

MARCH · APRIL 2021

# Bengeo Magazine

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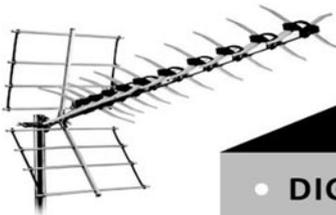


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# Bengeo Parish Magazine and Community News



Photo: Pam Thain.

Another month of lockdown has passed and we have seen more community support for vulnerable families and restaurants and pubs adapting to the new conditions by offering meals to cook at home or delivering takeaways.

Carrie Bone writes about the Jedidiah charity, started by Bengeo resident Cynthia Stroud, which has gone from strength to strength during lockdown and is delivering vital food boxes to families as far away as Enfield. Karen and Adam at the White Lion and those at Hertford are offering much needed food to families in the area. People have been supporting these ventures with offers of produce, groceries and donations.

Street-based social media groups are helping the housebound and those who find it difficult to get out to local shops and now that the Co-op has been closed for refurbishment, the shop has organised a collection service for those who cannot easily get to shops at a distance.

There are some good things to come out of Covid!

## The Editorial Team

*Front cover photograph:*

**A foretaste of Spring – bluebells in St John's Wood, Bengeo**

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### Editorial Team

Items for the magazine should be sent to [magazine@parishofbengeo.com](mailto: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](mailto: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' or pay by BACS to Bengeo Magazine, 20-05-73, 53580091.

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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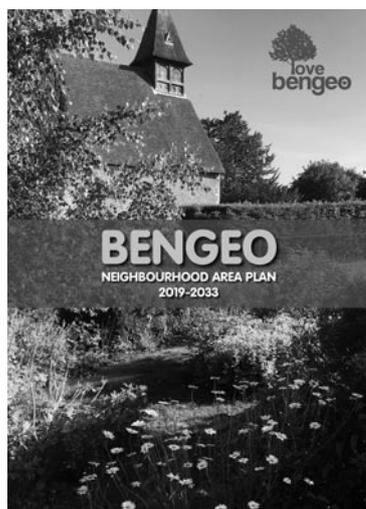
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# Moving towards a referendum on the Bengero Neighbourhood Area Plan



Great news on the Neighbourhood Plan! The independent examination of the Plan (by a Chartered Town Planner) concluded in December 2020. In his report, the Examiner recommended that, subject to his amendments, the Plan could proceed to public referendum.

The Neighbourhood Plan has planning policies on local green spaces, important views, nature conservation, air quality, community and cultural facilities, important buildings, sustainable travel, and residential and commercial development. All the policies have been the subject of extensive community consultation as well as scrutiny by relevant public bodies and organisations.

The Examiner agreed with the community's proposal to give additional protection to eight local green spaces, including Millmead Park, a section of Bengero Field, St Leonard's Garden, and the former railway line near Port Vale. He also agreed with the proposal to give additional protection to eight important views, including several across Bengero Field and Hartham Common, as well as the view across Beane Marshes from Beane Road bridge. Eighteen out of the twenty planning policies proposed by the community were approved by the Examiner (with some amendments). The Plan can be viewed on [www.lovebengero.org.uk/blog](http://www.lovebengero.org.uk/blog). Regular Neighbourhood Plan updates are also available on the 'Love Bengero' Facebook and Twitter pages.

Hopefully, the referendum, scheduled for the 6th May, will go ahead. If we vote in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, it will mean that the planning policies will be given equal weight in planning decisions to the policies in the East Herts District Plan. If the referendum is delayed, the Neighbourhood Plan can still be given significant weight in decision-making on planning applications that are relevant to the policies within it. Recent

Neighbourhood Plan responses to planning application include those for the proposed development of three new homes off Port Hill, and a proposal to extend a listed building on Port Hill. These, and all the Neighbourhood Plan responses to planning applications, can be viewed on the Love Bengero website.

Another update on the Neighbourhood Plan will be given in the next edition of the *Bengero Magazine*.

**Brenda Heninghem**

## COVID-19 vaccination update

The four surgeries of Hanscombe House, New River Health [Castlegate and Church Street branches], Wallace House and Watton Place Clinic have some advice for your vaccination at Hertford Theatre for those in the relevant groups who have been invited to attend.

Arrive on time – you do not need to come early! We will only allow the person who is having the vaccination into the Theatre, unless they need a primary carer. This is to keep infection risk to a minimum.

Parking is at St Andrew's car park; people with a disabled badge can park either there or on the yellow lines outside the Theatre.

Please do not attend if you feel unwell on the day. Contact the surgery to say you are unwell and check if you can still attend.

DO NOT come for your vaccination if you are displaying Covid-like symptoms – a high temperature; a new continuous cough and/or a loss of smell. Ring 111 or go to [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk). Also cancel your appointment.

You must, of course, wear a face mask and keep 2 metres apart.

**No appointment, no vaccination.** We use every single dose of vaccine each day. In the unlikely event there are a few vaccines left at the end of the day, patients who are next on the list are contacted and asked to come to the Theatre for their vaccination.



Before last year, Bengeo Resident, 38 year old Cynthia Stroud hadn't worked in charity before, working as a baker at her cake shop, Pretty Gorgeous Cake Company and appearing on BBC2 and the Food Network as a TV food judge.

Since then, she has embarked on a mission to feed the hungry and her charity, Jedidiah, has been expanding at a rapid rate.

It started in January 2020 when she began volunteering at the YMCA Peartree to help the homeless, after approaching them initially to run cookery classes once a week, "not just to feed them, but to teach them" she says.

"I knew I had to feed people but didn't know how," she adds.

