MARCH • APRIL 2026

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Bengeo Parish Magazine and Community News



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There is plenty going on in and around Bengeo during the months of March and April, especially with the Arts and Music. Courtyard Arts are inviting local artists and photographers to take part in events, while there are opportunities to attend plays and concerts in the area.

During the months of Lent we are looking forward to Easter when flowers will bloom again on the Easter Cross at Holy Trinity Church. Bridget Hersant tells us to look out for a small but hardy plant, Ground Ivy, which was a traditional ingredient for making soup on Maundy Thursday in Holy Week. David Cramphorn asks us to join the Lent Study on *'Feasts and Fortunes'* and on Easter Monday there is an opportunity to participate in the annual Pilgrimage to St Alban's Cathedral.

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: **The congregation of Holy Trinity Church, Easter 2025.**

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HERTFORD SHOWROOM

Bengeo Scouts Achievements





2nd Bengeo Scout Group have had another enjoyable term. The Beavers have enjoyed designing and making their own puzzles, they have learned about stranger danger from our visiting PCSOs and finished up the half term with pancake making!

This week Llinos and Pauline, our Scout Leaders, stood down after giving the Scout Troop four and a half years of amazing activities and sharing their skills. The Scout Group want to say a big thank you for all their time and fun they have given the Scouts. We are pleased to announce we have found an experienced leader, Caitlin, to take on the Troop for another year or so. At their last meeting they presented two highest Chief Scout Gold Awards to Zoe and Ollie. A team from the troop recently won the Hertford District Ready Steady Cook Scout Team, who went on to the County Competition where they came 7th.

The Cub section came second in the District Swimming Gala at the weekend against other packs in the District.

If anyone would like to come along as a regular assistant on a Thursday evening with either the Beavers or Cubs, please contact **debbie.ryan@hertfordscouts.org.uk**.

Bowling in Bengeo

Some of you may be unaware that, hidden away behind the Bengeo Club on Bengeo Street, there is a bowls green. This is the home of Bengeo Bowls and also the u3a Outdoor Bowls Group. The Bengeo Club offers its members not only the opportunity to bowl but also comfortable surroundings for socializing.

The Bowls section is a friendly group and we play socially on Monday afternoons and evenings in the summer months as well as running our own competitions, competing in a mixed league and playing friendly games against local clubs.

Are you interested in playing bowls but, as a beginner, don't know where to start? We have the answer as we will be having Open Days on 2nd, 3rd and 4th May from 10.30am to 4pm. Do come along whether you are a beginner or have played before. We have bowls you may borrow and we just ask that you wear trainers or similar flat shoes to prevent damage to the green. Alternatively come along on a Monday afternoon at 2.30pm or in the evening at 6pm. You'll get a warm welcome.

Interested? Do give Tony **(07736 436482)**, Rob **(07871 438700)** or Bernard **(07532 117868)** a ring for more information. Alternatively, email **bengeo.bowls@btinternet.com**.





Love Bengeo Community Group update

The Love Bengeo Community Group responds to planning applications when they're relevant to the planning policies in the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan, and we oversee a number of community projects, including the Bengeo Community Garden, Bengeo Mosaic, Bengeo Trails, and Bengeo Front Gardens. Love Bengeo's primary role is to bring all the communities of Bengeo together.

The Love Bengeo Steering Committee includes representatives of resident associations, Councillors, volunteers and leaders of the community projects. We hope you enjoy the updates from Love Bengeo initiatives. If you would like to get involved please contact us on **info@lovebengeo.org.uk** or on Facebook group **'Love Bengeo'**.

Andrew Stevenson, *Chair*, and Aśka Pickering, *Deputy Chair*
www.lovebengeo.org.uk

Love Bengeo Community Group responses to planning applications

Since the beginning of the year, the Love Bengeo Community Group have responded to two more planning applications within the boundary of the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan.

We welcomed proposals to create a new play area in Hertford Castle Gardens, particularly its relocation further from the noise and traffic fumes of Gascoyne Way. We also supported improved access to the gardens for pedestrians and cyclists. A funding decision on the Hertford Castle Greenspace Renewal is expected in March.

We objected to a proposal for development on land adjacent to Footpath 93, a popular walking route off Molewood Road. The proposal to construct a new build house with three parking spaces on this undeveloped land conflicted with the Neighbourhood Plan's commitment to protecting natural habitats.

Our planning application responses are on the Love Bengeo Community Group website and the East Herts District Council planning portal.

Brenda Heninghem



Bengeo Community Garden and Bengeo Front Gardens

It may still be grey and cold but our gardens are springing into life and many local gardens are featured in the Bengeo Front Gardens Facebook page along with seasonal gardening tips. Please join our Bengeo Front Gardens' Facebook group and share your spring photographs.

Our Bengeo Community Garden is no exception as bulbs are starting to show through and the hellebores are a stunning purple. Soon our main growing and flowering season will start and we can enjoy the many new plants there. Many of our newest plants were bought after last year's successful fund raising and some are donations. Thanks to everyone who has contributed in some way. Plant donations are welcome and we work with plant expert neighbours and Mudlarks to ensure that the garden evolves as a haven for people and wildlife alike, by planting native and natural looking plants.

If you would like to help look after and improve the Community Garden we will be starting monthly 'tidy up' sessions from March. Volunteers are sought to carry out basic tasks like weeding, dead heading and watering. You don't need to be an expert gardener and you don't need to come along every month. If you are interested please contact garden@lovebengeo.org.uk. We will also have another Bingo Fundraiser in March – back by popular demand. You can find more on 'Bengeo Community Garden' Facebook group.

