

JANUARY • FEBRUARY 2022

Bengeo Magazine

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF BENGEO, CHAPMORE END AND TONWELL



On the Doorstep



Roe Deer



Shadows, Bengoe



Snowdrops, Sacombe



Lesser Celandine, Bengoe



Poplar or Crack Willow, Hartham



Silver Birch, Waterford Heath



Daisy, Bengoe



Catkins



Misty morning, High Cross



Misty field, Bengoe

Bengeio Parish Magazine and Community News



Happy New Year!

Despite the ongoing Covid restrictions there are green shoots appearing 'On the Doorstep' as Bridget Hersant has shown in the photos opposite and in her article.

The Hertford Yarnbombers (Secret Society of Hertford Crafters) have gone from strength to strength and treated us to their ever more inspired Post Box Toppers which you can see on the back and inside covers. They have scored success in fundraising and in becoming known in the national media. Not such a secret Society after all!

Clive Fleming writes about how we can all help conserve our local Swift population by knowing more about these fascinating birds and by putting up nest boxes to encourage them to breed.

The Editorial Team

The views expressed by the contributors are not necessarily those of the Editorial Team or the PCC. Whilst every care is taken, we cannot be responsible for the action of any of the contributors or advertisers in this magazine.

Front cover: Holy Trinity Church, Barry Goodey, BG Drones
Inner front cover: 'On The Doorstep' photographs by
Bridget Hersant

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Editorial Team

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Helping Hertford's Swifts



Swifts are amazing birds that come here for 3 months every Summer (migrating to and from the Congo and Southern Africa), nesting in nooks and crannies – often under the eaves – in our buildings.

Parties of birds flying fast and low around Hertford rooftops have long provided a fantastic Summer spectacle. They are among the fastest birds – reaching 70mph in level flight.

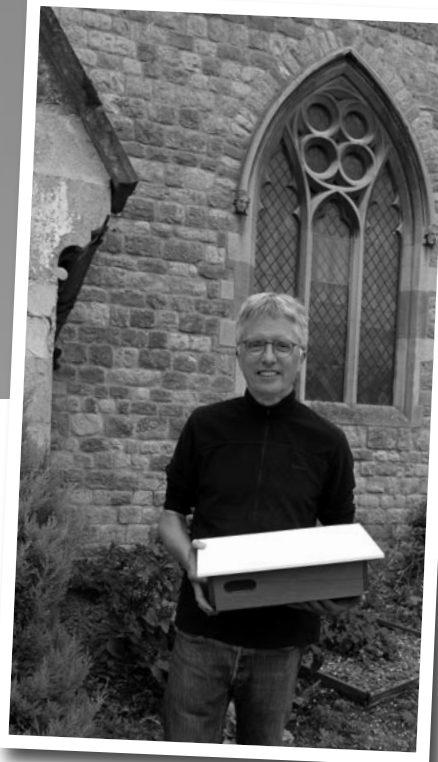
The Swifts are in the Apodidae bird family (which also includes Hummingbirds). Apodidae translates as 'footless'. Swifts in fact have tiny feet but these are little used as they do not perch (unlike Swallows and House Martins which look similar but are not actually related). Swifts live – feeding, sleeping and even mating – in the air. They only leave the air to go to their nests, and they do not do this until they are three or four years old!

Sadly, Swift numbers are in steep decline (~50% in 25 years) due to a number of factors including the reduction in nesting sites as older buildings are modernised or demolished, and the reduced numbers of insects that are their food.

The Hertford Swift Group is working with interested people and organisations to try to help build their numbers up again. This includes commenting on

new building developments with a view to getting Swift bricks or other integrated nest boxes included in plans, and providing nest boxes in suitable places on buildings across the town.

Swifts like to nest near to one another, so it makes sense to locate boxes in areas where there are still nests – St Andrews Street, Cowbridge and Port Vale for instance in central Hertford still have Swifts, and the Kingsmead allotments area is also good.



In Bengeo, houses in and around Gosselin Road have eaves perfectly suited for these birds and they can be seen well at Holy Trinity Church. So it was great news when the church agreed to have boxes installed. Thanks to Vicar Robert and to churchwardens Diana and Graham for their support on this. The boxes were thankfully(!) put up by steeplejacks at the end of July. Fingers crossed that they will have Swift residents before too long.

If you would like to find out more about Swifts and their

conservation in Hertford and elsewhere, and about how you can help, I will be giving a free talk at Bengeo Church Hall in Duncombe Road on 16th February at 7pm. Please contact me by emailing **HertfordSwifts@gmail.com** or phoning **07954 727133** if you would like to come.

I will also be organising Swift walks in the Summer to watch the birds and to look for nests. If you are interested in putting up boxes and attracting Swifts I am happy to advise at any time, so please do get in touch. In the meantime, there will be updates on work around Hertford on our Facebook page: **<https://m.facebook.com/HertfordSwifts/?ref=bookmarks>**.

