

# SAVE BENGEO FIELD

## FROM FURTHER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECT IT AGAINST GREENFIELD EXPANSION

### Love Bengoe Field

In 2018 East Herts District Council (EHDC) designated part of Bengoe Field as part of the HERT4 land for housing development. The developer Durkan have already constructed 52 homes as The Stiles (previously Bengoe Nursery). The same developer is now proposing to develop an additional 100 houses, which will spread across part of the Bengoe Field, along Sacombe Road from the Orchard and down the Wadesmill Road.

Hundreds of people worked hard to save Bengoe Field for future generations – you will recall residents successfully campaigned to stop the proposal to extract gravel and sand from the site ([www.stopbengoequarry.org.uk](http://www.stopbengoequarry.org.uk)). Since the public enquiry, and the decision of the Planning Inspector and the Secretary of State, it now looks highly unlikely that any further applications to quarry this area will be made. **It will be now up to EHDC to consider if the development of houses is permitted in this area.** It is not a foregone conclusion, and you can help influence that decision!

We believe the new proposed development in Bengoe Field is not appropriate for this location and should be objected to for a number of reasons:

### 1. Protecting the landscape and amenity of Bengoe Field

- The rolling landscape of Bengoe Field with its attractive views of the Rib Valley have long been cherished. It was OBJECTIVELY found to be of exceptional value by the Herts County Council's (HCC) Landscape Officer, and then by the Planning Inspector conducting the 11-day inquiry on the proposed quarry. Protecting the landscape of Bengoe Field from destruction was one of the key reasons the proposed minerals extraction was stopped! Why would we want to risk destroying it now?

<https://stopbengoequarry.org.uk/secretary-of-state-dismisses-appeal/>

- The Planning Inspector and Secretary of State also recognized the high amenity of Bengoe Field to the local and wider community. The pathway through Bengoe Field, which passes by the Lonely Oak, is extremely popular and surveys provide evidence that increasing number of people use it for a variety of activities.

- At the time of the public enquiry the EHDC planners agreed that housing development in the area could ONLY be considered AFTER there had been gravel extraction, which would reduce the height of the land possibly 10m or more – when the houses could not be viewed in the same way.

### 2. Impact on infrastructure – Bengoe Primary School, health services, and water/drainage

- Hertford already experiences pressure on infrastructure and services. The new development will bring new families and children who will want to go to Bengoe Primary School, which is constrained from further development. Many children living in Bengoe could, in the future, be considered outside of the catchment area and are therefore highly likely to be allocated to other schools in Hertford and Ware.

- There are no new local doctors, dentists or other amenities planned in addition to those already available in the area.

- There is potential risk to drinking water aquifer below the site and nearby boreholes – the housing development raises the risks of contaminating Hertfordshire drinking water at a time of growing shortages (and in the face of a push by HCC to build 100,000 new homes in the county, all of which will require 110 litres per person per day).

- Sewage drainage is also a significant issue in Bengoe.

### 3. Traffic and road access concerns

- The proposed development is planned to have **road access onto the B158 / Wadesmill Road** halfway down the hill from Bengoe. The speed that cars go down the hill will make exiting and entering the site dangerous. An exit onto the **Sacombe Road** will add to the already stressed single lane route making it more over-crowded and dangerous than it already is to both pedestrians and vehicles.

- Concerns have also been raised that the proposed housing development would cause additional strain to the already overstretched traffic/highway system, and **Bengoe Street** and **rat-run issues in Lower Bengoe** that will only get worse.



## 4. Housing development needs and minerals extraction

• The HERT4 area was approved, with the view that the **Bengeo Field area would be quarried first**: *Land to the north of Hertford is allocated as a residential development site to accommodate a minimum of 150 homes, with around 50 dwellings being provided to the north of Sacombe Road by 2022; and, subject to the satisfactory previous phased extraction of mineral deposits on the neighbouring site, around 100 homes to the west of B158 Wadesmill Road between 2022 and 2027.* Now that the proposal to extract gravel is no longer relevant, the housing development is NOT appropriate.

• HERT4 was designated to meet **short and medium term housing needs**. Given other developments that have come forward across Hertford, can EHDC confirm **if there is still a quantifiable need?**



### Draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan

• The current Local Minerals Plan (2002-2016) was adopted in 2007 and was due to be renewed from 2017. The plan includes Bengeo Field as “preferred area” for quarrying. While the new draft **Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP)** is being considered, the old one is still regarded as the basis for planning decisions.

