a new charity currently being set up by local Hertford resident Sophie McInnes, whose autism had made her 'obsessed' with counting calories, even though she did not want to lose weight.

This ultimately resulted in Sophie developing anorexia - not because she had issues surrounding her body image or weight, but because she had developed a set of rules for herself about how many calories she could eat.

Sophie was diagnosed with autism several years after she admitted herself into an eating disorder unit. Had the link been spotted sooner, she said, it would have helped her recovery.

Sophie wants to help other girls and women with autism and ADHD - if you would like to get involved in the charity, or would like further information, please contact Sophie via email at **missunderstoodthecharity@gmail.com** or phone 07469237873.

Hertford Theatre Opening

The much-anticipated new Hertford creative arts and culture venue (BEAM) opened its doors on 23 August. BEAM promises to 'continue the legacy of bringing high quality entertainment and arts to the town. Offering first-release films, a new, flexible studio theatre, community facilities, including a Changing Place and a variety of public spaces to work, socialise or just relax in'. Go to **https://beamhertford.co.uk/** for more information on this fantastic new venue, including the full programme of theatre and films.

Health Information Event (BEAM)

On Saturday 12 October, the combined patient groups of our local surgeries are running a heath information event at BEAM. It will run from 10:30-12:30 and is titled 'Let's Breathe, exploring heart and lung health'. There will be opportunities to have your blood pressure and blood oxygen levels and pulse measured as well as relevant information stalls. Please look on our MRA website or your surgery websites nearer the time for more information.

LOCAL EVENTS

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

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

Local Health Walks
Please do come and join us on a free local health walk led by trained volunteer leaders. The timetable can be accessed here via the Hertfordshire Health Walks website:
https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/doc/env/hhw/2024-03/east-herts-health-walks-timetable-sept-dec-2024.pdf

Bengeo Parish Church Hall, Duncombe Road:

Mondays: Keep Fit, Church lunches twice monthly, Brownies

Tuesday: Hertford Adult Learning Group, U3A Tai Chi, U3a Simply Fit, Tap Dancing

Wednesday: Craft Club monthly, U3A Ukulele Band, WI monthly, Move it, Tiger Cheer, Keep Fit

Thursday: Bengeo Coffee Pot, U3A Pilates, Children's Chess Club, Evening Pilates

Friday: Pilates, Keep Fit

Saturday: Dance school, Children's parties / Family Celebrations

Sunday: Children's parties / Family Celebrations

If you would like to book the hall, please ring Wendy on 01992 589538

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Good News: 6.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday, 7.30am – 4.30pm Saturday and 8.00am – 12.00pm Sunday

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

'A Little Bit of Cheese' Pop-up Thursday 2-5pm NEW

Headlines: Is open from 8am 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

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. The aim of the association is to support Molewood residents and contribute to community events and projects.

The association issues two Outlook newsletters annually which are delivered and saved down onto our website and the annual membership of Molewood Residents' Association costs £3 per household a year.

The Committee always welcomes new members! If you interested in getting involved, please get in touch by emailing us at **enquiries@molewood.org.uk**.

Committee details

Chair: Emily White ..... 27 The Drive
Treasurer: Alan Sewell ..... 16 The Avenue
Secretary: Kath Richardson ..... 138 Cowper Crescent
Editor: Jess Chan ..... 124 Cowper Crescent

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
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 Design

Jim Martin

MRA Committee meeting

Our next two committee meetings are on Wednesday 23 October and Thursday 9 January at 138 Cowper Crescent.

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Hartham Lane, Hertfordshire, SG14 1QN

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 2024.
☐ I/we have paid our subscription by electronic 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: .....