JANUARY • FEBRUARY 2021

# Bengeo Magazine

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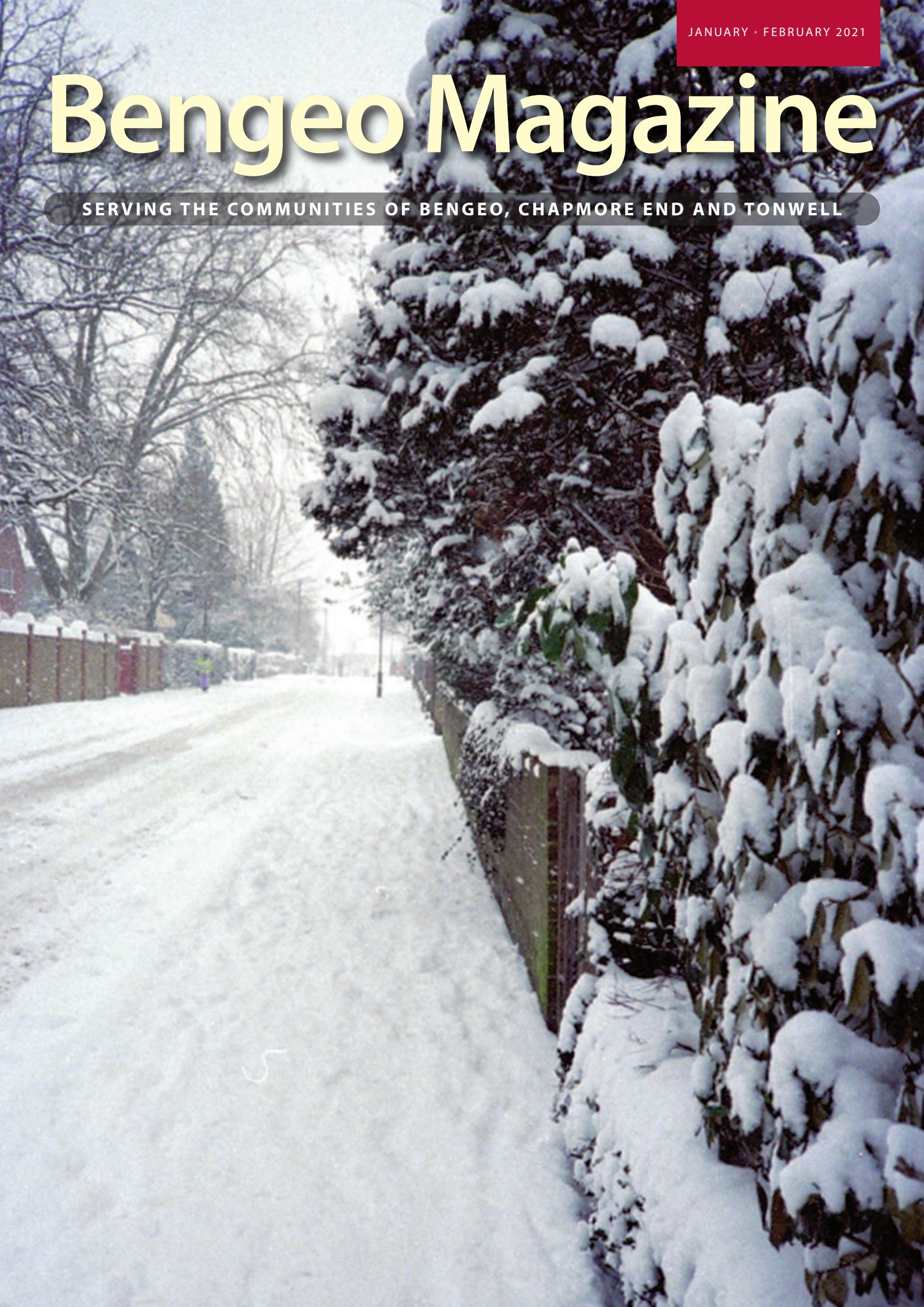

Steve Baldwin

Steve Baldwin

# Bengeo Parish Magazine and Community News

## The best laid plans…

Let's hope that 2021 will see people and places in Bengeo all out and about again without the necessity of a further lockdown. Things are looking brighter with the vaccines being rolled out, and we will wait to see the effect on our lives.

Thankfully, schools have been open and children are enjoying being together under the new rules. At present pubs can open for family groups to have a meal, but keep an eye on their Facebook pages for any updates.

Local groups, such as those in lower Bengeo, came together to celebrate Christmas by decorating their houses in festive spirit bringing joy to residents and passers-by. Ben Crystall's article also shows how lockdown has given residents new ideas for their area.

Although we cannot meet together at the moment we can have a flavour of future events in Guy Thomas's article on local aviation history – a preview of his talk later in the year.

Here's hoping for a Happy New Year!

**The Editorial Team**

*Front cover photograph:*
**Winters past in Duncombe Road, John Rossiter**

*Inner cover photographs:* **Steve Baldwin**
Steve is a local photographer who has prints of his photos and the Waterford Calendar to purchase on:
*Website* **www.stevebaldwinphotography.co.uk**
*Twitter* **@stevestevebald1**
*Instagram* **stevebaldwinphoto**
*Facebook* **Steve Baldwin Photography**

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**Editorial Team**
**Items for the magazine should be sent to magazine@parishofbengeo.com**

**Copy dates for 2021**
**Items should be sent by the middle of the month preceding publication.**

**Advertising**
**Please address all advertising enquiries to magazine@parishofbengeo.com**

**Distribution**
***Bengeo:*** **Pam Martin**
***Tonwell:*** **Pat Lavis**

***The magazine can be delivered to your door for a subscription of £6.00 per year. Contact Pam Martin, phone 01992 422441, to ask about obtaining the magazine.***

**Individual issue: £1.00.**
**Cheques payable to: 'Bengeo Magazine'.**

**6 issues per year: January/February; March/April; May/June; July/August; September/October; November/December.**

**The magazine is printed by MSPC Ltd, Unit 10, Hartham View Industrial Estate, Hartham Lane, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 1QN.**

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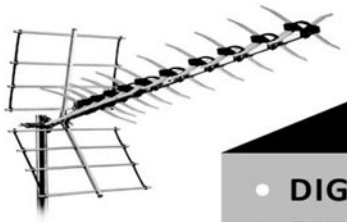

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# Update on Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan

At the time of writing (December 2020) the Neighbourhood Plan is nearing the end of the independent examination stage and we're looking forward to receiving feedback from the examiner, Hopefully, we'll be able to move towards the final stage, which is the public referendum on the Plan.