Every Friday, she would show them how to cook and also eat with them, but when the pandemic struck and the country went into lockdown the visits took a hit, from there the idea of a food

parcel came to mind, as she didn't want to disappear.

The food parcels she gave had a good reaction, receiving notes of appreciation.

From there, Cynthia looked for others who needed feeding and got in touch with local schools to ask if they had children who needed a food parcel, and from the reaction of what started as a one off with 100 families, made clear this wasn't the case.

"It became clear the need was there, so I did it again, although I was struggling financially as my cake business and all income was on hold; it was test of faith to do this," she says.

Cynthia tells of families reaching out in desperation to schools, with some head teachers paying for groceries out of their own pockets and realised the need was greater than she first perceived.

"What if I need the money myself?" she asked herself, but she says God wanted her to do it again,

and by the end of September there were 165 families signed up. When the schools went back, it exploded further and continued to grow every week.

In January the most recent lockdown brought on another 1200 families, with numbers now at almost 3500 families being fed every fortnight and extended out into Enfield.

With a growing number of food parcels to package, it became clear that the operation would need to move to bigger premises, having been operating out of Bengeo Club, and taking over the whole place.

"People are extremely generous with their time," Cynthia says, "we have 98 volunteers to help pack and deliver parcels to schools, offering the use of their cars."

Funding initially started from her savings, and by diverting money from her business, before managing to secure some grants with the help of a local councillor, and a kind anonymous donor who paid six months of rent for the charity.

"It was a charity born due to Covid," she says.

"God keeps meeting what we need, it was a challenge of faith, I had 80% of what I had left, income vanished with pandemic and this is what God wanted me to do, I felt sick and cried when I spent the money," she says.

Cynthia recognises that it is important for people who may be in need to remain anonymous, the schools act as a veil between them and the charity.

Cynthia doesn't expect demand for the food parcels to end any time soon, expecting 9-12 months for the economy to right itself.

Not matter what area people are living in, there will be families that need the support.

"So many people are hanging on by a thread. It was a gut feeling, if you read between the lines, even affluent areas suffer the same as non-affluent areas, everyone is tightening their purses and not spending," she says.

She realised that post-lockdown it would be time to look for their own place for the charity, the new premises in size are 8,000 square foot and located in the former STS Tyre Pros building in Fore Street, Hertford.

## FUTURE|hope

We are continuing to support 14 young people through our mentoring programme offering phone calls and distanced one-to-one sessions. We have also started to receive referrals and have a new partnership with a local GP surgery.

Before Christmas we ran a four-week pilot group with 6 young people in Simon Balle School focussing on building resilience. The school were really pleased with the group and we will do more in schools this term. Again, following guidelines for youth work we have been able to continue to deliver detached sessions (basically walking around Hertford and Ware!) to engage with young people that may be out and about and to encourage them to follow current rules but so far, since lockdown, these sessions have been rather quiet. We are still running our parent course on 'The Teenage Years' on Zoom. It works really well and the first two sessions have been full of discussions.

In our last update we shared our ambitious plan to raise £15,000 for our new mobile youth project vehicle. We are very excited as we have secured a grant of £10,000 from Lottery Awards for All fund! We were also grateful to be awarded £1,000 from the Tesco Bags of Help fund to go towards equipping our mentors with new phones, credit and developing resources.

### **Please help us to give:**

- ▶▶▶ Praise for the grants and donations towards the new vehicle and pray that we will be able to find the most suitable one for our work.
- ▶▶▶ A prayer for the young people we are working with in our mentoring, we are seeing lots of mental health concerns.
- ▶▶▶ Praise for our amazing volunteers. Some haven't been out for nearly a year with us, but it still feels like family when we Zoom each other.

# Help for Families



## Your Bengo Co-op store is closed for refurbishment until 11th March

A message from Kim Hale, Co-op Pioneer Member with responsibility for community projects and causes.

During the closure the Co-op is collaborating with volunteers in the area to provide shopping services

to those who cannot get to other stores. You can register for this service if you haven't done so already by contacting Kim on **07815 659816** or Nicole on **07850 807316** or through the established Community Voluntary Service Communities 1st on **020 8207 5115** or email [help@communities1st.org.uk](mailto:help@communities1st.org.uk).

### How to pay

To avoid the need for money changing hands, we've made it easier for those staying at home to pay for and get their essentials delivered with the Co-op Community Shopping scheme. You can purchase or top up the Community Shopping Card in store or by calling **0800 029 4592**. Friends, family or volunteers can use this card to do your shopping in other Co-op stores.



## The White Lion – supporting the community

We have been running the free fruit and vegetable stall at the front of the pub for about 6 weeks now but it started off as a one-time thing as we wanted to say thank you to the people of Bengo for all their support over the very difficult last year.

Many people contacted us directly to ask whether we would accept donations as a thank you. This is not what we were doing it for but after speaking to Debs (at Manic Ceramics) who is running Hertfood we agreed to accept donations and these would be passed on to them.

Since the first day the stall has got bigger and bigger with many people donating veg, fruit, eggs, cakes and their time to help us run the stall. We have also been overwhelmed with the donations we have

received, many people have given us money to pay for the fruit and veg each week along with the donations that have been given to Hertfood which to date totals £1,600.

If people want to donate directly to Hertfood, go to the Justgiving page.

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hertfood?utm\\_term=8x28PNDga](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/hertfood?utm_term=8x28PNDga).

Hertfood also have a wish list on Amazon where people can go and purchase goods that are then sent directly to the charity.

[www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1NX94AW2L0PGU?ref\\_=wl\\_share](http://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1NX94AW2L0PGU?ref_=wl_share).

