



BENGO TRAILS COMPILATION
A LOVE BENGO COMMUNITY GROUP PROJECT



Bengeo Trails: a background to the project

In 2021, residents voted “YES” to policies in the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) that help protect important views, green spaces, historic buildings, and community facilities. The [Bengeo Trails](#) highlight their importance to residents.

The trail routes include nature reserves, wildlife sites, ancient woodlands, rural areas, Folly Island, and parts of Hertford town centre. All the trails are in the Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The trails also visit the [Bengeo Community Garden](#) and the [Bengeo Mosaic](#). Like [Bengeo Trails](#), they’re Love Bengeo Community Group projects.

The [Love Bengeo Community Group](#) wrote the trails and helped produce the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan.



Neighbourhood Plan Map

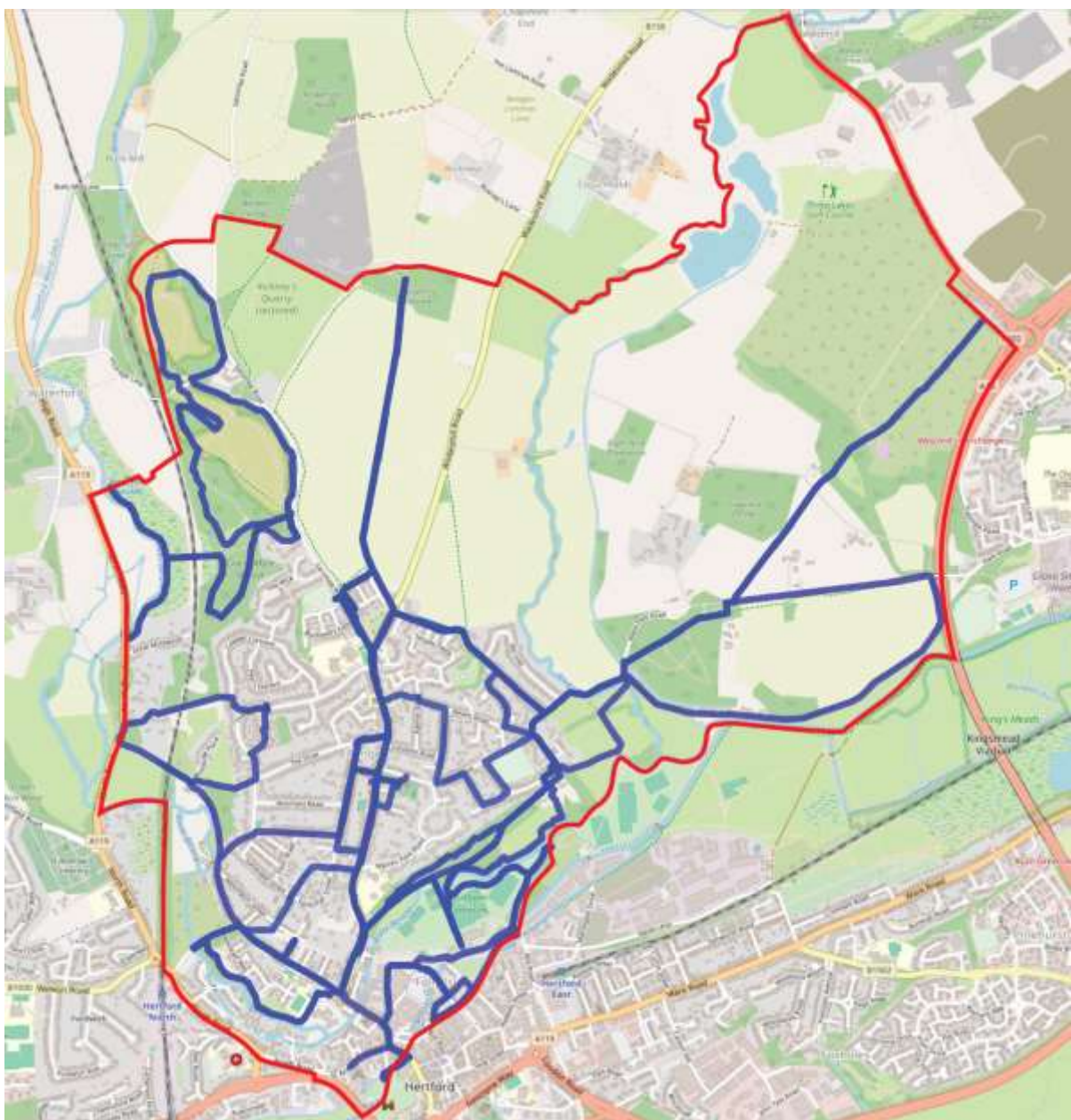
VISITED ON THE TRAILS	TRAIL NUMBER
Important views and designated green spaces	1, 2, 3, 5, 6
St. Leonard’s Church and St. Leonard’s Garden	2, 6, 7, 12, 15
Waterford Marsh, Great Mole Wood, and Waterford Heath	13,16
Ware Park Manor and rural areas	7 & 12
Bengeo Field	3, 6, 8
Beane Marsh Nature Reserve	1, 6, 10
Hartham Common	2, 4, 6,15
Folly Island	9,15
Bengeo Community Garden	3, 6, 10
Bengeo Mosaic	3, 6
Churches, Listed and historic buildings	2, 4, 6, 9, 10,14,15
Bengeo’s twitchels	14
St. Andrew Street , Old Cross, and Hertford Castle Gardens	9
River Beane, River Lea, River Rib, and the Lee Navigation	1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 15
Gardens and wildlife corridors	10
Parks/play areas sports and leisure facilities	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 14, 15
Molewood Road steps	5,10
St. Andrew Street, Old Cross, and Hertford Castle Gardens	9
St. John’s Wood	8
Bengeo Water Tower	11
Neighbourhood Plan boundary reached	4, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16

Bengeo Trails Overview Map

The trails in this compilation reach all the Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan Areas that are accessible on foot, from within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

The red line indicates the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan boundary. The blue lines indicate the Bengeo Trails routes.

The Bengeo Trails maps were produced using openstreetmap.org.



Contents: 16 Walking Trails in the Bengo Neighbourhood Plan Area

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Bengeo Trails 1: View Across Beane Marshes

This trail incorporates an important view and three of the designated green spaces given additional protection from development through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#).



Courtyard Arts

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

Port Vale, SG14 3AA

Distance: 0.91m/1.47 km

Conditions: Pavements, tarmac surfaces, grassy areas
Short uphill and downhill section

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 (no pavement here) and walk up to the Balfour Street bridge. The land underneath the bridge runs from Sidings Court (off Port Hill) to the northern end of Port Vale. This **Former Railway Line** has [Local Green Space](#) designation through the Neighbourhood Plan, giving it additional protection from development.



Looking west towards Port Vale



Looking east towards Port Hill

The land is described in the Neighbourhood Plan 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.



Port Vale Wildlife Garden

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 Important View 5: **Beane Marshes towards Molewood from Beane Road bridge**.

The view description 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'*.



Beane Marshes towards Molewood from Beane Road bridge



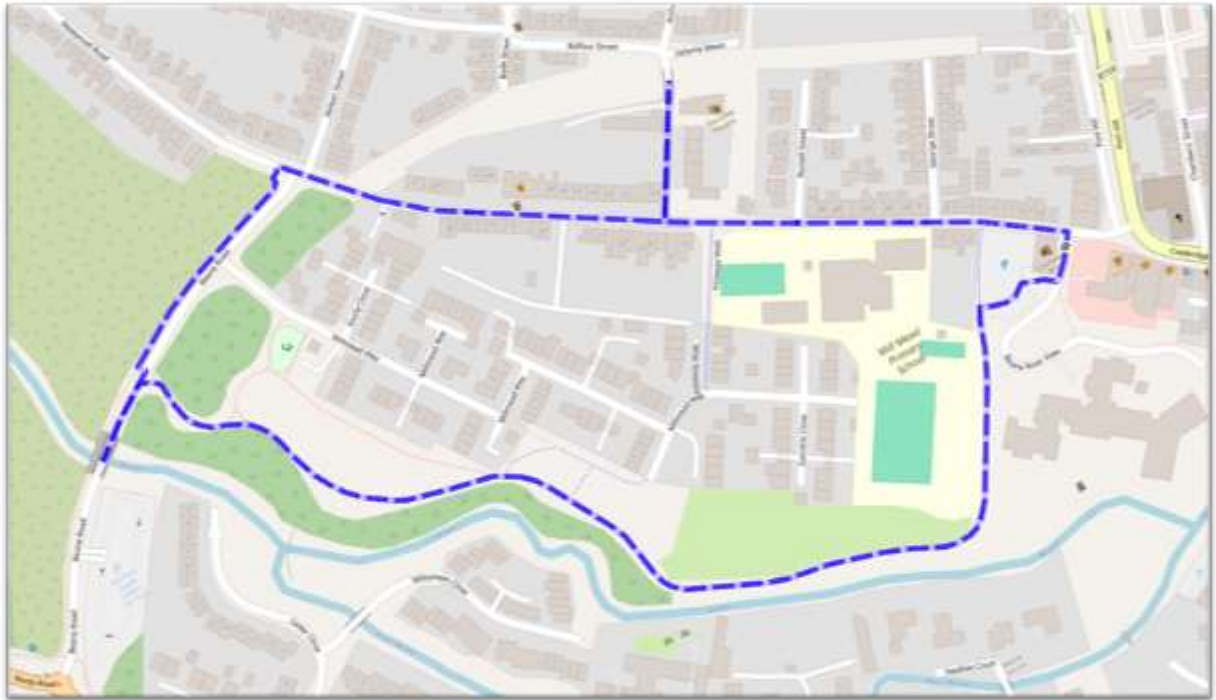
Millmead Park

Crossing back over Beane Road at the crossing point, enter **Millmead Park** which has *Local Green Space* designation *'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 garden, where this trail ends, is to the right.

Bengeo Trails 1: View across Beane Marshes



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Bengeo Trails 2: St. Leonard's Garden, Hartham, and Ware Park Manor Views

This trail visits important views and designated green spaces given additional protection through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#).



Gates to The Warren and Hartham Common

Starts: Gates to the Warren and Hartham Common, Port Hill SG14 3EP

Ends: The Greyhound pub, Bengeo Street SG14 3EY

Distance: 1.6m/2.58km

Conditions: Some unsurfaced paths and grassy areas. Some uphill and downhill stretches

Go through the **Gates to the Warren and Hartham Common** onto Public Footpath 86. The gates, and numbers **38-40 Port Hill**, to the left of the gates, have additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

At the first footbridge, cross the River Beane (a rare chalk stream) into [Hartham Common](#), along the path, until you reach the grassy area in front of [Hartham Leisure Centre](#).



