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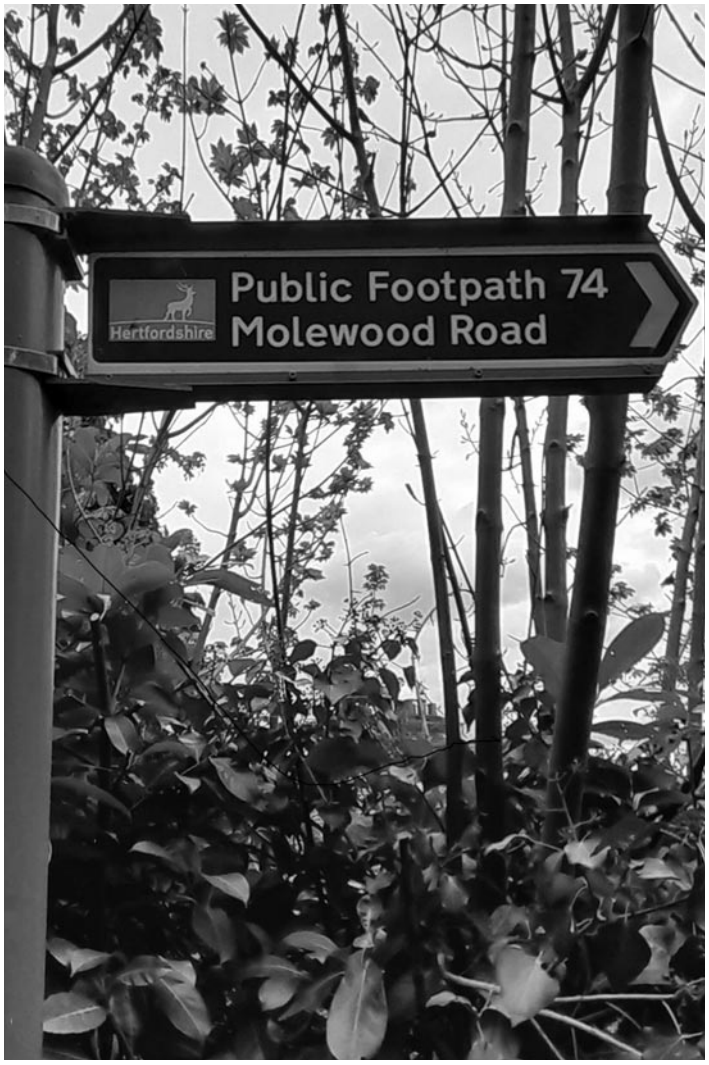
Bengeo Magazine

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Bengeo Parish Magazine and Community News



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With the summer approaching and lighter evenings ahead Love Bengeo is encouraging us to go out and explore Bengeo Trails. Read about them and how other community activities are developing in our area.

If you are out and about you may be fortunate and come across the elusive Bee Orchid, that flowers in June. There have been sightings on Waterford Heath in the past, so, who knows, the conditions this year may be right for them to appear again.

St Leonard's opens up again for the summer months and this year offers more tea and cakes on Sundays. A pleasant end to a Bengeo walk.

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: **Walkers on Bengeo Trail No. 5 at the top of the steps at Church Road.**

Editorial Team
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SCAN ME

HERTFORD SHOWROOM

2nd Bengeo Scouts

2nd Bengeo Scout Group have all had a busy few weeks before the Easter break. The Beavers enjoyed becoming spies, making bug hotels, creating sun catcher hearts for Mother's Day and loved their visit to Hertfordshire Zoo where they learnt about the importance of conservation. The Cubs all had a great time inviting their Mums to join them for tea and cake and gifted their Mothers with a painted plant pot with violas in them.

The Scouts welcomed their new leader, Caitlin, and look forward to creating memories and learning new skills with her. We wish our retiring leaders, Pauline and Llinos all the best and send our heartfelt thanks for everything they have done for the Scout section! We are still looking for adult volunteers in all sections including an assistant leader for the Scouts section. If you think this could be a role for you, please get in touch via the following email address **groupscoutleader@2ndbengeo.org.uk**.



WI News

Bengeo Afternoon Women's Institute meet every first Wednesday of the month in the Church Hall, Duncombe Road, Bengeo at 2pm. We are a group of ladies who enjoy getting together each month, have a cuppa and biscuit, while listening to some very interesting speakers.

Earlier this month we heard from a rider with the Herts and Beds group of SERV, Service by Emergency Response Volunteers, known locally as Blood Runners, who provide free, urgent out of hours transport of blood samples and medical supplies to the NHS across the UK. Not only a vital service to us but they pay all their own expenses, cost of fuel, their vehicles and maintenance. A charity worthy of our support.

On 6th May, we are looking forward to Nick Blatchley coming. His talk is *The Pie Man*, whether samples are included, we will find out!

Our June meeting is a Social Afternoon where we meet and have a quiz or Beetle Drive and hold our Annual Meeting and a Bring and Buy Book Stall where you can pick up a favourite read at a very modest price.

So, if any of the upcoming Meetings interest you, do come along. Visitors are FREE for their first visit. If you wish to hear more, please contact our Secretary, Mrs. Janet Butler on 07961 906860.

Bengeo Parish Handbells

This time last year I wrote that we were having to pause for a while as we needed more ringers to make the group viable. Fortunately, we were able to reconvene in the summer and for some months were able to meet twice a month in the church to learn and practise handbell ringing.