Recently, the Community Steering Group have responded to planning applications for Hertford Theatre, a proposed conversion from office space to residential in St Andrew Street, the revised proposals for 5 homes on the Tree Heritage nursery site on North Road, and a further variation to the planning application for 8 homes on Sacombe Road. These, and all Neighbourhood Plan responses to local planning applications, as well as the Neighbourhood Plan itself, can be viewed on **www.lovebengeo.org.uk/blog**.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan has twenty local planning policies on green spaces, important views, nature conservation, air quality, cultural, community and heritage assets, sustainable travel, homes and development and sustainable commercial growth.

Regular Neighbourhood Plan updates are provided on the 'Love Bengeo' Facebook page and Twitter account.

**Brenda Heninghem**
*Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan*

## Bengeo Co-op now closing later for refurbishment

The Bengeo Co-op was scheduled to close in November to undergo a refurbishment. Due to the lockdown that month and the problems this would have caused to local residents, the changes have been postponed and will not take place until February or later and are expected to last for 4 weeks.

As we reported before, John and Kim at the Post Office will also be retiring but most of the Post Office services will be found at the till from 7am to 10pm when the Co-op reopens.

In addition to the new display cabinets, shelves and flooring there are plans to have cycle racks in the front of the store.

**Hazel and the Team**

## Caring for Cats

**Lodi Carter-Gifkins has volunteered for Cat's Whiskers Rescue charity in Hertford Heath since September last year. After seeking out a cat charity that needed fosterers, finding one so close was perfect, she says.**

**Having recently lost her cat of 19 years, which she says "completely broke my heart and left me with so much love that didn't have a place to go", volunteering looked to be the perfect outlet for those emotions and so she took on fostering cats and kittens.**

**One of the surprises during her time fostering was the most recent cat she took in, which was pregnant and produced 8 kittens. Since joining she has rehomed a total of 13 cats and kittens, plus an additional three that she kept for herself. With three cats of her own, any further additions to the cat family will depend on how they react to a new guest. The trio were fine with the kittens she adds, but adult cats might be different.**

**"Even if I stopped fostering there are plenty of other areas within the charity that need assistance. We do fundraising events and last year I spent some time at Pets at Home on our stand, so that's always a need." she says.**

**Carrie Bone**

***If you wish to find out more go to www.catswhiskersrescue.com.***

# Ready Steady Glow

How one community's plan to create safer streets turned into a festive celebration – with a competitive edge! However many times you puff up Byde Street with shopping, or cycle down Nelson Street on the way to the station, there's one thing you probably haven't noticed. It's the competitive spirit that flourishes in lower Bengeo.

Here, speed and agility are a way of life. With a constant flow of vans and cars passing back and forth along otherwise quiet residential roads, those living in the half-dozen or so streets that stretch up from Beane Marshes – the so-called Bengeo 'rat run' – have learned to take on everyday tasks with the skill of a professional athlete. Daily they brave the 10 metre dash across a road suddenly filled with rush-hour commuters, and run the obstacle race with buggy or dog, nimbly negotiating traffic as well as pavements blocked by parked cars. And come the evening, it takes determination, eagle-eyes and lightning-fast reflexes to find and secure that rarest thing, the empty parking space near home.

Certainly they are not the only ones in Hertford to face such difficulties. Perhaps what's different in lower Bengeo is that in the run-up to Christmas, residents decided to wield that competitive spirit against their own neighbours. Someone had the bright idea of pitting street against street in a challenge for the sparkliest, most dazzling display of festive lights. More surprising, perhaps, is that this Christmas compeition was borne out of a growing desire for peace and quiet.

It all began in lockdown. Some residents developed the habit of meeting each Sunday, standing in the street, socially-distanced, to swap gossip and laughs over tea or something stronger. The rat run also came up for discussion after recent accidents and near misses. "Even though commuters have been fewer during lockdown, we all noticed that traffic had seemed to become faster," says Byde Street resident Felicity. "It was increasing the risk that an accident could be fatal." Previous attempts to solve the problem of the rat run had not been successful despite incredible community activism, but a small group decided to take a fresh look.

After discussions with councillors, the local Residents Association and other neighbours, a vision started to emerge in which their roads were still open, but simply

slower and safer, with pedestrians and cyclists not just enjoying equal rights to road space, but even getting priority. Soon a nucleus of around 20 residents were discussing ideas on WhatsApp, united in a desire that the daily shouting and hooting of angry drivers could be replaced by the sound of families having fun.

For inspiration, they started looking at what others are doing elsewhere to calm traffic. A number of ideas appeared to fit the bill: for instance, many villages in Hertfordshire have 'gates' beside the road as you drive in, with signs to indicate that you are entering a community space. This kind of marked entrance is proven to slow traffic passing through. Perhaps planters filled with flowers positioned at the side of the road on Byde Street or at the bottom of Nelson Street could serve the same purpose, and bring some welcome colour to the street?

In other villages, life-sized cut-outs of children have proved effective in making drivers slow down – reminding them that the roads have other, more vulnerable users. Meanwhile a number of London boroughs have tested brightly painted patterns on road surfaces – evidence shows that this kind of unfamiliar design gives drivers a clear visual signal that their surroundings have changed, and they tend to slow as a result. So could this kind of relatively low cost idea influence driver behaviour? The group harnessed local expertise among residents and a plan started to form. Local councillors were enthusiastic and in response, the highways department at Hertfordshire County Council promised to consider their suggestions.

With the concept of brightly painted signs and coloured road surfaces spawning enthusiastic discussions of bunting and street festivals, October gave way to November, and visions of planters and bollards evolved into talk of roads dotted with glittery Christmas trees. Suddenly the residents' competitiveness bubbled back to the surface, and the residents' festive street lights competition was born.

The great switch on took place on Saturday 28th November. During the day, groups of Santa-hatted neighbours sipped wine and chatted in the streets while they threaded baubles and unravelled lights. Bunting was hoisted. Circuits tested. Judges were appointed from amongst the youngest residents. Then as dusk fell and lights began to flash, judging began. The panel had a critical eye, and processed street to street, looking up, chatting, pointing and laughing. They loved it. The winning street? They were all winners.

Now Christmas is over, most lights and decorations are gone. And one question remains: did the festive display actually bring extra vehicles to lower Bengeo? We'll never know. But the residents are even more determined to find a long term solution to the rat run that can slow traffic and make their roads safer. Their suggestions have been passed to the Highways Department which has agreed to work with them on a solution. And ideas, enthusiasm, and a competitive spirit, continue to flourish. "Why not find a way to create extra planting along Beane Road that uses new trees and bushes to help slow traffic," suggests Wellington Street resident Vic. "This could even enhance the new nature reserve at Beane Marshes." Better still, perhaps all this could become a seed of change for a range of new ideas across Bengeo aimed at reducing the speed of traffic, improving air quality and making walking, cycling and outdoor chat safer and more pleasant? In lower Bengeo at least, you can bet that residents are up for the challenge.

