

Speldhurst News



December 2021
January 2022
£5 per year 70p per copy



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Welcome - December/January

Dear Readers,

I'm struggling slightly to believe that this is our Christmas issue once again. 2021 was a strange year again for sure.

Lovely to see that the crib service is 'live' again this year (p5) and that there are carols in Speldhurst (p26) and Penshurst (p14).

Most importantly though I hope that you, your families and those you care about are well as the year ends and are perhaps able to look forward to some time together this Christmas, and to an easier 2022.

We wish you all the very best for a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

With our seasonal best wishes.

Abi Dawson for the Editorial Team, Speldhurst News
(Abi Dawson, Maria Turner and Sara Turner)

Please remember that copy for the February edition should be sent by 10th January at the latest to: speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred. Thank you.

The SPELDHURST NEWS endeavours to include articles in addition to village, church and chapel news. These are taken in good faith and without prejudice, therefore the committee will not be held responsible for the accuracy of the content, nor will it be held responsible for any work or treatment received from the advertisers. Readers should satisfy themselves of advertisers' abilities before accepting a job quotation or undertaking a course of treatment. All articles & inclusions should be sent as a word document attachment. The editors reserve the right to amend submissions where they feel it is appropriate.

Diary at a glance

December

Community Choir Practices 7.30 – 9pm, Fridays in Nov. & December.

Mon pm	Library in the Village Hall	
Fri 3rd	Elizabeth Wallace memorial	p.17
	TMC Jazz evening	p.15
Sat 4th	Penshurst Farmers Market	p.12
	Blackham Xmas market	p.11
Mon 6th	SPC full council meeting	p.22
Weds 8th	Praise & Play	p.4
Sat 11th	Penshurst Choral Society: carols	p.14
Mon 13th	Bumps & Babes	p.4
Sat 18th	Penshurst Farmers Market	p.12
Thurs 23rd	Parish council office shut till 4.1.22	p.23
Fri 24th	Crib service, St Mary's	p.5
Mon 29th	Bumps & Babes	p.4

January

Tues 4th	Parish council office reopens	p.23
Mon 10th &24th	Bumps & Babes	p.4
Weds 12th	Praise & Play	p.4
Fri 28th	Totally Toddler music event	p.15

News & Announcements

What's on in Speldhurst for the Under 5's in December & January

Bumps and Babes, the coffee mornings for new Mums meets just once in December on Monday 13th December from 10.15am. Then twice in January (on 10th & 24th). We are now meeting again in each other's homes so do message Jenny to find out where we are.

Praise and Play have their Christmas meeting on Wednesday 8th December from 9am in St Mary's Church. We'll share the Christmas story using our lovely knitted nativity figures. Come the New Year we'll meet fortnightly again starting on 12th January.

For more information contact Jenny Fitzsimmons on 07891318123 or at jenny50fitz@gmail.com

Fete chair

The eagle-eyed amongst you will notice a change to some of the contact details on pages 30 & 31.

Possibly most notably that Mike Harrowing replaces Lynsay Bischoff as the village fete chair.

A big thank you to Mike for agreeing to take on a role that ensures the continuation of a beloved village event.

And a HUGE thank you to Lynsay for the vast amounts of hard work and care that she has put into her role as fete chair over the years. We have all benefitted from your attention to detail and formidable planning skills Lynsay and I am sure we would all agree you have done a terrific job.

Thank you!

Ed

Crib Service - Christmas Eve Friday 24th December.

A family focused celebration of Christ's Birth

We are delighted to announce that our annual Crib Service at St Mary's will be a "LIVE" service in the Church this year and will take place on Christmas Eve afternoon (see church diary p26).

Children of Primary School Age who either attend St Mary's Church, Speldhurst Primary School or who live in the parish of Speldhurst, Ashurst and Groombridge, are invited to participate in the retelling of the "The Birth of Christ." through action, carols, and narration.

If your child or children would like to take part, please email me as soon as possible stating their name and school year:

joannaheames@gmail.com , 863231 for further details.

Additionally, any young person of secondary school age is invited to be part of our backing group and leading the Carols. Likewise could parents/guardians please get in touch via the email address with their names.

Please note those participating will be required for a full run through on **Thursday 23rd Dec at 9.00am – 12.00**.

I look forward to hearing from you all very soon.

