MOLEWOOD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

OUTLOOK

Autumn 2025

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

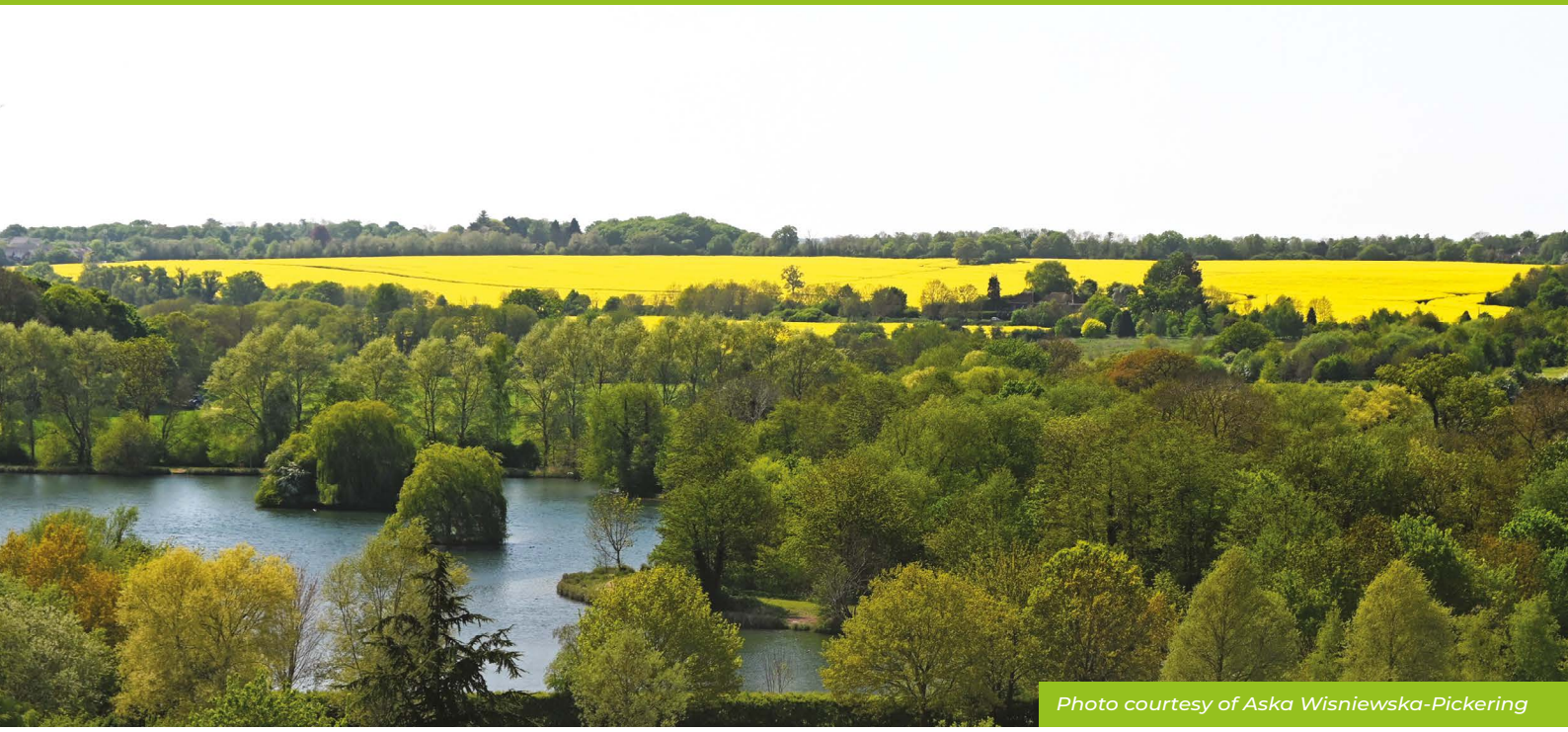


Photo courtesy of Aska Wisniewska-Pickering

New Bin Collection Service Now Underway

As part of efforts to meet government recycling targets, a new bin collection system was introduced in August. We now have an expanded collection of bins with blue, purple, brown, black, and green lids!

