

Suzi Lane and Jo Morizzo remember finding a home on land and making a new life in Hertford as parents.

Did it take you a while to find a house in Hertford?

Suzi:

We'd taken a couple of lockdown walks and we'd been up to the Port Vale area and obviously it's really, really lovely, and we were like, "This would be a lovely place to live if we were on land". And then when we found out that we were having a baby we thought, "Can we look and see whether there'd be a house round there", and there was two little houses that came up that we sort of had a look at and we went in one of them and we knew that that was the one we wanted. And we told the vendors, "Oh you know, we're moving off a boat" and they said, "Turn around and look at the picture on the wall" and it was a picture of their boat and they were narrowboaters as well, and they'd done the circuit for sort of four years before they'd bought the house and they'd got the Lea and Stort boat plaques hung up on the wall which they'd left for us. So yeah, it was meant to be really.

How did you meet other people?

Jo:

In the Port Vale area the community there has been amazing, really welcoming and really strong as well.

Suzi:

We did the NCT course, so we met quite a few other new mums all over Hertford really, and then I did a local group called Six Week Social which is run out of the Mill Bridge rooms, just on Cowbridge.

Jo:

It's a really beautiful building, there are some other amazing buildings in Hertford.

Suzi:

I think that's another interest for Hertford isn't it

Jo:

Yeah, there's quite a lot that spoke to us here

After you initially arrived in lockdown, has Hertford lived up to expectations?

Suzi:

I think for us, when we arrived on the boat it exceeded expectations because we had such close amenities, just walking out past the allotments onto the common and having those walks through the countryside, it was just amazing to have that on your doorstep for so

long. So, actually moving on land here and it being out of lockdown it's been really good. There's a really good night-time offering, there's a lot of activities organised through the town, you see a lot of things for children, especially during the holidays.

Jo:

We didn't know Hertford before lockdown, so we don't know really what it's like, everything's new to us, and as things start to open again, it's just like revealing more and more of itself. Obviously we're aware that the large shopping centre has been knocked down recently, and that must have changed the town quite a lot, and we're really excited to see what's going to happen next there. We're excited for our future here because that will change, the dynamic of the town. and it'll change our experience of the town

Suzi:

I think coming into a town with such a rich history was really interesting for us both, particularly finding gems like St Leonard's Church, up in Bengeo and sort of walking through the town and finding the old town particularly because it's been cut off in some ways by the dual carriageway and finding different parts of the town. Having a child and meeting local people is really good, cause then they can say, "Oh you should do this and that" and point us in the right direction.

What would you say to someone who was moving to Hertford now?

Suzi:

Go and read the blue plaques, there's lots of blue plaques around. Go and read up on the history of the town that you're walking around.

Jo:

It's a very friendly place – and I'm coming from up north, it's one of the friendliest places I've found down south. Talk to people, talk to people in the community and it's a very open, feels very friendly. The pubs are great, food's really good here, the extensive community I think is really good here.