Many thanks

Jo Eames



FREE Nordic walking Taster sessions

Step into the New Year with Nordic walking. If you enjoy walking, but would like to step it up a gear come along & give it a try! There are two sessions available: Saturday 8th January 12.30pm Southborough Common OR Tuesday 11th January 10.15am Langton Green Recreation Ground. Booking essential via NWUKTunbridgewells.co.uk or Call Emily on 07739842379



CHRISTMAS HAS ARRIVED AT OUR SHOP AND POST OFFICE!

Dear Customers,

The festive season is upon us and we have lots of Christmas goodies to tempt you. Mince pies and seasonal wines are available for pre-order as well as our usual bread orders.

The post office is gearing up for the Christmas rush. The last posting dates are available in the shop, with a handy leaflet for you to take home if you need to have them to hand. They can also be found online on the Royal Mail website. Christmas stamps are also available.

A big thank you to Jutta Barlett, who has dressed our windows beautifully this year!

Don't forget you can do high street banking at the post office as well as shopping returns and a whole lot more!

Are you aged 14 or over? We need a new paper girl/boy. Rounds would be Saturday and Sunday, possibly Mondays. Apply at the Shop!

We look forward to seeing you over the festive period!



Season's Greetings to all our wonderful Managers, Volunteers and Customers

Merry Christmas
HAPPY NEW YEAR!

	 SHOP	 POST OFFICE
Christmas Eve Friday 24th December	9am – 1pm	9am – 12pm
Christmas Day	CLOSED	CLOSED
Boxing Day	CLOSED	CLOSED
Bank Holiday Monday 27th December	CLOSED	CLOSED
Bank Holiday Tuesday 28th December	8am – 12pm	CLOSED
Wednesday 29th December	7am – 5pm	9am – 5pm
Thursday 30th December	7am – 5pm	9am – 5pm
New Year's Eve Friday 31st December	9am – 1pm	9am – 12pm
New Year's Day	CLOSED	CLOSED
Sunday 2nd January 2021	9am – 11am	CLOSED
Bank Holiday Monday 3rd January 2021	CLOSED	CLOSED



Latest Recommended Posting Dates for Christmas Delivery 2021



International

International Economy*

Date	Destinations
Monday 13 September	All non-European destinations (except South Africa, Canada, Middle and Far East, USA)
Friday 15 October	Middle and Far East, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Africa
Monday 1 November	Canada and USA
Friday 26 November	Cyprus, Eastern Europe, Greece, Iceland, Malta, Turkey
Monday 29 November	Western Europe

International Standard and International Tracking and Signature Services*

Date	Destinations
Wednesday 1 December	Caribbean
Monday 6 December	Australia, Greece, Italy, New Zealand and Portugal
Wednesday 8 December	Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Far and Middle East
Friday 10 December	Cyprus, Malta and Sweden
Saturday 11 December	Eastern Europe (except Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia), Turkey
Monday 13 December	Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, Poland and USA
Thursday 16 December	Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland
Friday 17 December	Royal Mail Bulk Mail Economy
Saturday 18 December	2nd Class, 2nd Class Signed For, Royal Mail 48®
Tuesday 21 December	1st Class, 1st Class Signed For, Royal Mail 24®, Royal Mail Tracked 48***
Wednesday 22 December	Royal Mail Tracked 24****
Thursday 23 December	Special Delivery Guaranteed®

UK

UK Inland Services*

Date	Service
Classified: RMG – Public	

Christmas Stamp appeal

R N I B

See differently



This Christmas, collect your used stamps and help us create a world without barriers for blind and partially sighted people.

Order your pre-paid envelopes and boxes today!



rnib.org.uk/stamps



0303 123 9999



rnibstamps@rnib.org.uk



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REGULATOR

AN APPEAL TO SUPPORT THE REC: DON'T LET IT GO TO REC AND RUIN!

So many people use the village recreation ground from small children in the playground to dog walkers to those enjoying a cup of tea and piece of cake in the summer cafe. It's truly one of the joys of living in Speldhurst.

The Rec belongs to a Trust for the benefit of the village: it was given to us by Edwin King in 1924. Since it is not owned by the Borough or Parish, they don't maintain it – the Rec survives on funds generated by the village fête and contributions from the various sports clubs that use it. Each year the Rec needs to find the money to mow the grass, keep the trees safe, cut the hedges and buy dog poo bags. Every year all this costs some £8,000.

There hasn't been a fête for two years because of COVID 19. We want to make sure the Rec will continue to be available for everybody in the village for the next 100 years too. This means finding new ways of raising the funds to run it. The suggestion for the future is simple: people in the village as well as other users of the Rec make an annual donation towards its running costs. When the fête returns, we can use the new funds for one-off projects such as the replacement of the slide in the playground, new playground or MUGA equipment, or improvements to the pavilion, boundary and ground.