Hope to see you on the 16th February at 7pm in the Church Hall.

Clive Fleming
Hertford Swift Group

Secret Society of Hertford Crafters' Christmas yarnbombing event



Photographs: SSOHC

The Secret Society of Hertford Crafters (SSOHC) returned to bring Christmas spirit to Hertford and Ware residents, shoppers and businesses, while also raising money for the local branch of Samaritans.

SSOHC has yarnbombed 42 Royal Mail Postboxes with festive toppers: 27 in Hertford, 12 in Ware, 1 in Hertford Heath, 1 in Watton at Stone and 1 in Van Hage Garden Centre, with the locations of them on their website www.ssohc.co.uk.

For 2021, the festive designs feature gigantic festive Christmas Baubles, on top of the postboxes, with a surprise inside each bauble.

Hiding inside each bauble is a miniature mouse-themed scene. Each scene can be viewed through a mouse hole, cut into the bauble.

Some of mouse themes include:

- Brambly Hedge Mice, celebrating 40 years of publishing the 'Brambly Hedge' series of children's books
- Mice postmen, with thanks to all the Postal Workers and Royal Mail, for supporting SSOHC over the years

- Mice choristers in Church
- Samaritans Mice hard at work
- Mexican Mice
- Mice on a train (outside Hertford East Station)
- Mice shepherds and sheep
- Mice making a Christmas pudding

Photographs of all the baubles are shared over the festive period, on their website and social media channels.

"As yarnbombing by its nature is secretive and anonymous, it also feels slightly naughty going out in the dark to erect giant baubles on Postboxes – you don't get that many chances, especially later in life to be a bit naughty," said fellow yarnbomber, Anne Haworth.

"I am amazed at the skills I have learnt and re-learnt, working on our team's bauble. It's really taken me out of my crafting comfort zone. I have re-learnt how to use Plaster of Paris and papier mâché, I've learnt how to saw plumber's plastic piping and use more types of glue than I thought existed. The new craft skill I loved using most was découpage –

glueing tissue paper and patterned napkins to the inside of my bauble, creating a wonderful decorated effect," said Jo Baily.

The 160 strong group split into small teams with a co-ordinator for each postbox topper who manages their own team, with smaller meetings making it easier to manage any cover-related issues.

"Not everybody does everything, some may knit a few squares, but it's a nice group with no one pressured into making 300 mice or even 1 mouse," she adds.

The designs change each year, and this year inspiration came from a crocheted bauble large enough to walk into which was sent into the group, and from there that became the Christmas bauble idea for this year.

For commuters coming into town, the baubles brighten their mornings.

"When they come into work in the morning, that's the first thing they see while stuck in traffic, and seeing the bauble, and then coming closer, walking or posting a letter and seeing what's inside," said Jo.

Between 2017 and now numbers have grown from 20 people in the first year, to numbers being boosted during the 100th year anniversary of the end of WW1 which adorned Hertford Castle in poppies, to 160 members now.

The troop of yarnbombers are predominately women, with little success enrolling willing men, however the men involved are often partners working behind the scenes to do things such as wood cutting for props and tree cones for last year's projects.

"We have such a nice team, everyone's contribution is absolutely valued from knitted squares to making the infrastructure, so many people do so many different things, it's nice it's worked out that way," she said.

Recent media exposure has raised questions by some regarding how 'secret' the society is, but for them, it's all necessary to raise my money for good causes.

"It's nice to get the exposure [in national media] because we're raising funds for charity.

We are a secret society, and the bits that are secret are what, where and when we do it," she says.

"Proper yarnbombing is: 'one day it's not there, and one day it is', with surprise and delight, and feedback on social media. It spreads the joy, it's lovely and we don't want crowds," she continues.

After the festive season is over, the baubles are auctioned off to raise more funds for charity.

Carrie Bone



BAG ladies exhibit at Watermill Lane Scout Hut

We were delighted to welcome the Bengo Art Group ladies, Donna Chamberlain, Jill Rolfe, Angela Roberts and Jenny Stratfold at the end of November to the Scout Hut in Watermill Lane. Their artwork is of a tremendous standard with lots of images of the local area, animals and the natural world. They transformed the hall into an art gallery and there were lots of visitors and sales despite the terrible weather. Delicious homemade cakes were also available.

We would like to thank them for using our new community hall and raising £380 for us to continue improving the facilities at the hut.

If you are interested in having an event at the Scout Hut please contact me, Barbara Kiln on 01992 552562.