38-40 Port Hill



Hartham Common towards Port Hill



Hartham Common towards The Warren

Looking left across the Common is Neighbourhood Plan Important 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 the right is Neighbourhood Plan Important 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'*.



St. Leonard's Garden

Return 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'*.

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



St. Leonard's Church from St. Leonard's Garden

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. It's described as *'highly valued by residents'*. *'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'*.



Watermill Lane Play Area

Walk up Bridleway 15 (adjacent to the recreation area) to Watermill Lane North. On your right is Neighbourhood Plan Important 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'.



Watermill Lane North towards Ware Park Manor

At the top of Watermill Lane North, turn left onto Wadesmill Road and continue on to Bengeo Street until you reach **The Greyhound** pub, on the left, where this trail ends.

The Greyhound has additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

Bengeo Trails 2: St. Leonard's Garden, Hartham, and Ware Park Manor Views



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Bengeo Trails 3: Bengeo Field Views

This trail highlights important Bengeo Field views and designated green spaces given additional protection through [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) policies. The trail passes the Bengeo Mosaic and ends at the Bengeo Community Garden - both (like [Bengeo Trails](#)) Love Bengeo Community Group projects.

Starts: The Greyhound pub, Bengeo Street, SG14 3EY

Ends: Bengeo Community Garden, corner of Duncombe Road and Tower Street, SG14 3HD

Distance: 1.6m/2.7km

Conditions: Unsurfaced paths and grassy areas. Mostly flat with a downhill and uphill section

With The Greyhound pub on your right, walk north along Bengeo Street, over the pedestrian crossing and turn left into Sacombe Road, past [Bengeo Primary School](#), onto the path to the left of the narrow pavement. Turn left into the [Sacombe Road Play Area](#).



Woodland adjacent to 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 **Bengeo Field** (large phone mast on your left). Join Byway 1, to your right, and walk north to the brow of the hill.

On the right is **Land at Bengeo Field** (hatched green in the image right). It has *Local Green Space* designation through the Neighbourhood Plan, giving it additional protection from development.

In the Neighbourhood Plan survey, more residents showed support for protecting Bengeo Field than any other green space.



Land at Bengeo Field



North from Bengo Field towards 'The Lonely Oak'

Looking north from the brow of Byway 1 is Neighbourhood Plan Important View 2:

North from Bengo Field towards 'The Lonely Oak'

The view description says 'As the only agricultural land within easy access of the Molewood Estate, this view is not only iconic of Bengo, but much enjoyed by local people'

Walk down Byway 1, and, just after the 'Lonely Oak' tree, Neighbourhood Plan Important View 3: **Bengo Field towards Ware Park Manor**, is on the right. The view description 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'



Bengo Field towards Ware Park Manor



Bengo Mosaic

Retrace your steps to Bengo Primary School, turn right onto Bengo Street, and continue along Bengo Street for around 5 minutes, passing the [Bengo Mosaic](#), which was [unveiled](#) in May 2026, and is another Love Bengo Community Group project.

The mosaic features Bengo landmarks, including [St. Leonard's Church](#), Bengo Water Tower, and [Holy Trinity Church](#).

From Bengo Street, turn right onto Footpath 90 (signposted 'The Drive'). At the end of the footpath, turn left onto Duncombe Road.

Further along, on the left is [Bengo Parish Church Hall](#), which has additional protection through a Neighbourhood Plan Policy.

[Bengeo Community Garden](#) is to the right of the church hall. The Neighbourhood Plan said it would-

'support the landscaping of a community garden on the empty plot on the corner of Duncombe Road and Tower Street'

Neighbourhood Plan volunteers established the site as a community garden, working with East Herts District Council, [Mudlarks](#), and local residents. The information board in the garden thanks East Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertford Town Council and [The Coffee Pot](#) for their support.



Bengeo Community Garden

Volunteers help maintain the garden. More volunteers are always welcome.

garden@lovebengeo.org.uk

Bengeo Trails 3: Bengeo Field Views



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Bengeo Trails 4: Around Hartham Common, Cowbridge and Port Hill with the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan

This trail takes walkers through Hartham Common and explains how the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) policies are put into practice when planning applications impact community facilities.

Leaving Hartham Common, the route returns to the starting point via nearby streets, passing notable Listed Buildings along the way. Neighbourhood Plan policies have been put into practice on planning proposals for two of them.

The planning responses referenced in this trail are on the Love Bengeo Community Group [website](#).



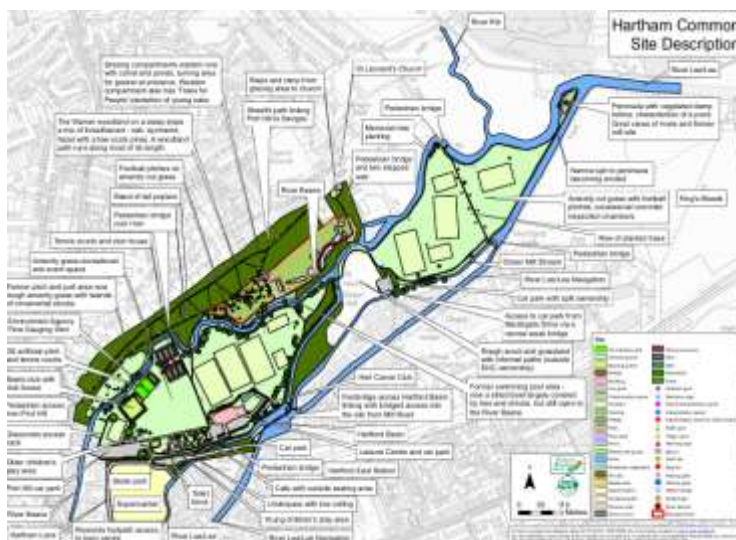
Neighbourhood Plan Map

Starts and ends: Gates to The Warren and Hartham Common, Port Hill SG14 3EP

Distance: 1.6m/2.7km

Conditions: Footpaths and pavements, with a short uphill at the end of the trail

Starting at the ornate gates at the entrance to The Warren and Hartham Common, go through the gates and follow Public Footpath 86, passing the River Beane (a rare chalk stream) and the tennis courts on your right. Ignoring the first footbridge on your right, take the next sharp right, by the Hartham Common interpretation panel, and cross over the River Beane via the second footbridge, into Hartham Common.



Excerpt from the Hartham Common Greenspace Action Plan

The map, left, is reproduced from the [Hartham Common Greenspace Action Plan \(GAP\)](#), a map-based management plan for Hartham Common.

In 2018 and 2024, the [Love Bengeo Community Group](#) supported proposals in the Greenspace Action Plan to increase walking and cycling routes linking Hertford with Hartham Common and the wider countryside. There are some circular walks in this [Beyond Hartham Common leaflet](#).

Management of The Warren, and the upgrading of the younger children's play areas on the Common, were also supported by the Love Bengeo Community Group, and recommendations to increase provision for teenagers were made.

Interpretation panels, with information about Hartham Common, its rivers, and its wildlife, are on display in various location on the Common.

After crossing the bridge from Footpath 86, turn left and follow the path around Hartham Common, with the River Beane on your left. Continue on until you reach the junction with another path and turn left.



Confluence of the Rivers Lea and Beane

Follow the path for a short distance to the bridge. From the bridge, you'll see the River Lea cascading over the weir on the right and the confluence of the River Beane and River Lea on the left.



River Lea on Hartham Common

The bridge is at the edge of the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan boundary.

From the bridge, retrace your steps and follow the path towards Hartham Leisure Centre, with the River Lea on your left. Continue straight on, passing the large weir on your left and the [Herts Canoe Club](#) on your right. [Hartham Leisure Centre](#) is also on your right.

Between 2018-2020, the Neighbourhood Plan Group responded to public consultations and planning applications for the refurbishment and extension of Hartham Leisure Centre.

Proposals to improve and increase community facilities were supported but concerns were raised about the proposed external design of the extension. It was felt that the exterior cladding, shape, and appearance of the double-height extension was more suited to an industrial setting than to Hartham, with its thousand-year heritage



Hartham Leisure Centre

Revised proposals for the addition of a living wall on the south side elevation, 'wrap-around' green corridor on the west elevation, and a raised boardwalk between the trees on the north elevation were welcomed by the Group. Planning consent was granted in late 2020 by East Herts District Council.

To the left of Hartham Leisure Centre is the Hartham Common Play Area. The Love Bengeo Community Group participated in the consultation on the refurbishment of the play area and welcomed the subsequent planning proposals.



Hartham Common Play Area

The Group endorsed proposals for a broad range of play equipment (much of it constructed with natural materials), water and sand play, and an increase in benches and picnic tables. Planting plans for perennials, trees, and native hornbeam hedging, with their potential to improve biodiversity and wildlife habitats, were also endorsed.

Planning consent was granted by East Herts District Council in early 2020. Local residents, particularly the [Hertford Playground Alliance](#), were instrumental (with East Herts District Council) in driving this initiative forward.



McMullen's Brewery

With the play area on your right, cross at the pedestrian crossing, bear left, and cross over the road, with Sainsbury's in front of you. Turn right and follow the pavement, curving round to the left and continue along Hartham Lane, passing the [Grade II Listed McMullen's Brewery](#) on your left.

At the end of Hartham Lane, at the junction with Cowbridge, turn left and head towards the traffic lights at Old Cross, passing the Grade II Listed former [Hertford Library](#). The Library and McMullen's Brewery are both referenced in the Neighbourhood Plan.



Former Hertford Library

At the lights, cross at the pedestrian crossing and head back towards Cowbridge. On your left is 7, Cowbridge, the former motorcycle shop, now beautifully restored.

Prior to its refurbishment, this Grade II Listed Building had lain empty for a considerable period. The proposal for change of use from retail to residential, and the refurbishment proposals, were welcomed by the Love Bengeo Community Group, including the removal of the shop window and its replacement with one in the original historic position. As there were swifts in the building, the Love Bengeo Community Group urged the developers to include swift bricks during construction. Change of use was approved and, in February 2023, Listed Building planning consent was approved.



7 Cowbridge



Above: Prince Albert Model Cottage built 1854
Photograph: V. A. Bennett

Continue straight along Cowbridge, passing the [Grade II Listed Prince Albert model cottages](#) on your left (mentioned in *'The history and heritage of the Neighbourhood Plan Area'* at the beginning of the Neighbourhood Plan).

Walk over Cowbridge – the bridge over the River Beane - and, when you reach Vale House on the left, cross over Port Vale and immediately right onto the cul-de-sac slip road adjacent to Port Hill.

As you approach the pedestrian crossing, you'll see **45 Port Hill** on the left. This mid/late 17th [Grade II Listed](#) building was originally a house, then in use as variously named pubs and, more recently, The Oak Veterinary Practice.



