

Speldhurst News



February 2024

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Welcome

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the first edition of Speldhurst News 2024.

Our front cover image was taken in the snowy January weather and is on one of the beautiful walks surrounding Speldhurst. More ideas for walks can be found on our website www.speldhurst.org

There is good news about our shop as planning for the move later this year continues at pace. For details on how to get involved see p.9. In the meantime this month has many occasions to celebrate, including Valentine's Day and Pancake Day; the shop is very well stocked to meet your needs for these days as well as the everyday!

Our perennial contributors offer advice on what to look out for in nature this month plus the benefits of growing your own veggies. For details of allotment spaces check out the contact details on p19.

Finally, a gentle reminder regarding magazine subscriptions and how to pay is on p.5.

Wishing you a bright and sunny February,

Judith

**On behalf of Speldhurst News Editors:
Maria Turner, Sara Turner, Judith Malim**

Please remember that copy for the **March 2024 edition** should be sent **before 10th February 2024** to: speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred. Thank you.

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

Mondays	Library (2:00pm - 4:00pm)	p.21
	Bumps & Babes (fortnightly)	p.4
Wednesdays	Praise & Play	p.4

February

Sat 3rd	Blackham Village Market	p.7
	Penshurst Village Market	p.8
Mon 5th	Full Council Meeting	p.16
Sat 10th	Sir Scallywag...	p.9

March

Sat 16th	Quiz night	p.6
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June

Sat 15th	Village Fete	
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News & Announcements

What's on in Speldhurst for the Under 5's in February

If you have a child under 2 you may like to join Bumps and Babes, the fortnightly coffee mornings for new Mums. We meet in each other's homes on a Monday morning from about 10.30am. Do message Jenny if you are interested in joining the group.

Praise and Play, St Mary's Toddler Group, meets on Wednesdays from 9 – 10.30 am in St Mary's Church. There are toys to enjoy, crafts to try and songs to sing but what the children love the most is the chance to ring the church bell. You may have heard us. Do come along if you have an under 5 of any age. All are welcome.

For more information contact Jenny Fitzsimmons on 07891 318123 or at jenny50fitz@gmail.com

Speldhurst Association of Men (SAM)

SAM is a group of local men who meet on Tuesdays once a month for sporting and social activities. The "sporting" activities include such things as ten pin bowling, croquet and indoor bowls. Our social activities include visits to places of interest. For example in 2023 we have had a guided tour round the Amelia Scott Centre in Tunbridge Wells and visited the Royal Engineers Museum in Chatham. After our meetings we always have a pub lunch. We also have a barbecue in the summer.

We are a very friendly group. If you would like to join us contact Brian Tasker on 01892 862301 or email: brian.tasker@totalise.co.uk

SPELDHURST MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Speldhurst News is very conscious of the rising cost of everything - not least our printing costs. We are keen to hold subscriptions and advertising costs at their current levels and ensure that we print only the required number of magazines each month. With this in mind we want to give a gentle reminder to those who haven't paid their subscription to please do so as soon as possible.

The best way to do this is to pop the money in an envelope with your address clearly noted and drop it round to your magazine distributor or into the shop. If you take your envelope to the shop please mark it FAO Anu Aron, Speldhurst Magazine with your address noted too. We would love to be up to date with all of our admin. well before the next subscription cycle starts in June.

Many thanks.

Speldhurst Magazine Committee

www.speldhurst.org





Save
THE
Date

PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS HERE!

QUIZ NIGHT

SATURDAY, MARCH 16TH, 2024

SPELDHURST VILLAGE HALL, ST. MARY'S LANE

£15 PP INCLUDING FOOD + 1 FREE DRINK!