Veronica Fraser

Bengeo Trails

Bengeo has historic buildings (including a Norman church), a thousand-year-old Common, beautiful rivers (one of them a rare chalk stream), its own little theatre and arts centre, two

community gardens, and lovely surrounding countryside with beautiful views. Many of us regularly walk, jog and cycle around and beyond Bengeo and the project will share walking trails focused on all that's fascinating about Bengeo.

To kick things off, the Bengeo Trails group have produced four walking trails based around some of the special views, green spaces, community facilities and listed buildings given additional protection through the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan. The first three trails are grouped together and can be walked individually, or as a circular trail. There are more trails in production, on varied aspects of Bengeo, and they'll also be shared. If you are on Facebook, please join the **'Bengeo Trails'** group, and if you have a local trail you've enjoyed, please share it there or email it to **info@lovebengeo.org.uk**. Available now Bengeo Trails are: 1. View across Beane Marshes, 2. St Leonard's Garden, Hartham, and Ware Park Manor Views, 3. Bengeo Field Views, 4. Around Hartham Common, Cowbridge and Port Hill. All four are on the website and **'Bengeo Trails'** Facebook group.

Brenda Heninghem

Bengeo Mosaic



We are thrilled to celebrate the success of the four community workshops, full of creativity, collaboration and brilliant community spirit. All the pieces for Bengeo Mosaic are now in Costello Mosaic's studio and will be assembled and completed by the end of March. We would like to thank everybody who contributed and made this project possible. We can't wait to share what's been created at a special big reveal in March. We are working on finding the right site for the mosaic – we would like it to be in a visible place in Bengeo Street – if anyone is willing to make suggestions or offer their wall, we would be keen to discuss (**info@lovebengeo.org.uk**).

Please check our website or **'Bengeo Mosaic'** Facebook group for further updates.

Catie Geering and Aśka Pickering

Save Bengeo Field Group update

Save Bengeo Field Ltd had applied in April 2025 for Judicial Review of the decision by East Herts District Council to grant planning permission for 118 homes on Bengeo Field. Permission had been refused by the Court in November, but as the case was considered with some merit, SBF applied for a Reconsideration Hearing in the High Court. On 22nd January 2026, Save Bengeo Field Ltd's case was refused and the Judicial Review will not go ahead.



Simon Collyer, Andrew Stevenson and Aśka Pickering represented Save Bengeo Field at the Judiciary Review Renewal Hearing in January 2026.

The main reason why the Court refused to grant a Judicial Review seems to have been that the overall objective of the District Plan was to build houses and so the Developer argued houses should be allowed to go ahead despite quarrying not having taken place. The Developer argued building 118 homes was fundamental to a Plan that delivered 18,458 homes. Also, the Court took the view that Councillors acted rationally based on all the information that had been presented to them.

Save Bengeo Field Group believed that it had an extremely strong case. There was a very clear condition in the District Plan, supported by Statements from the Council in 2017 and 2019, confirming that quarrying must happen first on the northern part of Bengeo Field before houses could be built on the southern part. In Save Bengeo Field Group's opinion, the "subject to the satisfactory previous phased extraction of minerals" clause was misrepresented to Councillors as a "phased approach", which the Council alleged was now no longer "required, necessary or justified". Other material information such as the Bromate Plume pollution and the availability of other quarry sites in Hertfordshire was not even presented to Councillors.

Save Bengeo Field Group would highlight that East Herts Council has been consistently clear that the condition stated in the District Plan was the policy position. There were good reasons for this condition as houses would only be a suitable proposition once the landscape value had been changed by quarrying. It also maximised mineral extraction and importantly allowed for land reprofiling to take place, which would have reduced the impact on the landscape from the quarry and housing.

This was not a case about stopping houses, it was simply about requiring East Herts District Council to follow its own plan, which was made for good, sound and logical reasons. It seems very odd to allow the houses to proceed first, as the sand and gravel remains in the ground. There is still every possibility of quarrying going ahead at some point in the future.

Save Bengeo Field Group will be contacting the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority to share our concerns about the development. These two organisations both originally refused permission for this development.

We would like to thank all our supporters who helped and contributed to the campaign. For further information contact **askawp@yahoo.co.uk**, **www.savebengeofield.org.uk**, or join our **'Love/Save Bengeo Field'** Facebook group.

Simon Collyer

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Church Hall Lunches

The first lunch for the New Year was a Burns dinner, although we had it at lunch time and brought the date forward to Monday 12th January.

The hall was, as usual, warm and nicely decorated with the tables covered in white cloths with candelabra on them. There were carafes of red and white wine and bottles of water on each table, but we were each given a small Whisky Mac to begin with. Very cheering on a cold grey day!

Most people wore something tartan. Richard from the Lobster Pot, who was in charge, wore a kilt and some of the others wore scarves and trousers, and one lady also wore a kilt.

The menu, of course, was Scottish. A very fine soup, followed by Haggis with mashed tatties and neeps, and a delicious pudding. We each had a menu which featured an Ode to the Haggis, which Richard read out to everyone's enjoyment. We finished up with tea or coffee.

The lunch in February was on an equally cold day, but the cheerful hall made a difference. There were the usual wine, water and flowers on the tables.