We hope each household could contribute £20 a year. We know there will be those who can't afford this, as well as those who can afford more: please give what you can. We have set up a Just Giving web page to make your donation: www.justgiving/speldhurstrec

Kate Plunkett



Autumn Delights:

A selection below of the lovely sights dotted around the village during this autumn.



With thanks to the very talented Lumleys (pumpkins), Debbie Moon & Olive West (the postbox).

BLACKHAM VILLAGE CAFÉ AND MARKET

(first Saturday of every month except January)



CHRISTMAS MARKET

SATURDAY 4 December 2021

10am – 12.30pm

BLACKHAM VILLAGE HALL



Meet your friends at “The Stage” café, enjoy filter coffee, tea, or a *glass of mulled wine* and a piece of delicious homemade cake, mince pie or a lovely sausage roll.

Produce for sale at the market include: Bread, free range eggs, pasties and other baked savouries, cakes, scones, preserves, honey, wild bird food plus other exciting goodies, including handmade pottery, personalised Christmas gifts bags to get your Christmas shopping off to a great start.

If you are interested in having a stall in the future please contact: Jacki 01892 740337

Blackham Village Hall is a registered charity whose sole purpose is to promote and maintain the hall for the enjoyment of and benefit of the community



A very big Thank You to everyone who has contributed this year, whether by filling a box or making a donation.

I have 100 boxes to take to the processing warehouse next week ☺

If anyone would like to come and help us prepare the boxes for sending overseas, just get in touch with me (jkp3306@gmail.com) / 863300 and I can provide further details. Julie Pinnell





FARMERS' MARKET AT PENSHURST

*Put the dates in your diary! This December there will be **two** markets at Penshurst for the best festive local food & drink*



Saturday
4th & 18th
December
2021
9.30 am
to
12 & 2 pm

Penshurst
Place Visitor
Car Park



This year for the first time we are hosting markets on two dates in December, our regular one as usual on the first Saturday of the month when you can get ahead with all the advance shopping for storecupboard essentials, items to freeze and gifts. Then a special Christmas Farmers' Market will take place on the 18th staying open till 2.00pm to allow even more time for those last minute festive treats. This new addition to the calendar of our acclaimed monthly market will feature as usual the best of local Kent, Surrey and Sussex produce and also showcase seasonal guest stall holders with a range of Christmas gifts and crafts.

Alongside meat and game, seafood, fruit and veg, cheeses, cakes and breads, there will be seasonal specialities on offer such as Christmas puddings and mince pies, Kent grown saffron, hand-made chocolates plus crafted gifts including soaps and cosy alpaca knitted hats, scarves and Christmas decorations.

Carol singers, Christmas trees, mistletoe and mulled wine will all add to the festive occasion. Parking is plentiful, free and close by. Dogs and families welcome as always.

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Twitter and Instagram

WWW.kfma.org.uk/penshurst

Christmas Trees

GRADE 1
KENT GROWN

DECEMBER 3-5th,
10-12th & 17-19th

9-4pm



3ft potted and 4ft-8ft NORDMANN FIR in stock.
3-18ft available for pre-order.

WE ALSO HAVE WREATHS AND CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS!

DRAGONFLY FARM. LANGTON ROAD. SPELDHURST TN3 0NR
OTHER TIMES AVAILABLE BY APPOINTMENT. 07899286144

PENSHURST CHORAL SOCIETY



Carol Concert

Saturday 11 December 2021 at 6.30pm
St John the Baptist Church, Penshurst TN11 8BL

BOOKING BY WEBSITE: LIMITED TICKETS AVAILABLE

Adults £10 Children £3 Family Ticket £23

www.penshurstchoralsociety.co.uk/concerts

Tonbridge Music Club

Over the next few months, Tonbridge Music Club (TMC) has two very unusual events coming up. For the first time in its almost 60-year history, it will be holding a Jazz evening in early December while in January, it will be running **Totally Toddler!**, a concert for under 5s. Interested? Please read on!

On 3 December at 7pm, Tonbridge Music Club presents its first-ever jazz evening, featuring the highly-acclaimed **Ben Cox Band**. Come and join TMC for a relaxed evening of popular jazz classics by great songwriters such as James Taylor, Joni Mitchell and Paul Simon – the perfect start to Christmas!