7:00PM START

IN AID OF **OPENARMS MALAWI**, FUNDRAISING FOR A MONTH-LONG TRIP,
COMPLETING VARIOUS COMMUNITY PROJECTS ACROSS MALAWI

any questions please email: katiesmalawiquiz@gmail.com :)

Your Borough Councillors

	Contact Details	Re-Election Date
Cllr Matthew Sankey (Alliance)	07881 674 310 matthew.sankey@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024
Cllr Paul Curry (Alliance)	07515 938 765 Paul.curry@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024
Cllr Harry Allen (Conservative)	07523 005 178 harry.allen@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024

News from the Villages

BLACKHAM VILLAGE HALL

BEER AND SKITTLES EVENING

SATURDAY 23RD MARCH 2024
7.00PM

COME AND ENJOY A FUN EVENING OF
SKITTLES AND OTHER OLD
FASHIONED PUB GAMES
£5 PER PERSON TO INCLUDE BAR
SNACKS

LICENSED BAR OPEN FROM 7.00PM
SERVING BEER, WINE AND PROSECCO (CASH OR CARD)
GET YOU TICKETS FROM RUTH ON 07890 303791

A colorful illustration of a market stall. On the left, a man in a blue shirt and red apron stands next to a yellow stall. On the right, a woman in a blue dress and yellow shoes stands next to a stall with a red awning, holding a red shopping bag. The background is decorated with colorful bunting flags.

Blackham Village Market
SATURDAY 3RD FEBRUARY
10.00AM TO 12.30PM

Coffee/Tea & Cakes served from 10am

Lots of lovely produce for sale: homemade pasties, cakes, scones, free range eggs, bread, bird food, honey, handmade craft items and lots more

SEE YOU THERE!



Don't miss February's Penshurst Farmers Market for the very best local seasonal food and drink around



**Saturday,
February
3rd, 2024**

**9.30 am
to
12.00 pm**

**Penshurst
Place Visitor
Car Park**



We're back in Penshurst Place car park for our first full market of 2024 with all our regular stallholders back with us after a new year break. As usual there's plenty to try and buy, Look out for home-made cakes and pies, sourdough bread and craft chocolate, cuts of beef and lamb or wild venison perfect for slow cook braises and roasts.

This is the best time for locally-caught fish and seafood due to the cold seas - Rye Bay scallops are at the height of their season. Pick up seasonal vegetables, cold pressed rapeseed oils and locally laid eggs. Plan a Valentine celebration for someone special with a bottle of Kentish sparkling wine.

Don't forget to bring your kitchen knives and garden tools to be sharpened by our Knife Ninja ready for the new season in the garden; buy new season's flowering spring bulbs and shrubs from Low Wood Nursery to get into the ground now.

Parking is plentiful, free and close by. Families and dogs welcome.

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Twitter and Instagram

WWW.kfma.org.uk/penshurst

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Happy New Year!

We hope you all had a lovely time over the festive period and have had a good start to the new year.

It's an exciting year ahead at the shop with the move to the chapel looking good. We'll keep you up to date with our progress. Would you like to have a say in the new shop? Please let us know in the shop if you have any comments to help us build an even better shop over the road. Valentine's day is fast approaching and we have everything you need to spoil your loved one this year. We have a lovely selection of Whistlefish cards and some delicious chocolates. We also have our regular selection of excellent wine from Secret Cellar. We have Valentine's themed cupcake cases and cookie cutters for the bakers too! Or you could just treat yourself to the hot chocolate from our coffee machine, it really is the most delicious!



Remember you can bring your dry cleaning and laundry to the shop. Southborough Dry Cleaners pick up on Mondays and Thursdays and have very reasonable rates.

Would you like to volunteer in the shop? We're always looking for people to stack shelves or help behind the till. Please pop into the shop and let us know if you'd like to help, even if it's just for an hour or two when you can.

We hope to see you in the shop soon. Our prices are competitive and our service is friendly and local!



December has been very and wet and windy and now the beginning of January looks dry and colder. This should slow down the plants of many types from flowering too early and missing the pollinators they need to set seed and fruits. The question I keep getting asked is where are all the smaller garden birds this winter. I do not have the answer but it seems to be everywhere in this part of the county this includes the water birds on the reservoir. The met office has just announced 2023 was the hottest year so far, so not many birds migrating from Europe. As soon as the British Trust for Ornithology have the data we will hear. The Waxwings have arrived in Tonbridge and the industrial estate in Tunbridge Wells and might be seen wherever berries are still on trees up until the end of February.