**Ben Crystall**

# Tier 2 Opening Times for Local Pubs

**At the time of writing Hertfordshire is in Tier 2 of Covid restrictions which means that pubs have to offer a substantial meal with their drinks. Up to 6 people from the same household or bubble can sit together inside.**

## White Lion

Unfortunately, the live music at Archie's cannot continue during the current restrictions, but the pub is open to welcome you with a full menu Thursday to Saturday from 12 noon to 10pm and on Sundays with plentiful roasts from 12 noon until 7pm.

In addition we are providing takeaway fish and chips on Fridays and planning takeaway beer and real ale for to you to enjoy at home.

Van Pizza is still outside on Thursdays and Saturdays from 5pm to 9pm.

## The Greyhound

After the initial blow of having to close so soon after opening, we want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank everyone who supported us by ordering a takeaway during lockdown.

We are so pleased to reopen the restaurant once again from Wednesday to Saturday from 12 noon to 3pm and from 5pm to 9pm and with our new winter menu too. Of course we are still offering our very popular Roasts from 2pm to 6.30pm on Sundays. Do pop in every Friday from 8:30am when you will be able to take away some lovely freshly baked bread, cakes and Danish pastries.

Saturday 5th December saw our first Breakfast with Santa event. It was such a pleasure to have lots of lovely families from the community join us and the children were an absolute delight. Everyone enjoyed breakfast, meeting Santa and then playing in our snow machine out the front.

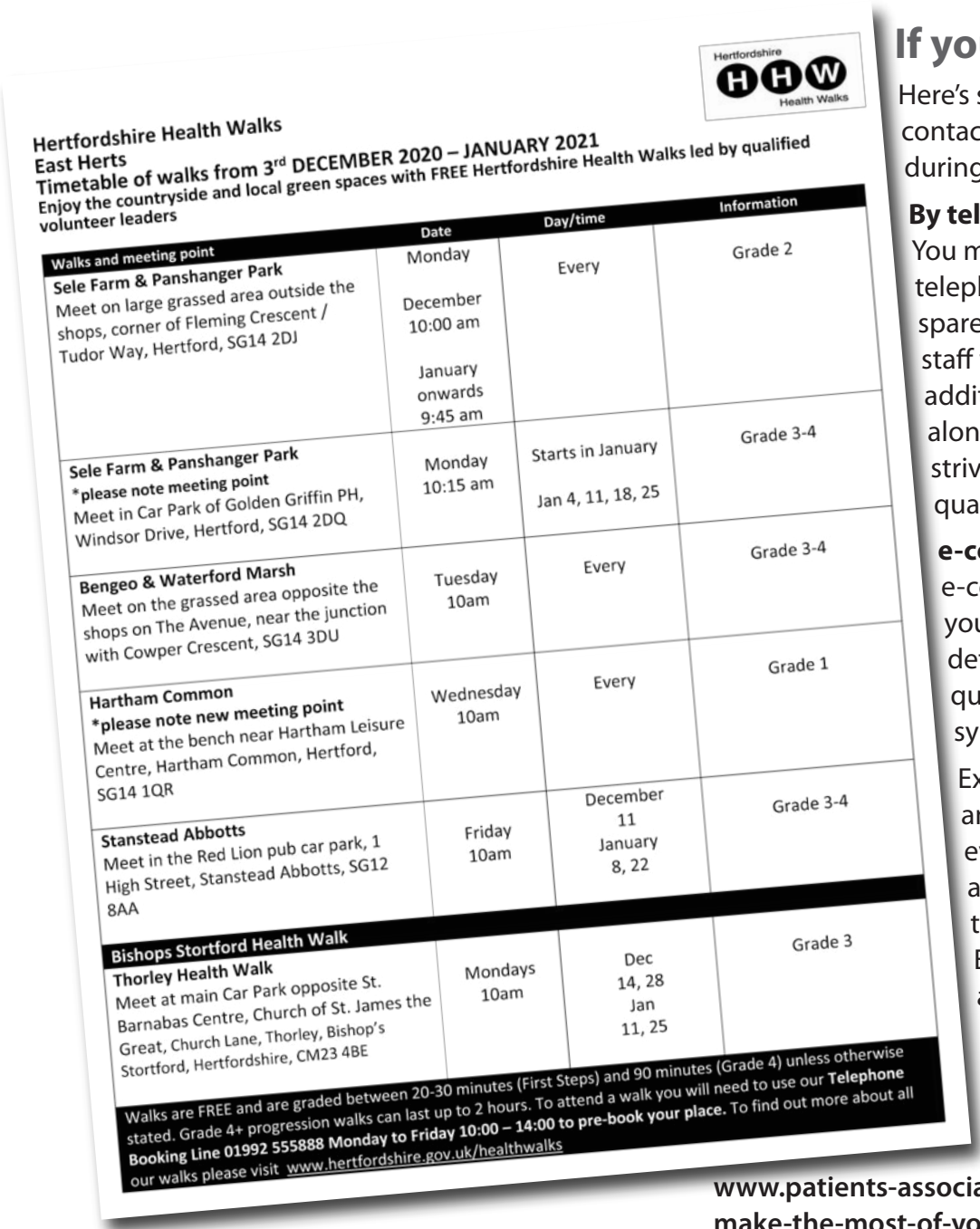
## The Millstream

The Millstream is open for meals every day from 2pm until 10pm, Sundays with Sunday roasts from 2pm to 6.30pm.

The shop is open with a range of bakery goods and fresh produce on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 9am until 12 noon.

