MOLEWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

OUTLOOK

Spring 2025

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



Photo courtesy of Nick Gough

Chair's message from Emily White



Welcome to the first Outlook of 2025.

In this edition, we reflect on the previous year by reviewing the results of the Christmas Lights competition – as always, we had many strong contenders. We also look ahead to our upcoming residents' evening, which will include our AGM on Thursday, 15 May. This event was very well attended last year, and it's always a pleasure to see residents reconnecting or meeting for the first time over pizza and Prosecco.

Since our last edition, East Herts District Council granted planning permission for the Durkan housing scheme on land to the north of the old nursery site. While this decision may be unwelcome for some residents, it brings much-needed certainty to the future of the land. We will now await updates on how and when the development will move forward.

The Love Bengeo Community Group has some exciting plans for the local area and its residents. As a residents' association, we are always keen to support initiatives that have a positive impact on the Molewood community. The MRA organised a working group to clear and clean the steps at the corner of The Avenue. The route is now safer and brighter for many. We are currently working with the County, District, and Town Councils to explore further improvements.

County Council elections are scheduled for 1 May, and this may be the last time they are held in their current format. The Government released a White Paper before Christmas outlining plans to combine Hertfordshire County and District councils into one or more Unitary Authorities. While there are no details yet on what this means for residents, we will be closely monitoring developments.

In 2025, we will also mark 80 years since the end of the Second World War, with Victory in Europe Day on 8 May and Victory over Japan Day on 15 August. If any residents are planning street parties to celebrate, please consider requesting a donation from us to help fund your event. In return, we'd love to receive some photos to feature in this newsletter.

Wishing you all a very happy and healthy 2025. I look forward to meeting many of you on 15 May. If you'd like to get in touch, our committee details are at the end of the newsletter, or you can email us at **enquiries@molewood.org.uk**.

Emily White, Chairman

Membership Payments

If you would like to support us, the membership payment for 2025 is 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:

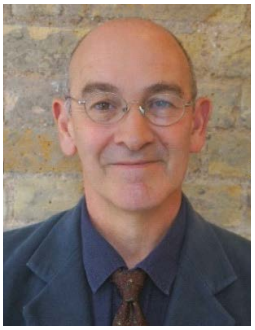
- Scan the QR code and follow the on-screen instructions
- Transfer to our bank account - account no 18411010, sort code 60-10-39 with your house number and road as reference
- Pay cash direct to Alan Sewell, the Treasurer or to the person who delivers your Outlook using the slip on the last page

We are very grateful for your support.

Residents' Social Evening

Please join us for a social evening to incorporate our AGM on Thursday 15 May at 7pm at Bengeo Primary School. There will be pizza and prosecco and you can meet fellow residents, the Molewood Residents' Association committee and your local councillors to socialise and discuss neighbourhood issues.

Report from our local councillor, Ben Crystall



Hello! With winter fading, we're all looking forward to better weather and a break from the downpours (and potholes!). Here's an update on local issues:

Traffic and roads:
By the time you read this, changes to the road markings at the north end of Bengeo Street should be in place, aiming to prevent pavement-blocking and slow fast traffic. While they may not suit everyone, we need to give them time before judging their impact and ensure further adjustments are made if necessary.

I'm also pressing for a 20mph speed limit along Bengeo Street following two recent accidents involving children near Duncombe and Bengeo Schools. I'm awaiting a response from HCC Highways and am pushing for an expanded 20mph zone around Bengeo School, including Sacombe Road. Highways have consulted residents on proposals to make Byde, Wellington, and Nelson Streets safer for pedestrians. The improvements are limited by funding but include a raised area at the Byde Street junction for better visibility and pavement extensions at Nelson Street. If supported, these should be implemented by April 2026.

Following the (rather depressing) approval of the HERT4 development on Bengeo Field, we must ensure Durkan fulfils promises, including on-site parking for contractors and improvements to local bus services.

Community activities:
I really enjoyed joining last year's path clearing at the corner of Church Rd/The Avenue, organised by the Molewood Residents' Association (MRA). I've contributed £1,100 from my County locality budget to help install railings for added safety. We may need further funding for this project, so feel free to contact me or the MRA with ideas for other improvements.

