

This 3.1 mile circular walk was originally devised by CPRE Herts' former Chairman David Irving and revised by Trustee Eliza Hermann.



Throughout 2018, our walk each month will feature the corresponding site in our "Countryside Under Threat" calendar. Our aim is to highlight these sites and raise their profile in aid of local campaigns to prevent their inappropriate development.

The June site is situated in the Green Belt north of Hertford in Bengeo, where a 36 hectare parcel of mainly agricultural land is threatened by a proposal to extract 1.75 million tonnes of gravel over 10 years. The area has many public footpaths, bridleways and other public rights of way and receives a lot of recreational use by walkers, runners, birdwatchers, horseback riders, children and adults alike. Following a successful campaign by the local action group "Stop Bengeo Quarry" Hertfordshire County Council rejected the application for development in March 2017. However the developer lodged an appeal, the public inquiry for which was being held just as CPRE Herts tested this walk in mid May 2018.

The walk starts and finishes at the car park for Waterford Heath Nature Reserve, which is on Vicarage Lane just east of the railway line.

The walk is also easily accessible by public transport. From Hertford North rail station walk 1 mile to the northeast through Bengeo to the junction of Sacombe Road and Wadesmill Road, and begin the circular walk from there.

Although the walk is mostly level and there are no stiles, there are a few short ascents and descents and one set of steps.

From the Waterford Heath Nature Reserve car park on Vicarage Lane....





... walk south across Vicarage Lane and through the wooden gate. Then take the level path on the left that runs alongside the trees at the base of the sandy cliffs. Stay on the level ground and aim for the far southeastern corner of open heathland.



Where the level ground ends, walk up the hill to the wooden railings and benches.



From here on a clear day there is a spectacular view looking north over the heath and beyond to the Beane Valley and Bramfield Woods.



Continue in the same southerly direction out of the Nature Reserve via the wooden gate, to Sacombe Road.

You now have a route choice to reach Restricted Byway 1 and the next part of the walk.

### Option A

To use only public rights of way, turn right and walk along Sacombe Road. After 80 yards there is a pavement. Continue to Bengoe Street, cross at the pelican crossing, then turn left and walk northeasterly on the pavement along Wadesmill Road to a street called Watermill Lane North. Watching out for traffic, cross Wadesmill Road and then walk northerly along Restricted Byway 1.



### Option B

Although not a public right of way, there is a well worn path along the field edge opposite where you've just emerged from the Nature Reserve. To take this route, turn right along Sacombe Road and after 20 yards pass through the gap in the trees on the left. Turn right and follow the path south and then east as it curves around the edge of the field. You then come to a path junction and turn left (north). Although there is no waymark, you are now on Restricted Byway 1.





Proceed in a northerly direction through the middle of this large field. This is the site threatened by the quarrying proposal.



At the base of the distinctive oak tree in the middle of the field, you will see a display of stones painted by children in support of the local campaign to "Stop Bengo Quarry".



Carry on and the footpath becomes a wider track and enters St Johns Wood.





The path continues straight through the wood, descending into a dip and then climbing again. Ignore paths branching off to the sides and continue straight ahead. Emerge from the wood at a tarmac track. Cross over this track, and continue straight on, along the right hand edge of a field.



You will come to a path junction with a footpath heading off to the left, and a metal gate with a "Keep Out" sign on the right, but you keep walking straight ahead.



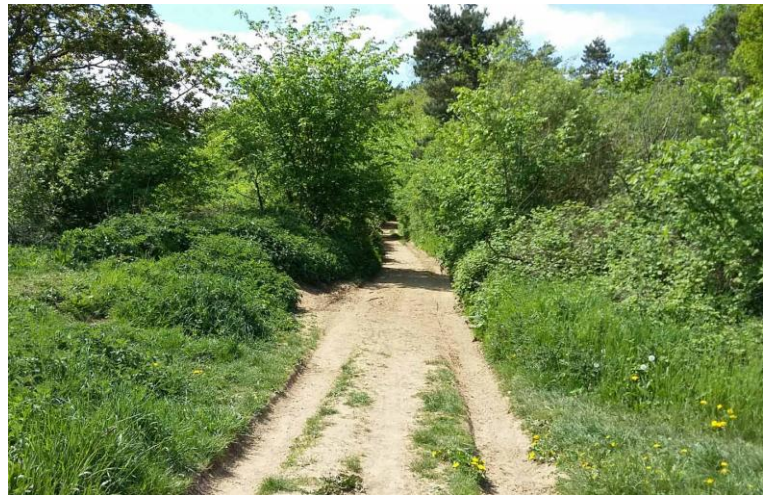
The path comes to an end by a metal gateway at a broad gravel track. Turn left (west) onto the track at this point.

(Note - although not tested by CPRE Herts, if you take the broad track to the right instead of left, you should shortly come to The Woodman pub at Chapmore End).





The track heads westerly through open land and then enters a wood.



Emerging from the wood, the track comes to a four way junction. The sign pointing back the way you've come says "Public Byway 2, Chapmore End 1/2". You want to carry on straight ahead, on the "Public Bridleway".



Follow the bridleway in a southerly direction with a wire fence on the left and a small wood on the right.

As you emerge from the wood, ignore the unmarked path on your right, and continue southerly down the gentle slope.





At the bottom of the slope there are metal gates and an unmarked path on the left. Ignore this and continue straight on.

Soon there is an unmarked fork in the path; you take the path on the right, ascending the hill.



At the top of the hill, pass through the metal stanchion to come to Sacombe Road. There is a sign pointing back the way you've come "Hertford Public Bridleway 007".

Cross over the road to enter the northern part of Waterford Heath Nature Reserve through the wooden gateway.



You then come to a path junction. There are many paths through Waterford Heath, but our route turns right at this point. Stay on the woodland path keeping the boundary of the nature reserve on the right. You will soon come to a set of steep wooden steps descending to the open heathland.





At the bottom of the steps, head out into the heathland to the main track, and turn left (south). From here if you keep to a southerly bearing you will soon come to the car park and the start of the walk.



If you have enjoyed this walk, please consider supporting CPRE Hertfordshire in our efforts to protect and celebrate the Hertfordshire countryside for everyone to enjoy. For more information on our work and how you can help, please visit our website at [www.cpreherts.org.uk](http://www.cpreherts.org.uk).

On our website you can also find ordering instructions for our remaining very limited quantity of 2018 "Hertfordshire Countryside Under Threat" calendars, which will provide the locations of our walks for the rest of the year.

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This route last walked by CPRE in May 2018.

Note: all walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended and a compass may be helpful.

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CPRE Hertfordshire is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel 01438 717587. We are the county branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.