***Please check opening times on the pubs' Facebook pages if there are changes from Tier 2 in January and February.***

# Keeping Healthy this Winter



Hertfordshire Health Walks
East Herts
Timetable of walks from 3rd DECEMBER 2020 – JANUARY 2021
Enjoy the countryside and local green spaces with FREE Hertfordshire Health Walks led by qualified volunteer leaders

| Walks and meeting point | Date | Day/time | Information |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Sele Farm & Panshanger Park** Meet on large grassed area outside the shops, corner of Fleming Crescent / Tudor Way, Hertford, SG14 2DJ | Monday December 10:00 am January onwards 9:45 am | Every | Grade 2 |
| **Sele Farm & Panshanger Park** ***please note meeting point** Meet in Car Park of Golden Griffin PH, Windsor Drive, Hertford, SG14 2DQ | Monday 10:15 am | Starts in January Jan 4, 11, 18, 25 | Grade 3-4 |
| **Bengeo & Waterford Marsh** Meet on the grassed area opposite the shops on The Avenue, near the junction with Cowper Crescent, SG14 3DU | Tuesday 10am | Every | Grade 3-4 |
| **Hartham Common** ***please note new meeting point** Meet at the bench near Hartham Leisure Centre, Hartham Common, Hertford, SG14 1QR | Wednesday 10am | Every | Grade 1 |
| **Stanstead Abbotts** Meet in the Red Lion pub car park, 1 High Street, Stanstead Abbotts, SG12 8AA | Friday 10am | December 11 January 8, 22 | Grade 3-4 |
| **Bishops Stortford Health Walk** | | | |
| **Thorley Health Walk** Meet at main Car Park opposite St. Barnabas Centre, Church of St. James the Great, Church Lane, Thorley, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 4BE | Mondays 10am | Dec 14, 28 Jan 11, 25 | Grade 3 |

Walks are FREE and are graded between 20-30 minutes (First Steps) and 90 minutes (Grade 4) unless otherwise stated. Grade 4+ progression walks can last up to 2 hours. To attend a walk you will need to use our **Telephone Booking Line 01992 555888 Monday to Friday 10:00 – 14:00 to pre-book your place.** To find out more about all our walks please visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/healthwalks

## Health Walks

The Hertfordshire health walks have started again – see the programme for proposed walks in the New Year. Make sure that you ring in to book one of the 10 places per walk.

## Feeling Good Week

### 8th–12th February 2021

Feeling Good Week is a Hertfordshire-wide event that encourages schools and the wider community to promote children and young people's emotional wellbeing. The projects raise awareness of mental health and show where support can be accessed within the community.

## If you do feel unwell…

Here's some guidance about contacting your local GP surgeries during the wintertime.

**By telephone**

You may have to wait longer when telephoning the surgery. Please spare a thought for all the surgery staff who are working under the additional pressures of COVID-19, alongside winter pressures, whilst striving to deliver a safe and quality service to patients

**e-consult and Extended Access**

e-consult – the red button on your surgery's website. You give detailed responses to the questions asked about your symptoms.

Extended Access – if you require an out-of-surgery hours [early evening or weekend] routine appointment, ask Reception if there are any of the allocated Extended Access slots available.

**Getting the most out of your GP appointment**

Here is a link that we hope you may find useful **www.patients-association.org.uk/make-the-most-of-your-gp-appointment**

## Useful websites

Contact NHS 111, especially out of surgery hours: **www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/urgent-and-emergency-care/nhs-111**

Getting a Coronavirus test **www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test**

Local COVID information **https://hcc-phei.shinyapps.io/covid19_public_dashboard**

Staying well in Hertfordshire, a guide for older people **www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Nov2020/older-peoples-booklet-web-accessible.pdf**

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## Samaritan's Purse

### Shoebox Appeal

In 2019 398,664 shoebox gifts were sent from the UK to children in 10 countries across Eastern Europe, Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East!

We are delighted to report that although the results of the Bengeo Shoebox Appeal were down on last year (very restricted by COVID) we were able to contribute 18 boxes (some containing monetary donations) well filled with toys, games and other items (plus additional donations of £110) which will be delivered to needy children throughout the world.

*Thank you to all our donors.*

**Eileen and Jim Smith**

## New Year Quiz

It is not too late to have a copy of the quiz sheet with teasing questions on homophones and homonyms, available from Peter and Libby Shillito at **1 The Orchard, Bengeo** (telephone **01992 583979**) for a donation of £1. Please support us to help raise funds for Holy Trinity Church. Entries for the prize draw should be returned to us by Sunday 10th January. Three lucky winners will receive a big box of sweets.

## 2021 Holy Trinity Church Diaries

Available now from Libby Shillito (telephone **01992 583979**) at the usual price of £1, all proceeds to the Church.

## Children's Society

The Children's Society

After a very disappointing year of not being able to fundraise for the Children's Society we really hope to be able to get back into stride again in 2021 with Coffee Mornings and other events. Please keep a lookout in future issues of the *Bengeo Magazine* for any forthcoming events.

As always we depend on your support to raise funds for the worthwhile work of the Society.

*Many thanks*

**Libby Shillito**

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# Your help is needed to transform Beane Marsh

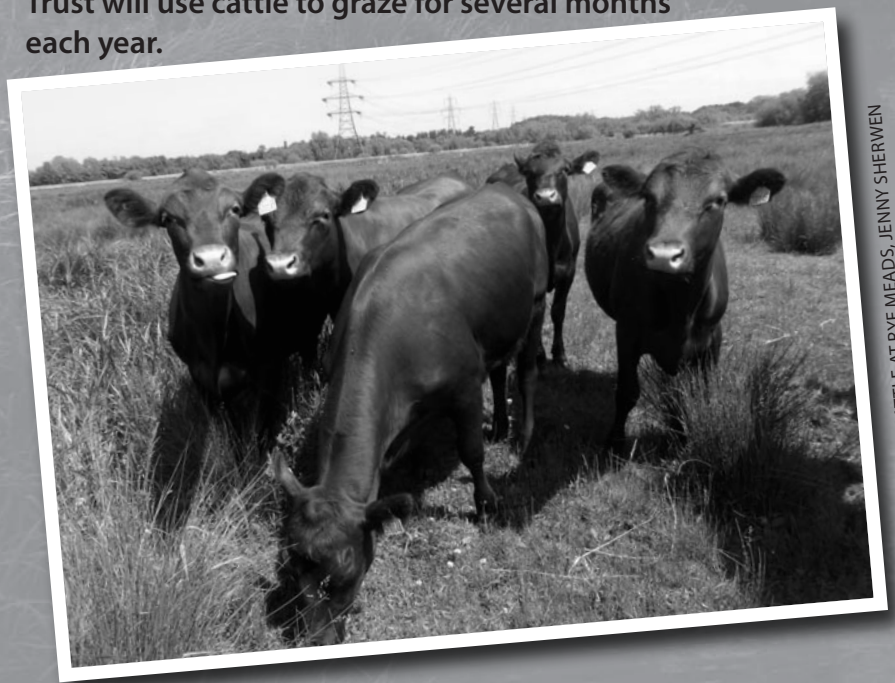
**Next to the River Beane along Beane Road, only a few steps from Hertford North Station, sits an unassuming wild patch that holds a valuable secret – it is one of the rarest habitats in the county.**