45 Port Hill

In 2023, it was sold at auction, and, in 2025, a planning application was submitted for refurbishment of the building and change of use to residential. The Love Bengeo Community Group supported the planning application (referencing Neighbourhood Plan Policy HBC2: Listed Buildings and Structures).

The building had not been used by the community for some time, the proposed alterations were sympathetic to the building's heritage, and the Policy supports proposals to bring empty listed buildings back into use. Planning consent was granted in February 2026.

Cross Port Hill at the pedestrian crossing and return up the hill to the Gates to the Warren and Hartham Common, where this trail ends.

***Bengeo Trails 4: Around Hartham Common, Cowbridge, and Port Hill
with the Neighbourhood Plan***



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Bengeo Trails 5: Public Footpath 93 to North Road Meadow

Public Footpath 93, en route to Waterford Marsh, Goldings Estate, and beyond, will be familiar to residents who descend the steep steps from Church Road, or walk up from Wellington Street or Molewood Road. Some residents may join it from Public Footpath 74, the steep path off The Avenue.

This short trail highlights what's being done, through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#), to help protect natural habitats, and help prevent overdevelopment along Public Footpath 93.

Starts (and ends): Bottom of the steps, Molewood Road, SG14 3AJ

Distance: 0.8m/1.2km

Conditions: Some unmade paths. Can be muddy in wet weather

The steep steps down from Church Road have benefitted from seasonal leaf clearance by the [Molewood Residents' Association](#) (MRA), other residents, and local Councillors.



Molewood Road steps

The welcome installation of a handrail in late 2025 (courtesy of the Hertfordshire County Council Countryside and Rights of Way team and MRA) has made the descent safer.

With the steps on your right and the River Beane (a rare chalk stream) on your left, walk along Public Footpath 95.

Passing the wooded area on your right, you'll reach the [Molewood Pumping Station](#), built in 1888 on the site of a former corn mill to supply water to the local area.

The Grade II Listed [Molewood House and Molewood Lodge](#) are on your left. Just after the pumping station, the bridge leading to Woodville Place is on the right and, to the left, Public Footpath 95 ends and Public Footpath 93, part of the [Hertfordshire Way](#), begins.



Molewood Road Pumping Station

In 2025, the Planning Inspectorate determined that an area of Green Belt land at the beginning of Footpath 93 should be classed as [grey belt](#) (thus reducing its protection from development).

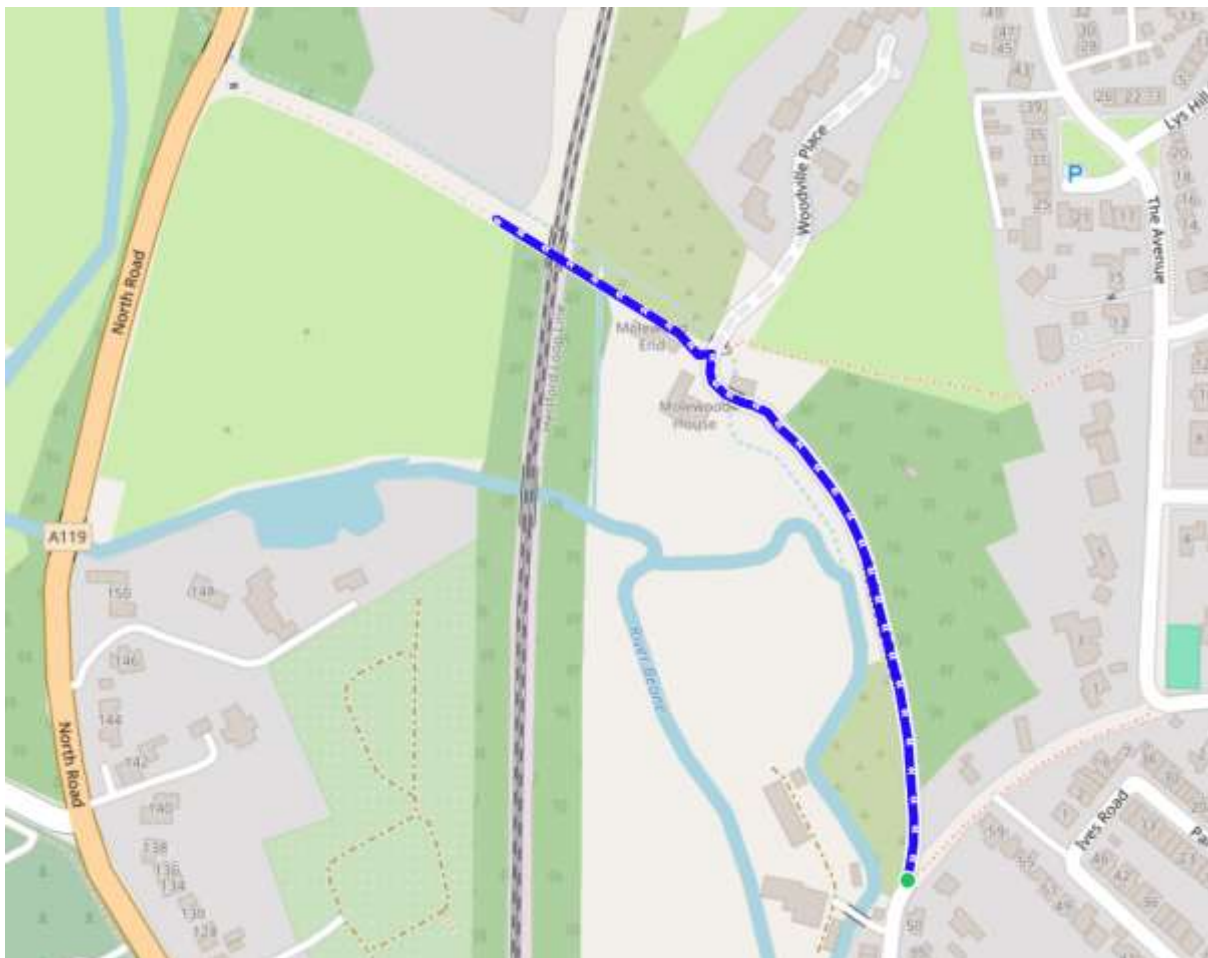
In 2026, the Love Bengoe Community Group objected to a [planning application](#) for development on the land because of harms that construction could cause to natural habitats, and because development on that site would represent further encroachment on the natural areas along Footpath 93. Planning permission was granted, with planning conditions attached, including the submission of a Design and Management Plan for a wildlife pond designed to benefit amphibians and invertebrates, with shallow margins, and native aquatic and marginal planting.



North Road Meadow

Passing under the railway bridge on Footpath 93, North Road Meadow is on the left. This lovely Green Belt meadow has [Local Green Space](#) designation through the [Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan](#). Residents chose it for additional protection to help prevent further Green Belt encroachment along Public Footpath 93. In the Neighbourhood Plan, the area is described as 'a wildlife haven'. Return from here to the Molewood Road steps.

Bengoe Trails 5: Public Footpath 93 to North Road Meadow



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Bengeo Trails 6: Neighbourhood Plan Important Views and Green Spaces

This route links Bengeo Trails 1, 2 and 3. It incorporates most of the important views and green spaces given additional protection from development through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#). The trail passes the Bengeo Mosaic and the Bengeo Community Garden - both (like Bengeo Trails) Love Bengeo Community Group projects.



Starts/ends: [Courtyard Arts](#), 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.



Looking west towards Port Vale



Looking east towards Port Hill

Turn right into Balfour Street and walk up to the Balfour Street bridge (no pavement here). The former railway land (above) runs from Sidings Court (off Port Hill), under the bridge, to the northern end of Port Vale. The land 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’.



Port Vale Wildlife Garden

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.

Turn left into Beane Road. Cross to the other side at the crossing point and walk to the Beane Road bridge.

From the bridge is Neighbourhood Plan Important View 5: **Beane Marshes towards Molewood from Beane Road bridge.**



Beane Marshes towards Molewood from Beane Road bridge

The Neighbourhood 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.



Millmead Park

Continue around the perimeter of Mill Mead Primary School into a small car park. The Courtyard Arts garden is to your right. 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.



Gates to The Warren and Hartham Common



Numbers 38-40 Port Hill

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](#).



Hartham Common towards Port Hill



Hartham Common towards The Warren

Looking left across the Common, towards Port Hill, is Neighbourhood Plan Important View 7: **Hartham Common towards Port Hill**. The view description 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 the right is Neighbourhood Plan Important 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*’.



St. Leonard’s Garden

Return 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*’.

Looking from the garden towards the church is Neighbourhood Plan Important 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*’.



St. Leonard’s Church from St. Leonard’s Garden

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.



Watermill Lane Play Area

The **Watermill Lane Play and Recreation Area** on the left has *Local Green Space* designation through the Neighbourhood Plan which describes it as being *'highly valued by residents'*. *'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 Important View 4: **Watermill Lane North towards Ware Park Manor**.

The view description 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'*.



Watermill Lane North towards Ware Park Manor

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.



Woodland adjacent to 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 the 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. In the Neighbourhood Plan survey, more residents showed support for protecting Bengoe Field than any other green space.



Land at Bengoe Field



North from Bengoe Field towards 'The Lonely Oak'

Looking north from the brow of Byway 1 is Neighbourhood Plan Important View 2:

North from Bengoe Field towards 'The Lonely Oak'

The view description says, 'As the only agricultural land within easy access of the Molewood Estate, this view is not only iconic of Bengoe, but much enjoyed by local people'.

Walk down Byway 1. On the right, just after the 'Lonely Oak' tree, is Neighbourhood Plan Important View 3: **Bengoe Field towards Ware Park Manor**. The view description 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'.



Bengoe Field towards Ware Park Manor



Bengoe Mosaic

Retrace your steps to Bengoe Primary School, turn right, and walk along Bengoe Street for around 5 minutes, passing the [Bengoe Mosaic](#), which was [unveiled](#) in May 2026 and is another Love Bengoe Community Group project. The mosaic features Bengoe landmarks, including [St. Leonard's Church](#), Bengoe Water Tower, and [Holy Trinity Church](#). From Bengoe Street, turn right onto Footpath 90 (signposted The Drive), then left onto Duncombe Road. Further along, on the left, is Bengoe Parish Church Hall, which has additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

[Bengoe 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'.

Neighbourhood Plan volunteers established the site as a community garden, working with East Herts District Council, [Mudlarks](#), and local residents. The information board in the garden thanks East Herts District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertford Town Council and [The Coffee Pot](#) for their support.



Bengoe Community Garden

Turn left into Tower Street, then right onto Bengoe Street. [Holy Trinity Church](#) is opposite, and the [White Lion Pub](#) is on the right. [Castle Joinery](#), which has additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan, can be seen from the pub car park. Continue along Bengoe Street, passing the [Bengoe Club](#) and the [Co-op](#), and on down Port Hill. After the pedestrian crossing, walk along the slip road to the right of Port Hill bridge. Turn right into Port Vale. Courtyard Arts, the start and end point for this trail, is opposite.