**Karen and Adam, The White Lion**

*PS: Don't forget our Friday night takeaways.*

# 'Cook at Home' during lockdown

Now that we cannot go out to eat in pubs and restaurants the next best thing is getting someone else to do all the buying, selecting dishes and carrying out preparation for meals to eat in. Some local restaurants and pubs are providing this service and delivering delicious meals to your door as takeaways or all ready for you to put in the oven.

## Lusmanns Restaurants



Although we cannot open our new restaurant yet in Fore Street, we can offer you the best of our meals 'To Go'.

Just click on <https://shop.lusmanns.com> and choose the 'To Go' menus with starters, mains and desserts or one of our fruit, veg steak or fish boxes.

## How our 'To Go' service works

Order online by 12 noon on Thursday every week for collection by you on Friday 12–6pm at our restaurant in Hertford or ask for delivery to SG13 or SG14 on Friday, 10am–6pm



For every item you buy we donate 2p to the Trussell Trust.

## The Greyhound

We certainly are missing being open and serving you all. Financially it is still not viable to keep the pub open but we wanted to remain part of the wonderful community in some way so we recently launched the new 'Greyhound Cook At Home' range, where we provide you with all you need to cook the Greyhound food at home.

Our Chef will do all the key preparation work and then provide you with all ingredients ready packaged and a comprehensive instruction leaflet. Just choose a complete 3 course meal for £30 per portion/person from the Cook at Home menu for any number of people. This will be delivered to your door free of charge to anywhere within a 7 mile radius of the Greyhound and anything over will be a £2 delivery charge.

As The Greyhound is closed temporarily due to Covid, please call our sister pub The Orange Tree on 01279 722485 and place your order by 2pm at the very latest for next day delivery by 3pm. We really appreciate your support as we continue to adapt to these challenging circumstances.

[www.greyhoundbengeo.com](http://www.greyhoundbengeo.com)



# Looking after the River Beane



*The River Beane is a chalk stream and is therefore one of the most valuable river habitats in the world. 85% of chalk streams are in the UK and all need help to maintain their unique habitat and flow. The river has its source near Cromer in North Herts and flows for 12 miles along the Beane Valley past Aston, Watton-at-Stone, Stapleford and Waterford to join the River Lea at Hartham Common.*

## River Beane Restoration Association

The RBRA was formed over twenty years ago initially to campaign to reduce or stop abstraction from the river upstream from Watton-at-Stone at Whitehall. This was achieved in 2017 with Affinity Water reducing their abstraction by 90%. With this objective achieved the Association is now getting involved with environmental monitoring and conservation work along the whole of the river. Here are some of their activities:

- ▶▶▶ Ground Water Measurements. Once a month measurement of the ground water levels in the nine boreholes installed in 1996.
- ▶▶▶ River Wardens. A number of regular walkers send monthly reports about river conditions such as rubbish tips or other incidents.
- ▶▶▶ Invasive species monitoring. Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and Mink are all invasive species. The RBRA tracks the

spread of these and encourages landowners to take remedial action.

- ▶▶▶ River Fly Monitoring. The health of a river can be measured by the variety of species living in the river. Certain larvae are used as indicator species, and the number and quantity of species found gives a reliable guide to the condition of the river. If the numbers suddenly drop The Environment Agency would immediately investigate because it could indicate a pollution incident.
- ▶▶▶ River flow monitoring. This hasn't started yet, but the RBRA have agreed to do this as one way of measuring river improvement once abstraction is reduced.

If you wish to find out more there is plenty of information on the RBRA website at [www.riverbeane.org.uk](http://www.riverbeane.org.uk).

## Molewood Millrace Action Group

Six months have passed since Molewood Millrace Action Group appealed to the Environment Agency over the breach in the bank of the River Beane at Waterford Marsh weir. At that time we asked the EA to take action because of its importance to the biodiversity of the area, its importance to the community as a much loved local walk of historic significance, and the impact the loss of flow in the Millrace had on local business and residents. The

millrace is in fact classed as Main River, and should perhaps be more correctly referred to as the Molewood branch of the River Beane.

The recent prolonged rainfall has further evidenced the need for urgent action as flooding once again threatened local homes. The water through the breach became torrential and already weakened banks were put under yet more stress, causing trees to fall and damage property.

At the end of August the area known as Beane Marsh was formally given to the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust by Save Beane Marshes. The millrace re-joins the River Beane at Beane Marsh and forms a valuable sheltered wildlife corridor connecting Beane Marsh nature reserve to the Waterford Marsh Local Nature Reserve.

Some progress has been made since we wrote to the EA in July. In September 2020 the EA contractors cleared the woodland area and riverbed around the weir and the breach, leaving the damage clearly visible. Up-to-date flood modelling was completed by the EA who concluded that the breach did not increase flood risk. However, the extensive rainfall in early January once again led to severe flooding with residents not receiving a timely flood alert, leaving us to question the accuracy of the model.

In December 2020, the EA wrote to the group asking for assistance setting up a panel to help advise on the ongoing situation and resulting options appraisal work at the weir breach site. The EA is looking to include others in the advisory group as and when the need arises.

The aims of the group, as set out by the EA, are:

- ▶▶▶ To review the specification of work for consultants to carry out a feasibility study of remedial options for the breach
- ▶▶▶ To provide ongoing advice and support for the duration of the study
- ▶▶▶ To help provide information as required by the consultant carrying out the study
- ▶▶▶ To act as a single point of contact and as a conduit for information and communications on the project.

We are in the process of setting up this group as we write, the group currently comprising home owner representation, landowner representation, parish representation from the parishes of Stapleford and Hertford. On Thursday 21st January 2021 key



members of the MMAG met with Ms. Julie Marson MP who lent her support to the campaign.