**Beane Marsh is a floodplain grassland and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust's newest nature reserve. After it had been put up for sale last year, Save Beane Marshes, a community of local residents who wanted to protect the site for wildlife, raised more than £100,000 which enabled the Trust to purchase the land this summer – a new nature reserve was born!**

**From wetter areas of fen and swamp to semi-wet, marshy margins and dry grassland, this small gem boasts a variety of habitats, but it needs specialist management to tap the huge potential it holds for wildlife. The Trust and the Save Beane Marshes community are now keen to start work to transform the reserve into a wildlife haven.**

**Cattle will play a crucial role in doing this. Conservation grazing with cattle, sheep or goats is an invaluable part of wildlife conservation. Livestock helps manage habitats like those of Beane Marsh by replicating the practices of the past when the countryside would have been grazed by wild animals.**

**Different kinds of livestock vary in their grazing and browsing habits so each are suitable for different tasks and habitats. At Beane Marsh, the Trust will use cattle to graze for several months each year.**



Photograph: REDPOLL CATTLE AT RYE MEADS, JENNY SHERWEN

Photograph © TERRY WHITTAKER 2020VISION

**Cattle wrap their tongues around the plants, pulling and tearing them out. Due to their bulk, their hooves poach up the ground creating patches of bare soil in grasslands. This will create a diverse grassland structure: wetland wildflowers will flourish and in turn will benefit insects such as bees and butterflies. This will attract predator species such as birds and bats.**

**Before this can happen, the Trust needs to install suitable fencing around the site. This is why Save Beane Marshes has launched a new crowdfunding campaign to help raise the funds needed to complete the work.**

Photograph © TIM HILL

**£8,400 will help to install the new fencing and gates. Every donation, no matter the amount, can make a difference and help achieve this goal. Bengeo residents can enjoy great views over the reserve from Beane Road. You can help make them even better for the future by donating to the new campaign!**

**Donate today on Crowdfunder**
**www.crowdfunder.co.uk/**
**beane-marsh-fencing-campaign**

**savebeanemarshes.org.uk**

**hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/beanemarsh**

Photograph © PAUL THRUSH

Photograph © RUSSELL SAVORY

# From Moth to Mosquito

**DH82 Tiger Moth**

***Guy Thomas is an aviation historian living in Bengeo. During lockdown, he produced a presentation and talk on '110 years of Aviation Heritage in Hertfordshire' delivered via Zoom to a couple of local groups. Once restrictions are lifted, he plans to deliver the talk in Duncombe Hall. Here is a preview for readers of the Bengeo Magazine.***

In 1920, Sir Geoffrey De Havilland set up his company to design and manufacture light aircraft, initially at Stag Lane in Edgware and later moved to Hatfield in 1930.

His first light aircraft designs included the name 'Moth' as a result of his interest in entomology (the study of butterflies and moths), De Havilland went on to produce 7 designs, which included the well known DH82 Tiger Moth (pictured). Many of these variants were also manufactured under licence in Canada and New Zealand.

There was also an opportunity in 1934, to build an all wood racing aircraft (DH88 Comet Racer) to compete in the MacRobertson sponsored England to Australia air race. This revolutionary design, using a stressed wood design ensured it was light, strong

**DH88 Comet Racer**

and fast. Scott and Black won the race in G-ACSS Grosvenor House (pictured). This is one of the vintage aircraft maintained in airworthy condition and is on display at the Shuttleworth Collection at Old Warden in Bedfordshire.

**www.shuttleworth.org**

However, with the advent of WW2, all light aircraft production ceased and in 1940, De Havilland started

designing a revolutionary twin-engine fighter bomber that was able to fly fast and low into Europe: the result, the DH98 Mosquito. This design utilised the experience and knowledge of wood technology that had been used to build the Comet Racer.

A combination of a national shortage of steel and an abundance of timber, enabled De Havilland to commence production of the Mosquito at Hatfield (and later at Leavesden) in early 1941. The prototype (W4050 pictured) was used for initial flight testing, following which it was abandoned, until the opportunity to form a De Havilland Museum emerged at its birthplace at Salisbury Hall, near London Colney. The Mosquito has recently been completely restored and, together with two others, is on public display at the Museum – well worth a visit!

**www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk**

The Mosquito went on to gain an exemplary wartime record and perhaps the most well known raid was 'Operation Jericho', led by Group Captain Pickard in February 1944. His Mosquitos took off from nearby Hunsdon airfield to successfully bomb the outer wall of Amiens Prison in France. The successful bombing enabled most of the prisoners to escape.

Unfortunately, Pickard was shot down on his return to the UK.

Some of our readers might well be asking whether there are any airworthy Mosquitos today? The answer is a resounding 'yes'. Of more than 7,000 Mosquitos built during and after WW2, there are three known airworthy examples, two in the United States, and one in Canada. Unfortunately, the last airworthy Mosquito in the UK crashed in 1996.

The good news is that today in the UK, there is a new Mosquito being built from scratch, 'The People's Mosquito', utilising many of the original drawings supplied by BAe Systems. The Mosquito project has been named *'Operation Jericho'* after the raid mentioned above and is due to fly in UK skies in a few years' time. You can follow the progress of the construction and contribute to the campaign by going to **www.peoplesmosquito.org.uk**.

**Guy Thomas**

*If you wish to visit the aircraft, please check the current opening times of the Shuttleworth Collection and De Havilland Aircraft Museum on their websites.*

**Mosquito prototype W4050**

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# Tonwell School News

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS

The past month has been very eventful at Tonwell School. Even with all the restrictions, the children have managed to join in a variety of activities.

For national Anti-bullying week, the children celebrated each other's differences by wearing their odd socks to school. All classes learned about anti-bullying in PSHE lessons and reflected on how they could play their part to be 'united against bullying'.

In the same week the children also got to take part in "Children in Need" where they managed to raise nearly £50! Our pupils enjoyed taking part in our non-uniform day and live out our school values of 'contributing to our school and wider community'.

Something that has become a focal point for schools post lockdown has been looking after the children's mental wellbeing and the importance of this with regards to learning. We welcomed BMX world champion, Mike Mullen and the whole school was treated to a morning of BMX brilliance and growth mindset. Not only did he wow us with his amazing skills, he spoke to the children about resilience and shared how he had made many mistakes and had many failures before being successful. We loved his word 'FLEARN' which means learning from failure.

Throughout the year with the support of the Sports Partnership, we normally take part in a variety of different activities, normally held alongside other schools. Of course this year has been different but the children were still able to have Archery and Orienteering sessions delivered to us at the school.

## Virtual is the new normal

Road Safety – Hertfordshire County Council are promoting the 'Be bright be seen' message to schools across the county using a PowerPoint presentation to reiterate how important it is to keep safe especially due to the long dark nights during the Autumn/Winter months.