Bengeo Trails 6: Neighbourhood Plan Important Views and Green Spaces



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Bengeo Trails 7: Ware Park Manor and the River Lee Navigation

This trail takes walkers from St. Leonard's Church, through the grounds of the former Ware Park Manor and returns along the River Lee navigation. It provides commanding views across the Lee Valley and King's Meads while remaining within the bounds of Bengeo.

Starts/ends: St. Leonard's Garden, opposite St Leonard's Church, St Leonard's Rd, SG14 3JW

Distance: 2.5m/4km

Conditions: Footpaths, bridleways, short sections on quiet roads, and one stile. Some uneven surfaces which can be wet and muddy. Contains uphill and downhill sections

St. Leonard's Garden is a delightful community garden overlooking the 12th century St. Leonard's Church. Starting at St. Leonard's Garden, head east along St. Leonard's Road, turn right and continue downhill along Ware Park Road. There is no pavement towards the bottom of Ware Park Road – take care when walking in the road. Cross the bridge over the River Rib and follow the raised pavement alongside the road.



Bench in St. Leonard's Garden



River Rib

The **River Rib** originates to the north, near the village of Buckland, and runs roughly parallel to the A10 until it joins the River Lea in Bengeo.

Continue along Ware Park Road, uphill, until it curves around to the right and crosses over a disused millstream.

The disused **Ware Park millstream** is barely recognisable; all that remains are the ornate cast iron balustrades of the bridge. The millstream used to take water from the River Rib to power the Ware Park Mill. The water wheel was unique in the area in that it was an overshot wheel, where the water runs over the top of the wheel, rather than the usual undershot wheel.

Turn right immediately after the bridge onto Restricted Byway 98. Continue to follow the path uphill through the woods, which are within the grounds of the old Ware Park Manor.



Bridge balustrade



Daffodils in the grounds of Ware Park Manor

Ware Park Manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book and has passed through many changes over the years. It was owned by the Fanshawe family in the 16th-17th century, before being sold to London barrister William Parker. In the early 20th century, it passed into the hands of Hertfordshire County Council and was used as a hospital for tuberculosis patients. The Manor house was converted to flats in the 1980s.

Continue to follow the byway until it levels out and crosses two entrance tracks to properties on the right. At the second track turn left and then right onto the wider farm track (Pampuss Mews Cattery will be on the right). Follow the farm track with Bardon Farm on the left and pass through the metal gates across the track. A short distance further on, Ware Carmelite Monastery can be glimpsed through the hedge on the lefthand side of the track. **Ware Carmelite Monastery** used to house an order of Carmelite nuns. The order was established in Notting Hill in the 1920s before moving to Ware in 1958.

Continue along the farm track until just before the road bridge over the A10, turn right and head downhill on Restricted Byway 97. Keep following this path as it curves around to the right and follows the River Lee Navigation.



River Lee Navigation

The River Lee Navigation forms the southern boundary of the Bengoe Ward. The river is a major tributary of The Thames and has been a trading route since the bronze ages. Various Acts of Parliament have been enacted since the 15th century to improve the river for navigation. The river was of great importance to the various industries of Hertford but is now mainly used for leisure as well as being a haven for wildlife. Continue to follow the byway, passing the New Gauge House on the opposite side of the river.

The New Gauge House dates from 1856 and was built to extract water from the River Lea to supply the New River. The New River was opened in 1631 to supply drinking water to north London, and the original source was the nearby Chadwell Spring. The flow of water from the spring proved to be insufficient, hence the extension to extract water from the River Lea. The metal structure in front of the building is an eel screen which is a recent addition to prevent eels from entering the New River thereby protecting the population in the River Lea.



The New Gauge House

Continue to follow the byway until the site of Ware Park Mill.



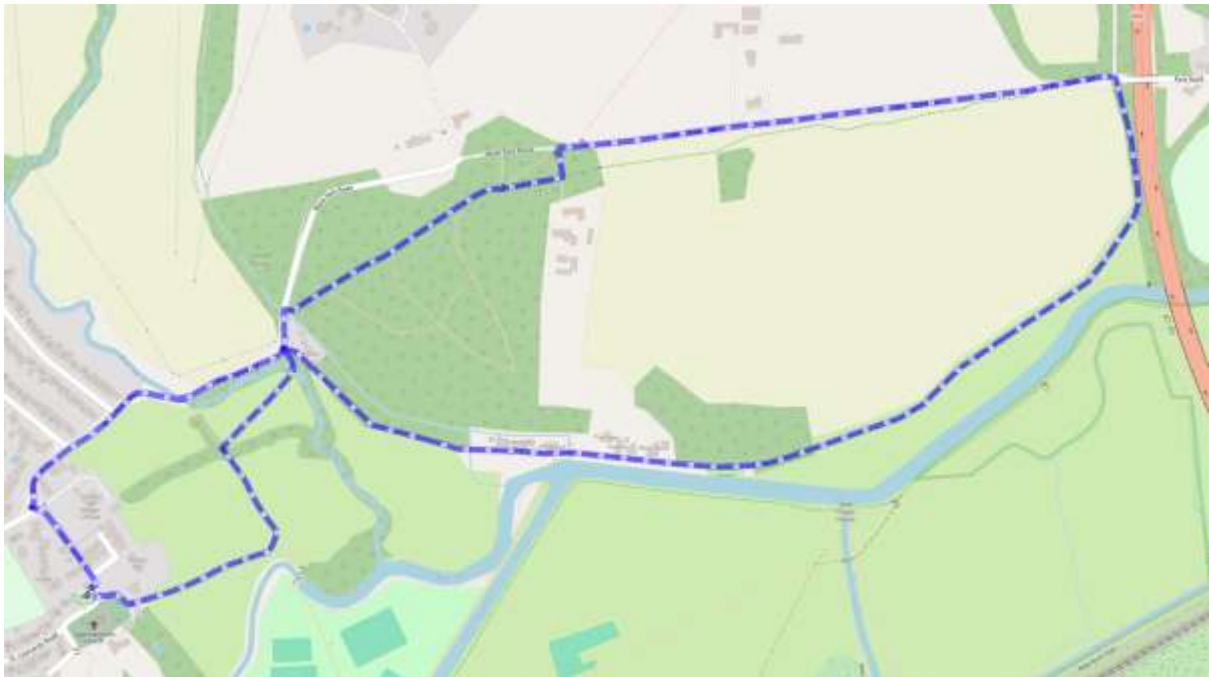
Ware Park Mill

Ware Park Mill was one of many mills in the Hertford area. Built in 1721 it was used to grind corn for animal feed until the 1950s when it was demolished. The remains of the mill race can still be seen.

Continue to follow the byway. Just before it rejoins Ware Park Road, turn left and cross the footbridge over the River Rib (Public Footpath 17). Follow the path diagonally across the field, then turn left over a stile and across a small bridge.

After the bridge joggle slightly to the left to avoid the private land to the right. Follow the path (Public Footpath 19) and head towards the footbridge over the River Lea. Just before reaching the footbridge turn right and follow the path (Public Footpath 21) up the slope towards St. Leonard's Church. Turn right through the gate and return to St. Leonard's Garden where the trail ends.

Bengeo Trails 7: Ware Park Manor and the River Lee Navigation



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Bengeo Trails 8: Bengeo Field to St. John's Wood

The iconic path across Bengeo Field is familiar to many. This trail builds on [Bengeo Trails 3](#) by taking walkers further along Byway 1 to St. John's Wood, with information along the way about the importance of Bengeo Field to the community.

Although there are no pubs or cafes on the trail, The Greyhound pub, 146 Bengeo Street, SG14 3EY is nearby.

Starts and ends: Beginning of Byway 1, Wadesmill Road, SG14 3HJ

Distance: Around 1.5m/2.4km

Conditions: Footpath and muddy woodland areas. Uphill and downhill sections



Byway 1 sign on Wadesmill Road

This trail starts at the Public Restricted Byway 1 sign on the left of Wadesmill Road, shortly after the junction with Sacombe Road, and just past the gate to [Bengeo Allotments](#). The approach to the Byway sign is across a grassed area. Turn left onto Byway 1, and, with the phone mast on your left, follow the Byway north onto Bengeo Field.

In 2025, planning permission was granted for housing development at the top of Bengeo Field despite substantial efforts by the community to preserve it, led by the ['Save Bengeo Field'](#) group.

Construction works may result in temporary detours for this part of Byway 1.

The 'Lonely Oak' can be seen at the bottom of the slope. From this part of the field, views north towards St. John's Wood, and east towards Ware Park Manor, have additional protection from development.



The 'Lonely Oak' on Bengeo Field

There's more information on these important views in the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#). Continue on Byway 1 towards St. John's Wood.

In 2024, the [subsoil under Byway 1](#) was registered as an [Asset of Community Value](#) by the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan Community Steering Group (now the Love Bengeo Community Group). The scheme gives community groups the right to identify land or property and ask the council to list it as being of value to the community. It will remain on the register until December 2029.



Entrance to St. John's Wood

At the end of Byway 1, enter St. John's Wood, which has [ancient woodland](#) status. Follow the path uphill to the edge of the woodland. This trail doesn't go further north than the edge of the wood.