We would like to reiterate our intention to support Environment Agency action, working with the broader community, to:

- ▶▶▶ re-assess the impact of the breach at Waterford Marsh weir on the area covering the River Beane from Stapleford to Beane Marshes, including the Molewood millrace and mill tail – an ancient water system
- ▶▶▶ restore the breach and reinstate the flow into the Molewood millrace.

We continue to press for action to restore the local ecosystem, remove the impact on local businesses and homes, reduce flood risk and preserve an ancient watercourse and popular local amenity.

*Maybe some of our readers have recollections of the millrace from 25 plus years ago? The MMAG is interested to hear from you as some locals have told us of fishing for trout and pike, whilst others claim it only flowed in flood. They are trying to build up a picture of how it was. Any images of the actual millrace pre-1990 would also be very useful. Please email [TyrerKate5@gmail.com](mailto:TyrerKate5@gmail.com) if you have any historical information.*

# Peter Ruffles has been a local councillor for 100 years!



Peter Ruffles receiving congratulations from Bob Deering.

**This milestone of 100, concocted by adding years spent on Town, District and County councils, is an opportunity for Peter to reflect, with gratitude, on the enrichment which local government has provided for a local lad's life, and to thank Bengo for the part it has played in that enrichment.**

Of course, I haven't been a Bengo Councillor for the whole span of the 45 years on the council, but a good part of it. Over those years I've represented each of the four Hertford Wards, Kingsmead, Castle, Bengo and Sele, and so enjoyed working with communities across the whole of our historic small market town with its great heritage.

I'd just love to live in Bengo! But alas, I don't. I can see homes in Bengo Ward close at hand from my back windows, but much as I love my house and garden here in the valley, I'd really love to be one of the folk of Bengo. So that's why I count it a special privilege to have been elected to shout for Bengo for so many years.

Interest in local affairs has been virtually life-long for me. I have a small red notebook somewhere, in

which, in my 9 year old hand, I've written, as they were announced, the Hertford Borough Council's election results. In 1950 they were declared to the crowd in Fore Street below the first floor window of the Shire Hall. A sizeable adult crowd, rather taller than me, I still recall. I was alone, and keen to deliver the news to parents at home, who were probably not as thrilled by it all as I was! My interest was more in the characters involved in the election contest than in the party politics of the day.

My real key to Bengo knowledge though, was 19 Old Cross, the address of HC Farnham and Son, newsagent. Again, precociously, old Mr Farnham being our neighbour in Hertingfordbury Road (where he had himself been a child in the 1880s) I got to start work, under-age, hidden in the back room of the shop marking up magazines for the 17 paper boys (and occasional paper girl) to deliver on their rounds next day. I absolutely loved that shop. It taught me so much. There was no paper shop at hilltop Bengo then, so that was where most of our big heavy paper rounds were. I didn't come off the shop payroll completely for 25 years.

Once at Hertford Grammar, as a teenager I often spent time in the public gallery when the Borough Council met in the historic court room of Shire Hall. In time, the issues became more important to me, but, precocious chap that I was, I also must have resembled the kind of pop fan (then of the future) trying to get near to the performers, after the meeting as they left, for a word or two and recognition. I blush!

My first real public move on a local issue involved 'tactics' and the assembling of a team of those better qualified and able to make the case. I was a senior pupil at Hertford Grammar School, soon to become Head Boy, when the news broke about the plan to

build a 'Relief Road for Hertford'. The grand drive to the school with its fine, broad, grass borders from Castle Street would be lost. Two subways would be needed to reach the front steps to the building. There was no organised challenge to the Councils. No Civic Society. I got a team together of better qualified and more experienced men. They were other boys' fathers, and together we made a case for a wider by-pass to protect our school, West Street, St Andrew Street, Castle Meads, and All Saints' Churchyard, and beyond. We failed that time! Gascoyne Way is with us.

Years later, after I'd been elected to represent the Town Centre, Horns Mill and Sele Farm quite a number of times and I felt ready for new issues, new angles, the precocious cheek re-surfaced. I dared to ask my Party to nominate me for Bengeo Ward. It was a cheek, but I knew the territory well, and many of the people. The Party let me have a go. It was a Labour Ward at the time, and being elected has been a privilege I've not forgotten for one moment.

Many years later, with a much happier outcome, has been the saving of Bengeo Field where I was able, as a County Councillor to have many conversations with officers at County Hall to support your Bengeo County Councillor Andrew Stevenson in his work. Currently there is the uplifting work by community members in leading the production of a valuable Neighbourhood Plan.

In between, since being first adopted as a candidate in the then inevitably smoke-filled room of the mid 70s, and today's challenges, there's been endless daily correspondence and matters large and small to worry about and seek to resolve well.

Ruefully, it's a bit of a roundabout currently. I was on the planning committee which granted Waitrose permission to develop at Bircherley Green. Here we are again! When, a bit later as Chairman of East Herts Council I climbed scaffolding and ladders to throw a wreath over the weather vane of the newly built Lloyd's Bank in Railway Street, I thought I was giving civic welcome to a building which would stand prominently for centuries. Little did I know.

### **Peter Ruffles**

*Peter is also a key member of the local Oral History Group. If you have any reminiscences of Hertford in days gone by then the group would love to hear from you. Contact Peter at [Peter.Ruffles@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Ruffles@eastherts.gov.uk).*

## **HERTFORD ARTS TRAIL**



HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL

### **Hertford Arts Trail**

This year's annual Hertford Arts Trail which will run from Saturday 10th April until Saturday 8th May 2021.