Sacombe Road Play Park
After concerns over the County/District wildflower planting project in the Sacombe Road play area, I worked with officers to reduce the areas affected. We expect to see this change by summer, with flexibility for further adjustments if needed.



Helping nature in Bengeo
Two local students have been litter-picking as part of their Duke of Edinburgh projects—let's thank them for their hard work! One has created a helpful leaflet on how we can all support nature in Bengeo. Look out for it in your letterbox.

County Council Elections:
A reminder that County Council elections are on 1 May. Bengeo typically has one of the highest turnouts in the District, and I hope we continue that tradition! I will be standing again to represent Bengeo, but whichever candidate wins, I'm confident they will support the MRA.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with me by email or via social media.

Best wishes
Ben

New Hertford Town Councillor, Sue Barber



Sue Barber has recently and previously been an elected councillor working for Hertford (where she has raised her family and lived for over 40 years), as well as being Hertford Mayor.

Sue is a firm believer in community and has been involved in many community projects including clearing the footpaths, litter picking, working with the scouts to plant spring bulbs and most recently repairing the noticeboard on Church Road which advertises local community events.

Sue is a trustee of HDOS (a local drama company who regularly produce fantastic events) and Hertford Disability Support Group. She has also been a magistrate for nearly 20 years, yet most residents will probably recognise Sue from the Hertford market fruit and veg stall!

Sue shares her thoughts with us:

I am diligent and proud to take up residents' concerns that have been highlighted to me, especially pavement and drain issues as well as antisocial behaviour problems. I also know that many residents who struggle to walk or have prams, wheelchairs, or mobility devices find that pavement widths have been significantly reduced because of overgrown hedges or trees. These can be reported to the council at **www.eastherts.gov.uk/contactus**.

As a local resident I understand many of the local issues and as an experienced councillor, am aware of who best to contact in resolving these.

You can email me on **susan.barber@hertford.gov.uk** if you would like to get in touch or have ideas about working together on projects in the community (large or small).

Message From Our Local Police Officer, James Parker



Dear Bengeo Residents,

I hope this message finds you well and that your year has started off positively.

I wanted to inform you that I have been promoted to Sergeant and am now stationed at Cheshunt Police Station. As of 1 January, I am no longer serving as the Bengeo Ward Constable.

In the meantime, Hertford Neighbouring Policing Team (NPT) officers are covering the Bengeo Ward. Once a replacement has been appointed, I will update the Molewood Residents' Association.

Thank you all for your support during my time as your ward constable – it's been a pleasure. Who knows, I may return in the future!

As always, please take care, and if you ever need to contact the police, you can reach us online, call 101, or dial 999 in an emergency.

Best wishes,
Sergeant James Parker



Photo courtesy of Aska Wisniewska-Pickering

Save Bengeo Field Campaign Update

Following an application to East Herts District Council (EDHC) to register the Bengeo field footpath as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), the path has been awarded the requested status and will be registered as an ACV on EDHC's register for five years until 14 November 2029.

Love Bengeo Community Group

We're excited to announce that the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan Committee has evolved into the **Love Bengeo Community Group**, bringing together local volunteers and Bengeo residents' associations. Our focus is on two key areas:

1. **Reviewing and responding to key planning proposals** in Bengeo, in line with the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan (BNAP).

2. **Supporting local projects and initiatives** through smaller working groups of volunteers, including:

i) Bengeo Community Garden

While winter may have set in, the garden at the corner of Duncombe Road and Tower Street is preparing for spring. If you haven't seen it yet, take a moment to check out the Information Board. We'd love for you to get involved with the garden's upkeep!

ii) Bengeo Walking/Cycling Trail

On 16 January, a group of 14 residents came together to explore ideas for a Bengeo walking trail. We're considering:

- A historical walk through Bengeo
- A longer trail showcasing the area's views and countryside

The next step is compiling a list of sites worth visiting to create a potential route.

iii) Bengeo Mosaic

Due to the great response from residents, we're moving forward with the idea of a Bengeo mosaic sign. We're currently looking for ways to raise funds for materials. If you're interested or can help with funding ideas, get in touch!

iv) Bengeo Connect/Welcome

At our first meeting, we discussed ideas such as:

- Making new residents feel welcome
- Helping current residents connect with one another
- Improving communication about local events and activities

Early suggestions include an annual picnic at The Wick, craft evenings, a free produce/plant stall, and a local business directory.