St. John's Wood

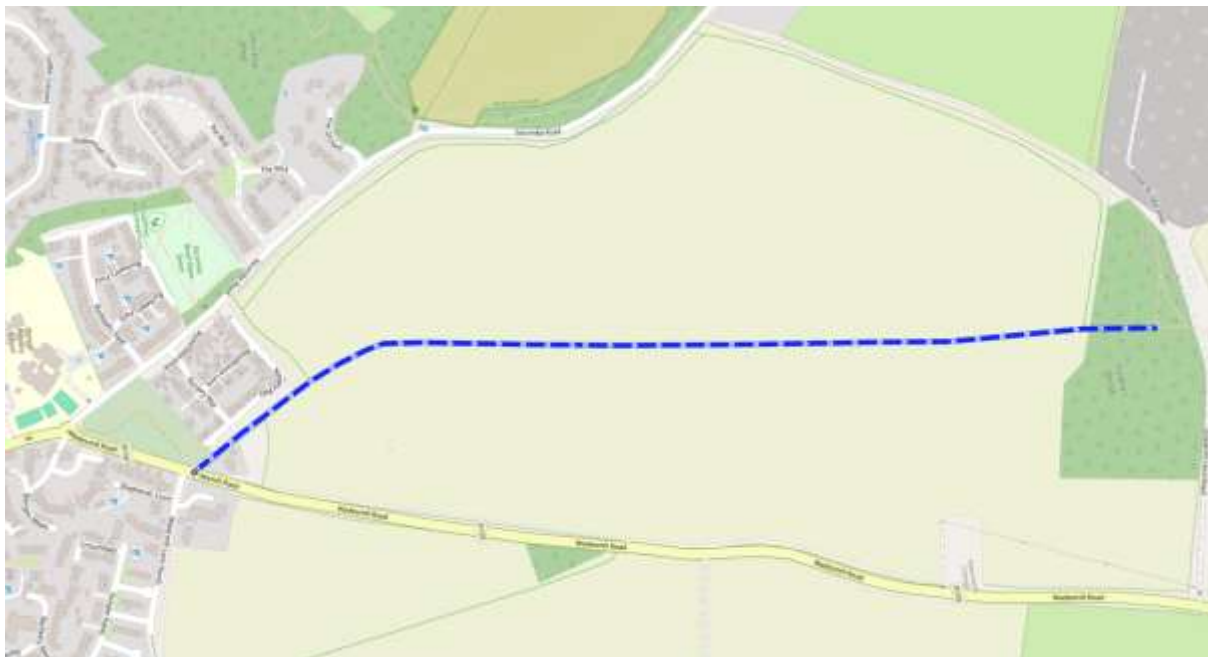
Retrace your steps back through the wood onto Byway 1. The Lonely Oak can be seen ahead. Looking east from here, the lakes at [Westmill Farm](#) can be seen in the distance. An important view from Westmill Farm, *Three Lakes towards west Bengoe* has additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

A 5.7 hectare area (to the left of the Lonely Oak from here) is designated as [Local Green Space](#) through the Neighbourhood Plan, giving it additional protection from development. Continue on Byway 1 until you reach the exit onto Wadesmill Road.



Bengeo Field looking south from St. John's Wood

Bengeo Trails 8: Bengeo Field to S. John's Wood



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Bengeo Trails 9: Around St. Andrew Street, Hertford Castle Gardens and Folly Island with the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan

The Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan boundary includes parts of Hertford town centre at Old Cross and St. Andrew Street, parts of Hertford Castle Gardens, and Folly Island. This trail highlights how the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) policies are implemented in these areas.

Starts: Hertford St. Andrew Church, St. Andrew Street, SG14 1HZ

Ends: The Old Barge pub, The Folly, SG14 1QD

Distance: 0.9m/1.5km

Conditions: Pavements, footpaths, and grassy areas



Hertford St. Andrew Church

The [Grade II Listed Hertford St. Andrew Church](#) is one of more than a hundred listed buildings and structures given additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan's 'Listed Buildings and Structures' Policy. The [church](#) and [St. Andrew's Centre](#) are included on the Neighbourhood Plan's list of community facilities that should be retained and protected.

The [Grade II Listed](#) 41-43, St. Andrew Street, immediately to the left of the church, was granted Listed Building Consent in 2021 for conversion of St. Nicholas Hall, the School Room, and the first floor of the Verger's House. The Neighbourhood Plan response (see www.lovebengeo.org.uk/blog/) welcomed the proposals to sympathetically bring these buildings back into full use.



The Verger's House

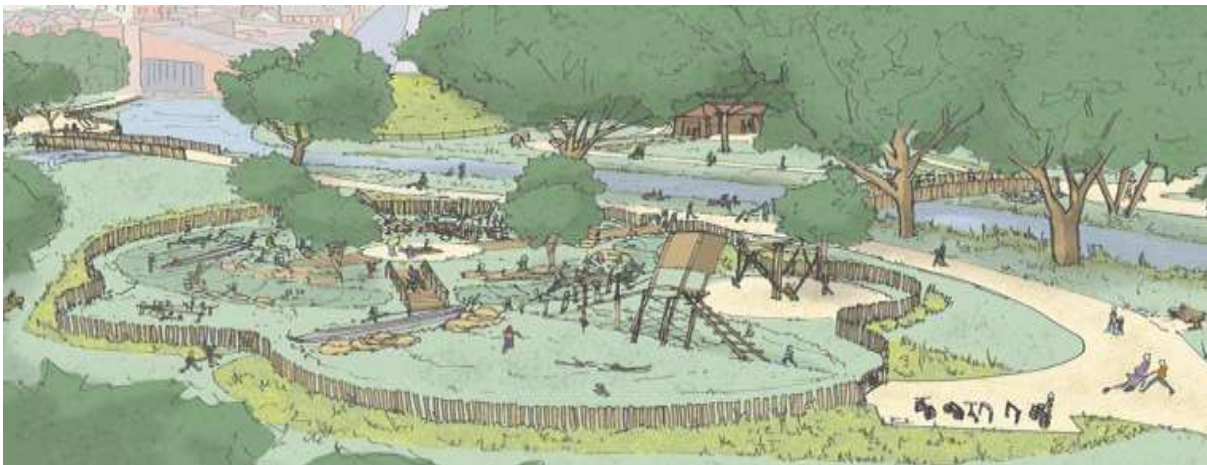
Walk along St. Andrew Street towards the town centre. Bear right onto Mill Bridge, over the River Lea, and turn right, just after the [Samuel Stone](#) statue. Cross the bridge into the St. Andrew Street car park (currently, you'll need to walk past seven car parking spaces) and turn left, through the gate, into Hertford Castle Gardens.



Hertford Castle Gardens Play Area

The grassy area, known as the Island, with the children's play area at the far end, is within the boundary of the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan.

In December 2025, a planning application for landscape and greenspace enhancements to Hertford Castle Gardens was published, preceded by a public consultation on the [Hertford Castle Greenspace Renewal](#).



Representation of the proposed replacement children's play area (from the planning application)

The proposals include the upgrading and relocation of the children's play area, improved pedestrian and cycle access from St. Andrew Street car park, and forest and wildflower planting. A Neighbourhood Plan response (available on www.lovebengeo.org.uk/blog/) to the planning application welcomed the proposals. The 'Improving Air Quality' policy in the Neighbourhood Plan supports the relocation of the play area, away from the traffic noise and fumes of Gascoyne Way.

Leaving Hertford Castle Gardens through the gate to St. Andrew Street car park, turn right and return over the bridge, then turn left onto Mill Bridge.



Former Hertford Library

Cross Mill Bridge at the traffic lights. The Grade II Listed former [Hertford Library](#) is in front of you. With the library on your right, walk along Old Cross and turn right onto Hartham Lane.

Take the left fork on Hartham Lane, passing the Grade II Listed [McMullen's Brewery](#) on your right. Both buildings benefit from additional protection through the Neighbourhood Plan.

After passing Sainsbury's, ignore the path that curves right around Sainsbury's car park and turn right into Folly Island via Thornton Street, over the [Thornton Street Weir](#).



Thornton Street Weir

Folly Island became an island when a millstream (now the Lee Navigation) was dug through in the 11th century. It's within the Hertford Conservation Area. In the [Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#) it's described as being *'overall a most delightful area and one worthy of careful protection'*.



Thornton Street

Folly Island was Hertford's first industrial area. The Foreword of the Neighbourhood Plan ('The History and heritage of the Neighbourhood Plan') says – *'In Victorian times, the town's time-honoured industrial area made way for the present-day Conservation Area focus – the artisan terraced homes on Folly Island'*.

From Thornton Street turn left into Old Hall Street.

Opposite the end of Old Hall Street are the gates to the [Folly Island allotments](#). They're one of two allotment sites within the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

They're given additional protection from development through the Neighbourhood Plan and both are included on the list of community facilities that should be retained.



Folly Island Allotments

Turn right into Frampton Street, then right onto the towpath adjoining the River Lea, past the riverside cottages, until you reach The Old Barge pub, on your right.



The Old Barge

[The Old Barge](#) is one of ten buildings and structures identified in the Neighbourhood Plan as having local historic or architectural importance. It was re-built in the 1890s to serve beer to residents of The Folly and its industries and is one of six pubs in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. There's more information [here](#) on the history of The Old Barge.

Bengeo Trails 9: Around St. Andrew Street, Hertford Castle Gardens and Folly Island with the Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan



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Bengeo Trails 10: Bengeo's front gardens and wildlife corridors

This trail was created in the spring of 2026 to mark the first anniversary of the Facebook Group [Bengeo's front gardens and wildlife corridors](#), which celebrates our gardens, nature, and biodiversity. The trail incorporates the gardens surrounding a church and an arts centre, naturalised areas, and the [Bengeo Community Garden](#). Along the way, it passes some of Bengeo's lovely front gardens.

Starts: [Holy Trinity Church](#), New Road, SG14 3JJ

Ends: The [White Lion](#), 59 Bengeo Street, SG14 3ET

Distance: 1.5m/2.4km

Conditions: Pavements and footpaths. Downhill path and long uphill flight of steps



Holy Trinity Church Garden

Go through the church gate on New Road and turn right. In spring the grass is carpeted with primroses and daffodils.

Follow the path to the exit gate. Look back to see the tree-lined path leading to the church.



Holy Trinity Church from the entrance gate

Turn left onto Bengeo Street, over the pedestrian crossing, past the gardens in front of the Victorian cottages. Continue south until Bengeo Street merges into Port Hill. On the opposite side are naturalised areas in the grounds of [Duncombe School](#). Continue to the bottom of Port Hill, then follow the Port Hill access road, to the right of Port Hill.



Grounds of Duncombe School

After the first row of front gardens to your right, there's a pocket of naturalised planting. On the day, the photograph on the right was taken, a small bunch of Mother's Day flowers, with a note from the [Hertford Baptist Church](#), was resting in the tree.



Port Hill tree

Turn right into Port Vale and cross to Beane River View. The Nourish café garden is to the left. On the right is [Courtyard Arts](#) behind which is their lovely little garden. This community arts centre has two galleries and a shop and was established as a charity in 1995. Its garden merges art and nature.



Nourish Café Garden

Return past the entrance to Courtyard Arts and turn left onto Port Vale, past [Mill Mead](#) school, with its kerbside brick planter, and cross to the opposite side, continuing past the front gardens on both sides of Port Vale.



Courtyard Arts Garden

Continue past [The Millstream](#) pub, with its seasonal hanging baskets. Just before the last house on the left of Port Vale is the little **Port Vale Wildlife Garden**. It's not publicly accessible but has [Local Green Space](#) designation through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#), giving it additional protection from development.



Beane Road Embankment

At the junction of Port Vale and Beane Road is the former railway embankment, which continues along Beane Road. This naturalised area has [Local Green Space](#) designation through the Neighbourhood Plan, as part of the designation of nearby Millmead Park.



Port Vale Wildlife Garden

Cross over Nelson Street onto Molewood Road. On the opposite side is the [Beane Marsh Nature Reserve](#) - a peaceful floodplain grassland, protected in 2020 thanks to a local community campaign and donations, led by [Save Beane Marshes](#). The reserve takes its name from the River Beane — one of only 240 chalk streams in the world.