Last year over 40 talented artists showcased their work during the Hertford Art Trail. Each artist was allocated a prime town centre location to exhibit and sell artwork for a month-long period. The pop-up art exhibition venues consist of a multitude of town centre retailers including bars and cafes, beauty salons, clothes shops and gift shops.

For 2021, Hertford Town Council has once again partnered with Courtyard Arts to help promote the festival and source artists to take part in the Hertford Arts Trail.

### **COVID-19 Secure Event**

Hertford Town Council and Courtyard Arts are hopeful that lockdown restrictions will ease by the scheduled event date and that visitors will be able to safely attend. In the event of an extended lockdown then the Trail will be amended, for example, by displaying artwork solely in retailer windows or running a virtual event. Event updates will be made online via the Town Council website.

## Giving comfort to hospital patients

These knitted items were sent to the Lister Hospital in the first month of lockdown this year by ladies from Hertford Bowls Club and Holy Trinity Church.

Five large blankets and four lap blankets suitable for elderly patients. Ten small children's blankets, each with a knitted toy. Two pairs of mittens, 68 hats, 62 pairs of mother and child bonding squares and 13 crib blankets for the Neonatal Unit.

Thank you to Eileen and Jim Smith for co-ordinating this volunteer effort.

## Holy Trinity Christmas and New Year Quiz

Thank you to all who supported the Quiz with your help we were able to raise £126 for the Church.

The Quiz sheet certainly got people thinking and we are pleased to say that the 3 winners were Sue and David Kenney, Pam and Roger Martin and Maggie Day who all received their boxes of Celebrations chocolates.

To put your minds at rest, here are the answers:

1. Arab chief: Rattle – **Sheik: Shake**
2. Followed: Religious pamphlet – **Tracked: Tract**
3. Store: Crowd – **Hoard: Horde**
4. Sprout: Slide – **Shoot: Chute**
5. Liquid container: Register – **Phial: File**
6. Committee: Suffering ennui – **Board: Bored**
7. The Bible's first murder victim: Competent – **Abel: Able**
8. Band clanger: Token – **Cymbal: Symbol**
9. Depressed: What the Runaway Train did – **Blue: Blew**
10. One-horse covered carriage: The plant in Plantagenet – **Brougham: Broom**

11. Offspring: Made the tea – **Brood: Brewed**
12. One use for wax: It's above my head – **Sealing: Ceiling**
13. Black and Red, for example: Take by force – **Seas: Seize**
14. Potters' essential kit: Wait for it – **Cue: Queue**
15. Soap: Grain – **Serial: Cereal**
16. Head: Rule of moral behaviour – **Principal: Principle**
17. No loss: Daniel was one – **Profit: Prophet**
18. The way of Tobacco or Silk: Paddled – **Road: Rowed**
19. Storm at sea?: Fuel – **Petrel: Petrol**
20. Lost deliberately: 1 = Seraph, 2 = Cherub, 3 = ? – **Thrown: Throne**
21. Nettle: Apex – **Pique: Peak**
22. Bogeyman: In a nutshell – **Colonel: Kernel**
23. Likely outcome of missing the ball: Forward – **Bowled: Bold**
24. Engrossed: Enveloped – **Rapt: Wrapped**
25. Rose higher: Pointless item carried at coronations – **Soared: Sword**
26. Trainer: Charabanc – **Coach: Coach**
27. Horse headgear: Nuptial – **Bridle: Bridal**
28. Observe: Bishop's Diocese – **See: See**
29. Family Gramineae: Informer – **Grass: Grass**
30. Blow hole mammal: Plaintive cry – **Whale: Wail**
31. Scram: Card box – **Shoo: Shoe**
32. Learner: Light regulator – **Pupil: Pupil**

Many thanks

**Libby and Peter Shillito**



**The Children's Society**

Unfortunately I am not able to give you any dates yet for fundraising this year but hopefully by the

next magazine in May we may be able to make some plans.

Please keep adding to your house boxes if you have them and also keep a lookout for items for our next Bring and Buy Coffee Morning.

Many thanks to all our supporters.

**Libby Shillito**

**Coronavirus has made life hard for many people.**  
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# Bengeo Lives – Charles ‘Kenneth’ Murchison

Mayor of Hertford in 1902, Charles Murchison was born 1872 in London, the son of Charles Murchison, MD, FRS, of Wimpole Street, London, who was personal physician to the Duke of Connaught. Charles was known throughout his life as ‘Kenneth’ and was educated at Clifton College, Bristol, and in France and Germany.

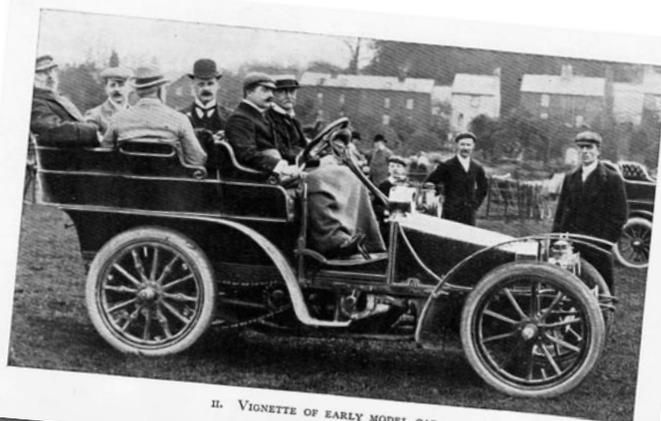
In 1897 he married Evelyn Rowe and moved to Bengeo Lodge. Once in Hertford he immediately took an active interest in local politics and was voted onto the Borough Council to represent Bengeo in 1898 and remained in this role until 1906. During this time he served on the Public Health, School Attendance and Public Library Committees. He was also a magistrate.