The first course was Mackerel Paté served with toast. The main course was chicken cooked with red peppers served with rice and broccoli. The pudding was a very good chocolate mousse served with shortbread, then tea and coffee with mints.

I cannot speak highly enough of the service, with cheerful friendly waitresses. I just hope enough people will come so that we can go back to offering two lunches a month instead of one.

The next lunches are on Monday 9th March and Monday 13th April. Ring Claire at the Lobster Pot on **07887 543464** to make a booking – preferably 7 days in advance.

Janet Guilbride

Bengeo Afternoon WI

Bengeo Afternoon WI meets at 2pm on the first Wednesday of the month in the Church Hall, Duncombe Road, Bengeo SG14 3DA.

In February our speaker, Mr R Butler, gave a slide presentation of his 14 day trip around the world in 2000 which he won in a competition. He and his wife and twin brother visited Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon, the Great Barrier Reef and Uluru. Our meeting continued after refreshments when we voted on the 2026 Resolutions that will go forward to be discussed and promoted at the National Federation of Women's Institutes meeting later this year.

At our 4th March meeting we will welcome Ian Pidduck who will be introducing King's Gin and on Wednesday 1st April John McCourt will be coming to explain the very important work that the Blood Runners do.

If these talks interest you, please join us, the first visit is FREE and we can offer a cup of tea and biscuits. Look forward to meeting you. For further information, please contact our secretary, Janet Butler, on 07981 906860.



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On The Doorstep – Ground Ivy

Ground-Ivy is my flower of choice for this issue of the magazine. Ground-Ivy is an unassuming little plant, but it does have a small but rather lovely flower. Unlike its name it is not actually an ivy but belongs to the mint family – Lamiaceae and is part of the dead nettle group of plants. The scientific name for Ground-Ivy is Glechoma hederacea, Glechoma derives from the Greek word gelchon, a term used for a type of mint and hederacea derived from the Latin word hedra meaning resembling ivy or like ivy. The plant has various common names including Creeping Charlie, Gill-over-the-ground, Alehoof, Field Balm and many others.

Ground-ivy is a native of the UK and can be seen in various habitats from hedgerows and woodlands to grassland and waste ground, but it does favour damp shady areas. The plant can grow to 50cm and forms clumps. It is fast spreading. The plant spreads in two ways: one is by stolons, which are overground runners that take root; the other way is by seed. Each flower produces 3 or 4 seeds which are dispersed when the stem bends over and the seeds are deposited on the ground.

The plant is evergreen and has bright green leaves although the young leaves and stem can have a reddish, burgundy tint to them. The leaves are a kidney shape, approximately 2 to 3cm across, and grow opposite each other on the stem. They have scalloped edges and a pleasant fragrant smell. The flowers grow out from the stem where the leaves join, to form a cluster around the stem. The flowers are a violet in colour with 5 petals that form a funnel shape, made up of an upper lip with 2 shallow lobes to each side of this and then a lower larger lip at the bottom. The lower lip has darker markings on it to attract pollinators and the larger lip acts as a landing pad for insects. The plant flowers between March and June.

Medicinally the plant is said to be good for head colds and respiratory issues and the essential oils of ground-ivy have antibacterial properties. Both the flower and the leaves have been used in food, in salads and added to soups; however, it can be toxic for some livestock. The leaves were also used in the making of beer to flavour and clarify it, right up until the 1600's when hops eventually replaced it.

There was a tradition to add the plant to an herb soup made on Maundy Thursday. The soup was meant to bring vitality and good health, to celebrate spring and the fact that green fresh plants could be eaten again.

Ground-ivy symbolises protection, healing and deep enduring connections. In folklore the plant was hung outside houses to ward off evil spirits, wreaths of the plant were put around cows' necks when milked to stop the milk from being bewitched and going off and it was thought that if humans were to wear a wreath around their necks it would give them the ability to see spirits and auras.

Ground-ivy is a pretty little flower with, in my opinion, a nice fragrant smell and when clustered together produce a mat of violet colour and sometimes burgundy red that brightens any waste ground. Indeed, in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*, by Geoffrey Chaucer, he writes and I quote "…ground-ivy that makes our yard so merry". I couldn't agree more.

Bridget Hersant

What's on in Bengeo

Hertford Art Trail 2026

Courtyard Arts is delighted to announce the return of the Hertford Art Trail 2026, one of the flagship events marking the organisation's 30th anniversary this summer. The trail will once again transform Hertford into a town-wide gallery, showcasing the work of artists from across Hertfordshire and beyond in shops, cafés, businesses, and public spaces.

Running from 28th March to 11th April, the Hertford Art Trail offers a unique opportunity for artists to exhibit their work in high-footfall venues while inviting residents and visitors to explore the town through a creative lens. Each year the trail brings together a vibrant mix of painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, and more – reflecting the diversity and talent of the region's artistic community.

This year's trail will also feature a special installation linked to Courtyard Arts' latest members' project, Pick a Card! Members have been invited to select a sealed envelope containing a playing card and create an artwork inspired by it – in any medium, no larger than A4, and suitable for wall display. The complete deck of 52 reimagined cards will be exhibited in the Stables Gallery and form part of the Hertford Art Trail itself.