Unfortunately, for various reasons, we now find ourselves in the same predicament as last spring, and once more need to take time out until we have enough members. Perhaps that could be you. Although you don't need to be able to read music, a good sense of timing and a musical ear is helpful.

You may not realise what beautiful music can be played on handbells, so to find out how about coming to the East Anglian Regional Handbells Team's concert at Ware Drill Hall at 3pm on 16th May (see poster on page 2) or watch a video of Broxbourne playing. See You Tube **youtu.be/F4jIIrhpazw?si=KvtjkRgNnQIc5rUr**.

Jackie Downs
07534 434900 | jacqueline.downs94@gmail.com

Updates from Love Bengeo Community Group Projects

www.lovebengeo.org.uk

Love Bengeo Facebook Group

You can contact us by emailing **info@lovebengeo.org.uk**.







1. Bengeo Trails

The Love Bengeo Community Group have published a wide variety of local walking trails available on our website, with more in production.

The website **www.lovebengeo.org.uk/Bengeo-trails** has more details.

New to the website are trails from St Leonard's Church, through the grounds of the former Ware Park Manor, returning along the River Lee Navigation, a circular trail from The Avenue shops around five of Bengeo's many footpaths, and another around St Andrew Street, Hertford Castle Gardens and Folly Island. The trail featured on the front page of this magazine is Bengeo Trails 5 featuring the steps from Church Road to Molewood Road where the installation of a handrail has made the path safer for walkers.

- **Bengeo Trails 1:** View across Beane Marshes
- **Bengeo Trails 2:** St Leonard's Garden Hartham and Ware Park Manor Views
- **Bengeo Trails 3:** Bengeo Field Views
- **Bengeo Trails 4:** Around Hartham Common^J Cowbridge and Port Hill with the Neighbourhood Plan
- **Bengeo Trails 5:** Public Footpath 93 to North Road Meadow
- **Bengeo Trails 6:** Neighbourhood Plan Important Views and Green Spaces
- **Bengeo Trails 7:** Ware Park Manor and the River Lee Navigation
- **Bengeo Trails 8:** Bengeo Field to St John's Wood
- **Bengeo Trails 9:** Around St Andrew Street, Hertford Castle Gardens, and Folly Island with the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan
- **Bengeo Trails 10:** Bengeo's front gardens and wildlife corridors
- **Bengeo Trails 11:** Five footpath circular from The Avenue
- **Bengeo Trails 12:** Footpath 96 towards Westmill Road

The Bengeo Trails project group are promoting the trails through the Hertford Town and Tourist Centre, on community notice boards, and through social media, including the Bengeo Trails Facebook group. Please join **www.facebook.com/groups/bengeotrails** and share any walking trails you've enjoyed.

2. Celebrating Bengeo's Front Gardens and Wildlife Corridors

It's a year since the Love Bengeo Community Group launched the Bengeo Front Gardens Facebook group, and its name and remit has broadened to include the wildlife corridors connecting our gardens.

A Bengeo Trail celebrating this first-year anniversary passes some of Bengeo's front gardens, wildlife corridors, and pockets of roadside planting, and visits the Bengeo Community Garden and Holy Trinity Church garden.

Please join the Bengeo's Front Gardens and Wildlife Corridors Facebook group to help share information on greening and increasing biodiversity in our gardens and other green corridors.
www.facebook.com/groups/bengeosfrontgardensandwildlifecorridors.






3. Bengeo Community Mosaic

Many of you will be pleased to hear that the Bengeo Community Mosaic is now almost complete. Thanks to the creativity and effort of so many local residents, the main piece has been finished. We are just awaiting the final tiles for the border, which will complete the design.

We are currently considering the best location for the mosaic so that it can be enjoyed by as many people as possible. We hope to be able to share more news on its permanent home very soon.

In the meantime, we would like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed their time, ideas, and enthusiasm to this wonderful community project. It has been a real collaborative effort, and we're excited for the moment when it can be unveiled and enjoyed by all. We're holding back from sharing further photos of the finished piece until the official unveiling – so watch this space!

4. Bengeo Community Garden

The warmer weather and appearance of the sun have heralded a true feeling of spring in the air and everything is beginning to look green and coming alive. This is certainly something we are seeing in the Bengeo Community Garden as we are starting to see the results of some planting that was done last autumn. Some pollinator friendly perennials are beginning to emerge and the bees have been enjoying the newly planted hellebores.

We had a successful bingo fundraising event in March which was a lot of fun and raised over £400 and we thank everyone who contributed in some way to this great result. The monies go towards ongoing maintenance with Mudlarks, plants, mulch, shells, etc.

In other news we have begun monthly volunteer sessions in the garden to help maintain this community space in addition to the work Mudlarks continue to do. We are very grateful to those who have volunteered and we have had 2 successful afternoons weeding, planting and mulching and have enjoyed meeting new people in the community and working together on this community project.

With warmer summers predicted we have been mindful to plant drought tolerant plants but they need nurturing in their early years so if anyone would like to help look after these plants do feel free to use the containers by the water butts to give them a helping hand! We really want it to be a beautiful space for the community and for wildlife so any help is much appreciated.