He became a motoring devotee in 1901 after a jaunt as a passenger in a friend’s car. He was so taken with his new hobby that he promptly purchased a De Dion Voiturette for 300 guineas. He called the car, Mary, because she could be so contrary. On one occasion when driving through Fore Street an elderly woman, convinced she was going to be killed by this new contraption, lay down on the road to get the matter over and done with!

During his Mayoral year of 1903 he organised the Automobile Club Rally followed by a demonstration of this new motoring phenomenon which he was sure was here to stay. On the 18th of May 1903 there was a rally from London to Hertford followed by a demonstration to prove how slowly motors could go and how quickly they could stop.

At 1.30 the participants together with local dignitaries had lunch in the Shire Hall. This was followed by a vehicle parade where they were driven through the town. The demonstration began in Fore Street with comparative brake tests between a car and Murchison’s own 4-wheeled dog cart with his coachman at the reins. A Lanchester car won the first test pulling up in 15ft 9in. The horse was left far behind, much to the chagrin of the coachman who sourly said he preferred his ‘oss’.

The next competition took place on Port Hill. After careering down the hill at around 30 miles an hour all except one car pulled up within 25 yards. The cavalcade then moved to Hartham Common where drivers were tested for their skills in manoeuvring.



II. VIGNETTE OF EARLY MODEL CAR.



IV. AUTOMOBILE DEMONSTRATION AT HERTFORD, 1903

See page 50.



V. BRAKE TEST BETWEEN MOTOR AND HORSE-DRIVEN VEHICLE

See page 65.



VI. SUDDEN STOPPING-TEST ON HILL

See page 64.

About 1905 Kenneth left Hertford to further pursue his political career, receiving a knighthood in 1927. After the death of his wife Evelyn in 1937, he married Mary Crew, a widow with two sons. He died in 1952.

*The information and pictures for this article were taken from Marilyn Taylor’s copy of Mr Murchison’s book ‘The Dawn of Motoring’.*

**Marilyn Taylor**

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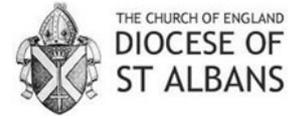


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# Tonwell School News



The start of this year has certainly been very different! We are very proud of the way our children, families and staff have adapted to the challenges of remote learning.

As a school, we are using Microsoft Teams as an online platform to keep our community in touch. Every morning, the children who are working at home log in to see their teachers and classmates and to find out about their learning for the day. They then complete their learning packs, which include a mixture of pen and paper and online activities. Pupils from across the school join together for collective worship in the late morning and then they

re-join their teachers at the end of the day to share their work.

Life is different in school too, with just the children who are eligible attending. They follow the same curriculum as those at home but have the benefit of being able to interact with their friends in person. In school, we have been very fortunate to have a remote session with a music specialist which the children really enjoy taking part in.

Our wonderful staff are continuing to work extremely hard, multi-tasking between teaching on site and delivering live sessions and learning packs. Monitoring their progress is important to ensure that they are getting the best education we can provide in this current climate.

Tonwell School would like to personally wish you and your families good health and cannot wait to get back to normal so that we can share more exciting news in the future.

## **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 you know, the school is currently only open to vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Our teaching staff have been working very hard to provide an excellent remote learning offer to those learning from home, as well as teaching children in school.

Every morning starts with an online 'live' registration and lesson allowing all children in the class and their teacher to see each other and learn together. We have all been so impressed with the

quality of work that children have been providing. Once again, our parents have supported the home learning of their children brilliantly, all whilst running a household, working, and dealing with their own anxieties around Covid-19. A big thank you to all parents from the Bengeo team.

Without all the children, the school is far too quiet. We are missing their smiles, their energy, and their enthusiasm. We are very much looking forward to the time when everyone is back at Bengeo School.

## Examples of children's work: for Art, PE and fun in the snow





# Mill Mead Primary School



Our younger children have carried out a mini project on Homes around the World. We looked at different homes and how they suit the environment, constructed mini houses and mud huts and even designed and built our dream homes, including one made out of Gingerbread!

During Children's Mental Health week, Reception explored the 'Colour Monster' story and practised expressing different feelings by painting, dancing with ribbons and colour mixing water. The children had opportunities to try yoga, meditation and a 'dress to express' assembly, where they were able to wear any item of clothing they wanted. We also made individual 'Happy Jars' to think of all those positive thoughts.

Year 4 recently enjoyed our first wellbeing afternoon. We had a relaxed time creating mosaics in the style of Antoni Gaudi using colourful paper. Gaudi took his inspiration from nature and used vibrant colours. It was lovely to see all the creativity that everyone had put into their art work. We also spent some time outside doing nature spotting. We used checklists of trees, insects and birds and had fun identifying the things we found. At school we

didn't manage to spot any newts or frogs in the pond but we did find a robin and a wren. Children who did this activity at home spotted some really exciting things like muntjac deer!