Molewood steps

Continue on Molewood Road, over Wellington Street, until you reach the Molewood steps on the right, signposted Public Footpath 74. There are more than 60 steps to the top! Walk to the top of the steps. Little Mole Wood is to the left of the steps and there are naturalised areas on both sides of the steps.

At the top, turn right onto Church Road. Cross to the opposite side of Church Road, and walk to the end, past more of Bengoe's front gardens. Turn left into Duncombe Road, cross to the other side and, passing more front gardens, cross over Tower Street.

The [Bengoe Community Garden](#) is on the corner of Tower Street and Duncombe Road.



Working with East Herts District Council and [Mudlarks](#), volunteers help care for the garden and raise funds for its maintenance. Activities are promoted through the garden's [Facebook](#) page. Extra volunteers are always welcome - garden@lovebengoe.org.uk

The community garden and the Facebook Group [Bengoe's front gardens and wildlife corridors](#) help meet an objective of the [Bengoe Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) to-

'maintain, protect, and increase natural habitats and local biodiversity'.

To complete this trail, walk up Tower Street and turn right onto Bengoe Street to the White Lion, on the right. Holy Trinity Church, the starting point for this trail, is opposite.

Bengeo Trails 10: Bengeo's Front Gardens and Wildlife Corridors



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Bengeo Trails 11: Five Footpath Circular from The Avenue

This trail incorporates 5 [public rights of way](#), one of which leads down to the western edge of the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan](#) Area and the last of which rises steeply uphill to Bengeo's residential streets.

Starts and ends: The Avenue shops, SG14 3DU (next to the community noticeboard)

Distance: 1m/1.5km

Conditions: Pavements and footpaths, which can be muddy and icy during wet or cold weather. Steep downhill and uphill sections.



The Avenue Community Noticeboard

The [Hertford Town Council](#) noticeboard, next to The Avenue shops, displays a range of Bengeo community information.



The Avenue Shops

With The Avenue shops on your right, walk a short way along until the road bears right onto Cowper Crescent. Immediately cross to the other side. Turn left onto [Restricted Byway 10](#), signposted 'North Road ¼'. In the early 1950s, Byway 10 was a longer path, extending east to Bengeo Street.

This short path merges onto Public Footpath 11 (not signposted), a pretty hedge and tree-lined path which ends with Molewood Hall on the right and opens out onto Byway 12 (not signposted).



Public Footpath 11



Byway 12

At the beginning of Byway 12, walk along the verge on the right. An area of Great Mole Wood is on the right. Although there's a gate onto the woodland, this part of Great Mole Wood doesn't seem to be publicly accessible. The [Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust](#) hold the leasehold to Great Mole Wood further north, near Waterford Heath and Marsh.

When the woodland on the right ends, the final stretch of Byway 12 curves steeply downhill. Although it's a quiet road, there's vehicular access, and there's no verge or pavement here.

At the bottom of Byway 12, turn left onto North Road – the edge of the Bengo Neighbourhood Plan Area at this westerly point.

Walk a short way along and, immediately after the brick bridge, turn left onto Public Footpath 93 (part of the [Hertfordshire Way](#)) signposted 'Little Mole Wood ¼'.



Neighbourhood Plan boundary on North Road



North Road Meadow

Before passing under the railway bridge, you'll see a large metal gate on the right, next to a meadow. The meadow has [Local Green Space](#) designation through the Bengo Neighbourhood Area Plan, giving it additional protection from development. It's one of eight green areas with this designation in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Continue under the railway bridge. The image, right, was taken looking back through the bridge.



Railway tunnel on Footpath 93

Continue along Public Footpath 93 and, with the Molewood Pumping Station (constructed in 1888 on the site of a former corn mill) in front of you, turn left, over the bridge, and immediately right onto Public Footpath 73 (not signposted at the lower end).



Molewood Pumping Station



Public Footpath 73

Passing woodland areas to the right, and open meadow to the left, the path rises steeply, with tree roots underfoot. Near the top, the path levels out. Exit the footpath onto The Avenue, cross over, and go left, continuing on The Avenue, and take the first right into Lys Hill Gardens.

Remaining on the right of Lys Hill Gardens, continue until you reach a gap in the houses where you'll see the Bengo Water Tower on the right. The floor of the tank is 75ft above ground level. The Bengo Neighbourhood Area Plan lists the tower as one of ten buildings and structures of local historic or architectural importance. Continue to the end of Lys Hill Gardens. The Avenue shops, where this trail ends, are opposite.



Bengo Water Tower

Bengeo Trails 11: Five Footpath Circular from The Avenue



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Bengeo Trails 12: Footpath 96 towards Westmill Road

This trail takes walkers from St. Leonard's Church, through the grounds of the former Ware Park Manor, and follows Public Footpath 96 towards Westmill Road. This walk goes to the furthest edge of the Bengeo Ward and gives views across Ware and the Lee Valley.

Starts/ends: St. Leonard's Garden opposite St. Leonard's Church, St. Leonard's Rd, SG14 3JW
Distance: 3m/5km

Conditions: Footpaths, bridleways, short sections on quiet roads, and one stile. Some uneven surfaces which can be wet and muddy. Contains uphill and downhill sections. The trail passes through working fields that can be either ploughed or contain livestock. Keep dogs on the lead and follow the [Countryside Code](#).

St. Leonard's Garden is a delightful community garden overlooking the 12th century St. Leonard's Church.

Starting at St. Leonard's Garden, head east along St. Leonard's Road, turn right and continue downhill along Ware Park Road. There is no pavement towards the bottom of Ware Park Road – take care when walking in the road. Cross the bridge over the River Rib and follow the raised pavement alongside the road.



St. Leonard's Garden



River Rib

The **River Rib** originates to the north, near the village of Buckland, and runs roughly parallel to the A10 until it joins the River Lea in Bengeo.

Continue along Ware Park Road uphill until it curves around to the right and crosses over a disused millstream.

The disused **Ware Park millstream** is barely recognisable; all that remains are the ornate cast iron balustrades of the bridge. The millstream used to take water from the River Rib to power the Ware Park Mill. The water wheel was unique in the area in that it was an overshot wheel, where the water runs over the top of the wheel, rather than the usual undershot wheel.

Turn right immediately after the bridge onto Restricted Byway 98. Continue to follow the path uphill through the woods, which are within the grounds of the old Ware Park Manor.



Bridge Balustrade



Daffodils in the grounds of Ware Park Manor

Ware Park Manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book and has passed through many changes over the years. It was owned by the Fanshawe family in the 16th-17th century, before being sold to London barrister William Parker. In the early 20th century, it passed into the hands of Hertfordshire County Council and was used as a hospital for tuberculosis patients. The Manor House was converted into flats in the 1980s.

Continue to follow the byway until it levels out and crosses two entrance tracks to properties on the right. At the second track turn left and then right onto the wider farm track (Pampuss Mews Cattery will be on the right). Turn immediately left and pass through the kissing gate on to Public Footpath 96.



Kissing gate to Footpath 96



Stile on Footpath 96

Continue to follow the footpath along the left-hand edge of the field. The path is way-marked at regular intervals. Bardon Farm can be seen across the field on the right.

Cross over the stile next to a telegraph pole and continue straight across the next field (heading slightly to the right of the house in front of you).

At the paved farm track joggle slightly right and then left to pass between piles of lumber and farm machinery. Continue to follow the track with woods to the left and a field to the right. Pass through the gap at the side of the five-bar gate and follow the path through the woods.

At the edge of the woods descend on a track with a wooden handrail on the right-hand side.

At the bottom cross over the access road and continue to follow the path uphill. On the right is a methane-powered generation plant.



Track with handrail



Brazier Generation Station

The **Brazier Generation Station** is a facility that captures methane from decomposing rubbish on this former landfill site and uses it to generate electricity. This provides a solution that not only generates renewable energy but prevents this greenhouse gas from escaping into the atmosphere.

The generator has an installed capacity of 699Kw, which is relatively small, but is enough to provide power for approximately 1800 households.

Continue to follow the path uphill until the metal kissing gate. Go through the kissing gate and enter a large field with commanding views across Ware and down the Lee Valley as far as Hoddesdon.



View across Ware and the Lee Valley

Carry on across the field until you come to another kissing gate and a small bridge. This marks the boundary of the Bengo Ward. (Passing through the gate would take the walker between some houses and onto the very busy A602.)

Retrace your steps and return to St. Leonard's Garden.

Brief route directions back to Ware Park Road below.

Turn around and aim towards the kissing gate on the opposite side of the large field. Go down the slope and up the path with the handrail. The generating station will be on your left this time. Continue to follow the path through the woods and across the field towards the stile by the telegraph pole. Follow the footpath way markers along the righthand side of the field until you reach Ware Park Road.

Bengeo Trails 12: Footpath 96 towards Westmill Road



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Bengeo Trails 13: Great Mole Wood and Waterford Marsh

This trail covers Great Mole Wood and Waterford Marsh. Great Mole Wood is one of two ancient woodlands, and Waterford Marsh is one of three Local Wildlife Sites cited in the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#). Both are excellent examples of natural, open spaces within Bengeo.

Starts and ends: The Orchard, Bengeo SG14 3HQ (If arriving by car, do not park in The Orchard, there is a layby with parking spaces further along Sacombe Road).

Distance: 2.5m/4km

Conditions: Footpaths and one short section on a quiet road. Some uneven surfaces which can be wet and muddy. Contains uphill and downhill sections. The trail passes through an enclosure that may contain livestock. Keep dogs on the lead and follow the [Countryside Code](#).

Starting at The Orchard go through the kissing gate into Great Mole Wood. Follow the path through the wood, bearing slightly to the right.



Information board with map



Entrance to Great Mole Wood

Just before reaching the gate posts, turn sharp left and follow the track downhill. (Do not follow Restricted Byway 09 or go through the gate to Waterford Heath opposite.)

At the bottom of the slope there is a waymarker post. Turn left here and immediately right on to Footpath 24. Follow the footpath around to the left passing a bench on the left. Continue straight on ignoring the steep downhill path to the right.



Path through Great Mole Wood

Follow the path through Great Mole Wood until it turns sharply downhill to the right. (Do not follow the path straight on towards the steel fencing alongside the railway line – this is a dead-end).

Great Mole Wood is an ancient broadleaf woodland containing oak, hazel, willow, and silver birch. As well as mature trees it also contains coppiced sections to encourage growth and increase biodiversity by allowing more light to reach the woodland floor. The woodland is a haven for wildlife and is full of bluebells and wood anemones in the spring.

Continue to follow the path downhill through the woods. It will curve around to the right with the railway line on the left.

Where the path meets the other path turn left and cross over the small bridge, through a gate and head towards the railway arch.