Ben studied Jazz at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London; he brings a fresh, unique sound to the jazz scene and is fast gaining a reputation for his mesmerising tone and captivating interpretation and delivery. **The Ben Cox Band** tours around the UK, regularly playing major jazz festivals, including London, Cheltenham and Scarborough as well as 'sold out' performances at prestigious venues such as Ronnie Scott's and the Pizza Express jazz club.

The Jazz Evening takes place at the Tonbridge Juddians RFC. Tickets, and further details, are available online at www.tmc.org.uk (please note no tickets on the door) Adults: £20 adults, £5 students, includes a finger buffet. Pay bar available for drinks. (Under-16s must be accompanied by an adult.)

On a completely different note, on the morning of Friday, 28 January, at Tonbridge Baptist Church, Darenth Avenue, another unusual event, **Totally Toddler!**, takes place.

Jessie Grimes on clarinet and Charis Hanning on piano give a 40-minute interactive performance specially designed for **babies, toddlers** and **parents/carers**. This will be live classical music in a relaxed concert setting, with children free to dance, sing and move about as they listen.

Jessie is a chamber musician and orchestral player, as well as a teacher, presenter and creative workshop leader. She has performed as a soloist in some prestigious settings, but her first love is chamber music, and alongside Charis on piano, she regularly performs with the Jacquin Trio. Charis has also had a varied career playing both as a soloist and in chamber ensembles. She also takes great delight in inspiring music-lovers and music-novices alike.

To book tickets for this concert, please go to www.tmc.org.uk. Tickets cost £5 per adult with up to 3 children, and £3 for an extra adult. Tickets include post-concert tea, coffee and biscuits.

Rachel Davies

Steve Shipley

The Funeral and Thanksgiving service for Steve Shipley was held on the 2nd November when many of us had the chance to say goodbye to a dear friend and great character who, with his wife Joan, had contributed so much to the life of Speldhurst for 45 years.

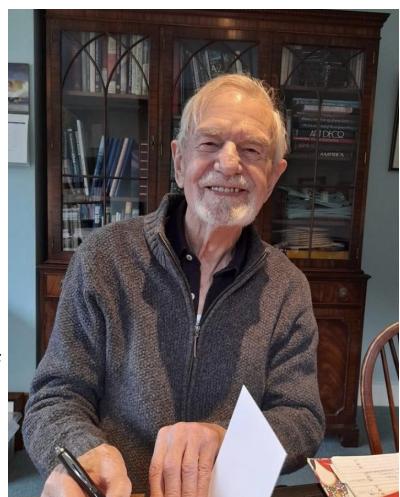
As a young man Steve was an all-round excellent sportsman. After graduating from Oxford he made a successful career in sales with ICI where he stayed for the whole of his working life. In the latter half of his career Steve was appointed to a position in ICI's London HQ and it was this that brought him and Joan, with their three children Gill, Lynn and Grant to Speldhurst in 1976.

Steve and Joan, who died 2 years ago, were inseparable: it was difficult to speak of one without mentioning the other and they joined in village life with enthusiasm. Amongst other things Steve ran the village fete for several years, was a prime mover in setting up Speldhurst Association of Men, joined the local bridge club and Speldhurst Bowls Club. In later years he became a member of Men on Wednesday. However, Steve's greatest passion was for the church where he trained as a Lay Reader which enabled him to preach and lead church services and take school assemblies. Steve and Joan also had a great heart for young people and combined this with their love of hiking by helping to lead St Mary's young people on Youth Hostelling holidays.

Steve was always polite and positive and had a way of encouraging others and even in the briefest of encounters could lift your spirits. True to his Yorkshire roots he spoke his mind clearly sometimes on controversial issues: that he managed to do so without causing offence was one of his many gifts.

I never heard Steve say a bad word about anyone.

From recent conversations with family, friends and Steve himself, it is clear that Steve had great life. He had had a successful business career and was surrounded by a loving family and good friends in a community he loved. He also had an unfailing sense of the presence of Jesus in his life and was looking forward to moving on and being reunited with his beloved Joan.



Rev. John Perkins

Elizabeth Wallace

Elizabeth died on November 4th, just a few weeks after her hundredth birthday, celebrated with a family barbecue in her garden, and parties with her neighbours and friends in Speldhurst. Wonderfully, she was able to remain in her home to the end, with the support of carers and the Hospice in the Weald.

John and Elizabeth moved to Speldhurst in 1966 with their four children who spent their teenage years here. John worked in London and Elizabeth was very active in the community for many years with a wide circle of friends. She was particularly active with the WEA locally, and volunteered with the Samaritans for 35 years.

