



Bengo Trails 6: Neighbourhood Plan Important Views and Green Spaces

This route links Bengo Trails 1, 2 and 3 and incorporates most of the important views and green spaces given additional protection from development through the [Bengo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#). The trail covers a significant part of the Neighbourhood Plan Area, going east to St. Leonard's Church, north to Bengo Field and returning south to Port Vale via Bengo Street. It stops off at the [Bengo Community Garden](#), a project that emerged from the Neighbourhood Plan. There are optional rest and refreshment stops along the way. The trails were produced by the [Love Bengo Community Group](#).



Starts (and ends): [Courtyard Arts Centre](#)

Port Vale, SG14 3AA.

Distance: 5m/8km

Conditions: Includes unmade paths and grassy areas with some uphill and downhill stretches.

Walk north along Port Vale, past [Mill Mead Primary School](#) and cross to the other side. Passing George Street and Russell Street, glimpses of the former railway land can be seen at the end of each road.



Turn right into Balfour Street and walk up to Balfour Street bridge (no pavement here). The land underneath the bridge runs from Sidings Court (off Port Hill) to the northern end of Port Vale. This **Former Railway Line, Lower Bengo** has [Local Green Space](#) designation through the Neighbourhood Plan, giving it additional protection from development. In the Plan, the land is described as 'a green corridor, recognised as having the potential to offer significant biodiversity gains. Any project to enhance and manage biodiversity on this site, and open up public access, will be strongly supported'.



Return down Balfour Street, passing the [Little Theatre](#) on your left. Turn right into Port Vale, passing the **Millstream Pub**.

Just before the **Port Vale Scout Hut**, on the left, is the small, privately owned, **Port Vale Wildlife Garden**. It's a haven of trees and shrubs, attracting birds and pollinating insects. Its **Local Green Space** designation gives it additional protection from development.

From Port Vale, turn left into Beane Road. Half way along, on the right, is the [Beane Marsh Nature Reserve](#) information board. At the crossing point, cross to the other side.



From the Beane Road bridge, you'll see Neighbourhood Plan View 5:

Beane Marshes towards

Molewood from Beane Road bridge. The Plan says: *'the panorama to the north and north east takes in the River Beane and its floodplain, a rare example of a naturalised water meadow that has significant amenity and biodiversity value and provides a strong landscape setting for Bengeo's historic settlement on the hill'*.

Crossing back over Beane Road at the crossing point, enter **Millmead Park**, which has **Local Green Space** designation through the Neighbourhood Plan *'to prevent encroachment from development, and to safeguard wildlife habitat'*.



The River Beane (a rare chalk stream) runs through the park, and the path is a cycle route to Hartham Common. Continue around the perimeter of Mill Mead Primary School into a small car park. The **Courtyard Arts Centre** garden is to your right. The Arts Centre is open 10am-4pm Tuesday to Saturday, with teas and coffees available.

From Port Vale, turn left onto the Port Hill slip road. Cross Port Hill at the pedestrian crossing, turn left and walk up to the **Gates to the Warren and Hartham Common**. The gates, and **Numbers 38-40 Port Hill** (to the left of the gates) have additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Go through the gates onto Public Footpath 86. At the first footbridge, cross the River Beane into the Common, along the path until you reach the area in front of [Hartham Leisure Centre](#).





Looking left across the Common, towards Port Hill, is Neighbourhood Plan View 7: **Hartham Common towards Port Hill.**

The Neighbourhood Plan says: *'The woods and Common are home to many different species of wildlife and this Green Finger helps the area not to feel over-developed.'*

To your right is Neighbourhood Plan View 8: **Hartham Common towards The Warren.** The view description says, *'no future development should be permitted to prevent the view of the bellcote (of St. Leonard's Church) seen from Hartham'.*



Return back towards The Warren. At the tennis courts, take the path on the right and cross the bridge across the River Beane. Turn right, back onto Footpath 86 and continue, slightly uphill, until you reach the [Grade I listed St Leonard's Church](#), the oldest building in Hertford. Turn left in front of the church, bear right and **St. Leonard's Garden** is on your left. The Neighbourhood Plan says: *'Although the garden is in the Hertford Conservation Area, designation as **'Local Green Space'** gives it much needed additional protection'.* There are places to sit in the garden.



Looking from the garden towards the church is Neighbourhood Plan View 6: **St. Leonard's Church from St. Leonard's Garden.**

The Plan says: *'if St. Leonard's Garden were developed, this wonderful view of the church would be lost to the public and should be preserved in perpetuity'.*



Leave the garden through the black gate and walk along St. Leonard's Road and turn right into Ware Park Road, then left into Watermill Lane.