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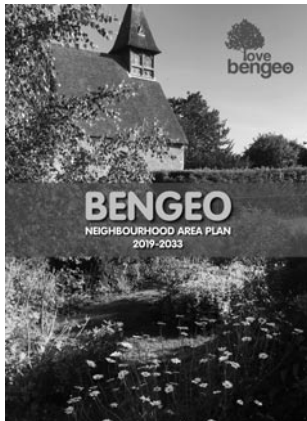
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BNAP Update

Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan



It has been a busy month for the Neighbourhood Plan team. We have had a couple of planning applications to comment on and we have been discussing how to take forward the community garden – see Veronica's report below. Part of this is setting up a charity to help with fundraising for community projects coming out of the neighbourhood plan.

Courtyard Arts extension

Courtyard Arts Centre in Port Vale have submitted a planning application for a 'single storey rear extension and single storey partially glazed infill extension'. The aim of the extension is to provide a space for a reception area and cafe as well as a clay studio.

Plan Policy HBC4 states that 'Proposals for the development and expansion of cultural facilities will be supported, subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the development plan'.

We judged that the extension is a great addition to Courtyard Arts and supported the application. We suggested the addition of cycle racks and swift boxes. We noted the loss of 6 parking spaces but Courtyard Arts have assured us that this will not affect public parking allocation. Planning permission has now been granted for the extension.

Thank you, Andrew

Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan want to recognise the huge contribution of Andrew Stevenson to both the Neighbourhood Plan and the area generally. Andrew was a great campaigner on Stop Bengeo Quarry and his contribution was important to the overall success of that campaign. He has also made many other important contributions including helping with the purchase of Beane Marshes. Although Andrew is no longer a County Councillor he is still active on the Neighbourhood Plan committee.

Bengeo Community Fund

We have been ploughing through acres of documentation on the Charity Commission website and creating a governing document to set up a charity for fundraising for community projects. Veronica has also set in train the process to open a bank account. We have approached several people to be trustees on the charity (and are looking for more), but we still need a treasurer. So, if you are community minded and have financial skills this would be a small commitment – probably quarterly meetings and an annual set of accounts. If you are interested in being a trustee or treasurer, please contact me John Howson on johnhowson@gmail.com.

7 Cowbridge

The former Bob Mills Motorcycle shop has fallen into disuse and there is a planning application 3/21/2821/FUL to convert this Grade 2 listed building into a four-bedroom house. We generally approve the planning application to prevent this property falling into decay and potential dilapidation.

John Howson



Bengeo Community Garden

Local residents and visitors to Duncombe Hall may have noticed some small changes to our community garden in waiting.

As we make progress in gaining charitable status for Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan projects (including the garden) we want to keep the site litter free and as open as possible.

Our first litter pick last month reaped a bumper bundle of bottles and food wrappers but we also made time to remove the fresh growth of ivy trying to strangle the trees. We've deliberately left some ivy on the fences, for now at least, as it can act as shelter for small birds.

Our photo shows local councillor Ben Crystall and another volunteer tackling the site on a very cold day.

Veronica Fraser

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Come and see live theatre at The Little Theatre in Hertford



Did you know that Hertford has another theatre which is thriving while the Hertford Theatre is closed for rebuilding?

Hidden on a narrow alley, on Balfour Street off Port Vale, halfway between Mill Mead Primary School and the Millstream Pub lies The Little Theatre, a surprisingly unknown gem of the amateur theatrical world. With a capacity of 63 seats, The Little Theatre produces up to 5 performances per year and is currently open and performing live. These are two of their upcoming productions but keep an eye on their calendar as they have more till the end of the season!



***Hindle Wakes* written by Stanley Houghton and directed by Jan Palmer Sayer**

Playing Dates: 14th January at 7.45pm, 15th January at 2.30pm and 7.45pm, 16th

January at 2.30pm and 7.45pm and 17th January at 7.45pm.

The mill-town wakes were seven days in summer when "the cotton slaves knew the ecstasy of freedom"; or, at least, the ecstasies of Blackpool. Fanny Hawthorn, the self-determined heroine of Stanley Houghton's 1912 drama, has taken the non-conformist route and gone to Llandudno instead. But has she gone alone?

The play scandalised audiences in London, Chicago and New

York and although it may have lost some of its power to shock, it enjoys regular revivals even today. It was the play in performance at the Royal Exchange Theatre during the 1996 Manchester bombing and the performance with which the theatre reopened in December 1998 after two and a half years of repair works.

***Eventide* by Barney Norris**

Friday 4th to Saturday 12th February 2022

Eventide is an elegy set in the beer garden of a rural Hampshire pub, and tells the story of a disappearing England, set against the background of a funeral and a wedding, one year apart.

We meet three people, each at a juncture in their lives, uncertain of the way forward. John is a landlord forced to sell up; Liz a church organist that can't get a gig; Mark takes what work he can to pay the rent.

Their tales unfold round the back of The White Horse pub on the edge of The New Forest.

Replete with truthful, poetic dialogue and peppered with sharp humour and bad 'dad' jokes that prompt genuine belly laughs, it's perfectly suited to the intimacy of the Little Theatre.