For full details on what goes in each bin, your collection days, and other FAQs, visit the East Herts website: **https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/bins-waste-and-recycling/bin-collection-changes**.



Judicial Review Sought to Protect Bengeo Field

After East Herts District Council approved plans for 118 homes on Bengeo Field, the Save Bengeo Field Group applied for a judicial review - this is a legal challenge on the planning decision process. The Planning Court is now considering whether the case will proceed.

To lead the effort, Save Bengeo Field Ltd has been established as a charitable company, soon opening membership to supporters. While developer Durkan may begin archaeological work, no construction can start until the review is resolved.

Stay updated via the Love/Save Bengeo Field Facebook page or visit **www.SaveBengeoField.org.uk**.

Membership Payments

If you would like to support us, please consider becoming a member. 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.

Fun & Fundraising at Bengeo Primary School

The Bengeo Parent's Association (BPA) has been hard at work fundraising, hosting two fantastic events that brought joy to children and adults alike!

Colour Run
In May, the BPA hosted its first – ever Colour Run–a lively obstacle course on the school field where participants were showered with coloured chalk. The event was a fun-filled success enjoyed by all.

Bengeo Day
July saw the return of the much-loved Bengeo Day – with better weather this year! Highlights included year group performances, a school-wide art competition judged by Councillor Ben Crystall, a bouncy castle, crafts, face painting, festival hair, and stalls from local businesses.

Thanks to their amazing volunteers, the BPA continues to fund equipment and activities that enhance every child's school experience.



The Avenue Good News – For Sale!

As many of you know, Ash has decided to move on and sell his newsagent business on The Avenue. We caught up with him to get the latest news...

Why are you selling, and what will you do after?
I've been here 20 years... it's a long time, and I need a bit of a change! I'll probably look for part-time work after this – maybe closer to home in Southgate, or perhaps something completely different!

How is the sale going?
I'm still here! I want someone who'll take over the shop, look after it, and improve it (the business use will stay the same), but also really become part of the community. I'm still looking!

What's been the best part of working here?
Everything! The community, the people – it's like a family.



Everyone knows everything about everyone... which is a good thing!

Will you keep us updated on your plans?
Don't worry–I'll put a big notice up when I'm going! Although some people don't want to let me go...

(As evidenced by various customers asking for updates and begging him not to leave during the interview!)

Good luck, Ash – your kind and cheerful presence will be truly missed by customers and locals of all ages!

Bengeo Tree Safety Works

The Herts County Council tree team have started a program of tree safety works in Hertford, which occurs every 3 years.

The works mainly relate to the lifting of crowns (i.e. decreasing the height and spread of a tree's canopy), and the felling of smaller juvenile trees growing in inappropriate places.



Photo courtesy of Nick Gough

Go to the website below to view the scheduled work, organised by street name:
https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/HertfordAllSaintsTreeWorks

Community Group

The Love Bengeo Community Group, is currently supporting the following local project and initiatives – everyone is welcome to contribute! **www.lovebengeo.org.uk**, **Love Bengeo**

Bengeo Community Garden and Front Gardens Open Day 12 October Bengeo Parish Church Hall

Enjoy live music from our local choir 'Just Love to Sing', refreshments, children's activities, wildlife gardening tips, and a seed, bulb & produce swap.



Bengeo Community Garden – A Year On....



It's been just over a year since the community garden opened, and we've learned a lot! Spring brought beautiful blooms, with thanks to Mudlarks and local neighbours for their regular visits and watering. Unfortunately, this summer's drought has taken its toll, and the garden is currently looking a little tired.

Our focus remains on making the space wildlife-friendly and welcoming. We're planting more drought-tolerant, pollinator-friendly species – less colour, but more resilience and biodiversity. We always welcome plant donations (Mudlarks will help place them), and we're looking into improving water access.

Until then, any watering help is much appreciated!

Some tree pruning and tidying is planned soon to improve light and tree health.

Thanks for helping our garden grow – as a green space and a community hub!