You can help us raise funds for the Bengeo Community Garden: we are looking for people willing to host an estate agent board to advertise the October community event to support Bengeo Community Garden project. The boards need to be in place for a month (around September to October) and the estate agent will contribute to the community garden. If you are interested or if you would like to join our group of volunteers, please email us on **garden@lovebengeo.org.uk**.




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Annual Pet Service Sunday

St Leonard's Church, Sunday 5 July at 4pm

This year we are supporting the Hearing Dogs for Deaf People Charity.

Reg and Denise Newman, who volunteer at the Hearing Dogs Charity, will be coming to the service. Denise will tell us all about the Charity and how it helps those with hearing loss gain independence and improve their sense of safety and mental health. We hope to also have a beneficiary of the charity there with their hearing dog.

This is a very worthwhile Charity to support so we do hope that you will come along. It doesn't matter whether you bring a pet with you as fluffy toys are also most welcome. The event is always a delightful service for all ages.

Refreshments will be available after the Service for our four-footed friends as well!

We look forward to seeing you there. Do come and join us and please spread the word to anyone who would be interested.

For any further information please contact me on **01992 583979**.

Best wishes
Libby Shillito



HALG Courses at the Church Hall, Duncombe Road

Recent Hertford Adult Learning Group courses have continued to be very popular – people enjoy learning something new in a welcoming and convivial atmosphere.

We are currently studying the poetry of TS Eliot with an excellent tutor, and are looking forward to the return of native Russian speaker Marina Burrell in the autumn. Marina's course is entitled *'Discovering Ukraine through its Culture'*. Her previous course in Bengeo was an exhilarating journey through the history of Russian music. The 10-week autumn course will run from 22nd September to 1st December, with no class on 27th October. Times are 10.30am to 12.30pm with a 10–15 minute break.

We will not take bookings for the autumn until later in the year. Everyone on the mailing list will be notified with course details including the fee.

If you would like your name to be added to the HALG mailing list, please send your name and email details to me at halgcontact@gmail.com.

Janet Sheail for HALG committee

Monday Lunches

The lunch for March was, as usual, on a chilly day. However, stepping into the brightly lit, warm Duncombe Hall put everyone in a cheerful mood. The tables were covered in white cotton cloths and were nicely laid with flowers and carafes of red and white wine and water.

The first course was a slice of quiche with a ham filling and the main course was lasagne which was very tasty and served with mixed vegetables. The pudding was tiramisu which was extremely good and tea and coffee and peppermints to finish.

In April, we had a slightly warmer day. The hall was, as it always is, very welcoming. To begin with, we had Scotch eggs served with pickle and green salad. The main course was gammon served with roast potatoes, peas and cauliflower cheese. For the pudding we had chocolate and hazelnut tart, which was extremely delicious and we finished with tea and coffee and mints.

The next meeting is the third Monday in May, the 18th, because the caterers will be away for the first two weeks. The one in June is the 8th which is the second Monday as usual.

We would like to see a few more people coming to the lunches because it really is good value at £20 for three courses. Not only is the menu very interesting but the service is excellent. Anyone wishing to come should ring Claire at the Lobster Pot on **07887 543464** to make a booking, preferably seven days in advance.

Janet Guilbride



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On The Doorstep

Here in Bengeo we are fortunate enough to have bee orchids growing on our doorstep. The bee orchid flowers between June and July and if you have a sharp eye, you may find some growing around the Waterford Heath Wildlife Trust site. I confess I had never seen one, until 2024 when there was a plethora of orchids right across the site. Popular belief is that the plant is rare. It is a protected species. However, it is quite well spread in southern England and it is rather that the plant is sporadic as it appears some years and not others and it can disappear from one area only to be found in another. Bee orchids may only flower once in their lifetime.

The preferred habitat of the bee orchid is well drained meadow or grassland with chalk and limestone soils, but it can also be found on sandy gravel soils and can also survive in clay soils. The orchid, although considered a native to the UK, is essentially a Mediterranean species. The orchids that appear in northern Europe are at the limit of their range.

The scientific name is Ophrys apifera. Ophrys comes from the Greek for eyebrow and apifera is Latin for bee-bearing. Common names are humble bee orchid, bee-flower or honey-flower. The bee orchid is so called because of the look of the flower as it mimics its main pollinator, a species of bee, that unfortunately, does not exist in the UK. However, the plant has also evolved to be self-pollinating, so survives well in the UK.

The flower looks like a female bee to attract the male bee to land and try to mate, in so doing the male bee picks up the pollen and when visiting another plant transfers the pollen. The flower has two greenish sepals and in front of these are three pink petals, that look a little like the bee's wings. There is also a dark brown, velvety lower lip with yellow markings, that looks like the body of the female bee. The stem is hairless and it has grey-green, pointed elliptical leaves that form a rosette at the bottom of the stem that withers as the plant flowers. The plant also has long, pointed elliptical leaves that grow up the stem as a sheath. There can be from 2 to 11 flowers on one stem, the lowest flowers opening up first and then progressing up to the top. The flower is approximately 3cm across and the plant can grow up to 30–40cm in height.

It is thought that Ancient Roman women used the orchid plant to darken their eyebrows, hence the name ophrys and in the Ottoman empire the root tubers were ground into a powder called salep, which was thought to have nutritional, medicinal and aphrodisiac values. Salep is still used today in medicine and traditional dishes in Turkey.