The **Watermill Lane Play and Recreation Area** on your left has **Local Green Space** designation



through the Neighbourhood Plan which describes it as being *'highly valued by residents'*. *'There are semi-natural areas within the park and owls, hawks and Red Kites visit regularly. Since its regeneration in the 1970s, many trees and shrubs have matured. This wonderful park has been cared for by residents and should be protected from development'*.

Walk up Bridleway 15 (adjacent to the recreation area) to Watermill Lane North.

On your right is Neighbourhood Plan View 4: **Watermill Lane North towards Ware Park Manor**. The Plan says *'this view gives the public a glimpse of a building that is otherwise difficult to access. This farmland to the north of the public footpath on Watermill Lane is unsuitable for development due to the open, unspoiled views'*.



At the top of Watermill Lane North, turn left onto Wadesmill Road, continue on to Bengoe Street and cross to the other side at the pedestrian crossing, Turn left into Sacombe Road, past [Bengoe Primary School](#) onto the path to the left of the narrow pavement.



Turn left into the **Sacombe Road Play Area**.

Behind the younger children's play area is the **Woodland Adjacent to the Sacombe Road Play Area**, which has **Local Green Space** designation through the Neighbourhood Plan. It's described in the Plan as *'pretty woodland used regularly by residents for walking, cycling and play'*.

Turn right out of the play area, over the Sacombe Road pedestrian crossing, and turn left then right into Nursery Way, then left into Butterfield Drive. Bear right and enter **Bengoe Field** (large phone mast on your left).



Join Byway 1, to your right, and walk north to the brow of the hill.

On your right is **Land at Bengoe Field** (hatched green in the image, right). It has **Local Green Space** designation through the Neighbourhood Plan, giving it additional protection from development. The Plan says, *'views north across the site are iconic of Bengoe'*.



Looking north from the brow of Byway 1 is Neighbourhood Plan View 2: **North from Bengoe Field towards 'The Lonely Oak'**. The view description says *'just over the rim of the hill, on the far side of the oak tree, lies the ancient St. John's Wood. As the only agricultural land within easy access of the Molewood Estate, this view is not only iconic of*

Bengeo, but much enjoyed by local people. The land is part of the Green Belt and the subsoil of the pathway running through it has been registered as an Asset of Community Value’.

Walk down Byway 1, and, just after the ‘Lonely Oak’ tree, Neighbourhood Plan View 3: **Bengeo Field towards Ware Park Manor** is on the right.



The Neighbourhood Plan says: *‘The panorama to the east reveals Hertfordshire’s rolling countryside, whilst a manor house is seen nestling on the opposite side of the valley. The partly wooded valley on the other side of the River Rib provides a stunning vista in all seasons’.*

The Bengeo Field views are highly valued by walkers and cyclists.

Retrace your steps to Bengeo Primary School, turn right onto Bengeo Street, and continue along Bengeo Street for around 5 minutes. Turn right onto Footpath 90 (signposted The Drive). At the end of the footpath, turn left onto Duncombe Road (no road sign here).



A short way along on your left is [Bengeo Parish Church Hall](#), which has additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan says – *‘this red brick building with decorative detailing, built in 1899 by Robert Green, is the church hall for Holy Trinity Church, which is on the corner of Bengeo Street and New Road’.*

[Bengeo Community Garden](#) is to the right of the church hall. The Neighbourhood Plan committed to *‘support the landscaping of a community garden on the empty plot on the corner of Duncombe Road and Tower Street’.*

In 2023, a small group of Neighbourhood Plan volunteers established the site as a community garden, working with East Herts District Council, Mudlarks, and local residents.



From the garden, turn left into Tower Street, then right onto Bengeo Street. [Holy Trinity Church](#) is opposite, and the [White Lion Pub](#) is on your right – a refreshment stop option.

From the White Lion car park, you can see [Castle Joinery](#), which has additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Continue along Bengeo Street, passing the [Bengeo Club](#) on your right, and on down Port Hill. Just past the pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Port Hill, walk along the slip road to the right of Port Hill bridge. Turn right into Port Vale and [Courtyard Arts Centre](#), the starting point for this trail, is opposite.

This trail ends here.

Route Map: Bengo Trails 6 – Neighbourhood Plan Important Views and Green Spaces
(map produced using openstreetmap.org)