Having lived at Shadwell, opposite the Primary School, they moved to Bullingstone Lane, and finally to Ferbies. In all this time she was an active member of St Mary's congregation, and was for some years a PCC member and Deanery Synod rep. With the help and support of her amazing friends and neighbours, she was able to continue to attend history and literature classes in Tonbridge into her late 90s and to have hydrotherapy at Burrswood, which helped keep her mobile and strong for so very long.

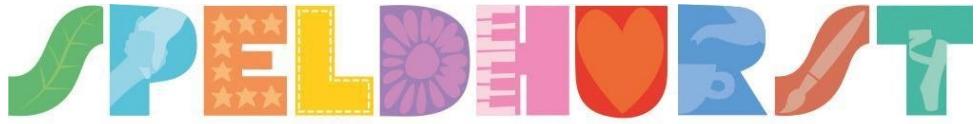
To mark her 100th birthday, her family and friends raised a sum of money to provide library books for the Primary School, in recognition of her lifelong passion for literature and for learning, and for her many years in this village where she had so many kind friends.



A memorial service will be held in St Mary's on Friday 3rd December, at 3pm.

Thank you, friends and neighbours in Speldhurst, for all the love friendship and support you gave her!

Andrew Parsons, on behalf of Elizabeth's family.



SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL

CARETAKER REQUIRED

Our wonderful Caretaker has decided to retire and we are looking for someone to replace him from January 2022.

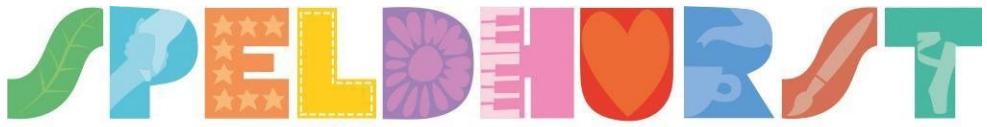
The position involves minor maintenance work. Heavier/major work will be carried out by contractors and you will not be asked to carry out heavy lifting/complicated electrical work etc.

The hall needs to be kept in a good and safe condition both inside and outside and this will be the responsibility of the Caretaker in conjunction with our Maintenance Officer.

This position would suit someone who is retired and likes DIY. This is a paid position and hours can be agreed.

If you are interested in helping your local community in this way, please contact Sam, Village Hall Administrator for a Job Specification

Sam Van Niekerk on 07894 903979 or speldhurstvillagehall@gmail.com



SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL

**Season's Greetings
from your village hall**

Thank you so much to everyone that has supported the hall during another challenging year. We have absolutely loved hosting your birthday parties, yoga classes, Pilates classes, art workshops, and all the amazing activities that are put on for the children.

Some of our activities will be running between Christmas and New Year so if you need to get out of the house do have a look on the website.

We're looking forward to seeing you all in 2022. Remember to book your events in soon to avoid disappointment as the diary is starting to fill up quickly.

As always, contact Sam Van Niekerk on 07894 903979 or speld-hurstvillagehall@gmail.com if you need to get in touch.



~ ALLOTMENT NEWS ~



Tips of the Year

Everybody likes a tip. A natty technique. A handy tool that will do just about almost every job. A sure-fire recipe for success. A horticultural ‘medicinal’ compound - safe to use and efficacious in every case of disease or infestation.

Whilst there is no universal replacement for effort, care and attention, there are a few things that I have been trying or have seen implemented have been found to help. Each of the following tips have been tried, tested and can contribute to success in whatever you want from your garden.

Tool up: I must admit to not being too fond of a spade these days – or a fork for that matter (unless for digging up spuds). Which means that I often need to address the surface of my soil. For this I would not be without the tool that I call the ‘terminator’.

More accurately, this is the WOLF-Garten Multi-Change Soil Miller. Quite an intimidating looking implement, that will clear any surface – even if compacted – and many weeds that grow. Look it up on the tinterweb. The descriptions are impressive.

Mulching: I have taken a whilst to get to this and to using all my grass cuttings as a mulch. But I’m now happy to put them under everything that grows. Not only will the cuttings suppress weeds, but they will retain moisture and over time add nutrients to the soil.

Additionally, I saw a report that a thin coating of newly mown grass cuttings spread around cabbages, broccoli and similar plants will keep them caterpillar-free. No one knows why this works, but it does...apparently.

Trust in a trellis: Excellent results can be achieved by growing certain vegetables and salads over a trellis – and Brian S is showing the way and is a master of this technique – he grows his squash (which can take up so much space) over a pallet, which acts perfectly as a trellis.