Amongst other meanings the flower symbolises faithfulness and love, it is also the county flower of Bedfordshire.

The bee orchid is a real stunner, there may not be the right bee to be attracted by it, but it certainly attracts the attention of any passer-by that happens to spot it.

Bridget Hersant

What's on in Bengeo

Courtyard Arts is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am–4pm.

Scenic Seas

The Stables Gallery

Tuesday 14th April to Saturday 9th May 2026

Courtyard Arts is delighted to present Scenic Seas, the debut solo exhibition by Hertfordshire based oil painter Fabio Felice Ferro, running from 14th April to 9th May 2026 in the Stables Gallery.

Bringing together a meticulously curated collection of seascape oil paintings, Scenic Seas invites visitors on a vivid journey across the world's oceans – from tranquil, glass like waters to the raw power of storm torn seas. Fabio's work is known for its emotional depth and striking use of colour, capturing the interplay between sea, sky, and landscape with both sensitivity and intensity. As described by the artist, the collection 'aims to illuminate the range of magnificent, vibrant colours the oceans, sky, and mountains give to humanity'.





Fabio is a self taught artist who began his creative journey through illustration, before embracing oil painting, inspired by Manga artists such as Takehiko Inoue and Tite Kudo. Fabio says: "The artwork in these books is so detailed and beautiful that it pushed me to try and create something similar. I am still pursuing illustration alongside my oil painting".

Fabio draws heavily on personal experience and emotion to shape his work. His practice spans still life and scenic compositions, each piece reflecting themes of introspection, joy, fear, and lived experience. His artistic story – rooted in passion, persistence, and a deep love for visual storytelling – has become the foundation of Felice Paints, his growing art brand.

This exhibition marks Felice's first public showcase at Courtyard Arts. Scenic Seas will feature between 10–20 new oil paintings, with final selections to be confirmed closer to the opening date.

Fabio says: "I chose the theme of oceans because of the sense of peace I get when visiting the beach on holiday or seeing videos of the sea. I gain the same peace of mind when sitting at home and creating art. This is what drives me to paint, relaying emotion felt within a moment and that's what I want to translate to people with my art".

CALL FOR ARTISTS!



Enter Hertford Photo Festival – and see your work on display across the town in May 2026

Presented by Courtyard Arts Centre in collaboration with All Saints Church and supported by BEAM.

- Festival dates: **5th to 30th May 2026**
- Private View at Courtyard Arts: **Friday 8th May 2026**
- Community Day at All Saints Church: **Saturday 9th May 2026**

Hertford is set to host a major new cultural event in spring 2026 as Courtyard Arts together with All Saints Church and BEAM will host *Love and Hope*, Hertford Photo Festival, running from 5th–30th May 2026. This community-focused festival invites residents of all ages to explore the power of photography as a medium for connection, creativity, and shared expression.

The festival will transform Hertford into a vibrant visual arts trail, linking key cultural venues and inviting residents of all ages to take part in an open photography festival.

The theme, *Love and Hope*, covers a wide and broad range of subjects – people, places, nature, objects, moments, memories, and everyday scenes, maybe even in Hertford itself! Capturing both small gestures and shared experience. This is an open and inclusive photography exhibition celebrating the many ways connection, care, and optimism appear in our lives. From the personal to the communal, the work reflects how love and hope can be found in ordinary moments, creative expression, resilience, and the world around us.

The selected photographs will be on display across three venues in Hertford: Courtyard Arts, All Saints Church and BEAM. The Festival will open with a Private View at Courtyard Arts on 8th May, followed by a lively Community Day at All Saints Church on 9th May, featuring food trucks, live music, and family activities. Look on the link for Entry Forms, T&Cs, prize categories and more information.

www.courtyardarts.org.uk/exhibitions/love-and-hope-hertford-photo-festival

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Entertainment in May

- **2nd** Phoenix Blues Band
- **9th** Bingo
- **16th** The Bonnet
- **23rd** Bingo
- **30th** Soul Chain

Entertainment in June

- **6th** Bazooka Joe
- **13th** Bingo
- **20th** Kelly's Heroes
- **27th** Bingo

The Company of Players

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presents



The Deep Blue Sea

By Terence Rattigan
Directed by Chris Janes

1st to 9th May 2026 at 7.45pm
Matinee on 2nd May at 2.30pm

In 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.

When Hester is found unconscious after a failed suicide attempt in her shabby Ladbroke Grove flat, the tumultuous affair that upended her life is exposed. As the day unfolds, Rattigan's finely tuned drama reveals the aching complexity of love, desire and emotional dependency as Hester must confront the painful gulf between romantic idealism and reality.



Village Wooing

By George Bernard Shaw
Directed by Becky Done, Hannah Tuson-Heasley

13th to 16th May 2026 at 7.45pm

Village Wooing is a 1933 play by George Bernard Shaw about a strong-willed working-class woman who pursues a gentleman, exploring themes of love, language, and class. It shares similarities with his play *Pygmalion*, as it focuses on a contentious relationship where a woman challenges a man, and the narrative is driven by dialogue that explores language and wit. The play, subtitled *'A Comedietta for Two Voices'*, centres on the dynamic between its two main characters.

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Friends of St Leonard's

We are looking forward to our summer open season at St Leonard's Church, the ancient heart of Bengeo.