'It captures all the still sad music of humanity.' The Guardian.

Tickets priced £14 for members, £17 for non-members and £14 for non-members children are available from Ticket Source (link available from our website www.cops.org.uk or our Facebook page).

Courtyard Arts

Courtyard Arts exhibitions at the Gallery in Port Vale.



BREAKING DOWN WALLS – HRC Photography HNC and Art & Design HND Students

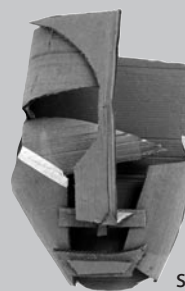
11th January–22nd January

A selection of photography and fine art pieces from both the HND Photography and HND Art and Design students from Hertford Regional College.

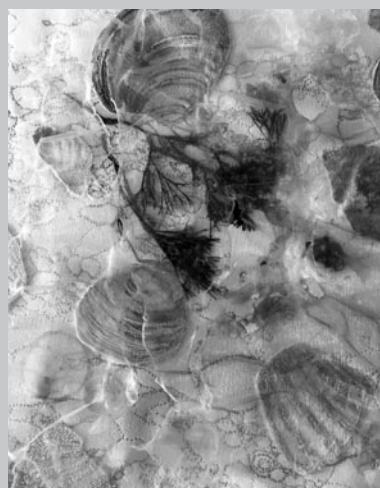
UNPACKED – University of Hertfordshire BA (Hons) Fine Art Students

25th January–5th February

Each artist has been given an identical cardboard box and the simple brief to transform it into whatever they choose. The scope of the metamorphosis is limited only by the



artist's imagination. Each mundane cardboard box is 'unpacked': its myriad potentialities are explored, and it is transfigured into something extraordinary.



A SENSE OF PLACE – Eastern Region Textiles Forum

8th February–th March

All our exhibitions are free to attend.

Gallery Opening Times: Tuesday to Saturday 10am–4pm.

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Bengeo Lunch

'Let's do lunch!' our Monday Lunch Club in the Church Hall is a great success. Why not bring someone who'd appreciate a trip out and a chat? Invite a neighbour as your guest or just bring yourself if you'd prefer someone else to do the cooking for a change.

Coming together for food and fellowship is something that Bengoe Church does especially well, whether it's bread and wine on Sunday morning or a three-course meal for just £15 on a Monday afternoon every fortnight in the Church Hall, Duncombe Road. Come and join us. Book on 07887 543464.

The Community Craft Club

Until lockdown in March 2020 we were meeting on Wednesdays once a month in the Church Hall in Duncombe Road from 10am until noon. We would each bring our own craft to enjoy whilst chatting and enjoying a hot drink. Projects included, but were not limited to, painting, drawing, knitting, sewing, tapestry, patchwork, card making, and new to 2022 will be model making. We are all happy to share skills and techniques but don't worry if you cannot think of anything to bring just come for the good company, the hot drinks and the biscuits! We take a small charge of £1.00 per person to cover costs.

The Craft Club started with just a few of us in 2013 and gradually grew to 17 members which is why I have recruited a small team to help set up the tables and chairs and serve drinks, etc. (Extra help is always welcome).

I am looking forward to restarting the club on Wednesday 12th January 2022 and hope to see many crafters in the Hall at 10am that morning. The meetings will be on the second Wednesday of each month again.

As soon as you get your 2022 diary, please mark these dates 12th January, 9th February, 9th March, 13th April, 11th May, 8th June, 13th July, 10th August, 14th September, 12th October, 9th November and 14th December.

Gail Cramphorn

On the Doorstep



The months of January and February can seem a dull and uninspiring time, with the trees bare and the flowers seemingly gone. However, there are plenty of natural things to hear, see and look forward to in these months, with their crispy, misty mornings and evenings.

The branches of the trees stretch upwards creating amazing patterns against the winter sky like the twiggy branches of the Silver Birch or the majestic Oak. On a crisp sunny day you might see the orangey, red branches of the Silver Poplar, Crack Willow or the bright yellow catkins of the hazel, contrasted against the sky and with the sun low in the sky you can enjoy the amazing long shadows cast over the winter landscape or on a snowy day the branches highlighted by snow.

As for flowers you may think that there would be none but with a mild winter the all year flowering ones like Common Daisy and Red Nettle can be found or some may have overwintered like the Red Campion or Yarrow. Then, as January and February progress the early flowering delicate drifts of Snowdrops can be found or the shiny bright yellow flower of the Lesser Celandine, that tracks the sun.

If you keep a really sharp eye out you might even see a Barn Owl and with the leaves gone and branches bare it maybe easier to spot deer like Muntjac, Fallow and Roe or keep your ears peeled

and you may hear the tap tap of the Greater Spotted Woodpecker tapping to declare its territory.