If you'd like to contribute to any of these projects, or have other ideas, please email **info@lovebengeo.org.uk**.

We also support other resident initiatives like Support Beane Marsh, Bengeo Railway Land, Love/Save Bengeo Field, and Bengeo Little Library.

For more information, visit our Facebook page, website at **www.lovebengeo.org.uk**, or follow us on Twitter at **@LoveBengeo**.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement, Aska Wisniewska-Pickering







Meet your Neighbour – Sue (Travel Luxe)

Sue has been a Bengeo resident for 20 years and is the proud mother of two boys, aged 8 and 6. She's also the founder of Travel Luxe.

Hi Sue, tell us more about your business.
I've recently launched Travel Luxe, an independent travel service. I can book all types of holidays, days out (such as trips to London attractions), and theme parks. I can book all types of holidays...packages, cruises, Disney, Lapland, UK and overseas breaks, beach holidays, skiing, multi centre holidays, villas, safaris...you name it!

How did your business come about?
I've always been the go-to person for travel advice! I spent years researching the best deals for friends and family, and they'd book based on my recommendations. It felt like a natural next step to turn my passion into a business. I also wanted a flexible job that allowed me to be there for my children before and after school, and during holidays. Working from home is the perfect fit!

How much do you charge for your services?
I don't charge anything! In fact, I often save people money. For example, I recently saved a Bengeo family £800 on their holiday. I have access to discounted rates and earn commission, so it's a win-win for you. Not only will I save you money, but I can also offer extra perks like access to airport lounges and fast-track check-ins—great if you're travelling with kids.

What bookings are you currently taking, and any tips for 2025 holidays?



Thailand and Indonesia are popular right now. My top tip for 2025 is to book through me—you won't regret it!

How can people get in touch with you?
You can find me by searching for travel.luxe.for.less on:
Facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/share/1Erbk6QqGc/?mibextid=LQQJ4d**

Instagram: **https://www.instagram.com/travel.luxe.for.less?igsh=MnY2cGpzZ3UwMmYz&utm_source=qr**

Community Path Clearing – Church Road/ The Avenue

On 10 November, a dedicated working party of 15 volunteers (including children) spent nearly two hours clearing the footpath that links the corner of The Avenue/Church Road with Molewood Road. It was a fantastic community effort, benefiting commuters, dog walkers, and many other residents.



In addition to the clearing, we have requested Herts County Council (HCC) to trim a branch from the large oak tree and install a handrail from Molewood Road to the top of the steps. The locality grant of £1,100 from HCC (via Ben Crystall) has just been approved to help fund this work. Whilst we explore other ways to fundraise, please take extra care, as the steps can become slippery in cold or wet weather.



Help Support Penny Breytenbach Following Amputation



Many of you may know Penny, who recently worked at the newsagent on The Avenue. In December 2024, she underwent leg amputation surgery after a blood clot led to severe complications, including sepsis. Penny was diagnosed with Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) in May 2024, which caused the clot and is progressively worsening. Penny's daughter, Loki, is raising funds to cover daily living costs, hospital visit petrol, accessibility aids like a motorized wheelchair, and home adaptations. Loki explains, "My parents have always worked hard, but my mother's health issues have left them with a single income, causing financial strain. Any donations are greatly appreciated." You can donate at GoFundMe - **https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-support-pennys-peace-of-mind-after-amputation**

Thank you for your support, Loki



New Bengeo School Crossing Patrol

Local resident John is Bengeo Primary school's new school crossing patrol officer.

Hi John, welcome! How are you finding your new job?
John says: 'I am really happy to be here, helping families getting to school. My first week was very cold, but I hope by the time your newsletter comes out, I'll be standing here in shorts!

What brought you to being a 'lollipop' man?
I retired last July and wanted a job that I could easily fit in. It's so nice to get involved with such a vibrant local school community. It is also handily only a five-minute bike ride from my house!

Thanks, John, for making the school crossing safer!

St Leonard's Church

St Leonard's Church in Bengeo will be open as usual to visitors during the summer months.