Bridge leading to the railway arch



Railway arch leading to Waterford Marsh

Pass under the railway arch, through another metal gate and proceed straight ahead, across Waterford Marsh towards the wooden kissing gate opposite. (This field regularly contains cattle during the summer months.)

Waterford Marsh is a wetland meadow adjacent to the River Beane. It supports many species of wildflower, insect, and bird life - it is a delightful location to watch the Red Tail Kites gliding overhead. In the summer months cattle can sometimes be seen in the enclosure. These cattle play an important part in managing and conserving this vital grassland area.



Cows on Waterford Marsh

Pass through the kissing gate, turn right, and follow the path (FP 26) alongside the River Beane. Keep going, past a bench until you reach another wooden kissing gate to the field on the right. Do not go through this gate – although not marked as such, this indicates the location of the boundary of the Bengeo Ward.

Instead, turn around and retrace your steps, with the River Beane now on your right. Instead of turning left towards the railway arch continue following the path beside the river.



River Beane

The **River Beane** is a chalk stream that rises near Sandon and flows into the River Lea (or Lee) at Hartham Common. Chalk streams are globally rare and vitally important natural habitats. The [River Beane Restoration Association](#), alongside partner agencies, have been instrumental in restoring and maintaining this precious waterway.



Weir across the River Beane

Just before the path meets the A119 (North Road) note the weir on the right-hand side.

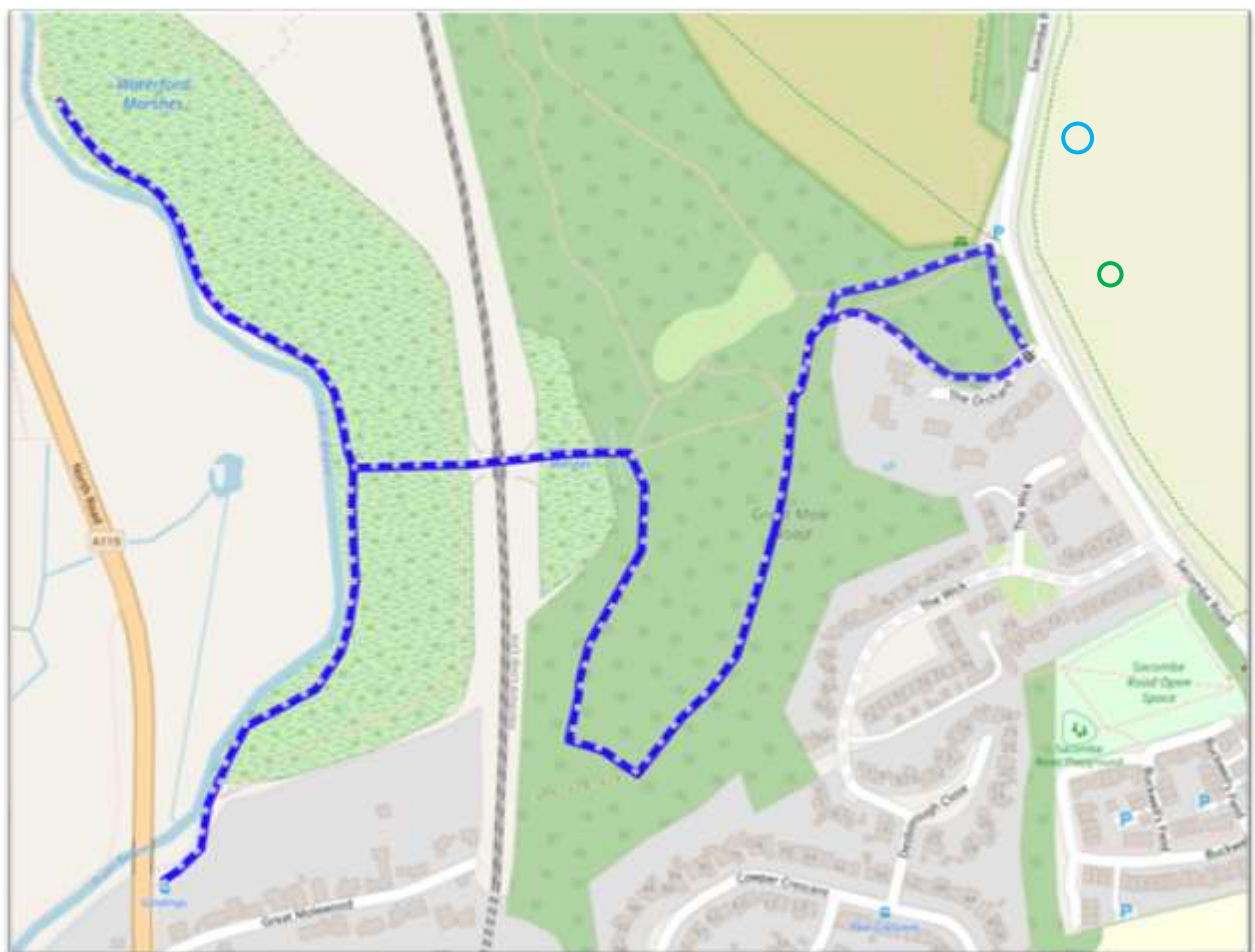
The weir originally diverted water into a millstream that fed a corn mill in Molewood Road (now the site of the Molewood Pumping Station). Some years ago, the stream was breached and the millstream is now dry.

Turn around and return to the kissing gate you originally passed through besides the river.

Retrace your steps through the railway arch, over the small bridge and turn right following the path through the woods.

Walk past the bench and bear round to the right following the gravel track (Ignoring the path you originally followed.) The footpath (FP24) curves around to the left and emerges at The Orchard. (If you parked in the layby, go through the kissing gate on the left and walk through the woods back to the layby.)

Bengeo Trails 13: Great Mole Wood and Waterford Marsh



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Bengeo Trails 14: Bengeo's Twitchels

This trail highlights eight twitchels connecting sixteen Bengeo streets between Watermill Lane and Port Vale. Twitchel is said to have been inherited from the Middle English *twychel*, an alteration of *twychen* from the Old English *twicen* (fork in the road).

It may have largely fallen out of everyday use, but, in urban settings, it was commonly used to refer to passageways or alleys between houses, fences, or hedges. Across England, alternative terms include *gennel*, *ginnel*, *jitty*, and *snicket*.

Starts: Watermill Lane North, at the junction with Wadesmill Road, SG14 3HT

Ends: Port Vale, at the junction with Port Hill, SG14 1PJ

Distance: 2.7m/4.4km

Conditions: Pavements and tarmac, uphill and downhill in parts

From Wadesmill Road, walk down Watermill Lane North and join Public Bridleway 14, on the left, signposted Rib Vale. The bridleway emerges into Watermill Lane.

Immediately after the 2nd Bengeo Scout Hall on the right is the first twitchel on this trail. Turn right into this hedge and fence-lined twitchel which connects Watermill Lane with Glebe Road.



Twitchel 1: Watermill Lane to Glebe Road



Twitchel 2: Glebe Road to New Road

Turn left from twitchel 1 and walk along Glebe Road. Just before it merges into Revels Road (and just before the brick wall on the left) turn left into twitchel 2, which exits at the other end on the boundary of New Road and Ware Park Road.

This twitchel is one of the longer ones on the trail. It's a shortcut to [St. Leonard's Church](#), Hertford's oldest building, and on to [Hartham Common](#). Turn right from the twitchel onto New Road.

Cross to the other side and, with the [Bengeo cricket ground](#) on your left, turn left into Boundary Drive.

The road bears round to the right and merges into twitchel 3, connecting Boundary Drive with Warren Terrace.

Walk along this short, fence-lined twitchel, with planting on the right, and turn right into Warren Terrace.



Twitchel 3: Boundary Drive to Warren Terrace



Twitchel 4: Grove Walk to Bengeo Street

Turn left into New Road, cross over, and turn right into Parker Avenue, then left into Revels Road. Cross over Palmer Road into Grove Walk, ahead, which is slightly diagonally to the right. The Public Footpath 16 sign points towards the fourth twitchel on this trail.

This fence and hedge-lined twitchel, connecting Grove Walk with Bengeo Street, has three pairs of 19th century cottages on the right of the path. Their yellow and red brick construction is referenced in the [Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#).

Turn left from the twitchel into Bengeo Street.

Continue along Bengeo Street, past [Holy Trinity Church](#) and Mansfield Gardens and turn left into Trinity Grove. Between the first and second house on the left is twitchel 5 - a short path leading to Mansfield Gardens. Holy Trinity Church is visible, on the right, as you walk along the twitchel.

There was once a school on the Mansfield Gardens site and this twitchel was used as a route to the school.

Exit the twitchel into the Mansfield Gardens car park. Straight ahead is a brick wall and a rear entrance to the grounds of Holy Trinity Church. Turn right through the entrance into the church garden, turn left after the bench, and, bearing left, follow the main, tree-lined path to the church gate onto Bengeo Street.



Twitchel 5: Trinity Grove to Mansfield Gardens



'twitchel 6: Bengeo Street to Duncombe Road

Turn left onto Bengeo Street, cross at the pedestrian lights, and turn right, heading north along Bengeo Street.

At the Public Footpath 90 sign (signposted to The Drive) – just before the tall curved brick wall, turn left into twitchel 6.

Eight trees line the right side of this twitchel. Duncombe Close is on the right and The Drive is straight ahead. It's understood that Public Footpath 73, at the far end of The Drive, once stretched as far as Bengeo Street. Turn left from the twitchel onto Duncombe Road.

Cross over Tower Street and turn left into Cross Road, then right onto Port Hill. Just before the Port Hill slopes, turn right into twitchel 7, signposted Public Footpath 85 to Farquhar Street.

The brick walls of the twitchel (and other brick walls opposite Byde Street) are referenced in the [Herford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#) as adding interest '*particularly to the footpath access*'. At the end of the twitchel, cross straight ahead into Byde Street.



Twitchel 7: Port Hill to Farquhar Street



Twitchel 8: Byde Street to Port Vale

Walk downhill along the right-hand side of Byde Street, crossing over Fanshawe Street and Wellington Street. At the very bottom of Byde Street, turn right onto the 8th and final twitchel on this trail.

This fence and ivy-lined twitchel (Public Footpath 89) has the former railway land on the left (which is designated as [Local Green Space](#) through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#)), and a row of Victorian cottages on the right. Goods traffic continued along the former railway line until 1966. This twitchel, connecting Byde Street and Port Vale, is the longest of the eight twitchels on this trail.



Scooby-Doo

Turn left from twitchel 8 into Port Vale. The bridge abutment on the left is known as the Scooby-Doo Bridge. Various versions of Scooby-Doo have been chalked or painted on the brickwork. Sometimes they disappear, only to reappear again!

The version on the left was photographed in 2007. Scooby-Doo is commemorated in the [Bengeo Mosaic](#) as a memorable part of local history. Continue to the end of Port Vale to the junction with Port Hill.