So far from dull and uninspiring these months offer a wealth of nature right on our doorstep waiting for us to discover and enjoy.

Happy New Year!

Bridget Hersant



The Children's Society

We are very pleased to say that our fundraising this year has been very successful, following 2020

when due to Covid we were unable to organise events.

Our Garden Party in July was an enjoyable occasion although limited in numbers due to Covid restrictions. The house box collection this autumn was generously supported and our Christingle Service was delightful as ever, led by Robert with music from Anne and Andrew Sentance. It was attended by over fifty people and raised the marvellous sum of £281. Thank you to all who supported us and to my group of ladies who assembled the Christingles beforehand. We were very grateful to the Co-op for donating the oranges this year.

The grand total raised during this year was £2,241, which is quite staggering due to some Covid restrictions still being in place.

We are so appreciative of all the support we receive in raising funds for the invaluable work of the Children's Society.

A special prayer

Heavenly Father we pray for all who support or work for The Children's Society in any way; keep us close to the love and mission of your son and to his special regard for children; give us eyes to see the plight of others, give us hearts to respond to the needs of others, give us hands to act in the service of others; through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen

Many thanks

Happy New Year

Libby and Peter Shillito

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Bengeo Ladies' Circle

Meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month.
Contact Ann Kelley on 01992 586280 for details.

.....

Bengeo Afternoon WI

Meets on the first Wednesday of every month.
Contact Val Worboys on 01992 730565 for details.



Tonwell School News



We are very excited to confirm that the formal consultation for federation is completed and Tonwell will be formally federating with Thundridge School from 1st April 2022. The two schools will have one overarching Governing Body and share an Executive Headteacher.



Our school has signed up to take part in the Queen's 'Tree-bilee'. To celebrate her jubilee next year, the Queen has asked that organisations get involved in tree planting. Tonwell has had 30 trees delivered. Older children helped plant trees in the school grounds, and also in the field opposite so that our whole community can benefit from this wonderful project.



Our Friends of Tonwell Fete has gone virtual. We are asking for families to 'Buy us a Book' from our Amazon wishlist, as this is what funds raised would have contributed towards. All books purchased will be used in the children's reference library to support their wider curriculum learning. <https://amzn.to/3xncqqh>

Our history timeline has been installed in the library area. It is personalised to our school's curriculum showing all of the topics our children learn and is

helping us all develop our knowledge of chronology.

A reminder that we have been chosen as a Co-op community fund for the next 12 months. Our cause number is 55334 and anyone with a Co-op membership card living within 15 miles of us can choose us to donate to. Please tell your family and friends!



Our junior children have been taking part in the Dragon's Apprentice Project raising money for the Hertford and District Food Bank. They designed Christmas decorations using natural materials gathered from our Forest School. Today, they made over £150

selling them at Asda, Ware. They'll now be selling even more at the school gates. In January, they will present their project to the board of local 'dragons' Well done children!

Thank you to those of you who are following us on Instagram and liking our posts. It's lovely to be able to share the children's learning with you and promote our school.



Tonwellstmarys

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

As Christmas approaches, a primary school is one of the most joyful places you can be: filled with the sound of singing and people who are excited and eager about the weeks ahead. We are very much looking forward to our 'Carols round the Christmas Tree' events and our Christmas lunch.

We have been talking about the British Values of respect and tolerance and hope that we can demonstrate acceptance as we show friendship to those similar and different to us. As a school we have been thinking about showing this love and respect through small kindnesses to each other. That may be a smile, a kind word, a small gesture or a helping hand. I am pleased to see that the children have embraced this culture of small kindnesses and have endeavoured to exhibit this throughout their school days and hopefully at home as well.

Some of the activities we have been up to this half-term...

Hertfordshire School Table Tennis finals... Huge congratulations to the girls' team who were runners up and the boys' team who finished 5th out of 12 schools. Both teams were fantastic and showed great skill and determination throughout the competition, the standard was exceptionally high.

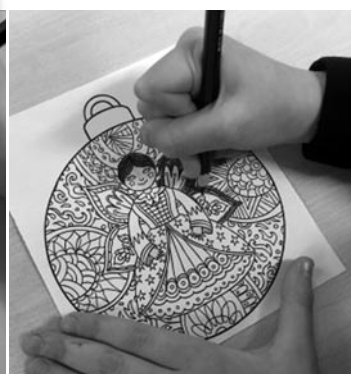


Every 1 in Festival – A great afternoon was had when a group of our Year 6s attended a sports festival at Wodson Park. They took part in curling, stacking, archery and boccia. Well done to you all.

The children and staff had a wonderful day raising money for Children in Need – raising a fabulous amount of £412.18.



Year 4 are creating some Christmas cards to send to local care homes, to brighten up the day of an older person.





Mill Mead Primary School



Nursery have made some super Christmas decorations which went on display in their classroom.