Sunday Teas

The Friends of St Leonard's are delighted to be opening the church for tea and cakes on Sunday afternoons between 2.30–4.30pm from 7th June. Thanks to our wonderful volunteers who give us their valuable time to bake and make teas and coffees, we are delighted to be back every Sunday this year. There is one exception – on the day of the Pet Service (see below).

Why not drop in to enjoy tea or coffee and some home-made cake while you are on your Sunday stroll. Information will be on hand to help you explore the nearly one-thousand-year history of the church and the people who have used it. Children are very welcome – we have a treasure hunt or colouring they can do while parents relax. Well-behaved dogs are also welcome!

You don't have to have tea, you can also just pop in to see the church and enjoy its very special, peaceful atmosphere and learn more about the history of Bengeo.

Local History

Dorothy Abel Smith will give a talk at 2pm on Saturday 20th June about Crouchfield and its life as a Training School dating back to 1857. Dorothy is a noted local historian and in 1998 she was awarded an MBE for Services to the Historic Houses Association. Her local work has included the Chairmanship of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust and the Hertfordshire Heritage Fund.

Her book on Crouchfield will be on sale on the day. Tea and cakes will also be available for a sociable catch up after the talk.

Music

We have a couple of concerts planned this summer. We have decided to hold these in the afternoons, as this seems to suit our audience better. Both events will be free of charge, but we do ask for a contribution to help us raise funds to maintain the church. There will be the traditional homemade tea and cake to make the concerts a real occasion!

First, we welcome back musicians who performed as Coracle in 2024. They have now become Pagoda Project and we look forward to hearing their new music. Check them out on Pagoda Project | Paul Hutchinson to get a taste. They will perform at 4pm on Saturday 4th July.

We are delighted to be welcoming back Colin Eldred on clarinet and Ellie Potter on harp for a repeat of last year's Musical Tea Party. These beautiful instruments sounded lovely in St Leonard's. They will perform at 3.30pm on Saturday 29th August.

Services and Prayers

The ever-popular Pet Blessing Service returns at 4pm on Sunday 5th July. Bring your pets to say a special thanks for the joy they bring you and to enjoy sociable refreshments with like-minded pet owners.

The church will also be open on Tuesday evenings at 8pm from 9th June for Quiet Time reflection and prayer.

If you want to get more involved, we would be happy to welcome you into the Friends. Becoming a Friend of St Leonard's Church will also give you advance warning on what is happening.
You can join through our website **www.stleonards.parishofbengeo.com/friends-of-st-leonards**.

All help to keep this lovely church open to the community is very welcome. Please get in touch if you want to have a chat about it. You can also follow us on Facebook (search for St Leonard's Bengeo and you will find us).

Helen Fleming
Secretaryfriendsofstleonards@gmail.com

Mill Mead Primary School



Nursery spent two weeks learning about Mona Baptiste who migrated on the Empire Windrush to come and sing in Europe. The children thought about what they would bring to live in another country and what they might like to be when they grew up. They are a group of budding astronauts, teachers, doctors and nurses.



Reception especially loved writing about *'The Street Beneath My Feet'*, where they drew and wrote about worlds of gems, fairies and dragons. In Science they have been carrying out different investigations, including floating and sinking, freezing and melting, light and dark, push and pull and loud and quiet.



Year 1 have been working on measuring in Maths, local weather patterns and why weather might be different in other countries. They loved tracking their shadows during the day. The highlight was the toy workshop where they played with lots of toys and made their own to take home.



Year 2 have learned about fractions, shapes and money. They became shopkeepers and customers for the day, learning how to calculate change. They made a class wormery and found out about habitats and microhabitats. In D&T they investgated levers and pivots and made their very own seesaws!



Year 3's highlight was Roman Day with creative activities and drama bringing Roman times alive. They practised reading maps and spotting different features on a local walk. The Microbits computer program helped in designing a protective harness for road safety.



Year 4 have been writing newspaper reports, reading about Amazing Rivers and developing comprehension skills. They enjoyed an engaging Anglo-Saxon workshop, increased their computing skills by learning HTML and built confidence in the water in their swimming lessons.



Year 5 acted out myths, performed dance and created crafts in an Ancient Greek workshop. They adapted versions of Theseus and the Minataur in English lessons and explored the oceans in Geography. In Yoga they created their own flows and practised breathing techniques while in D&T they applied their learning about gears and pulleys.

Year 6 have delved deep into the impact of WW2 on British life and the wider world. They made their own original compositions in Music by layering different instruments and sounds to great effect. It was great to see the class tackle tricky concepts in Maths, explore classification in Science, create graffiti-style murals in D&T and learn about migration, deserts, Christianity, handball, French and narratives!

Amwell View School – Tonwell Satellite

Dance Festival

Every year a group of Amwell View pupils participate in the Hertford and Ware Dance Festival, which is held at Sele School in Hertford. A group of five pupils from Amwell View Tonwell Satellite School took part in the Dance Festival on Monday 2nd March 2026. The Dance Festival brings together pupils from across the Hertford and Ware area to perform creative, curriculum-linked and extra-curricular dance pieces.

Amwell View's pupils took to the stage with huge smiles, ready to perform a routine inspired by the magical world of Willy Wonka.