## Christmas isn't cancelled…

We are aiming to keep our Christmas celebrations in school as normal as possible. As we are unable to hold our usual church service, each class is busy preparing either a narrated Christmas PowerPoint (Ash and Oak) or Nativity (Pine) to share with the parents at the end of term virtually. We have the Christmas tree up and the children are busy making their own Christmas decorations and cards.

To finish on a quote that we believe best sums up how we should approach going into the next year.

*"Starting today, I need to forget what's gone, appreciate what still remains, and look forward to what's coming next."*

**Tonwell St Mary's C of E Primary School**

**Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Bridgman**

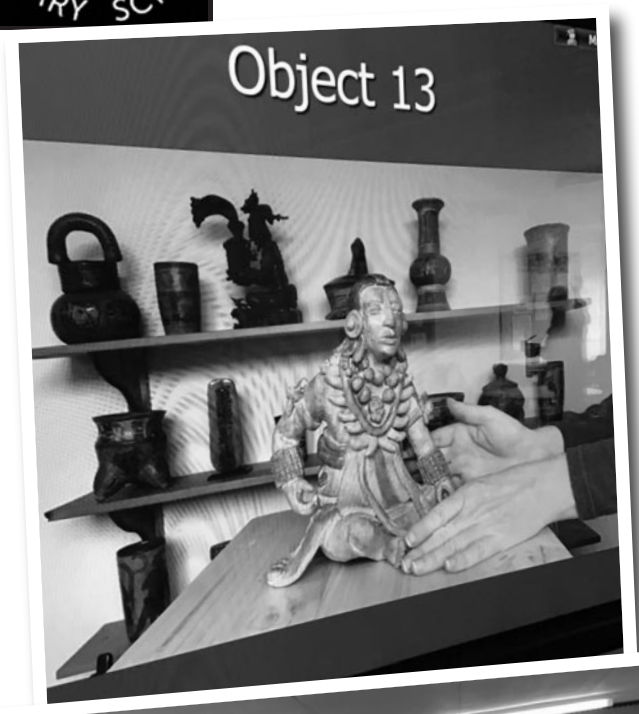
We are offering 30 hour places in our Nursery class.

We also have a Breakfast Club from 8am and After School Club until 5pm daily.

Visits are warmly welcomed.

Please speak to Mrs Moorehead on **01920 462894** between 8.30am and 12 noon to arrange a visit or email **admin@tonwell.herts.sch.uk**

# Bengeo Primary School




Bengeo School have had a quiet November in lockdown. We have managed a couple of activities and have some festive events coming up… Cedar Class 'SPACE' talk last Wednesday, one of our parents, Mrs Jauncey, gave a talk about space to Cedar Class, via Zoom. The children asked some very challenging questions and received the fascinating answers. It was a change from their normal science lessons but a huge amount of knowledge was still learnt.

## Y6 Maya Workshop

On Tuesday 20th October, Year 6 enjoyed a virtual Maya day with interactive presentations from Dr Davies who is the UK's only expert Maya archaeologist who has been working in the Maya rainforest since 2003.

## Fund Raising Christmas Signing

Classes are being videoed signing along to Christmas songs as they are not allowed to sing at the moment. The videos are being shared on our Facebook page each day and parents are kindly donating to our chosen charities; Hertfood and Keech hospital.

## Christmas Lunch

On the 16th, the children will be enjoying a festive lunch, wearing Christmas jumpers and the hat they have made in school.

## Christmas 'Virtual' Show

On the last week the children are being treated, by the Parents' Association, to a virtual 'Panto-like Theatre', with music and games based around Fairy Tale Goldilocks.

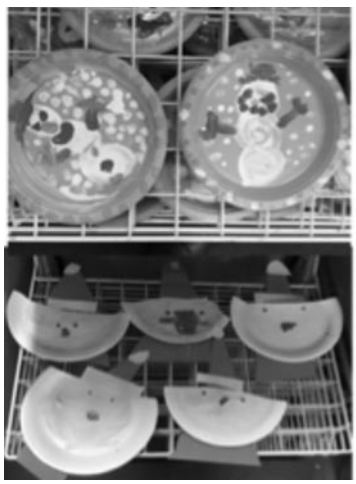
# Mill Mead Primary School

As the term here at Mill Mead comes to a close, we have been reflecting on the many achievements of our school community over the past few months. From adapting to our 'new normal' within our bubbles to overcoming new learning challenges, our children have demonstrated our school values consistently. We feel extremely proud of our whole school community, but we are especially proud of our children.

To try to preserve some sense of normality, we have held 'bubble parties' where children who have had birthdays so far this academic year have had the chance to celebrate with their classmates within their bubbles. These parties were funded by our brilliant parent association, FOMMs and the children had so much fun! There were balloons, cakes and, of course, renditions of 'Happy Birthday'.

Whilst maintaining our protective measures against the virus, we have also been able to continue to provide learning opportunities beyond the classroom. Year 5 had a visit from a planetarium and Year 3 were able to visit Celtic Harmony Camp for a 'Stone Age Experience' day.

We've had a lovely time over the last few weeks preparing for Christmas. We held our traditional 'Decs Day' within our class bubbles. Children made a wide range of beautiful decorations which are now proudly displayed on our Christmas tree and on our tables during our Christmas lunch.



*We would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff for their continued commitment to our children. They have gone 'above and beyond' in all aspects of school life and this has created a much-needed sense of stability for our children.*

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# Bengeo Lives – ROBERTS FAMILY – Part 2

**George Roberts Jnr** was born in 1890 in the old water tower in Tower Street, son of George Snr. He continued the business George Roberts and Co (Engineers) Ltd that his father had started which was run from the rear of 48 Bengeo Street where the family were then living and also the land where the maisonettes now stand between Gosselin Road and Globe Court. He married Evelyn Weston, the daughter of Mr Charles Weston of 'Risobank' Church Road, in Holy Trinity on 25th July 1914. They had two children Barbara in 1915 and George in 1921.

Mr Roberts was exempt from serving in WW1. The 1916 tribunal stated 'Mr George Roberts engineer of Bengeo exempted altogether because he is on Government munition work' which suggests the firm he was now running since his father's death was engaged in such activities. In the 1930s the firm built some houses in The Drive and a bungalow for Major Roberts, amongst others. The houses 3 and 5 The Drive were built on what had been the land that was used for materials whilst building the Duncombe Road houses. His mother-in-law Mrs Weston, and later his sister-in-law Mrs Eccles lived in no 3. He also built Nos 9 and 11 The Drive.