Both tomatoes and cucumbers also respond splendidly to such a system of cultivation. By habit, the cucumber has a natural inclination to climb and its luxurious foliage looks quite wonderful when grown this way. The same can be said for toma-

toes and the fruit produced will be superior in size, quantity and taste.

Lime for club root: My technique to control this horrid disease is to buy hydrated lime from a builder's merchant. Then when brassicas are planted:

- Dig a hole for the plant
- Place at least a dessert spoonful of lime in the hole and work it into the soil
- Line the inside of the hole with another spoonful of lime
- Then plant the brassica

This has been a 100% successful technique.

Mini-cloches: I really like using empty plastic containers as mini cloches. The 5l squash containers are ideal for brassicas whilst 2l ones can be used for everything else. The early stages of growth are when plants are most vulnerable.

When established, most plants can cope with what nature throws at them – even caterpillars and pigeons. So those empty drinks containers are ideal for giving vulnerable seedlings a good start and heading towards the bumper crops we all want.

Garlic for onions: Onions do not necessarily need to be rotated. And there is an advantage to this. After harvesting each year, the soil can be treated with garlic flakes. This encourages white rot to grow. However as it develops, there is no onion available to attack. So it dies – yay! This technique can greatly reduce the incidence of white rot. And it seems to work.

Companion Planting: An age-old tradition of organic gardening designed to help plants grow better, aid pollination, deter insects (from munching our crops) and encourage the predators that eat them.

Here are two examples: Sweet peas for runner beans – to attract pollinators. Nasturtiums for all beans to deter aphids and blackfly as well as for brassicas to deter caterpillars.

- If you are interested in acquiring an allotment, please contact Mark Oddy on 01892 862746.
- If there is any topic you would like to address relating to matters gardening or horticultural, please send an email to kytehouse@stepex.co.uk.
- If you would like to submit something for this article, please also email it to kytehouse@stepex.co.uk.



GOOD NEWS FOR SPELDHURST PARISH HIGHWAYS

We are pleased to report that KCC Highways has now approved Speldhurst Parish Council's application to reduce the speed limit on the B2110 Groombridge Hill, and the A264 from Langton Green to Ashurst. The existing limit on these roads is currently 50 mph and, through the council's Highways Working Group, Speldhurst Parish Council proposed a reduction to 40 mph. This is to ensure all vehicles approaching and leaving the villages, do so at a reduced speed. We understand that the work is now being scheduled and look forward to seeing the reduction implemented before long.



Whilst some may see this outcome as a simple measure – and only part of the way towards tackling dangerous driving in our parish villages – it is the result of over two years work. It's also testament to the effort we make to represent the views of its community, its working relationship with KCC Highways and a determination not to give up. A special mention also goes to the parish residents who gave their time to help make this happen.

We now hope for safer times on these roads, especially for the communities that live along them. To learn more about what we do to make roads safer in our parish, why not attend a Highways Working Group meeting?

SPEEDWATCH – A BIG THANK YOU

The Speldhurst Speedwatch effort has been admirable this year! We'd like to thank our Speedwatch Co-ordinators and volunteers for their commitment to running regular sessions, especially early morning ones. Speedwatch is a great example of how the council and local volunteers work together - here's to more collaboration in 2022.

PCSO DROP IN CLINIC

PCSO Jay Burt will hold monthly drop-in sessions in Langton Green Village Hall carpark so residents can talk through any concerns. Having encouraged PCSO Burt to establish a contact point in the parish, we're pleased he has been able to make this happen. See more details via the usual media channels.

Save the date: Our Annual Parish Meeting will be on Monday 28th March. Our Guest Speaker will talk on community policing – details to fol-

low.

A TRIBUTE TO OUR OUTGOING CLERK

Chris May has now completed his handover to Katie Neve. He will stay on as Finance Officer, so we can continue to benefit from his financial acumen and vast knowledge of council matters.



Chris joined the parish council over 12 years ago and has been a driving force in modernising the way we work. He has worked closely with and supported several parish council Chairs and built invaluable relationships with County and Borough council stakeholders. Lastly, he has been a truly supportive Line Manager to our two Assistant Clerks, who joined the council as Mums returning to the office. We're all grateful to Chris and hope he enjoys more free time with family and friends.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR WISHES

It's been a challenging year for many of us, and so it is heartening to be part of a community that comes together at difficult times. We wish you all a well deserved break at Christmas and here's to a happy and healthy New Year.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Our December **Full Council Meeting** will take place at 7.00pm on Monday 6th December in the Palmer Room at Langton Green Village Hall. - Our January **Full Council Meeting** will take place at 7.30pm on Monday 10th January, also at Langton Green Village Hall.