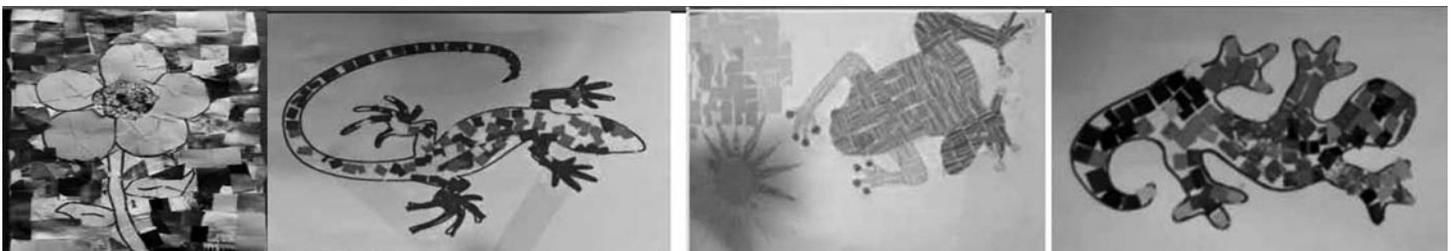
Year 6 have hosted their very own Lockdown Olympics with families all over Hertford competing for the title! The children are also creating their very own myths but with a modern twist. Instead of Pandora opening a box she has released a virus.

Who knew the Greeks would come crashing in so abruptly with modern day society.



## New Library

Watch out for more news of our extended, multi-use, and vibrant library which will help our children develop a lifelong love of reading. The Friends of Mill Mead School are fundraising to buy colourful seating, wall art, and purpose built units at the height and access levels required for the children.





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#TeamDuncombe

## February Wellbeing Calendar

**1<sup>st</sup>**  
Go for a walk or a run

**2<sup>nd</sup>**  
Drink plenty of water

**3<sup>rd</sup>**  
Share a happy memory

**4<sup>th</sup>**  
Try a 5 minute meditation

**5<sup>th</sup>**  
Join our 'Funky Friday Workout'

**6<sup>th</sup>**  
Call someone you miss

**7<sup>th</sup>**  
Bake something different

**8<sup>th</sup>**  
Give a friend a compliment

**9<sup>th</sup>**  
Read a book in bed

**10<sup>th</sup>**  
Go to bed 30 minutes earlier

**11<sup>th</sup>**  
Plan a games night

**12<sup>th</sup>**  
Plan a healthy meal

**13<sup>th</sup>**  
Go on a nature walk

**14<sup>th</sup>**  
Dance to your favourite song

**15<sup>th</sup>**  
Have a video quiz with friends

**16<sup>th</sup>**  
Write a letter to a loved one

**17<sup>th</sup>**  
Try something creative

**18<sup>th</sup>**  
Have a no screen evening

**19<sup>th</sup>**  
Try a new hobby

**20<sup>th</sup>**  
Video call someone

**21<sup>st</sup>**  
Watch a funny film

**22<sup>nd</sup>**  
Share your day with someone

**23<sup>rd</sup>**  
Play a game of cards

**24<sup>th</sup>**  
Try some mindful colouring

**25<sup>th</sup>**  
Plan a movie night

**26<sup>th</sup>**  
Join our 'Funky Friday Workout'

**27<sup>th</sup>**  
Listen to some music

**28<sup>th</sup>**  
Do something you LOVE!

**"Venture outside your comfort zone. The rewards are worth it."**  
Rapunzel





**“**

The addition of live reading sessions during the current lockdown (Jan 2021) have been very welcome.

We feel it's helped with giving our child more confidence to speak in video meetings and present their thoughts and ideas to others too.



**”**

**Voice of the Parent 2021**

*Nurturing young minds through an inspiring education*

**“**

We believe that Duncombe School always outperforms and especially through the pandemic, when we compare your standards of online education to that of other schools.



**”**

**Voice of the Parent 2021**

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*Welcome To*

## STARBOOKS CAFE

**“**

I have been so impressed with the online lessons during lockdown.

Our child has been fully engaged with their lessons and continues to progress well.



**”**

**Voice of the Parent 2021**

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Don't forget you can follow us on our social media channels to find out all the latest #TeamDuncombe news!



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## A Word from The Rectory

From The Vicar, The Revd Robert Thompson

# Human progress: further to fly



In one of his infamous forays into the English language, Donald Trump once expressed his confidence that the COVID-19 pandemic would be dealt with by 'herd mentality.' It wasn't too difficult to work out what he must have meant; in fairness many public figures might have struggled to explain exactly what 'herd immunity' actually involves.

The term 'herd mentality' is one that deserves a bit of attention, though. We deplore people who like lemmings (another standard metaphor, the poor creatures) never think for themselves, but follow the crowd – and we admire those who stand out against the 'herd', find their own path and act on their own convictions. The herd is lazy and dim-witted, and the individual needs to stand up for themselves.

Which is a bit funny, when you think about it. Mass conformity, mass surveillance and the mass market are the background of most human lives – yet it's the lonely individual that grabs the headlines and wins the plaudits. Not everyone is a fan of that, of course. There are forces at work today that prefer we all bunch together and stay part of the crowd – advertising algorithms directed at the herd we want to run with, social media corralling us into non-communicating tribes and twitter mobs.

The idea that humans face a choice between being bold individuals or stupid members of collectives is deeply engrained, and any religious believer would want to question that. I was taught a different way of looking at the world, and I have a preacher to thank for that. His words reached me during a school assembly many years ago, when, of all things, he started talking about geese.

Because geese are not your average bird. Complex mobile patterns are made by flocks of migrating birds, wheeling and spiralling in wonderful interweaving patterns, like a cloth shifting and rippling in the wind, or a stream over stones. They call out to another, their noisy honking an expert form of communication, moving as one, steering

through the skies. If one goose becomes injured and has to land, a few family members will stay with it until it recovers, when they'll all set off together and look for a new flock to join.