We all know about hibernation where the 3 species of mammals - Bats, Hedgehogs and Dormice - build up their fat reserves by eating as much food as they can before winter sets in. They then find a safe dry place and fall into a deep sleep where almost all of the bodily functions slow down until just ticking over to help the animal survive the cold days of winter when there is nothing to eat.

Have you heard about Brumation? It is a period of dormancy exhibited by reptiles and amphibians in colder months. It is very similar to hibernation in that it is characterised by extended periods of very minimal active periods to save energy.

Reptiles are ectothermic, which means their body temperature is dependant on their environment. As it gets colder reptiles will become more lethargic and less able to hunt, therefore entering Brumation is the best way for them to get through the winter.

Alan Ford





Speldhurst CEP School News



Eat your heart out Jamie Oliver – Speldhurst School has a new kitchen – worthy of any restaurant – and the lunchtime menus are already proving very popular. Parents and visitors were invited to enjoy a taster day. Years ago when my youngest daughter was still at the school, I made a BBC Radio 4 Food programme with presenter Sheila Dillion about the lamentable state of school dinners after many schools – particularly smaller ones - were forced to use outside caterers with the closure of their on-site kitchens. The celebrity chef then took up the baton with his TV programme in 2005 and Tony Blair's Government committed £280 million to improve meal provision.

In recent years Speldhurst has had brilliant outside caterers but there is nothing like a school meal prepared and cooked on site to tempt more children, who previously didn't have school dinners, to enjoy them. Already there are lots more pupils enjoying the freshly cooked food, tempted by delicious aromas wafting through the school – and fabulously colourful and appetising looking salads.



Building the kitchen so we can cook on site has been a long outstanding ambition and it is wonderful to see it in action. Thank you to everyone who helped raise funds to allow this project to succeed.

Encouraging a healthy lifestyle is important to everyone at Speldhurst and there is great enthusiasm for sport. Recent triumphs include our team being crowned winners of the Basketball tournament at Leigh Academy – for the first time ever. Congratulations and thanks to Mr Vale Taylor and Luke Carpenter who prepared the team for the event.

Meanwhile the girls football team has gone from strength to strength having won three games in a row- the latest an 8-1 victory over St Marks last week. They're developing into a fantastic team.



Whilst at the Cross Country event at Skinners Playing field, Speldhurst celebrated a lot of great performances, a few top 10 positions and Leo in Year 5 won the Year 5/6 boys race by some distance (see him giving the thumbs up below) He also won the Year 3 and 4 boys race last year. We have high hopes for him as a runner for the future!



Meanwhile, back in school, Yr 4 in Empire Class brought something of Ancient Egypt to the school. They recreated the mummification process by mummifying carrots! After two weeks of mummifying, the pupils took on the role of Ancient Egyptian tomb robbers, going on a hunt to find their mummies which had been hidden. Once found, the children dug up their mummies along with all the amazing treasures buried alongside them, laying the mummified 'carrot' remains to rest in fantastic homemade tombs. An exciting way to bring the ancient past to life.



But one of my favourite School initiatives this term has to be 'odd socks day' to champion diversity. Pupils learnt songs, and designed colourful footwear with positive messages about how to prevent bullying. There was an array of weird and wonderful socks on show to mark the day and to show that difference is to be celebrated. What a wonderful message!



Communications Governor
Sara Andrew



NEWS FROM SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL

To all our residents in Speldhurst, we wish you a very Happy Not-so-New Year – here's to a healthy and productive 2024.

THE PRECEPT - THE PORTION OF YOUR COUNCIL TAX PAID TO US

Every year, all parish councils look at their finances and determine what the precept will be for the coming year. This process starts in October and the final decision is made in January.

This year, due to inflation, rising prices, and the energy crisis, we have been faced with our costs increasing much more than we had budgeted for. We estimate our costs have risen about 12-13%, but we don't wish to raise our precept that much.