We will continue to monitor the number of local COVID cases and reserve the right to ask you to book a seat in advance. Please see our website for updates.

COUNCIL OFFICE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The council office will close for Christmas from Thursday 23rd December, re opening Tuesday 4th January. We will check emails and the mobile phone for messages during this time, if you need to contact us.

CONTACTS Call Katie Neve, Clerk: 01892 862927/07760769513

Email: clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

Visit: www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk



Speldhurst CEP School News



As school life begins to return to normal at Speldhurst, there is a strong focus on emotional health and well-being which head teacher Mrs Hayward describes as being at “the top of our list of priorities by addressing social, emotional and mental health issues comprehensively.”

A whole school approach has already begun with a baseline assessment of the impact of the past 18 months through a tried and tested programme developed in the Midlands by Sandwell educational psychology service. The plan at Speldhurst is to tailor a range of preventive measures and interventions such as TalkTime and play therapies as well as parent workshops, staff training, counselling and helping children to express their emotions through the use of colour. A Well-being Committee will meet regularly to ensure that “all pupils receive the support they need, when they need it.”

A massive thank you to the PTA whose funding is supporting this ‘Emotional Well-being Initiative’. One of the big annual PTA fund-raisers and a popular community event returned this year after a COVID-enforced absence (you probably saw the pupil’s lovely posters up around the village) and despite a few more restrictions and a few less tickets available due to the current situation, Bonfire Night was a sell-out. The weather was kind and the event raised a fantastic amount of money and brought our community back together again for a spectacular display!

Another success has been the on-line Christmas auction at the end of last month with bids for over 80 fantastic lots for items ranging from days out at Drusilla’s or Lords to festive specials such as a Christmas tree or pudding. Many thanks to everyone for their generous bids and to those who very generously donated the lots.



And now for news from the classroom. In Crispin Class, this lovely piece of artwork should give you a clue as to what the Year 5’s have been up to.

What inspired Paul McCartney to write the beautifully poignant song ‘ Blackbird’? Even someone like myself who grew up with Beatles music, may not know. As part of activities and lessons at Speldhurst School during Black History month, the pupils uncovered the story behind the song, unpicking the meaning of the lyrics. It’s a tale of defiance against brutal discrimination in 60s America, when a group of young black women in Arkansas battled to gain entry to a whites-only high school.



The song ‘Blackbird’ also featured in a whole school concert as a guitar piece. Peripatetic guitar teacher Michael Crowther played and gave an overview of the ukulele, acoustic and electric guitar featuring not only the Beatles classic but Amy Winehouse’s ‘Back to Black’ and some examples of folk finger style playing. But the highlight of the concert was the School Orchestra – back together again –

who performed pieces from Rossini's William Tell and Viva la Vida.

Meanwhile in lessons at the younger end of the school, Jazz class have been learning about minibeasts and their habitats. One activity in the school grounds was a minibeast hunt and the Year 1 children were very excited to find all sorts of creatures! They then took their learning back inside to draw and annotate diagrams of what they found. Very scientific!

Whilst in phonics they had to sort 'real words' from 'alien words' and had great fun with a cross-curricular activity, combining PE and phonics in a phonics egg and spoon race.



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Speldhurst's healthy body, healthy mind ethos is always strongly represented in the school through PE and clubs from football including an enthusiastic girl's side to team games, dance, netball, kickboxing, running and a cross country club which meets before School. Below is a photo of the Year 4 pupils in Empire class showing off their brilliant basketball skills in an end of term interhouse competition, whilst the football team is doing well in the local league including a recent 4-0

As pupils in Year 6's Russet Class start preparing for secondary school, they take increasing responsibilities – one of which is as buddies to the youngest children in Pippin and Jazz classes, supporting them and meeting weekly to do activities together (see below)



In their final year at Speldhurst, every pupil in Russet class gets given a new dictionary/thesaurus by the PTA to last for the rest of their education – and hopefully their lives. The smiles on their faces in this group photo say everything.
(see image on following page)

Have a wonderful Christmas break and may 2022 be happy, healthy and COVID-free.