Is that 'herd mentality?' Birds and animals don't follow mindless social rules. Their collective life seems to reflect a kind of intelligence that is deeply shared. Each bird in the flock is alert to the movement of the others, adjusts its flight to theirs; somehow, the intelligent awareness of the group produces harmony and beauty; they share out the burdens of their work. Scientists think that geese flying in V formation can fly 70% further than one bird alone; they take turns at the front of the flight to conserve energy and keep going. If life is a work in progress, then geese are going places.

And they have something to teach us along the way. History has long demonstrated the errors of mindless mass conformity, like an army in lockstep. Human progress can take a different form – something more like an attentiveness, one so careful and sensitive that people learn how to flow around one another as they move, not surrendering to something subhuman but rising to a different level of human understanding and action. It could be that of a flock, wheeling and re-forming and moving on in glad responsiveness to one another – in shared and supple intelligence.

I'm not sure that he was ever looking for it, but Donald Trump might have stumbled across an unlikely truth on his way out of office – maybe our ills really are cured by 'herd mentality.' In any case, our human progress will be furthered by our thinking together and acting together in ways that are shared and mutual, compassionate and reciprocal, or at the very least, the honest admission that as a race, we still have further to fly.

Which may be why the bible writers believed God's spirit to have 'hovered over the waters' at the beginning of creation. Dynamic grace is there to follow, like a bird on the wing.

With my prayers,

**Robert Thompson**



Holy Trinity Church  
is open for services  
through Lent and  
Easter beginning  
Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February

**SUNDAY SERVICES**

9am Holy Communion (30 mins)  
10am Holy Communion (30 mins)

Numbers are limited because  
of government guidelines.  
To book a place at any  
service please visit:

[www.parishofbengeo.com](http://www.parishofbengeo.com)  
Email [info@parishofbengeo.com](mailto:info@parishofbengeo.com)

**Or call us on 01992 413691**

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SPRINGS  
ETERNAL**

*'Hope is being  
able to see that  
there is light  
despite all of  
the darkness.'*

Desmond Tutu

# Parish Prayers

## Prayers in March

1. The Church in Wales
2. The Prison Fellowship: [fellowship.org.uk](http://fellowship.org.uk)
3. Christian Aid Climate Justice Group
4. HMP Bristol
5. World Day of Prayer, led by the women of Vanuatu
6. Local sports clubs and teams
7. Our Church online
8. Eleanor Road
9. The Prison Chaplaincy Service, serving all faiths
10. Oxfam Climate Awareness Group
11. HMP, London
12. Mission Aviation Fellowship in Arnhemland
13. Local clubs and pubs
14. Our Mothers
15. Elton Road
16. Prison Fellowship 'Letter Link'
17. The church in Ireland
18. HMP Bronzefield, Surrey
19. Our local doctors and surgery staff
20. Those who deliver home care in Bengo
21. The 9am service in Holy Trinity, Bengo
22. Elton Court
23. Prison Fellowship 'Angel Tree' Support for Children
24. The Mara Rianda Trust for schools in the Maasai Mara
25. HMP Buckley Hall, Rochdale
26. Bury St Edmund's Cathedral, first used in 1503
27. MAF and Christians working in Myanmar
28. The World Health Organisation immunisation program
29. Holy Week Prayers
30. Prison Fellowship 'Sycamore tree'. A victim awareness programme for prison inmates
31. Persecuted Christians in Egypt

## Prayers in April

1. Amnesty International
2. Friends we miss eating with
3. Prison Fellowship Chaplaincy Support
4. Our 10am Service for Bengo
5. The risen Lord Jesus
6. Bengo Cottage Gardeners Society
7. Hertford Young Carers
8. HMP Bullingdon, Oxfordshire
9. Local land use and development
10. Sacombe Road Allotments
11. The Holy Trinity Memorial Garden
12. UNICEF: care for children in poverty
13. The Bengo Coffee Pot return to Thursday mornings
14. Persecuted Christians in Pakistan
15. HMP Bure, Norfolk
16. Bengo Cub and Scout Groups
17. Those who are refugees
18. The Church Hall, Duncombe Road
19. Fanshawe Court
20. Those who are bereaved
21. Persecuted Christians in North Korea
22. HMP Cardiff, Wales
23. Bengo Rainbows, Brownie and Guide Groups
24. Local shops and businesses
25. The Gospel Message in Bengo Parish
26. Fanshawe Street
27. Friends of St Leonards
28. The Barnabas Fund for Persecuted Christians
29. HMP Channings Wood, Devon
30. Canterbury Cathedral, 1077

# Church Contacts

## Team Vicar

The Reverend Robert Thompson  
The Rectory, Byde Street, Bengeo, SG14 3BS  
E: [info@parishofbengeo.com](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus)

## Information about local council services

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Domestic Abuse

[www.sunflower.org](http://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](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/benefits)

### Hertfordshire Citizens Advice Service

03444 111 444

### National Debtline

[www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org)  
0808 808 4000

## Advice on avoiding scams

Sign up for scam alerts from trading standards  
[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/updates](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/updates)

### Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline

0808 223 1133

If you are interested in volunteering  
[www.thvolunteering.org.uk](http://www.thvolunteering.org.uk)

HertsHelp 0300 123 4044

## Mental Health Advice and Support

### Herts Mind Network

[www.hertsmindnetwork.org](http://www.hertsmindnetwork.org)  
020 3727 3600  
0300 777 0707 [8am–7pm]  
Nightline: 01923 256391

## Emotional Support and Practical Help

[www.hertshelp.net](http://www.hertshelp.net)  
[info@hertshelp.net](mailto:info@hertshelp.net)  
HertsHelp: 0300 123 4044

*Back cover photograph: Aerial view of St Leonard's Church. Barry Goodey, BG Drone Shots. You too could have an aerial view on your wall – see Barry's page 4 advert.*

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