In 1937 Mr Roberts did a lot of work for Hertford Borough concerning the water supply. His was the lowest tender for the new water scheme at £17,647 12s and he was known locally as a 'water engineer'. Mr Roberts was also chief engineer to the National Coal Board and the Gas Council. By the late 1950s the firm was the largest heating and ventilation company in the county employing about 38 men. He owned some property in London where he had garages with flats above.

George and Evelyn eventually moved to Westmill where Evelyn died in 1958. George died suddenly at his office in Bengeo Street in 1968 at the age of 79. He had moved to live with his daughter Barbara at 'Pond Cottage', Chapmore End, after his wife's death. Barbara was a nursing sister serving in the navy in WW2 and later in Egypt, and his son Dr George Fulton Roberts was Bursar of Jesus College Cambridge but died 4 years before his father.

After Mr Roberts' death, the business was inherited by his daughter Barbara and run by Mr Sidney Cook. Mr Cook had joined George Roberts & Co about 1945. He became a director in 1950 and chairman soon afterwards and remained so until 1980 when the firm closed. Mr and Mrs Cook moved to 'Risobank' in Church Road which had been in the Weston and Roberts families from new. The Cooks lived there for 10 years before moving to The Avenue. Mr Cook died in 1996. There is a bench in his memory outside the shops at the bus stop.

**Marilyn Taylor**

*Photo credits:* **Bengeo Stores, Hertford and Ware Building Preservation Trust 3 and 5 The Drive, Diana Howarth**

## A Word from The Rectory

**From The Vicar, The Revd Robert Thompson**

# Happier New Year

If I were to wish you a 'Happy' New Year then you might consider it a bold act of faith, or a small bit of sarcasm. After last year, I'm done with soothsaying; whilst this might be the time of year for making predictions, you can never know what kind of year to expect. Like the banker who told Henry Ford the horse was here to stay, or the weatherman Michael Fish who on the eve of the worst storm in living memory forecast that 'It might be a little windy tomorrow', the future can make mugs of us all.

Perhaps there is a danger in putting too much store in what might happen tomorrow. I leave tarot reading and crystal ball gazing to fatalists and fantasists. Are such people any more able to control their future if they were ever shown it? Would they change their lives, or take a different course? Their fate is inevitable and their destiny determined; you could tell them what the future had in store, and they'd still be none the wiser.

Which is why there's no soothsaying in the bible. The Old Testament prophets are spokesmen, not fortune-tellers – when prophets like Jeremiah and Isaiah pointed to terrible events in the future they were not predictions of what would happen, but descriptions of what could happen if people didn't change their ways. They were more concerned about getting things right in the present, than being right about the future. They called out uncomfortable truths – sometimes at great personal risk – about the injustices of society, about people's indifference to poverty, or the environment – urging people to choose a new direction and avoid an unhappy future.

The Jeremiahs and Isaiahs may be long gone, but if we listen carefully, we can still hear prophets speaking today. Not all end up being thrown into a lion's den or a burning fiery furnace, but it might seem as if they are. They could be journalists, scientists or environmental campaigners. They could be artists, poets or musicians. More often than not, it's children who bring home-truths to your door. They don't need special qualifications, and their message doesn't have to be pious, priggish or conventionally religious. Its inspiration might be divine, but the action is earthly, urgent and rooted in the now.

A prophet is someone who is able to describe that future, provoking a change of heart and mind that leads to action. Greta Thunberg is a prophet, some say, and educational activist Malala Yousafzai. Rosa Parkes was a prophet, and Nelson Mandela too. I'd suggest that anyone who calls out present injustice is a prophet, and I think that anyone who reveals God's future design is a prophet, and that we will always need prophets to tell us what is necessary and good and true.

Apparently, the word 'preacher' comes from an old French word, 'predicateur,' which means prophet. So I will not hold back on my words nor on God's promise when I make this prediction: that progress is impossible without change – and that the old year will end, and that the next will, happily, be New.

May you find a blessing there.

**Robert Thompson**

# Parish Calendar

**Holy Trinity Church is open for private prayer Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm. Come in and soak up the stillness.**

## Sunday worship

**You're welcome to join us for services every Sunday at 9am and 10am. To keep things safe please book a place on our website www.parishofbengeo.com or call us on 01992 413691 or email info@parishofbengeo.com and let us know when you'd like to come.**

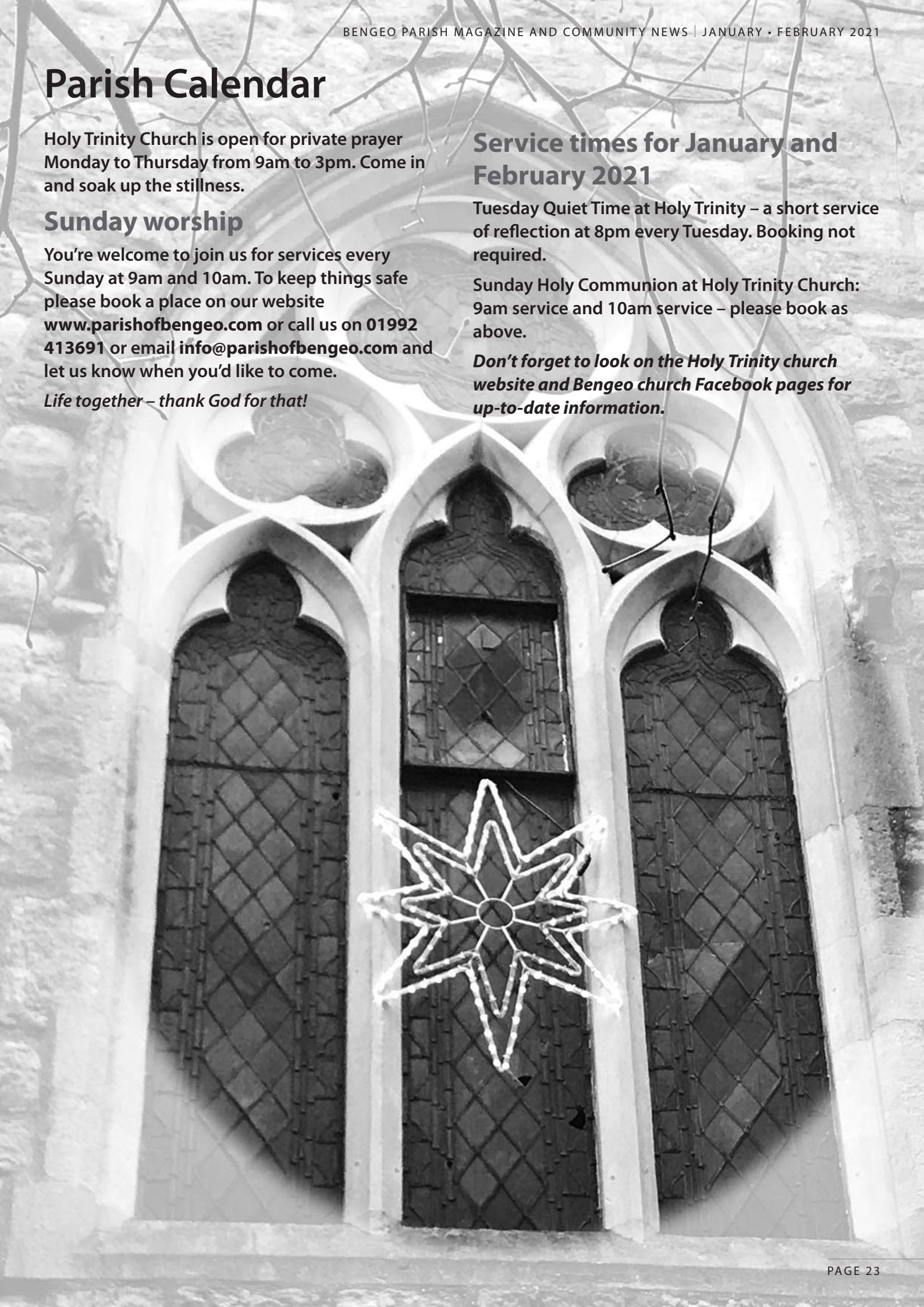
***Life together – thank God for that!***