Courtyard Arts Open Exhibition 2026

Call for Entries

Submissions on 29th and 30th March2026
Exhibition: 3rd April to 2nd May 2026

Courtyard Arts is inviting artists from Hertfordshire and beyond to submit work for the 19th Courtyard Arts Open Exhibition, one of the region's most anticipated annual showcases of creative talent. Entries are now open, with the exhibition set to feature 70–100 selected works across a wide range of styles and media.

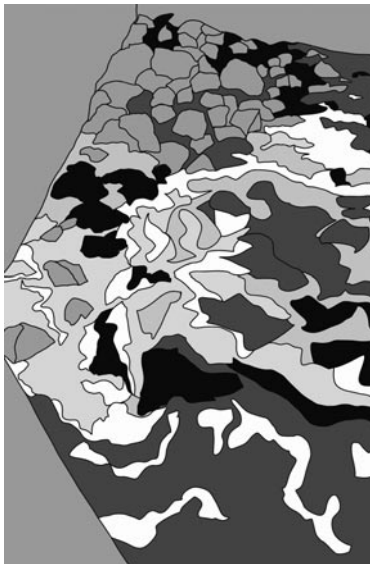
The Courtyard Open has grown into a major highlight of the regional arts calendar, attracting over 200 artists each year and attracting hundreds of visitors. The exhibition celebrates the diversity, imagination, and skill of both emerging and established artists, offering a vibrant snapshot of contemporary creativity in Hertfordshire and beyond.

Artists working in 2D or 3D media are encouraged to enter. All submissions will be considered by an independent judging panel, and one outstanding artist will receive the Courtyard Arts Open Prize of £250.

How to enter

Full details, entry guidelines, and submission forms are available at **www.courtyardarts.org.uk/news/courtyard-open-2026-call-for-entries-2**.

Inspirations: Liz Black



3rd to 28th March, Courtyard Arts Gallery

Inspirations, a new solo exhibition by Hertfordshire-based contemporary artist Liz Black, explores her long-standing creative relationship with St Ives, Cornwall – a place whose light, landscape, and artistic legacy have shaped generations of British artists.

For Black, St Ives is more than a picturesque destination; it is a catalyst for experimentation. Inspirations brings together a series of works that respond to the town's coastal forms, shifting light, and modernist heritage. Through bold colour, sculptural geometry, and a distinctive interplay between digital and physical processes, Black invites visitors to experience St Ives through her own visual language.

Liz Black was Artist in Residence at Courtyard Arts throughout August 2025 and her work continues to

evolve through a dialogue between place, structure, and perception.

Nine Lives in Colour: Andrew Marsh

Until Saturday 14th March, Stables Gallery uses cats to explore mood and emotion reflecting moments of pause, uncertainty or quiet observation.



Love and Hope: Hertford Photo Festival

Courtyard Arts Centre, All Saints Church, BEAM and Go Hertford announce their collaboration on Love and Hope, an ambitious community-wide photography festival celebrating creativity, connection, and local talent running from 5th to 30th May 2026. The event will transform Hertford into a vibrant visual arts trail, linking key cultural venues and inviting residents of all ages to take part.

Event details

Festival Dates: 5th to 30th May 2026. Opening Events: Friday 8th May 2026 – Private View at Courtyard Arts. Saturday 9th May 2026 – Community Day at All Saints Church featuring food trucks, live music and family-friendly activities.

How to get involved

Applications are now open to everyone from local residents, schools, emerging artists, and established creatives, celebrating themes of compassion, resilience, and shared humanity. Prizes will be awarded for those over and under 16 years of age, People's Choice and Mayor's Choice. Adult entry is a donation of £10; children are free. Each person can submit up to 3 photographs on the theme of Love and Hope. These should be delivered to Courtyard Arts by 3rd May 2026.

For more information, go to **www.courtyardarts.org.uk/Love&Hope**.

Live music and local talent

Love and Hope fosters collaboration between venues, schools, artists, musicians, and local businesses. As part of this, the festival will spotlight Hertford's musical community with the aim of creating a rich, multi-arts experience.

The Company of Players

The Little Theatre, Balfour Street
presents

The Deep Blue Sea



by Terence Rattigan, directed by Chris Janes

1st to 8th May 2026, 7.45pm (matinee Saturday 2nd May, 2.30pm)

In The Deep Blue Sea, a powerful account of lives blighted by love – or the lack of it, judge's wife Hester flounders in the closing stages of a hopeless affair. Her lover, a handsome but shallow ex-RAF pilot, is out of his depth in the face of emotions he just can't reciprocate.

Ware Choral Society Spring Concert, 2026

For its Spring concert at the Drill Hall on 11th April Ware Choral Society is planning a treat for lovers of gentle, beautiful music. The main item is Fauré's REQUIEM, a piece which probably shares "choral singers' favourite" with Handel's *Messiah*, but is half the length. It is well known for its sublime soprano/treble solo Pie Jesu, but it is full of glorious tunes for choir and orchestra. Its conception was prompted by the death of Fauré's mother, so it is perhaps not surprising that the piece is less concerned with the dogmas of judgement and punishment (as other requiems) than it is with consolation and release from suffering.

The support piece, *LUX AETERNA* by the living American Morten Lauridsen will not be familiar, but the sound may be: if you think of the most ravishing Christmas choral music you heard this year, chances are it was his 5 minute gem *O magnum mysterium*. A more substantial piece, *Lux Aeterna* was also a response to the final illness of the writer's mother, full of soaring lines and thick harmonies, from which he found great solace and comfort.