Bengeo Mosaic – Piece by Piece, a Community Mosaic Begins



ARTs IN EAST HERTS

Something exciting is taking shape in Bengeo – a brand-new community mosaic project is in the works! Though still in the early planning stages, the vision is to create a vibrant piece of public art that reflects the character and spirit of our neighbourhood. This will be a truly collaborative project, with opportunities for residents of all ages to get involved and leave their mark. Join us for an open community event for Bengeo Mosaic supported by Arts in East Herts on 11 October, Bengeo Club, 2.30-4.30pm. If you'd like to help with the project or support us in securing funding, please get in touch at **askawp@yahoo.co.uk**.

Bengeo Front Gardens



Image courtesy of Brenda Heninghem

Launched in April, the Bengeo Front Gardens Facebook Group has already grown to over 130 members. People have been sharing beautiful photos of plants, pollinators, and wildlife spotted in their front gardens, along with tips from the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and updates on local gardens open through the National Garden Scheme.

Recently, the group invited members to submit children's artwork inspired by anything spotted in a Bengeo front garden. These creations will be shared at a community event on the afternoon of 12 October at Bengeo Parish Church Hall. Children are also welcome to bring their original artwork to display on the day, which will celebrate all things garden, plant, and wildlife.

If you're on Facebook, simply search for "Bengeo Front Gardens" to find the group. New members are warmly welcomed, as are photos of garden-inspired children's artwork!

Other Bengeo Community ideas...

- A Bengeo Trail to showcase the area's rich history, beautiful views, and surrounding countryside.
- A Bengeo Connect & Welcome initiative to help new residents feel at home and strengthen community ties.
- We also support other resident-led initiatives such as Support Beane Marsh, Bengeo Railway Land, Love/Save Bengeo Field, and the Bengeo Little Library.

If you'd like to get involved in these projects – or have ideas of your own – we'd love to hear from you! Please email **info@lovebengeo.org.uk**.

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

Bulb Planting – Saturday 11 October 11am

Last year, a few of us planted daffodils on the green opposite The Avenue shops —thanks to all who helped, and to Councillor Sue Barber for donating bulbs. The ground was tough, and we've learned we need an auger! If you're free on Saturday 11 October come along with bulbs, a trowel, bulb planter, and, if possible, an auger. Let's cover the green in daffs!



Love Bengeo Community Group – Response to Planning Proposals

The Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan has guided responses to various planning applications, including 15m mobile phone masts on The Avenue and Beane Road, the conversion of a listed building on Cowbridge, the Courtyard Arts Centre extension, 52 homes on the Bengeo Nursery site, and the Hartham Leisure Centre redevelopment. These responses were coordinated by the Love Bengeo Community Group (formerly the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan Steering Group).

In August, the group submitted an objection to East Herts District Council regarding a proposal for up to four homes on Green Belt land near Ware Park Manor. The



objection cited a conflict with the Neighbourhood Plan's 'Important Views' policy, specifically harm to View 4 from Watermill Lane North toward Ware Park Manor. We are waiting for a decision to made on this proposal.

For further information visit **https://lovebengeo.org.uk**

Community Path Clearing – Sunday 19 October

Join us as we team up with neighbours (local councillors are also invited!) to help clear the footpath connecting The Avenue/ Church Road with Molewood Road. Last year's successful effort made the path noticeably lighter, safer, and more accessible for many residents. Now, we're continuing that progress. We've submitted a request to Hertfordshire County Council to trim an overhanging oak branch and to install a handrail along the steps from Molewood Road. Once we receive a quote for the handrail, we'll be looking at ways to raise the necessary funds for this important improvement.



Chair's message from Emily White



As August draws to a close, it's safe to say this has been the summer of the bins! While we all recognise the need to recycle more and care for our environment, the recent changes from East Herts have brought some challenges – new bin colours, missed collections, unexpected ones, and even maggots! Hopefully things will soon settle, and we'll adapt to the new system. Personally, I'd rather deal with bin issues than new landfill sites near Bengeo!

We're always keen to support local initiatives. On Sunday 19 October, we'll be repeating last year's successful clean-up of the steps at The Avenue – litter picking, cutting back growth, sweeping, and making the area more pleasant. We're also pushing Herts County Council for a handrail to improve safety there.