Dance can significantly enhance the wellbeing of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) by strengthening social-emotional skills, improving motor coordination, supporting cognitive development and offering a powerful outlet for self-expression. Research consistently shows that dance helps SEN learners feel more confident and connected. The Dance Festival gives children the opportunity to perform on stage and experience performing in front of an audience.

Amy Gregg, Dance and PE Teacher said, "Their dance was full of imagination, playful movements, and 'chocotastic' moments that brought the audience straight into a candy-filled adventure. The group had spent weeks practising after school, working incredibly hard to perfect every step, spin, and formation. When the music started, all their effort paid off as they performed with confidence and joy. By the end of the routine, it was clear they absolutely loved every second of their sweet, energetic performance".

Holy Trinity Church is fundraising for Amwell View School, Tonwell Satellite, in their 2026 Lent campaign.



w: duncombe-school.co.uk

Duncombe School

An Independent Day School and Pre-School nestled in the beautiful town of Hertford, for children aged 2-11 years.

Nurturing Young Minds

UPCOMING OPEN EVENTS:

Stay & Play (for Nursery and Reception entry):
Friday 8th May, Tuesday 12th May & Wednesday 3rd June
Meet and Coffee with the Leadership Team: Wednesday 13th May

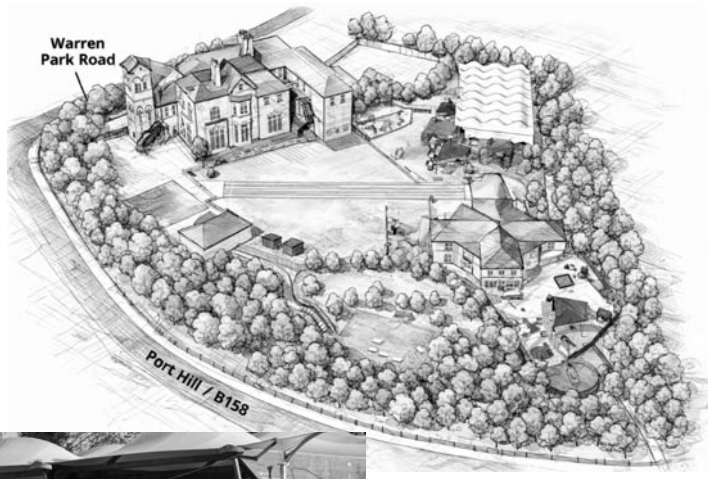
Contact **admissions@duncombe-school.co.uk** or **01992 414109** to find out more.



Duncombe School
An Independent Preparatory School and Nursery

Duncombe School







Bright future for Duncombe School

Duncombe School in Warren Park Road has announced it is entering an exciting new phase, with significant investment set to enhance both its facilities and the everyday experience of pupils. With more than £290,000 being committed to improvements, the school is building on its reputation as a place where ambition and opportunity sit alongside a warm, close-knit community.

Often described as 'the big small school', Duncombe has long balanced high standards with a nurturing environment. This latest programme reflects a commitment to preserving that identity while ensuring pupils benefit from modern, high-quality spaces that support learning, creativity and wellbeing.

A key focus of the investment is creating an even more welcoming environment for families. Enhancements to the school's entrance and reception areas will strengthen that all-important first impression, reinforcing the sense of belonging that defines the Duncombe community.

Younger pupils will benefit from a refreshed TreeTops Garden, featuring new play equipment, improved surfaces and upgrades to the conservatory space. These changes will provide a more engaging and safe setting for early years learning, recognising the importance of outdoor play in children's development.

Inside the classroom, comfort and inspiration are being prioritised. Air conditioning is being installed in TreeTops and Lower School classrooms, while the first phase of a wider refurbishment programme will modernise teaching spaces. Together, these improvements will create bright, comfortable environments where pupils can focus, collaborate and thrive.

Beyond the classroom, shared spaces are also being enhanced. The Main School After School Club Room will be transformed into a more stimulating environment for extended day activities, while new waterproof sails over play areas will ensure pupils can enjoy outdoor time in a wider range of weather conditions.

Creativity remains a key strength of the school, and two new bespoke music practice pods will further support pupils' musical development. In addition, plans are being explored to enhance both the main playground and performing arts facilities, demonstrating a long-term commitment to enriching opportunities for every child.

"These investments are about more than just buildings; they are about enriching the experience of every pupil and strengthening our wider school community", said Headteacher Jeremy Phelan. "By creating spaces that inspire learning, support wellbeing and encourage creativity, we are ensuring that our pupils are not only well-prepared academically, but also confident, happy and ready to thrive in the future".

Contact the school to find out more or to arrange a private visit: **01992 414109** or email **admissions@duncombe-school.co.uk**.

A Word from The Rectory

The Beautiful Game

From The Vicar, The Revd Robert Thompson



You know it's coming. The signs are everywhere. Even the sceptics recognise them and unbelievers know what they mean. When the Panini stickers are in the paper shop. A cross of St George has appeared in the back of your neighbour's van, and a key England player has gone and got himself injured.

You know it's coming when some bishop comes out offering a prayer for fans to enjoy the celebration as well as a prayer that non-fans will be granted the gift of sympathy. Or when you've just noticed that if England emerge from the group stages the next game will clash with a wedding you're conducting that same Saturday afternoon.