Reception have had a brilliant few weeks and especially enjoyed making decorations! In Maths we have been looking at shapes and have extended this beyond the classroom. We had our own Christmas fete in our classroom!



Year 1 We enjoyed a walk outside and created some pictures from the items we had collected.

We are getting ready for Christmas. We had a lovely time making Christmas decorations to share with the school and also to take

home. We have also had a visit from the Christmas Elf. We looked forward to seeing what mischief he got up to each day!



Year 2 2M recently welcomed the children's author, Alice Hemming. We thought of lots of questions to ask her and she shared with us how she gets her ideas and what inspires her to write. She read her story '*The Leaf Thief*' and we then had a lot of fun having a go at creating our very own leaf thieves. We have since used Alice's book to inspire us to learn all about the autumn and we have then created our own information sheets about this season.



Year 3 In science we have been exploring different types of rock, and even looked at some real fossils!

Year 4 In Science and Design and Technology we have been exploring how the current flows to make a complete circuit. We also carried out an experiment to investigate what materials are conductors of electricity and which are isolators.



Year 5 In DT, they have started a project on healthy meals and looked at where beef comes from, how cattle can be protected and then created posters about this. They have now adapted a basic bolognese recipe to make it more healthy but still enjoyable to eat.

Year 6 The children had fun designing table runners for our Christmas meals and then created some stunning, festive candleholders. We think they were good enough to be sold in a shop!





Duncombe School

An Independent Preparatory
School and Nursery

Little Learners, Big Dreams.

Team Duncombe

Teaching the Future

Little Learner

Future Foreign Correspondent



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Duncombe School

A big hello from Team Duncombe!

Team Duncombe's Eco Council have been extremely busy working towards the Eco-Schools Green Flag accreditation. The topics cover a huge range of sustainability issues including the climate crisis, plastic pollution and biodiversity loss. The council decided on the three topics that they would like to work on: Litter – Reducing litter, which harms wildlife and costs millions to clear every year. Energy – Reducing energy use and investigating greener energy sources. Marine – Protecting and conserving water-based ecosystems. Watch this space for future updates!

Alongside this our Digital Captains have been chosen to represent Team Duncombe in our first international collaboration competition! But that's not all, their teammates are 2 pupils from Cognita Chile! The competition is to work as a team and create a way of helping the elderly understand technology. Team Duncombe's idea will then be submitted to Education Exchange for their international project "Empowering students to change the world". The winners will be notified in March, something to look forward to!

Duncombe Bear once again has been fully involved in Duncombe life this term and has lent a paw in more ways than one. Firstly, he supported the children in their launch of Anti-Bullying Week in November. And what a launch it was! Picture this: the whole school, wearing odd socks, working out to 'Treat People with Kindness' by

Harry Styles. We had an incredible time highlighting this year's Anti-Bullying Week theme: One Kind Word in truly toe-tapping fashion, with our workout-meets-flashmob!

Then Duncombe Bear went on a trip with Year 4 to visit the Holy Trinity Church, Bengoe. The Reverend Thompson welcomed the children and explained the importance of symbols in Christianity. Duncombe Bear then volunteered himself for a mock baptism ceremony to help the children understand the importance of the sacraments in the Christian faith.

Lastly the children have been helping him train for his Christmas challenge! Duncombe Bear together with Team Duncombe's Chef Manager, Michael Goulston, will be taking part in a charity skydive with Thomas Franks Ltd our catering company to raise money for a charity called The Burnt Chef Project. Go DB and Mr Goulston, we can't wait to see the pictures and hear all about the jump!

Santa visited our Treetops Pre-School children and not only spread a little Christmas cheer, but he turned our Forest School into his very own grotto. We've had a fabulous sporting term with wins across multiple sports including winning our first 5-a-side football tournament of this academic year. And we mustn't forget many of our year groups have been on exciting trips, including Year 2 who had a 'giganticus' day at the Roald Dahl Museum.

Finally, we were thrilled to have had the opportunity to celebrate a Team Duncombe success. Our Class of 2020 Head of School, was selected for the U13 Hertfordshire County Netball Team. Well done!

Wow what a term, it is certainly the case that learning really does come to life here at Duncombe.

Team Duncombe

Follow us on social media to keep up to date with all our news and Open Morning information. If you would like to know more about Duncombe School and Treetops Pre-School, please visit our website at www.duncombe-school.co.uk for more details.



A Word from The Rectory Uphill from here

From The Vicar, The Revd Robert Thompson



According to researchers, happiness over the course of our lives is u-shaped. For the average Briton, the mountain highs peak at the ages of 20 and 70, while the valley lows bottom out at 49. So as I mark my 50th birthday this month I am ready to head to those promised sunlit hills of happiness, whilst looking over my shoulder and contemplating what

might have been, the tightening hamstrings and thickening waistline, and the fact that I will never make Archbishop of Canterbury.