Rosie Howarth will conduct the choir and the Orpheus Sinfonia, with soprano Erin Alexander and baritone Tim Bagley providing the solos. The concert starts at 7.30pm; tickets at £20 and £10 for under 18s may be available at the door, but can be ordered from society members, or via **www.warechoral.org.uk**, with a 10% discount for all tickets ordered before 5th March. *(See the poster of the concert of page 27)*.

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Friends of St Leonard's

Spring is here and the Friends of St Leonard's are looking forward to warmer days and the St Leonard's Church summer season. It is early days in our planning, but there will definitely be more afternoon concerts (with tea and excellent cake), our usual summer services, and other special events when the church will be open.

The best way to stay in touch is to bookmark **www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/events-and-concerts-at-st-leonards**. We will keep this up to date with what's going on. You can also follow us on Facebook – search for St Leonard's Bengeo and you will find us.

We love to be able to open up the church to different events and just to let people have a wander around to enjoy Hertford's oldest building. We need more volunteers to help us do this so please get in touch if you would like to get involved. We would also welcome any ideas for events and activities – don't hesitate to get in touch if you have the germ of an idea!

Membership

If you want to get more involved, we would be happy to welcome you into the Friends. A very reasonable £5 for individuals and £10 for families for a year's membership gets you advance warning of our events and more information on what is being done to preserve this important part of Bengeo's history. You can join through our website **www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/friends-of-st-leonards** or just get in touch via my email.

Helen Fleming
Secretaryfriendsofstleonards@gmail.com

The Children's Society

Bring and Buy Coffee Morning

We will be holding a Bring and Buy Coffee Morning on Saturday 25th April from 10am to 12 noon at **No. 1 The Orchard, Bengeo**.

There will be the usual raffle and please do look out some items that we can sell, any donations of cakes and plants will also be very welcome.

We do hope that you will spread the word and come and join us for an enjoyable morning as well as raising funds for a very worthwhile charity.

If you have any queries or would like a lift, please let me know. Telephone **01992 583979** or mobile **07807 349031**.

Libby Shillito

Christmas Quiz 2025

Thank you to everyone who bought the quiz which many of you almost completed correctly. However, three entries were absolutely perfect: Rowena and Cliff in Garstang, Mary and John in Hertingfordbury and Diana and Mike in Bengeo. Well done! The result of all this brain power was £318 for the church funds.

Thanks again to you all.

Libby and Peter Shillito

Christmas Quiz Answers

1. What is the male Honey Bee known as? *Drone*
2. Hermit and Spider are types of what? *Crab*
3. What is another name for an insect's feelers? *Antennae*
4. What name is given to the body a parasite feeds on? *Host*
5. How many eyes does a bee have? *Five*
6. Which beetle was sacred to the Egyptians? *Scarab*
7. What is the casting of skin, hair or feathers called? *Moulting*
8. What is a Gurnard? *A fish*
9. Which bird is associated with Lundy Island *Puffin*
10. What is a Conch? *Seashell*
11. What sort of creature is a Papillon? *A dog*
12. What is the Olfactory sense? *Smell*
13. What does the term Metamorphosis mean? *Change of shape*
14. What is the Humming Bird hum caused by? *Beating of the wings*
15. What is the largest member of the Crow family? *Raven*
16. What and where is Minsmere? *Bird Sanctuary in Suffolk*
17. Give another name for Thunderflies or Thunderbugs *Thrips*
18. How many parts are there in an insect's body? *Three*
19. Where do Lugworms live? *Sand or mud*
20. What is a Dunnock? *Bird (Hedge Sparrow)*
21. Which system controls touch, sight and hearing? *Nervous*
22. From which language does Budgerigar come? *Aboriginal Australia*
23. What do Americans call the British ladybird? *Ladybug*
24. How many wings does a Flea have? *None*
25. For whom is the Glorious 12th NOT glorious? *The Grouse*
26. What is another name for cartilage? *Gristle*
27. How does a Stoat`s appearance change in Winter? *Coat turns white*
28. What is a Mavis? *Song Thrush*
29. What is the smallest living unit called? *A cell*
30. What do polled cattle not have? *Horns*
31. Which animal does the domesticated dog come from? *Wolf*
32. Are mammals warm or cold blooded? *Warm*
33. Do Tigers hunt in packs or alone? *Alone*
34. Which part of a human includes loops and whorls? *Fingerprints*
35. A leveret is a young what? *Hare*
36. What part of a Basset hound is particularly long? *Its ears*
37. Does the Moose live in a warm or cold climate? *Cold*
38. Which primate species is closest cousin to humans? *Chimpanzee*
39. Are crocodiles carnivorous or herbivores? *Carnivorous*
40. Which bear is the largest meat-eating land animal? *Polar Bear*

Bengeo Primary School



Fundraising

The Parents' Association Quiz night was such a fun evening and raised a brilliant £800 towards the All-Weather Running Trail for the school field. For 2026 we have a huge ambition to raise money for the track for the school field and have an ambitious target to reach of a further £10,000 by the summer!

School Garden News

Bengeo Primary School were winners of the Best School Garden award in Hertford 2025! Well done to everyone who has been involved over the last year. From the holiday watering crew and all those who donated equipment, compost, pots and plants. A huge Thank You!

Thank you to the lovely team at Mudlarks who did the judging and presentation of our wonderful prizes. We have been using the tools that we were awarded as part of winning Best School Garden 2025 with Hertford in Bloom, they are child-sized so they are perfect for all our gardening activities.