For that reason, we're looking to set the precept at £195,000, which works out to a 7.4% rise for each household in our parish. This means we're anticipating having to spend some of our reserves next year. We're aware that this can't continue in the longer term, but we feel that setting the rise lower than our cost increases is the right thing to do, considering the cost-of-living increases that are affecting us all so sharply. Further, thankfully, the tax base (the number of people who pay council tax in our area) has increased a little since last year, meaning the rise is a bit lower.

We should mention that the average amount your parish council receives from the overall Council Tax is just 3%. The breakdown of each £ of Council Tax collected and where it goes is:

Kent Police 11p
Parish Councils 3p
Kent Fire and Rescue Service 4p
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council 9p
Kent County Council 73p

We've also kept our precept low, historically, in comparison to other parish councils both locally and in the Kent area. When figures are this small, the percent increase can look high, but our pounds and pence figure is still relatively low compared to the other organisations in your council tax bill.

In addition to the 7.4% precept increase that will be used to cover day-to-day expenditures, there will be a new expense added to your council tax bill this year. This is to cover the annual repayment costs for the Public Works loan that the council is applying for to purchase Speldhurst Chapel. You can read more about this loan and the terms of its repayment at www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk under the 'Speldhurst Chapel Project' tab.

As several of you have requested, we will ask that the amount required from each household to repay the public works loan appears as a separate item on your council tax bill. However, If the tax authority does not approve our request to have this amount listed separately, the precept increase will appear much higher - around 25%. It is worth bearing in mind that the amount required to repay the loan will decrease over time as we continue to pay it back. If, after reading this, you are still unclear about anything we have written, do get in touch – contact details below.

It is always at the forefront of councillors' minds that the money the council spends belongs to the community, and getting the best value for ratepayers is very important to us. Our financial records are available for examination, and we continue to work hard to ensure proper value is delivered from the small slice of tax that we receive.

VACANCY FOR A PARISH COUNCILLOR If you see this before the 29th January deadline, you still have time to apply to be a councillor. We know there are many community-minded residents in Speldhurst, so now is your chance to get involved in improving quality of life for all. Ask the Clerk for more details.

PUBLIC MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME Full Council Meeting 7.00 pm, Monday 5th February Palmer Room at Langton Green Village Hall.

TO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL: Call the Clerk, Katie Neve on 01892 862927/07760 769513 or email clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk
For helpful information, visit www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk



REPORTING INCIDENTS TO KENT POLICE

The Parish Councils Co-Ordinator at Tunbridge Wells Police Community Safety Unit has asked us to share the following message:

“Over the past month, we have been meeting with parish and borough councillors across the whole of the Tunbridge Wells district. This is a new initiative to further engage with the councils embedded within their communities, to help raise any concerns with our staff and officers in our Community Safety Unit.

One particular concern we are seeing raised is a perceived lack of reporting to Kent Police regarding incidents happening in some of these areas. We have used these meetings to highlight the importance of reporting all incidents to the police, no matter how big or small and our officers pride themselves on gathering information that can really help build a picture of an issue or ongoing complaint.

There is also sometimes a perception from these meetings that ‘nothing will be done’, and I want to offer assurances that this is most certainly not the case. For example, over the past year, there has been an increased focus on tackling anti-social behaviour in and around Tunbridge Wells, which has included enhanced patrols aimed at deterring and reducing offences and which include shop thefts, assaults, and criminal damage.

Our enforcement action has seen charge rates rise for several offences linked to anti-social behaviour. Between October 2022 and September 2023, there were 49 charges made for criminal damage, compared to 27 in the previous corresponding period - a rise of more than 80 per cent. Charges relating to offences involving the use of violence have also increased, to 230 from 204; whilst at the same time, the number of reported incidents involving the use of violence in the borough has fallen.

It is important to again highlight that information we receive regarding incidents within our communities, is often crucial to resolving residents’ concerns, deterring and solving crime, and improving people’s lives. Your support or information can help provide the missing puzzle piece which helps your local officers solve a crime.”