• When the District Development Plan and HERT4 were being determined, the land of Bengeo Field was a “preferred area” for quarrying. The emerging plan does not include Bengeo Field as proposed area for quarrying or landfill BUT... it is currently under public consultation and the proposed approach cannot be taken for granted.

• The ongoing consultation will help determine whether Bengeo Field will be taken out of the plan as a preferred area for quarrying. While we very much hope it will NOT be included, the decision about this is expected to be finalised **by April 2024**. Whilst Bengeo Field is still officially included in the existing Local Mineral Plan, **no decisions about any housing development in this area should be made**.

• Please respond to the consultation by HCC and share your support the Plan's proposal not to include Bengeo Field and Rickneys, as areas of high amenity value and closeness to local schools and housing estates. You can review the draft MWLP and respond to the consultation here (**by 30 Sept 2022**): <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/planning-in-hertfordshire/minerals-and-waste-planning/local-plan.aspx>

### Save Bengeo Field - protect it against greenfield expansion

We believe Bengeo Field needs to be protected from further development and the destruction of a beautiful landscape that is much loved and utilised by local residents. There is clearly very strong local objection to further development in Bengeo Field and we need to let EHDC planners take this into account and respond to our concerns. The planning decision will be made by the elected District Council members on the Development Committee, and we are asking our elected District Councillors and their political parties to represent our community, and oppose the loss of this landscape and amenity.

### What you can do:

• Please join “Love/Save Bengeo Field” group on Facebook, where you can find further information and share your views. We will post information from Durkan planning exhibition on 31st August at Bengeo Cricket Club.

• Please let **Durkan** know your feedback about the suggested housing development of 100 houses in Bengeo Field by email or online: [bengeowadesmillroad@durkan.co.uk](mailto:bengeowadesmillroad@durkan.co.uk) OR <http://bengeowadesmillroad.co.uk/feedback/> (**by 14 Sept**)

### • Please share your response by emailing:

**Your District Councillors:** [Sally.Newton@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Sally.Newton@eastherts.gov.uk), [Peter.Ruffles@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.Ruffles@eastherts.gov.uk), [Ben.Crystal@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Ben.Crystal@eastherts.gov.uk) - all three are on the EHDC Planning Committee

**Your Hertford Town Councillors for Bengeo Ward:** [Alex.Daar@hertford.gov.uk](mailto:Alex.Daar@hertford.gov.uk), [Vicky.Smith@hertford.gov.uk](mailto:Vicky.Smith@hertford.gov.uk)

**HERT4 Steering Committee:** [Jane.Sartin@hertford.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Sartin@hertford.gov.uk)

**Chair of EHDC Planning:** [Bob.Deering@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Bob.Deering@eastherts.gov.uk)

**EHDC Planning team**, who regulate the planning on behalf of the residents: [Planning@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Planning@eastherts.gov.uk)  
EHDC Head of Planning: [Sara.Saunders@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Sara.Saunders@eastherts.gov.uk)  
EHDC Planning Officer: [Kay.Mead@eastherts.gov.uk](mailto:Kay.Mead@eastherts.gov.uk)

**HCC Landscapes team**, who previously expressed strong views about the unique nature of the Bengeo Field landscape: [Jennifer.Owen@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Owen@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

**HCC Minerals and Waste Planning Policy team**, who lead on the emerging Minerals Local Plan currently under consultation: [Christopher.Stanek@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Christopher.Stanek@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

**HCC Highways team**, who are responsible for traffic and highways decisions: [Phil.Bibby@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Phil.Bibby@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

**Save Bengeo Field team:** [savebengeofield@gmail.com](mailto:savebengeofield@gmail.com)

• Please share with your neighbours, friends and family - especially those not on Facebook!

• Please sign the Save Bengeo Field petition on EHDC website - coming up soon!  
<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/mgEPetitionListDisplay.aspx?RPID=10075930&HPID=10075930&VM=2&J=5>

The more people share their views the less likely it will be that important issues are not properly addressed. The planners are expected to take on board public views, as we've successfully proven with the Stop Bengeo Quarry campaign. By contacting the decision makers we can keep up the pressure and highlight that there is strong public interest in this.

If you would like to be more involved or want to contact us – please email us on [savebengeofield@gmail.com](mailto:savebengeofield@gmail.com). We are really keen to hear from residents who are willing to help with this campaign and keeping our residents up to date!