The Love Bengeo Community Group continues to work on local improvements like Bengeo Community Garden in Tower Street updates, front garden planting, and exploring a Bengeo Trail. We welcome their efforts and are open to supporting future proposals.

Following planning approval for the Durkan housing scheme north of the old nursery site, Save Bengeo Field has launched a Judicial Review. Preparatory work is ongoing, including archaeological digs, but development is paused pending the legal outcome.

We're pleased that Ben Crystall has been re-elected as our County Councillor, and we continue to liaise with him on local matters.

There are also ongoing discussions about combining County and District Council services, such as having one authority manage both bin collections and recycling centres. A proposal for a single Hertfordshire-wide Unitary Council was rejected, but the structure is still being reviewed.

Lastly, our Christmas Lights competition will return! The best-decorated house wins £25 for a charity of your choice and a feature in the next newsletter.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy rest of 2025!
Emily White, Chairman

New First Steps Walk – Weekly Tuesdays

Join our free weekly First Steps walks from Tuesday 16 September, starting at the Bengeo Club on Bengeo Street. Perfect for those returning to activity or recovering from illness, these short, gentle walks include rest stops and are led by health walk volunteers to keep the group together. Parking available, and tea/coffee can be purchased afterwards. Find out more on **www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthwalks**, call **01992 555 888** or email **Healthwalks.cms@hertfordshire.gov.uk**. We'd love to see you there!

Report from our local councillor, Ben Crystall



Hello, I hope you are all feeling refreshed after a relaxing summer!

Thank you for your support in the May County Council elections – I'm delighted to have been re-elected and will continue doing my best for our area.

Following the election, the Liberal Democrats now lead Hertfordshire County Council as the largest group in a minority administration. It's still early, but signs of positive change are emerging:

Potholes: New technology is being trialled to fix potholes more quickly and sustainably. The Council is also reviewing current Highways pothole repair policies – this could improve roads like Bengeo Street, where small holes have often been left to grow.

Speed Management: The County Council's speed management strategy is under review. This may open the door to better measures to reduce speeding on for example Bengeo Street. I'll share updates as plans develop.

Bengeo Street Parking Bays: I'm still pushing Highways to correct and repaint the parking bays. Thanks to those using them properly and keeping off pavements. Where a bay continues to be misused, we will consider all options including removing the parking space entirely.

Drive Safe Project: In Kingsmead, I've joined a Drive Safe group that monitors speeding with police support. Offenders are contacted, and the data collated helps make the case for speed cameras. I'd love to set up a similar group in Bengeo – please get in touch if you're interested in joining.

If you have any questions or want to discuss local issues, please call me on **0300 123 7551** or email me at **ben.crystall@hertfordshire.gov.uk**

Best wishes
Ben

Meet your Neighbour – Jo (Love-Reiki)

Jo has been a Bengeo resident for over 55 years and is the face behind 'Love - Reiki'.

Hi Jo, tell us more about your business.
I am a Reiki therapist and meditation teacher.

How did your business come about?
Love-Reiki was born out of a deeply personal journey. After being made redundant from a large corporation following a 30-year career – and facing personal challenges including bereavement, menopause, and long-standing mental health struggles – I went through a really difficult time.

During my recovery, I realised that the Reiki training I had originally begun just for myself, after years of receiving treatments, was actually something I was meant to share with others.

I've now been practicing Reiki for about five years, and it's been a real journey – things are always evolving. One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that you can't rush it; things tend to happen when the time is right.

I absolutely love what I do, because it has helped me so much, and I see how it helps others too. Honestly, if I won the lottery, I'd still be doing this (for free!) – because being able to share Reiki with others, and to receive it myself, feels like a truly special gift.



Can you tell us a bit more about Reiki?
Reiki is an ancient Japanese healing technique that works with the body's natural energy system to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and support healing. It involves a practitioner channelling 'universal life force energy' through their hands, often focusing on the body's chakra points to help clear energy blockages.