Plans for a range of activities are still being finalised, however the "Little Trains for a Little Church" is already booked for Saturday 21 and Sunday 22 June.

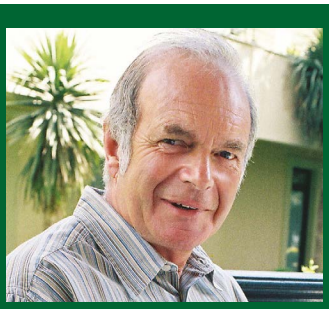
Local model rail enthusiasts will show a range of working model railways and vintage train collections. There will be a model for children to operate. Refreshments will be available, and entry is free – although donations to Friends of St Leonard's (FOSL) would be much appreciates.

Keep any eye out for other events such as concerts by checking their website on **https://stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/events-and-concerts-at-st-leonards/**, online updates, posters or follow them on Facebook by looking up 'Friends of St Leonard's Bengeo'.

If anyone is interested in getting to know more about St Leonards and would like to get involved with helping to keep the church open, please get in touch with Helen Fleming at **secretaryfriendsofstleonards@gmail.com**. They would love to hear from you!



Photo courtesy of Helen Fleming



Bryan Lovell

Dr. Bryan Lovell, a local resident and the geological expert behind the Stop Bengeo Quarry campaign, as well as the author of Gorgeous Goldie Gryphaea: The Tale of a Jurassic Oyster, died peacefully at home on 20 September, aged 82. He will be deeply missed, and our heartfelt condolences go out to his family. In his memory, donations can be made to the MS Society by going to **https://donate.mssociety.org.uk/**.

A Little Bit of Cheese

Hi Janette - how long have you been selling cheeses?
I started in June last year after training with Paxton and Whitfield. I always knew I wanted my own business, but it took a while to figure out what it would be!

What was your inspiration?
During the COVID lockdown I watched a Hairy Bikers programme, where they were travelling around the country visiting different counties. That for me was a light bulb moment – what I loved about it wasn't just the food, but also the sense of community amongst the artisan farmers.

As a vegetarian, I knew I couldn't go into the meat industry, but I've always loved cheese! The variety in the UK's artisan cheese market is incredible - once you've tasted a Farmhouse cheese, often made using traditional pre-war methods and recipes with milk sourced from original but now endangered breeds..... well there's no comparison at all!'

What else do you like about your job?
It's about supporting small-scale and independent cheesemakers/farmers and sharing their products with the public. I love visiting farms and hearing their stories—they truly care about their animals, produce, and the environment. I also enjoy seeing people light up when they discover a cheese they love. I encourage customers to taste the cheese before they buy, to ensure it's right for them!

Finally, what's your favourite cheese and why?
That's tough, but Pevensey Blue is stunning—it's organic and made from cows that graze on a nature reserve. Baron Bigod, which has been named the



UK's best cheese for three years, is another favourite. I recently discovered a sheep's cheese, Flower Marie, which has a delicate, fruity sweetness.

Well now you have us all salivating – thanks Janette, and good luck with your business!

You can find Janette in the Secret Garden café on Thursday afternoons 2-5pm, and the monthly Hertford Farmer's market every second Saturday of the month 8.30-1pm. Janette also sells online through her website, with a choice of pickup or delivery to Hertford addresses.

Janette's contact details are:
Website: https://www.alittlebitofcheese.co.uk/
07533 970483
cheesy.business1@gmail.com

Christmas Lights Competition - Winners

A big congratulations to our Christmas lights winners! These are:

John Debnam
35 The Avenue

John and Liz Fisher
39 The Drive.

A donation will be made to a charity of their choice.





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, Keep Fit

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

Friday: Pilates, Chair Pilates

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

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 to represent residents of the then new Molewood estate, Bengeo. This has now expanded to cover residents in the area north from The Drive (including all of The Avenue), west of Bengeo Street and Sacombe Road as far north as Woodland Grove. We also now cover the new developments of Buckwells and The Stiles. 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 Thursday 1 May at 138 Cowper Crescent, and Thursday 15 May at Bengeo Primary school (AGM).

Your Outlook is printed by:
Mobile Stationery & printing center limited
Unit 10 Hartham View Industrial Estate
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 2025.
☐ 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: .....