It has been a long, cold wet winter in the school garden, but we have still been busy from December – January with weeding and clearing the raised beds, getting them ready to plant our crops such as potatoes, garlic, onions and salad.

Wednesday's gardening club have been busy sorting out pots and plants, rescuing plants that have survived the colder weather and recycling the compost for topping up the beds and sowing seeds. Our sweet pea seedlings planted in October last year have been overwintering, and are growing each week- getting ready for planting outside as soon as the weather warms up.

We have had some damage to the polytunnel this year as the foxes have chewed through the cover, so we will be aiming to get this replaced or repaired as soon as possible. We can start the very exciting task of sowing tomato and pepper seeds, and much more, so we have plenty of veggies to harvest in June and July.



Amwell View School – Tonwell Satellite

Holy Trinity Bengeo has chosen Amwell View School's Tonwell Satellite for their Lent Fundraising Campaign. Hayley Warrington, Class Teacher and Middle Leader, was invited to the Sunday Service on 15th February 2026 to speak to the congregation about the school and how the funds will help the pupils.

Hayley said, "Tonwell Satellite School is a beautiful location, with a generous amount of outside learning and play space, as well as an adjoining nature area. The site is fully secure, with fencing around the perimeter, ensuring privacy and safety throughout and allowing our pupils to extend their independence when using the outside space.

We want to extend, challenge and harness our pupils' independence, confidence and self-help skills to ensure they have a future filled with as many opportunities as can be provided. A large way that we encourage this is through community-based work such as outdoor maintenance, gardening and harvesting. Last year, my class put in a joint effort to re-soil the plant beds, sow seeds and successfully grew cucumbers, tomatoes and pumpkins. They loved seeing their hard work pay off, watering, trimming and harvesting the plants to then serve the salad to their parents at a visit day. It was a wonderful, real-life experience for them and one that we hope to continue to provide for our pupils in the future.

Despite the success of last year's harvest, our outdoor planters and tools are in need of replenishing. The wood of the planters is deteriorating and with our increased capacity, there are now not enough tools to be shared across each class. With your kindness and generosity, we hope to be able to invest in some new raised plant beds, as well as safe and appropriate tools, which can provide our young people with World of Work Experiences that are meaningful and supportive to their futures."





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UPCOMING OPEN EVENTS:

Friday 6th March **Stay & Play (for Nursery 2026 entry)**
Thursday 19th March **Meet and Coffee with the Leadership Team**
Friday 24th April **Open Morning**

Contact **admissions@duncombe-school.co.uk** or **01992 414109** to find out more.



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Duncombe School

Pupils win gold at prestigious choir competition



Talented young vocalists at Duncombe School have scaled new heights after claiming top prize at a regional choir competition.

Duncombe School Harmony Choir has been crowned Prep School Choir of the Year at the Haileybury Choral Competition, after a group of Year 5 and 6 pupils wowed judges at a special event celebrating choir music.

The 2026 edition of the competition, which is hosted by Haileybury College in Hertford Heath, saw leading independent prep schools from across the region compete for the trophy.

The 18-piece Duncombe School Harmony Choir secured gold medals for their rendition of Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning, the traditional spiritual arranged by Greg Gilpin.

The day of music-making also included a jazz workshop, a masterclass on Sir John Rutter's *A Sprig of Thyme*, and a performance from the Haileybury Choir, which featured a host of talented former Duncombe School pupils.

Duncombe School, located on Warren Park Road, is part of Blenheim Schools, a leading family of all-ability independent schools with a focus on high-quality education that reflects the individual needs, learning styles and aspirations of pupils.

Director of Music at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Claudia Grinnell, who judged the competition, said: "It was clear that all the singers were enjoying performing, and this drew the audience in and captivated them."

Awarding Duncombe School a distinction, Claudia said the intensity of their "extremely engaging" performance shone through in the pupils' vocals and facial expressions.

Jeremy Phelan, Headmaster at Duncombe School, said: "Events and opportunities outside the classroom, including competitions like this, are so important for developing and celebrating pupils' individual talents.

"We couldn't be prouder of our incredible singers, who put on a fantastic performance deserving of the top prize."

A Word from The Rectory

Raincheck on screentime

From The Vicar, The Revd Robert Thompson



I knew I had a problem when I found myself opening the weather app on my phone to see what the weather was like outside when I could have just looked through the window instead. It took me a little while to pluck up courage to confess this kind of stupidity to anybody else, only to find that they'd done the same thing.

It seems I'm not the only one struggling to keep the necessary but addictive traits of communication technology from becoming a tyranny. Over half of us spend more time with our computers than our spouses; researchers have found that an office worker works an average of three minutes before being interrupted by email – and that it takes them 64 seconds to recover their train of thought after that. That's a lot of people struggling to think straight.

That technology adds a lot to my life is a given, and I'm not sure I could do my work without it. Many clergy process into church services clutching a tablet – the Church of England have all the prayers and bible readings for any given day on a handy little website – but I'll be the first to admit it's not a good look. How many of your congregation are wondering whether the clergy leading God's praises are using that time to catch up on their email? Will a prayer to heaven be rudely interrupted by an unwelcome ping from your inbox? Lord, save and preserve us from such devilish distraction – the constant excess that creates a kind of restless, electronic fidgeting. It's a dependency that not only eats up mental attention and makes intellectual focus hard, but blurs the distinction between work and rest too. Too much time in front of a screen leaves me feeling edgy and tetchy, and actually less likely to communicate well.