You know it's coming when you realize that this is the fourteenth World Cup you've lived through, and the last one you'll be able to share whilst your kids are still living at home, and you can still remember with micro-precision what it was like to watch the tournament at their age – when Paul Gascoigne cried his famous tears and Gary Lineker equalized against Germany – and when you actually got on your knees during the penalty shoot-out, even though part of you suspected that God didn't really favour the prayers of the English any more than the prayers of the Germans.

You know it's coming when it feels so familiar, like we've all been here before, even though this World Cup is so far away with unimaginably expensive ticket prices – and which will nevertheless play host to Haiti, an impoverished, displaced and bullet-ridden country, with its heroically successful national squad playing out an inverted version of its national drama of hunger, fear and chaos.

You know it's coming with the journalists producing growing column inches on political controversy, security threats and human rights issues, together with pieces about how the money could be spent on better things.

You know it's coming when you can feel the tension between the celebration and the cost; the transcendent and the transient; the hope that a sporting event can actually do something to change things, have the power to bring people together – or that it might all be forgotten in a matter of weeks.

You know it's coming when you sense that it isn't just about the football – it's a global festival, nations playing together and partying together – even praying together – and that for every one cynic there are ten hopefuls; and that somewhere in Sudan a kid in a tatty old AC Milan shirt is making a ball from a bundle of plastic bags and imagining himself scoring the winning goal in the final.

You know it's coming when, despite the wages of the players, the size of the stadiums or the amount of money that's made from television rights, that it's bigger than all this – and that when the FIFA president says that for the 39 days of the World Cup 'the world will stand still' at a time when it seems to be sleep-walking into crisis – that even though it's just words, it might actually be true.

So, for all the humbug, there is hope beyond all the hyperbole. At last, this summer, we'll be able to wave the cross of St. George and it not mean something ugly, but only the Beautiful Game.

PS: England do have a prayer.

With my prayers,

Robert Thompson

Easter Monday pilgrimage walk

We were very fortunate to have a beautiful spring day on Easter Monday. We arrived at All Saints Church at 6.50am not knowing exactly how many people would be joining. In the event 14 of us, old and young, as well as three dogs, set off on the 14 mile walk to St Albans. By the time we had all assembled it was around 7.15am. We set off and made very good progress down the Cole Green Way, arriving on the edge of Welwyn Garden City exactly on schedule. Skirting around the south-east of Welwyn Garden City, through open country, a wood and then across a golf course, we made our way to the northern parts of Hatfield, and from there to the Alban Way, taking a short and needed break at Hatfield Galleria. The Alban Way took us most of the rest of the way to our destination, St Albans Cathedral, where we arrived ahead of schedule.

A few of us took a short detour to see St Alban's Well which was tucked away in a small housing estate not far from the city centre. Legend has it that St. Alban, on his way to martyrdom, became tired and thirsty. Falling to his knees he prayed to God to quench his thirst and miraculously a spring of fresh water appeared. After this we made our way to the Cathedral for a special service, where many hundreds of pilgrims from all corners of the diocese had gathered.

This was apparently the 80th year that the Diocese has staged this pilgrimage. We were pleased to be able to revive the practice of walking from Hertford this year and hope this Easter Monday may be the first of many.

John Duncan



Thank you, Bengeo

Through the pages of this *Community Magazine* I would like to thank members of the community and in particular, the members of Holy Trinity Church for the kindness and support given to me and my much-missed husband Roger during his protracted illness and to me following his death.

We came here 14 years ago having lived on the edge of the Fens for over 70 years and, as well documented, the residents thereof during our formative years were slow in welcoming newcomers. Having moved here for family reasons we received a second bonus in the manner in which we were so readily welcomed into our new surroundings: that never ceased to amaze Roger. So, people of Bengeo please give yourselves a pat on the back from Roger and me for being such an open and inclusive community.

Mary Crane



Parish Calendar MAY 2026

Sunday 3rd May	**Fifth Sunday of Easter**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	All Age Worship
Wednesday 6th May	
2pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Cafe at Nourish Cafe, 43 Cowbridge Hertford
Thursday 7th May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 10th May	**Sixth Sunday of Easter (Rogation Sunday)**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 12th May	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome
Wednesday 13th May	
10am	Craft Club, Duncombe Hall – all home crafts welcome
Thursday 14th May	
10am	Holy Communion for Ascension Day
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 17th May	**Seventh Sunday of Easter**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
Tuesday 19th May	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome
Thursday 21st May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
6.30–8pm	Bereavement Cafe at Manic Ceramics Pottery Shop, 22 Port Vale Hertford
Sunday 24th May	**The Day of Pentecost (Whit Sunday)**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	All Age Communion for Pentecost
Tuesday 26th May	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome
Thursday 28 May	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 31st May	**Trinity Sunday**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion

Parish Calendar JUNE 2026

Tuesday 2nd June	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's. All welcome
Wednesday 3rd June	
2pm	Bengeo Afternoon WI, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
2.30–4pm	Bereavement Cafe at Nourish Cafe, 43 Cowbridge Hertford
Thursday 4th June	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 7th June	**First Sunday after Trinity**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
2.30–4.30pm	St Leonard's Church: Tea and Tour
Tuesday 9th June	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome
Wednesday 10th June	
10am	Craft Club, Duncombe Hall – all home crafts welcome
Thursday 11th June	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 14th June	**Second Sunday after Trinity**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
2.30–4.30pm	St Leonard's Church: Tea and Tour
Tuesday 16th June	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome
Thursday 18th June	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
6.30–8pm	Bereavement Cafe at Manic Ceramics Pottery Shop, 22 Port Vale Hertford
Sunday 21st June	**Third Sunday after Trinity**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
2.30–4.30pm	St Leonard's Church: Tea and Tour
Tuesday 23rd June	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome
Thursday 25th June	
10am	Holy Communion
10.30am	Coffee Pot Charity Café, Church Hall, Duncombe Road
Sunday 28th June	**Fourth Sunday after Trinity**
9am	Holy Communion
10am	Parish Communion
2.30–4.30pm	St Leonard's Church: Tea and Tour
Tuesday 30th June	
8pm	Quiet Time St Leonard's – all welcome

Parish Prayers

Daily Prayers for May

1. BRAKE Road Safety Charity
2. Local Cricket Clubs
3. Friends of St Leonard's
4. Nelson Street
5. Christians in the Maldives
6. The King
7. HMP Eastwood Park – Young Offenders
8. Road Safety Trust
9. Hertfordshire Social Services
10. Christian Aid Week Fundraising
11. Nursery Way.
12. Hertford and Ware Foodbank
13. Christians in Algeria
14. Ascension Day
15. HMP Elmley
16. Christian Aid Against Child Poverty
17. Our Singing Group
18. New Road
19. Christians Against Poverty (CAP)
20. Christians in Mauritania
21. HMP Erlestoke
22. Hertford and Ware Street Pastors
23. Local Bowls Teams
24. The Holy Spirit in Holy Trinity
25. Oliver Court
26. Child Accident Prevention Trust
27. Christians in the Central African Republic
28. HMP Exeter
29. Portsmouth Cathedral
30. The Children's Society
31. Trinity Sunday – Your Parish Church

Daily Prayers for June

1. Owens View
2. Future Hope Hertford
3. Christians in Morocco
4. Celebration of the World Wide Holy Communion
5. HMP Featherstone
6. Local Tennis Clubs
7. Our Bell Ringers
8. Palmer Road
9. Local Businesses
10. Christians in Cuba
11. St Barnabas – Encouraging Others
12. HMP Feltham – Young Offenders
13. The Samaritans Ware Office
14. All Who Preach and Teach in Church
15. Palmer Close
16. Victim Support Charity
17. Christians in Uzbekistan
18. HMP Five Wells, Wellingborough
19. Herts Young Carers
20. Hertford Town Council
21. Our Fathers
22. St Alban, first Christian Martyr
23. Palmer Court
24. Christians in Niger
25. HMP Ford
26. Ripon Cathedral
27. MIND – Mental Health Charity
28. Our Memorial Garden
29. Parker Avenue
30. The Alzheimer's Society

Register

10th March Funeral **Shirley Merrion**

12th March Funeral **Jill Burgess**

24th March Funeral **Joy Wright**

7th April Burial of Ashes **Brian Phasey**

26th April Burial of Ashes **Jill Burgess**



Quiet Time

Quiet Time will be held at St Leonard's Church at 8pm on Tuesday evenings from the 9th June.

Please note that there is no Quiet Time on Tuesday 5th May.

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
0800 1111 or webchat
24-hour counselling service for children and young people 24/7
www.childline.org.uk

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•
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•
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•
Own Crematorium

STEVENAGE • 01438 316623
HITCHIN • 01462 438422
KNEBWORTH • 01438 812365
BUNTINGFORD • 01763 274111
WELWYN GARDEN CITY • 01707 390018
WELWYN • 01438 714686
HERTFORD • 01992 582052
WARE • 01920 468551
LETCHWORTH • 01462 684292
HODDESDON • 01992 471709
HARWOOD PARK • 01438 812515
HARPENDEN • 01582 762570

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www.crematorium.co.uk

Serving the local community for ten generations

On The Doorstep – Bee Orchids

Bridget Hersant's pictures of Bee Orchids.
Please see her article on page 11.



ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH, BENGEO
CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2026

QUIET TIME – Tuesday evenings at 8pm from 9th June

June

Sunday 7th	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Sunday 14th	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Saturday 20th	Talk on Crouchfield by Dorothy Abel Smith
Sunday 21st	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Sunday 28th	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm

July

Saturday 4th	Concert - Pagoda Project, 3.30pm with teas
Sunday 5th	Annual Pet Service at 4pm, followed by refreshments
Sunday 12th	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Sunday 19th	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Sunday 26th	Teas and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm

August

Sunday 2nd , Sunday 9th, Sunday 16th, Sunday 23rd	Tea and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Saturday 29th	Concert: Colin Eldred (clarinet) and Eleanor Potter (harp), 3.30pm with teas
Sunday 30th	Teas and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm

September

Sunday 7th	Teas and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Saturday 12th	Heritage Open Day, 9am to 5pm Herts and Beds Historic Church Trust 'Bike and Hike'
Sunday 13th	Heritage Open Day, 11am to 5pm
Sunday 21st	Teas and cakes 2.30pm to 4.30pm
Sunday 27th	Friends of St. Leonard's AGM followed by Harvest Festival Songs of Praise, 4pm

Further information

Look out for updates on the St Leonard's website or on Facebook

stleonards.parishofbengeo.com or Facebook: Friends-of-St-Leonards-Bengeo