To report a crime, call 101, this ensures you receive a crime number. You can also sign up to www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk, a crime prevention messaging service provided by Kent Police.

Always dial 999 in an emergency.



~ Allotment & Gardening News ~



What Brussels Sprouts This Christmas Led Me To 'Dig Up'

I was contemplating my Christmas lunch (just before tucking in), feeling reasonably satisfied that on the plate were brussels and potatoes grown by me. I'd also harvested leeks, cabbage and broccoli. But those were for another time.

Although I was happy about my harvest, what was interesting was that just before Christmas, supermarkets were selling vegetables for just 19p. For that price, you could buy a swede or a bag of carrots or parsnips. Or all, totalling a good amount of vegetables for just 57p.

That surely can't be profitable for the supermarkets. And impossible to compete with from an allotment or garden veg plot (taking into account the time spent).

Kilo for kilo, there is no contest when it comes to financial outlay and value between allotment or garden produce versus supermarkets. At 19p per item, the supermarkets win 'hands down.' But there are other considerations – some of which have been touched on before. But what also came to mind were these comparative thoughts:

When we buy fruit and vegetables from a supermarket, they are almost always in pristine condition i.e. mostly regular, good-sized and washed. When I harvest produce from the allotment it almost always is dirty, nibbled and often containing added protein (such as slugs, caterpillars, worms – which love to find their way into cabbage).

What I have often contemplated is how do the farmers achieve the 'quality' of produce for the supermarkets. Cost considerations aside, if my produce is affected by the attention of 'wildlife', how come the supermarket produce is not?

Surely farmed produce is 'controlled'. This can mean the application of chemical conditioners. So as in many other circumstances, I turned to Google. The results were interesting. Here are just 3 examples indicating what (according to a Defra survey) is sprayed on commercially grown non-organic crops.

Brussels Sprouts; Broccoli (Sprouting); Cabbage; Calabrese; Cauliflowers; Kale, etc: On average are sprayed with - 3 insecticides, 2 fungicides, 2 molluscicides and 2 herbicides. Other pesticide applications were found to include physical control agents and sulphur.


Tomatoes: On average are sprayed with - 28 biological control agents, 4 fungicides, 3 physical control agents, 3 insecticides and 3 sulphur sprays during the growing season. Other pesticides used included disinfectants, acaricides, growth regulators, soil sterilants, herbicides and tar oils/acids.

Strawberries: On average are sprayed with - 14 biological control agents, 13 fungicides, 5 insecticides and 2 acaricides during the growing season. Other pesticides used included disinfectants, physical control agents and sulphur.

With such a range of treatments, there is added concern about the possible effects of a cocktail effect of chemicals in and on our foods. It's not my intention to go into that here – though finding out about this is not difficult – just enter 'the cocktail effect' in an internet search engine and there is plenty of information there.

Amongst the many benefits of growing produce, one of the key principles is that what we eat from our allotment is totally organic, utterly fresh, free of any anything-icide with virtually zero food miles and just about as healthy as it is possible to be (even with a little added protein chucked in).

How fortunate are we in our community to have our allotments – our village resource - where we can achieve the objective of eating healthy produce. Anyone now interested in an allotment? If so, see below who to contact. It can change lives.



If you are interested in these topics / types of discussions, there is a Facebook page where we go into a lot of this type of stuff. It is called Speldhurst Allotmenters & Gardeners and the web address is: <https://www.facebook.com/>



A Letter from St Mary's

February 2024

By the time you are all reading this letter Christmas will be over and we will all be into diets and good intentions ! However I hope that we do not lose the spirit of Christmas and the positive message that it brings even in an extremely gloomy period in the world .

To me Christmas is all about people, creation and the message brought by Jesus to a very broken world ,even 2000 years ago. We all seem to be very busy at Christmas with parties food and visiting friends and relatives besides going to the carol concert and possibly other services .Do we however stop and think in this frantic time of those alone unwell and possibly in their last period of life ?