It was Samuel Morse that sent the first 'electronic message' in 1844 with the words: 'What hath God wrought?' Good question. Newer and quicker forms of communicating were bound to be both a blessing and a curse. The challenge for us isn't so much to put up a Luddite resistance as to ask, 'How can we best live with this stuff?'

There's no question that we're creatures wired for communication, but it can't just be about speed and immediacy – or even about words. Indeed, the monastic traditions saw self-control, listening and not speaking as essential for the kind of deeper communication some believe we were created for. 'Be still and know that I am God,' the Psalmist wrote or, to paraphrase: 'Switch off, dial down and tune into another kind of communication – the kind that allows the mind to experience a deeper, uninterrupted level of thought – where creativity and complex thinking can happen, and where we'll hear a still more important voice too.'

Many of us will remember a time when you could sit in a coffee shop with no phone or tablet, with nothing but a cup of coffee in front of you, and no one considered you a bit of a weirdo. Nowadays your experiments in screen-free stillness might be better limited to the privacy of your own home. It's certainly worth trying. Sit as comfortably as you can for as long as you can without doing anything, thinking anything or trying to communicate with anyone. If, like me, you fail you needn't be embarrassed. Only God is watching. And with God's help, I might just learn to sit still in peace, not sending any messages – until I get the message.

With my prayers,

Robert Thompson

Lent Study

Many discussions and problems solved are often around a meal table or a chat with a cup of tea and maybe a biscuit in hand. This range of the informal, spontaneous and grand occasion provides for us some Biblical insight.

Our Lent Group for 2026 takes a look at *'Feasts and Fortunes'*. Take a whistle-stop look at the big celebration events that Jesus would have taken part in, the weddings and the religious, also the small intimate moments of sharing with friends. Maybe we can learn a thing or two that translates into our everyday experience.

***'Feasts and Fortunes'* starts on 3rd March at 8pm in Holy Trinity Church, New Road. There are four evenings planned: each will be different and of course all are welcome to any one, two, three or four. There is no charge or commitment, and despite the title, no actual food.**

David Cramphorn

Join us on an Easter Pilgrimage

Every year for many years there has been a tradition of pilgrimage to St Alban's Cathedral from all over the diocese on Easter Monday. There is a service for pilgrims at the Cathedral at 3pm (optional).

If anybody would be interested in walking to the cathedral in a group from Hertford on this Easter Monday, 6th April, please contact John Duncan **(john.duncan2387@hotmail.co.uk)** for further details.

Ideally, we would aim to arrive at 2.30pm to join the procession into the service. Please note it will need to be an early start, most likely starting from All Saints Church at 7am. We may be able to arrange a point on the route where people can join later if they don't want to walk the whole route.



Parish Calendar MARCH 2026

Sunday 1st March	**Second Sunday of Lent**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion and Junior Church
Tuesday 3rd March	
8pm	Quiet Time: *Feasts and Fortunes*, Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 4th March	
2pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Café at Nourish Café, 43 Cowbridge, Hertford
Thursday 5th March	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Friday 6th March	
2pm	World Day of Prayer, St Andrews Church
Sunday 8th March	**Third Sunday of Lent**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 10th March	
8pm	Quiet Time: *Feasts and Fortunes*, Holy Trinity Church
Wednesday 11th March	
10am	Craft Club, Church Hall, Duncombe Road – all home crafts welcome
Thursday 12th March	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 15th March	**The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Mothering Sunday)**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	All Age Worship
Tuesday 17th March	
8pm	Quiet Time: *Feasts and Fortunes*, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 19th March	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
6.30–8pm	Bereavement Café at Manic Ceramics Pottery Shop, 22 Port Vale, Hertford
Sunday 22nd March	**The Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passion Sunday)**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 24th March	
8pm	Quiet Time: *Feasts and Fortunes*, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 26th March	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 29th March	**PALM SUNDAY**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion with procession of palms around the church
Monday 30th	**Monday in Holy Week**
8pm	Holy Communion
Tuesday 31st March	**Tuesday in Holy Week**
8pm	Holy Communion

Parish Calendar APRIL 2026

Wednesday 1st April	**Wednesday in Holy Week**
2pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Cafe at Nourish Café, 43 Cowbridge, Hertford
8pm	Holy Communion
Thursday 2nd April	**MAUNDY THURSDAY**
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
8pm	Holy Communion – The Liturgy of Maundy Thursday
Friday 3rd April	**GOOD FRIDAY**
12 noon–2pm	Prayer and Meditation
2pm	Good Friday Devotions
Sunday 5th April	**EASTER DAY**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Festival All-Age Communion
Wednesday 8th April	
10am	Craft Club: Church Hall, Duncombe Road – all home crafts welcome
Thursday 9th April	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 12th April	**The Second Sunday of Easter**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 14th April	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 16th April	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
6.30–8pm	Bereavement Café at Manic Ceramics Pottery Shop, 22 Port Vale, Hertford
Sunday 19th April	**The Third Sunday of Easter**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 21st April	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 23rd April	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 26th April	**The Fourth Sunday of Easter**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 28th April	
8pm	Quiet Time, Holy Trinity Church
Thursday 30th April	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road