Sara Andrew, Communications Governor



December 2021



5th December

- 10 am Communion Service
10 am Online Worship available via
<http://youtube.com/StMarysSpeldhurst>

12th December

- 8 am Traditional Holy Communion (1662)
10 am Morning Worship

SATURDAY 18th December

- 6 pm Carol Service

19th December

- 10 am Communion Service
10 am Online Worship available via
<http://youtube.com/StMarysSpeldhurst>

FRIDAY 24th December

- 2 & 3 pm Crib Services
11.30 pm Midnight Communion

SATURDAY 25th December

- 10 am Christmas Celebration

26th December

- 10 am Communion Service



Wedding

30th October

Richard Perkins and Cindy Schäfer

Funeral Service

2nd November

Steve Shipley

The Church Office can be contacted on 861187 or

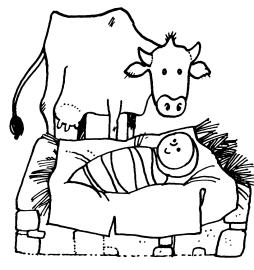
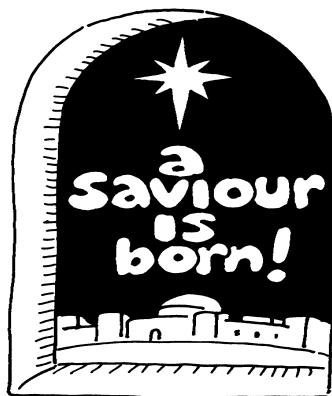
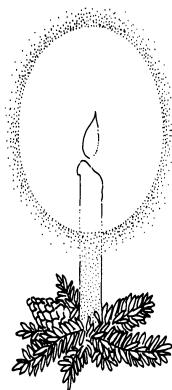
speldhurst.church@btopenworld.com

Normal office hours: 9 am to 12.30 pm

See our website: www.speldhurstchurch.org

St Mary's Facebook page:
facebook.com/StMarysSpeldhurst/

Please note that details of the church diary for January were unavailable at the time of going to print.
Please see www.speldhurstchurch.org/whats-on for details.



A Letter from St Mary's



December 2021

Dear Friends,

Several people have stopped me recently to ask if we are holding church services. The answer is yes, in fact we have been holding Sunday worship, weddings and funerals since the beginning of March. We are also continuing with our online worship that engages with people who, for whatever reason, can't join us in person (although it is now fortnightly). You can join us online by searching YouTube for St Mary's Speldhurst.

All this means that we are definitely planning Christmas services and you will find details of these elsewhere in this magazine. Inevitably we have had to adapt for COVID and changing regulations. We hope that we have the right balance between freedom and safety although, since no one knows what will happen next with the pandemic, we may have to change our plans at short notice to keep people safe. We will do our best to communicate any changes and you can follow the latest information on St Mary's website: <https://speldhurstchurch.org>.

This year I will be holding a special service on Boxing Day. Christmas is great fun and special in many ways but for some it can also be a painful time, perhaps because it reminds us of loved ones no longer sharing our lives or because life is tough from time to time and seeing others celebrating can rub salt into the wounds of our personal pain. On 26th December at 10am in St Mary's, there will be a quiet Communion Service for anyone who would like some space to just be in God's presence.

Whatever service connects you to the heart of Christmas, do join us. You will be very welcome.

Douglas

PS I can be contacted at douglas.wren12@gmail.com or on 01892 862821 or at The Rectory, Southfields, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0PD

Nature Watch

Bird numbers can move very quickly. Last month I mentioned that I had seen up to three Red Kites at any one time; at the end of October we had a count of 20 swirling around the sky over the North lake and woodland at Bough Beech reservoir.

Redwings were also on the move with a visible migration count of 34,727 counted in one day flying over Leith Hill in Surrey – the people counting deserve a medal. At Bough Beech 600 were counted.

The annual big butterfly count recorded its lowest number of butterflies since it was launched 12 years ago; even the number of common species like Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell are well down in numbers. I expect we all think it was a very bad butterfly year after that very cold April.

A species of Owl called Shelley's Eagle Owl has been located in Ghana rain forest after a period of 150 years since the last sighting, this is a very large owl and I wonder what other birds are still waiting to be found.

My usual reminder that bird feeders and the ground underneath need to be kept clean this time of the year when large numbers of birds are coming to feed, in order keep disease at bay. One disease, Trichomonosis, has caused the Greenfinch and Chaffinch population to decline markedly over the last few years. Suitable disinfectants that can be used include a weak solution of domestic bleach, or other specially designed commercial products.

Alan Ford



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Brownies	Louise Scott	862972
Bumps and Babes	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
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Cricket Club	Nick Coffin	07867 803121
Cubs	Karol Leeves	531104
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Guides	Sybil Oddy	862746
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Mothers & Toddlers	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
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	Alan Rowe	863404
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