Bengeo Trails 14: Bengeo's Twitchels



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Bengeo Trails 15: Hartham Common and surrounds:
The Alfred Russel Wallace connection

Naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace wrote with fondness of playing in Hartham Common and the surrounding area during his childhood years in Hertford.

This trail takes in the rivers and woodlands around Hartham Common and St. Leonard's Church that feature in Wallace's autobiography: '[My Life, A Record of Events and Opinions](#)'. It starts at the 'Evolution' sculpture, inspired by Alfred Russel Wallace.

The sculpture was installed in 2013, the centenary of Wallace's death.

Starts: The [Evolution](#) sculpture, Hartham Lane, SG14 1RD

Ends: Hartham Leisure Centre, Hartham Common, SG14 1QR

Distance: 2.2m/3.6km

Conditions: Footpaths and unmade paths. Steep uphill and downhill sections



The Wallace Sculpture, looking towards Thornton Street

The 'Evolution' sculpture is on a grass mound off Hartham Lane, between Hartham Common skate park and Sainsbury's. The sculpture information board is just in front of Thornton Street.

The sculpture, created by Karen Murphy and Leiselle Bristow, was inspired by naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, who independently proposed the theory of evolution by natural selection.

From around the age of 6, for eight or nine years, Wallace lived in 5 homes in Hertford, including houses in St. Andrew Street and Old Cross.

From the sculpture information board, walk straight ahead, past the Thornton Street weir, into Folly Island's Thornton Street. Folly Island became an island when a millstream (now the Lee Navigation) was dug through in the 11th century. Before its Victorian houses were built, Folly Island was Hertford's first industrial area.



Alfred Russel Wallace Sculpture on Hartham Lane



Decorated bench on the towpath, at the end of Thornton Street

Turn right into The Folly and, at [The Old Barge](#), turn left onto the Lee Navigation towpath (Public Footpath 27), passing the lovely benches at the end of Thornton Street and Frampton Street, refurbished as part of the [River Lea Art Trail](#).

Alfred Russel Wallace would probably have approved of the decorative bench illustrations of flora and fauna.

Continue past the Folly Island allotments on the left then across the long bridge (opened in 1988 by then MP Bowen Wells) over the Hertford Basin weir, part of the [Lee Navigation](#) system.

Wallace said of the Navigation -

'The river flowed on among houses and workshops and was again dammed up to supply another mill about half a mile away, and to form the river Lea navigation.'

From the bridge, turn left, down the steps then right onto the Hartham Common perimeter path, with the River Lea on the right.



Hertford Basin Weir

Continue along the perimeter path until you reach another bridge where the River Lea cascades over the weir on the right, and the confluence of the Lea and River Beane (a rare chalk stream) is on the left. Wallace described the Beane, in Hartham, as *'our favourite bathing place'*, though he also described *'very nearly being drowned.....at a place called Willowhole'*.



River Lea on Hartham Common

From the bridge, retrace your steps and take the first right, following the path around the perimeter of Hartham Common, with the River Beane on the right. Of Hartham Common, Wallace said-

'Few small towns have a more agreeable public playground than the fine open space called Hartham.'

From the perimeter path, turn onto the first bridge on the right, over the River Beane.

Just after the Hartham Common interpretation panel, and before The Warren footpath, turn right onto the unmade but well-trodden path.



Bridge over the River Beane on Hartham Common



St. Leonard's Meadows

On the left of this lovely path, with its wooden railing, are the Hartham Common grazing meadows, referred to in the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) as 'St. Leonard's Meadows'. The Hartham Common interpretation panel says –

'Grazing throughout the summer months encourages flowering plants to thrive, providing a valuable nectar source for insects.'

Dogs are required to be on lead when cattle are on site.

Continue following the path (ignoring the path you pass on the left). Go uphill at the end. The top of St. Leonard's Church can be seen just ahead. Turn right out of the metal gate then right again through the gate into the grounds of the Grade I Listed [St. Leonard's Church](#), which was built around 1120. In his description of this area, Alfred Russel Wallace said –

'Just across the River Beane was a steep slope covered with scattered fir trees, and called The Warren, at the foot of which was a footpath leading to the picturesque little village and old church of Bengeo.'



Approaching St. Leonard's Church from St. Leonard's Meadows



The path around St. Leonard's Church

Follow the path around the church and turn left out of the gate. [St. Leonard's Garden](#), a lovely community garden, with places to sit and look at the view over St. Leonard's Church, is on the right.

With the church on the left, follow the road round then bear right, and join The Warren footpath, signposted 'Footpath 86: Port Hill ½ mile'. About a third of the way along Footpath 86, turn right up the steep steps to The Warren Woodland. There are steep up and downhill sections throughout the woodland.

Of The Warren, Wallace said –

'This path along The Warren was a favourite walk of mine either alone or with a playmate, where we could scramble up the bank, climb some of the old trees, or sit comfortably upon one or two old stumpy yews which had such twisted branches and stiff spreading foliage as to form delightful seats.'



The Warren Woodland



Steps up to The Warren Woodland

The woodland now has a mix of oak, sycamore, and hazel, with a few Scots pine. [The](#)

[Hartham Common Greenspace Action Plan](#) includes an action to selectively fell compartments of The Warren Woodland and replant with an appropriate native tree mix.

Follow the path through the woodland until it descends to Footpath 86. Turn left at the bottom and after the tennis courts on your right, turn right across the footbridge over the River Beane. Walk across Hartham Common to Hartham Leisure Centre, where this trail ends, close to the 'Evolution' sculpture.

The Old Barge, Folly Island allotments, Hartham Leisure Centre, St. Leonard's Garden, and the view of St. Leonard's Church from the garden, as well as views across Hartham Common towards The Warren, St. Leonard's Church and 'St. Leonard's Meadows' have additional protection through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#).

St. Andrew Street and Old Cross, roads lived in by [Alfred Russel Wallace](#), are in what's now the Bengeo Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Bengeo Trails 15: Hartham Common and surrounds: The Alfred Russel Wallace connection



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Bengeo Trails 16: Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve

This trail covers the Waterford Heath nature reserve. Reclaimed from former gravel workings, Waterford Heath is referenced in the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) as a designated Local Nature Reserve. It is one of the largest green spaces in Bengeo and is divided by Vicarage Road into the South Heath and the North Heath.

Starts and ends: The Orchard, Bengeo SG14 3HQ (If arriving by car, do not park in The Orchard, there is a layby with parking spaces further along Sacombe Road. Alternatively, there is a car park on Vicarage Lane, and the walk can be started there instead.)

Distance: 2.5m/4km

Conditions: Footpaths, tracks, and quiet roads. Some uneven surfaces which can be wet and muddy. Contains uphill and downhill sections as well as some steep steps.

Starting at The Orchard go through the kissing gate into Great Mole Wood. Follow the path through the wood, bearing slightly to the right.



Entrance to Great Mole Wood



Information board with map

Just before reaching the gate posts, turn sharp left and follow the track downhill. (Do not follow Restricted Byway 09 or go through the gate to Waterford Heath opposite.)

At the bottom of the slope there is a waymarker post. Ignore the arrow pointing left and continue straight on along the path.

Shortly after, take the first left-hand path into a wooded glade. Continue to follow the path as it curves around to the right and down some steps.



Path through Nature Reserve

Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve is managed by [Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust](#). The site was originally a large sand and gravel quarry which was reclaimed to create a 35 hectare nature reserve. It now supports a wide variety of trees, including oak, ash, birch, willow, pine, and cherry. The reserve is home to many species of insects including the increasingly rare Grizzled Skipper butterfly, as well as birds such as Woodpeckers, Kestrels, and the ubiquitous Red Tailed Kites. There are information boards dotted about the reserve giving details about the wildlife, flora, and history of the site.



Steps in the woods

Follow the path through the woods climbing up several separate flights of steps until you emerge at a metal gate.

Go through the gate and turn left onto the path (ignoring the second metal gate opposite). This is Public Restricted Byway 09 which passes through the middle of the South Heath.



Oak tree beside the path

Follow the byway as it rises gently uphill. At the end of the path turn right through the kissing gate and follow the path through the woods noting the gnarled and ancient oak trees to your right.



Bench on the south heath

Continue down a steep flight of steps until you emerge onto the floor of the South Heath. Turn left from the steps and follow the path around to the left passing a bench on the way.

Keep following the path with the bank on your left noting the interesting outcrops of gravel conglomerate (more commonly known as 'Hertfordshire Puddingstone'). Continue following the path heading towards the wooden five-bar gate ahead.



'Hertfordshire Puddingstone'

Pass through the smaller gate to the right-hand side and head directly across Vicarage Lane. Take care when crossing the road. (The car park is an alternative starting point for the walk.)

Keeping the car park to your right, bear left at the horse-hop (a barrier, designed to prevent vehicle access) and follow the path downhill through the woods. Follow the path until it emerges by a bench looking out on the North Heath.



Bench on the north heath



Breaking the Mould

Follow the main paved track straight ahead across the heath. To your left, on a small mound, is an interesting sculpture called 'Breaking the Mould'.

Breaking the Mould is technically just outside the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) boundary but is significant enough to warrant some comment. This is one of 21 identical pieces created by sculptor Andrew McKeown which are scattered throughout the country. They were installed as part of the Changing Places Project to transform derelict industrial land into parks and open spaces. The artwork signifies the rebirth of nature from industrial decline.

Continue following the paved track slightly uphill. About 50m before reaching the large gate, which opens on to Bulls Mill Lane, turn right and follow the path heading towards the pine trees on the side of the heath.

Climb up the steep steps into the pine woods. At the top of the steps follow the main path as it curves around to the right. Continue to follow the path through the pine woods. (Note that at the time of writing there is a fallen tree across the path, but it is easy to step over.)



Steps to the pine woods

Continue to follow the path passing a gate to your left which opens onto Sacombe Road. Go straight on, with views over the North Heath to your right. Go past the bench and follow the path around to the right passing a small housing estate on your left. Go through the horse-hop and turn left. Head for the wooden kissing gate on the opposite side of the road (taking care when crossing the road). Turn left through the kissing gate. Follow the path through the pines with Vicarage Lane on your left and looking over the South Heath on your right.



View across the south heath

Keep following the path until you see a metal gate on your left opening on to Sacombe Road. Don't go through this gate. Instead turn right and go down a flight of steps. At the bottom of the steps turn left onto the path and follow it along the eastern edge of the South Heath.



Bench looking across the south heath

At the top of the path there are a couple of benches where you can enjoy the view across the heath.

Continue up the slope until you come to the entrance of the heath. Go through the gate posts and head for the gate post.

Retrace your steps through Great Mole Wood until you reach The Orchard.

Bengeo Trails 16: Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve



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