## Service times for January and February 2021

**Tuesday Quiet Time at Holy Trinity – a short service of reflection at 8pm every Tuesday. Booking not required.**

**Sunday Holy Communion at Holy Trinity Church: 9am service and 10am service – please book as above.**

***Don't forget to look on the Holy Trinity church website and Bengeo church Facebook pages for up-to-date information.***



# Parish Prayers

## Prayers in January

1. The Archbishop of Canterbury
2. Christians in Sport
3. The Year Ahead for Bengeo 2021
4. Cumberland Close
5. The Homeless, those who beg on the streets
6. Christians in Lebanon
7. HMP Altcourse, Merseyside
8. Local Planning and Land Use
9. Christian Aid
10. All who are seeking Baptism
11. Danesbury Park
12. Christians in Nigeria
13. The Society of Friends in Hertford
14. HMP Ashfield, Gloucestershire
15. Hospital Chaplaincy Service
16. Young people seeking work
17. The 9am Morning Service at Holy Trinity
18. Hertford and District Churches Together
19. Desborough Close
20. St Joseph's Church, Hertford
21. HMP Askham Grange, North Yorks
22. St Andrews Church, Hertford
23. All Saints Church, Hertford
24. The 10am Morning Service at Holy Trinity
25. Dimsdale Street
26. Hertford Baptist Church
27. St Mary's Church, Hertingfordbury
28. HMP Bedford
29. Birmingham Cathedral 1715
30. The Village Churches of Bramfield, Stapleford, Waterford and Watton at Stone
31. The Village Churches of Bayford, Brickendon and Essendon

## Prayers in February

1. Holy Trinity Church PCC
2. The Methodist Church, Hertford
3. Christians working in Somalia
4. HMP Belmarsh, London
5. Future Hope, working with young people
6. HM the Queen, her family and advisers
7. The Archdeacon of St Albans
8. Duncombe Road
9. Hertford Team Ministry
10. Hertford Town Council
11. HMP Berwyn, Wrexham
12. Age UK charity shops
13. The Hertford and Ware Foodbank
14. Those we love
15. Bible Reading Fellowship
16. Isabel Hospice, Welwyn Garden City
17. The Start of Lent, Ash Wednesday
18. HMP Birmingham
19. The Wellbeing Church, Hertford
20. All who work for the NHS
21. Amnesty International, all who are held hostage
22. Duncombe Close
23. Local community groups and associations
24. Christian churches in India
25. HMP Brinsford, Staffs
26. Bristol Cathedral 1877
27. Local shops, clubs and pubs
28. Holy Trinity online, our web and Facebook pages

# Church Contacts

**Team Vicar**
**The Reverend Robert Thompson**
**The Rectory, Byde Street, Bengeo, SG14 3BS**
E: **info@parishofbengeo.com**
T: **01992 413691**

**Associate Priest**
**Fr. David Pepper**
T: **01992 314012**

**Reader**
**Bob Kelly**
T: **01763 274653**

**Churchwardens**
**Diana Howarth**
T: **01992 587292**
**Graham Squires**
T: **01992 553465**

**Parochial Church Council**
*Chairman:* **Rev Robert Thompson**
*Honorary Secretary:* **David Greely**
T: **01920 412485**

**Director of Music and Organist**
**Dr Andrew Sentance**

**Assistant Organist**
**William Sarjeant**

**St Leonard's Church**
Friends of St Leonard's
*New Member Secretary:* **Sue Patterson**

**Addresses**
**Holy Trinity Church**
**New Road, Hertford SG14 3JJ**
**St Leonard's Church**
**St Leonard's Road, Bengeo, SG14 3JW**

# Local Contacts for Help and Advice

## Bengeo Residents Support Network Against Coronavirus

Many volunteers from Bengeo and the vicinity are offering help and support to vulnerable neighbours. Ring **01992 230155**. Call if you need food or other items, information or just for a chat.

There is a Facebook group to get help or to volunteer: **www.facebook.com/groups/bengeo.residents.against.coronavirus**

Below are links to local services that Herts CC have sent out about the coronavirus assistance.

**Medical and Health Advice**
**www.nhs.uk/coronavirus**

**Information about local council services**
**www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus**

**Domestic Abuse**
**www.sunflower.org**

**Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline**
**0808 808 8088**
[Freephone Monday to Friday, 9am–9pm Saturday/Sunday 9am–4pm]

## Financial Advice

**Money Advice Unit**
**www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/benefits**

**Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Service**
**03444 111 444**

**National Debtline**
**www.nationaldebtline.org**
**0808 808 4000**

## Advice on avoiding scams

Sign up for scam alerts from trading standards
**www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/updateme**

**Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline**
**0808 223 1133**

If you are interested in volunteering
**www.thvolunteering.org.uk**

HertsHelp **0300 123 4044**

## Mental Health Advice and Support

**Herts Mind Network**
**www.hertsmindnetwork.org**
**020 3727 3600**
**0300 777 0707** [8am–7pm]
Nightline: **01923 256391**

## Emotional Support and Practical Help

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