People often feel heat, warmth, or a tingling sensation – and I sometimes see the colours of the chakras, so it can be a visual experience for both the practitioner and the person receiving Reiki.

It's a very gentle practice and can be effective for both physical discomfort and emotional well-being. You don't need to understand how it works to benefit from it – it simply helps the body rebalance and heal itself in a calm, natural way.

Do you work with children?
I am deeply passionate about working with children, especially because of my own experiences with childhood anxiety. When children and teenagers come here, they don't have to do anything – they simply lie down and let the Reiki do its work. It gently soothes the nervous system, helping them feel calm and relaxed. The treatment is completely non-invasive, making it a peaceful and comforting experience. Children are generally more responsive to Reiki, as they are often more open and accepting of it than adults!

What are your plans for the future?
I will continue my current offerings of 1:1 Reiki sessions, and the following weekly mindfulness sessions:

- Online zoom 30 mins of mindfulness and breathwork
- In person children (and parents) 45 mins on Sundays 11.15am

I am also exploring ways to collaborate with other businesses that support children and keeping an eye out for opportunities to work with people who could really benefit from pain relief, such as cancer patients.

How can people get in touch with you?
People can go to my website **https://love-reiki.com/**, or contact me directly via:
Facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/thisislovereiki**
Email: **jo@love-reiki.com**
Tel: **07885 964715**



VE-80 Lys Hill Gardens Event 11 May 2025

On a sunny Sunday afternoon, 33 residents and friends of Lys Hill Gardens came together to enjoy a lovely community gathering. Kath and Pam shared their memories of the VE Day street parties in 1945, adding a special historical touch to the day. The children had great fun with a friendly archery competition – armed with sucker-tipped arrows, of course! Stuart Rossall kept everyone well-fed with his excellent work on the barbecue, and the event ran smoothly thanks to the quiet efficiency of Jenny Foster, who organised the afternoon with care and good humour. MRA were pleased to support this event with a financial contribution.

St Leonard's Church

Upcoming Events
Harvest Service and AGM
The church will host the Harvest Service which marks the end of our season on 28 September 6.30pm. This will be followed by the Friends of St Leonard's AGM.

Christmas Wassail
Get into the festive spirit by joining us as we celebrate Christmas with a hearty Christmas Wassail led by folk musicians (Magpie Lane) on Friday 19 December.

Tickets available from **boxoffice@parishofbengeo.com**.

Joining the Friends
Support the church's work by becoming a Friend for an annual subscription of £5 a year (family membership £10 a year).

Sign up at **stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/friends-of-st-leonards** and follow us on **Facebook 'Friends of St Leonard's Bengeo'**.



Please contact Helen Fleming, **Secretaryfriendsofstleonards@gmail.com** for further information.

A Little Bit of Cheese – New Location and Events!

In addition to her popular Thursday afternoon pop-up at the Secret Garden Café, Janette now has a new base at The Vergers House, 43a St Andrew Street, Hertford. The opening hours here are 10-2pm Wednesday, Friday and non-market Saturdays.

This new location will serve as a hub for both online and walk-in orders and collections (nationwide courier service coming soon for online orders!).

Bespoke services will include tiered celebration cakes, cheese boards, and tasting events held on the following dates:

Sat Oct 4th 3-5pm Autumn Harvest
Sat Nov 1st 3-5pm Bonfire Night
Fri 5th Dec 6:30-8:30pm Xmas

Tasting events will include five themed cheeses, each with its own unique story. Janette will guide you through their backgrounds and suggest



complementary food and drink pairings. A welcome drink will be served on arrival.

You can still find Janette at the Hertford Farmers' Market on the second Saturday of each month, 8.30am–1pm. Please check her website/social media sites for up-to-date opening times.

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

Christmas Lights Competition 2025

Just a reminder: This year's Christmas Lights Competition winners will have the opportunity to donate £25 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/2025-3/east-herts-health-walks-timetable-sept-dec-2025.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: 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

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

The next committee meeting is on Thursday 6 November at 138 Cowper Crescent.

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 below and put it through the letter box of our treasurer, Alan Sewell, 16 The Avenue or pay online as detailed in the membership section on page 2.

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:.....