Parish Prayers

Daily Prayers for March

1. The Church in Wales
2. Hornbeam Close
3. Lent Study Groups
4. Christians in Pakistan
5. HMP Deerbolt, Barnard Castle
6. Our Lent Charity: Amwell View School Tonwell Satellite
7. Local Sports Teams
8. Our Church Hall
9. The Commonwealth
10. Local Land Use and Planning
11. Christians in Iran
12. HMP Doncaster
13. Amwell View School Charity Shop, Stanstead Abbots
14. Friends of St Leonard's
15. Our Mothers
16. Ives Road
17. The Churches in Ireland
18. Christians in Ireland
19. HMP Dovegate, Derbyshire
20. Tonwell Village
21. The H5 and H6 Buses
22. Our Church Maintenance
23. Lodge Close
24. *Feasts and Fortunes:* Lent Study Group
25. Christians in India
26. HMP Down View, Young Offenders Institution
27. Norwich Cathedral
28. Our Local Shops
29. All Who Teach
30. Holy Week Services
31. Lys Hill Gardens

Daily Prayers for April

1. Christians in Saudi Arabia
2. Maundy Thursday
3. Churches Together Walk of Witness
4. All who are lonely or housebound
5. The Risen Lord Jesus Christ
6. Manor Close
7. Sands Charity, Hertford
8. Christians in Myanmar
9. HMP Drake Hall Young Offenders Institute
10. Our Bereavement Cafe
11. The Lullaby Trust
12. Our Choir
13. Mansfield Gardens
14. Hertford and District Churches Together
15. Christians in Mali
16. HMP Durham
17. Local Hospice Care
18. Local Pubs and Clubs
19. All who view our service online
20. Millmead Way
21. Mercy Ships Africa
22. Christians in China
23. St George's Day – our 11am Service
24. Peterborough Cathedral
25. Local Councillors
26. Our Memorial Garden
27. Molewood Road
28. The last Quiet Time at HTB before we move to St Leonard's
29. Christians in Tibet
30. HMP East Sutton YOI

Register

18th December Funeral **Ena Neath**

29th December Funeral **Pamela Cain**

14th January Funeral **Roger Crane**

26th January Funeral **Jane Hadley**

2nd February Funeral **Dennis Dudley**



Quiet Time and Lent Study

Quiet Time continues at Holy Trinity Church on Tuesday evenings at 8pm. During four weeks in Lent from 3rd March this will take the form of a study entitled *'Feasts and Fortunes'* which explores meals with Jesus. All welcome.

Church Contacts

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

Associate Priest: Fr. David Pepper
T: **07583 985266**

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

Churchwardens:
Diana Howarth T: **07711 571272**
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

Below are links to local services.

Medical and Health Advice
www.nhs.uk

Domestic Abuse

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

Refuge Free and Confidential Helpline 24/7
0808 2000 247

Financial Advice

Hertfordshire Support Fund
If you need help, regardless of whether you qualify for benefits, please call HertsHelp on **0300 123 4044**, email **info@hertshelp.net** or visit **www.hertshelp.net**.

For more information about the support on offer for residents both locally and national, please visit **www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/costofliving**.

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

Citizens Advice Service – East Herts

Local Message Line 01920 459944. Monday to Thursday, leave a message with your details, and an adviser will call you back Monday to Thursday, between 10am–4pm.

Out of Hours Helpline 0800 144 8848. Monday to Wednesday, 4–8pm, Thursday and Friday 4–9pm, and Saturday 10am–4pm.

Local contact centres: **Hertford Sele Community Hub, 18 Fleming Crescent, Sele, Hertford, SG14 2DJ**. Open Wednesdays 11am–1pm. **Ware Contact Centre, Ware Priory, High Street Ware SG12 9AL.** Open Tuesdays 11am–1pm.

National Debtline
www.nationaldebtline.org
Helpline 0808 808 4000. Monday to Friday 9am–8pm, Saturday 9.30am–1pm, Sunday closed.

Advice on avoiding scams

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

Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline
0808 223 1133

Mental Health Advice and Support

NHS Mental Health Services in Herts
Call for free **0800 644 101** this number is open 24/7 or call **111** and choose option 2
E: **hpft.spa@nhs.net**

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

Emotional Support and Practical Help

Samaritans
116 123 lines open 24 hours a day, calls are free
www.samaritans.org

Childline
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24-hour counselling service for children and young people 24/7
www.childline.org.uk

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On the Doorstep – Ground Ivy

Bridget Hersant's pictures of Ground Ivy.
Please see her article on page 11.









BENGEO TODDLER GROUP

MAKE FRIENDS - STORIES - SINGING

Monthly on Wednesdays

10-11.30am

Bengeo Parish Hall, Duncombe Road, Hertford, SG14 3DA

2026 dates:
January 28th, February 25th, March 25th, April 22nd

A new, friendly group for babies, toddlers and their grown-ups

Ware Choral Society

presents

FAURÉ: REQUIEM

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Erin Alexander Soprano
Tim Bagley Baritone
Orpheus Sinfonia
Conductor Rosie Howarth

7.30 pm Saturday 11th April 2026
The Drill Hall Ware SG12 9HP
Tickets: £20, £10 Under 18

From: www.warechoral.org.uk, society members and at the door

Discount £18/£9 from Eventbrite & at rehearsals until 5th March

Sponsored by Wood Bros Furniture

Bengeo Community Garden

Corner of Tower Street and Duncombe Road



Volunteers needed

for deadheading, weeding, mulching, watering & planting