Goodbye to all that. If the writer of the famous 23rd Psalm is to be believed, valleys are thick with shadows, a glum depression bedeviled with traps and hazards, bewilderment and deceit. No good place to hang around in. What the psalmist calls the valley, psychologists call a crisis: that creeping, subconscious mid-life stock-take where the over-reaching ambitions we had in our twenties have been passed through the audit of our lives and found wanting; the credibility gap between our dreams and their realization yawns like an abyss. We've been cooking the books of our expectations and now our bodies, our bank balances and our lack of accolades are telling us we've reached our peak and, from where we stand, it's barely a hill.

Dante divines this moment in his *Inferno*: 'In the midway of this our mortal life,' he says, 'I found me In a gloomy wood, astray; Gone from the path direct.' This from the original renaissance man, mature enough to know where he's at and honest enough to admit it's not where he should be. Hence the rush for a way out of the crisis, the otherwise inexplicable urge for a sports car, a visit to a cosmetic clinic or plans for some youth-yearning athletic challenge. If we can't find a way out of the valley, we'll be stuck gazing upwards in grudging envy towards the

blessed doubt-free – the award-winners, the gifted ones, the beautiful people, those who've made it, who've scaled the heights without ever looking back.

Yet according to the research, the joy dip in mid-life affects us all – rich, poor; famous, anonymous; saint or sinner. In fact, the statistics suggest that unhappiness isn't attributable to a lack of material wealth or achievement. It even hints that going through the valley could be the best way forward. Those who make it out are not so much winners as survivors, having examined life and imagined a future that gets their expectations and hopes in line with reality. You should never waste a good crisis.

The writer of Ecclesiastes – the ultimate mid-life crisis manual – famously declared everything to be meaningless and that 'all is vanity'; but he didn't leave it there, wallowing in cool despair. He hints that we have been wired for something else: he

Bereavement Café

Drop in for tea, coffee and a chat

An informal, monthly drop-in for adults who want to meet, share experiences and chat with people who have also been through bereavement.

Hosted by friendly local people, set up by volunteers from Holy Trinity Church, Bengeo

2021/2 Dates: Third Thursday of every month (except August):

16th September	20th January	19th May
21st October	17th February	16th June
18th November	17th March	21st July
16th December	21st April	

⌚ 6:30pm - 8pm

📍 The Secret Garden Café,
89 The Avenue,
Hertford SG14 3DU

For more information
please contact us via
Holy Trinity Church,
Bengeo, Hertfordshire

@ info@parishofbengeo.com

☎ 01992 413691

🌐 www.parishofbengeo.com
/bereavementcafe.php

📘 @BengeoBereavementCafe



suggests that God planted eternity in every human heart, and that a life (or even half a life) lived in avoidance of this is what leads to a sense of pointlessness. True happiness has little to do with 'all things under the sun'; it lies in the unseen.

Behind much of mid-life angst there lurks the need – the want – to be loved. You can hear it in the teary histrionics of an Oscar acceptance speech, you can see it in the middle-aged man dragging himself

round the local ParkRun or crawling home from the BodyFit Boot Camp.

'Do you love me?' 'Will you remember me?' 'Will my life amount to something?' 'Am I a contender?' we ask. Perhaps the real question for someone half way through a life isn't 'How have I done?' or 'Have I measured up?' but 'Who is doing the measuring?'

Happy New Year!

Robert Thompson



For Hertford and District Churches Together, Christmas Alone is just the beginning, the support into the community through volunteer commitment, funding, worship and prayer enables local projects to flourish and gain further support.



The Foodbank Hertford started amongst support and funding from HDCT, ensuring consistent funding and

volunteers, with the URC giving generous space, the consistent enthusiasm and hard work has led to the support of supermarkets, businesses, youth groups and schools.

Youth Outreach initiated by church youth leaders meeting together at HDCT in the mid 80s leads now through to Young Life and Wyld Life, both providing safe space with games organised by enthusiastic caring Youth Leaders engaging with young people meeting in the URC church hall and the Baptist Church, Young Life also work within and with local Schools, time and space appropriate for young people is made for the word of God.

FUTURE|hope

Future Hope provides a mobile safe space for young people who meet in Hartham and Ware, this is an opportunity for young people venturing out into the evening with friends for the first time. Future Hope provides mentoring for young people and parents. Drug education into schools can also be arranged and delivered by Future Hope.

Funding for both groups has been provided by HDCT.

HDCT also give grants to local schools to purchase books or other media to assist with teaching about the Love of God.

Street Pastors have also had success in Hertford and Ware, with a small start-up funding from HDCT ensuring funding from Council and Police sources.

Events for Christian Aid week, supporting one another with collections and the Christian Aid walk ensure that many hundreds of pounds are donated from Hertford into the wider world.