I believe that at Christmas too many people can be overlooked in our rushing around and socialising and their lonely ness and uncertainty forgotten.Christmas is a time of love and cooperation with our fellow humanbeings , never forgetting Gods message which was to and for us all –

Love the lord your GOD and

Love your fellow humanbeings

This may be difficult especially as the Christmas spirit becomes diluted !,However look around you and never forget that love ,light, hope that may be missing in so many other peoples lives .

Christmas is a very challenging period for us all as we give ourselves little time to stop and think outside our own world and cares .Perhaps after reading this letter, we could all stop and think of the community and people around us and offer some one in our community who we may have overlooked, a little of our prayers and support . May we never forget the clarity of the Christmas message throughout the year.

David Iamey

February 2024 services at St Mary's

4th February

10am Communion

11th February

10am Morning Worship

14th February

8pm Ash Wednesday

18th February

8am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)

10am Communion

25th February

10am All-age Worship

6pm Evensong



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/

Mobile Library

Come and browse and borrow each Monday afternoon between 2:00 and 4:00 pm at the Speldhurst Village Hall.



SPELDHURST VILLAGE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

Age UK Lunch	Jan Mann	863931
Allotments	Mark Oddy	862746
Beavers	Jo Smith	518706
Bowls Club	Debbie Moon	861317
Bridge Club	Heather Hughes	863367
Brownies	Louise Scott	862972
Bumps and Babes	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Cricket Club	Nick Coffin	07867 803121
Junior Cricket section	Francis Booth	07738474144
Cubs	Karol Leeves	531104
Flower Show	Alan Ford	863276
Football: Speldhurst Rangers	Ollie Crees	07919467576
GP Surgery		863040
Guides	Sybil Oddy	862746
Library	Olive West	863234
Men on Wednesday	John Perkins	863239
Mothers' Union	Christine Baker	540793
Mothers & Toddlers	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Nursery School		860557
Parish Council: Chair	Paul Curry	07515 938765
Vice Chair	Katrina Lyle	862070
Parish Clerk	Katie Neve	862927
Parish Councillors	Richard Ellery	864077
	Alan Rowe	863404
Police Community Support Officer	Gemma.Gilbert@kent.police.uk	
Primary School	Stephanie Hayward	863044
Rainbows	Alex Brown	
	speldhurstainbows@gmail.com	
Recreation Ground	Ed Wesson	07799 731247
Running Group	Paul Eames	07975 577630
Speldhurst Association of Men	Brian Tasker	862301
Snooker Club	Nick Fenton	864144
Speldhurst Art Exhibition	Maria Turner	863394
Speldhurst News Editors	Maria Turner	863394
	Sara Turner	863226
	Judith Malim	864268
Speldhurst News Advertising	Eric Roughley	863222

St Mary's Church Rector Administrator	Andrea Burgess	861187
Stoolball	Donna Burden	524793 07810 048599
Scouts	Nick Burgess	863362
Shop & Post Office	Jo-Anne Dekker	863158
Village Fete: Chair	Mike Harrowing	0772 5561154
Village Hall	Rachel Bourdin	07766 830303
Village Website	Miranda Hawkins	863601
Walking Football	Brian Shilling	07940 013135
Walking Group	Brian Tasker	862301

Opening Hours & Local Information

Buses	Timetables for bus 285 Speldhurst to Tun Wells - Hams Travel 01580 879629 For info: https://hamstravel.com/services
George & Dragon PH:	Mon-Thurs & Sun midday to 10-00pm. Fri & Sat midday to 11-00pm. 01892 338549
GP:	Mon - Fri 8am-6pm Tel: 01892 863040
Dispensary:	Mon - Fri 8.30am-1pm; 2.30-6pm (dispensary calls 8.30-11.30 only)
Library (village hall):	Monday 2-4.30pm.
Shop:	Mon-Fri 7.30am-5pm; Sat 8-1pm; Sun 8-11
Post Office:	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 9-1pm; Sun Closed

To advertise please contact Eric Roughley
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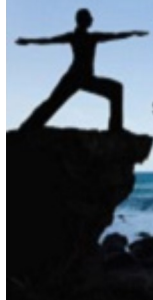
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