Lent and Easter events are often held together in different churches in Hertford, all these events and initiatives are opportunities to share ideas and develop relationships. Holy Trinity Bengo is part of HDCT.

Parish Calendar JANUARY 2022

Sunday 2nd January		THE EPIPHANY
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 4th January		
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church	
Wednesday 5th January		
1.55pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Thursday 6th January		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Sunday 9th January		THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 11th January		
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church	
Wednesday 12th January		
10am	Community Craft Club, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Thursday 13th January		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Sunday 16th January		THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 18th January		
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church	
Thursday 20th January		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
2–4pm	Ladies’ Circle Social Meeting, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
6.30pm	Bereavement Cafe at The Secret Garden Cafe, The Avenue	
Sunday 23rd January		THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	
Tuesday 25th January		
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church	
Thursday 27th January		
10am	Holy Communion	
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road	
Sunday 30th January		THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST (CANDLEMAS)
9am	Holy Communion	
10am	Parish Communion	

Parish Calendar FEBRUARY 2022

Tuesday 1st February	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 2nd February	
1.55pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Thursday 3rd February	
10am	Parish Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 6th February FOURTH SUNDAY BEFORE LENT	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 8th February	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 9th February	
10am	Community Craft Club, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Thursday 10th February	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 13th February THIRD SUNDAY BEFORE LENT	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 15th February	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 17th February	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
2–4pm	Ladies' Circle, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
6.30pm	Bereavement Cafe at The Secret Garden Cafe, The Avenue
Sunday 20th February SECOND SUNDAY BEFORE LENT	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 22nd February	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 24th February	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Cafe, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 27th February SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT	
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion

Parish Prayers

Daily Prayers for January

1. The Archbishop of Canterbury
2. The coming year 2022
3. Port Vale
4. The Church in Scotland
5. The Church in the Philippines
6. HMP Hollesley Bay
7. Bengeio Scout and Guide Groups
8. Church maintenance
9. The Font and all who are seeking Baptism
10. Redwoods
11. Hospital Chaplains
12. Bengeio Community Craft Club
13. The Friends Meeting House, Hertford
14. HMP Holme House. County Durham
15. The Barnabus Fund for Persecuted Christians
16. Church Cleaning
17. Revels Road
18. Future Hope Hertford
19. The Church in Jamaica
20. HMP Hull
21. Street Pastors in Ware and Hertford
22. Young Life and Wyld Life In Hertford and Hoddesdon
23. Hertford and District Churches Together
24. Revels Close
25. Christian Aid
26. Churches in Bermuda
27. HMP Humber
28. Hereford Cathedral
29. Christians in Sport
30. Bishop of Hertford
31. Rib Vale

Daily Prayers for February

1. Christians in Sudan
2. Our Godchildren
3. HMP Huntercombe, Oxfordshire
4. Local Businesses
5. Christians on Television
6. Our Choir
7. River Court
8. Police Chaplains
9. Christians in Turkey
10. HMP Isis, London – A Young Offenders Institution
11. Hertford Town Council
12. Christians in Politics
13. Our next-door neighbours
14. Those we love
15. Russell Street
16. Christians in Ethiopia
17. HMP Isle of Wight
18. The Children's Society
19. The Herts and Beds Wildlife Trust
20. The Baptist Church in Hertford
21. Sacombe Road
22. Christian Publishers
23. Christians in Uganda
24. HMP Kirkham, Lancashire
25. Peel Cathedral, Isle of Man
26. Local Planning and Land Use
27. The Methodist Church in Hertford
28. Shepherd's Court

World Day of Prayer (formally known as Women's World Day of Prayer) is a worldwide Prayer initiative with material being provided each year by Women from different parts of the World.

For 2022 the World Day of Prayer in Hertford will be celebrated in Holy Trinity Bengeio on 4th March. The service is called 'I know the plans I have for You' and has been prepared by women from the UK. The expected start is 10.30am and of course there will be coffee, cake and an opportunity to chat. All are welcome.

Church Contacts

Team Vicar

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

Associate Priest

Fr. David Pepper
T: 07583 985266

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, Bengoe, SG14 3JW

Local Contacts for Help and Advice

Bengeo Residents Support Network Against Coronavirus

Many volunteers from Bengoe 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

www.hertshelp.net
info@hertshelp.net
HertsHelp: 0300 123 4044

Inner back page photograph:

Lone Oak, Bengoe: Bridget Hersant

Back cover photograph: Bengoe Post Box Toppers

Inside the Elton Road Topper by SSOHC;
all other images 'The Howarths'

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WELWYN GARDEN CITY • 01707 390018

WELWYN • 01438 714686

HERTFORD • 01992 582052

WARE • 01920 468551

LETCHWORTH • 01462 684292

HODDESDON • 01992 471709

HARWOOD PARK • 01438 812515

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