



# Speldhurst News

**April 2025**

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# Welcome & Contents

Dear Readers,

There has been a fantastic planetary parade across our skies this year, a good reason to look up into the night skies. Thank you Abi for sending us this month's cover photo. of St Mary's by night.

Back down here on earth, April is a fantastic month to look ahead at events of the year to come and review how we have been keeping ourselves occupied over the winter - read on for a review of sell-out show The Calendar Girls, plus plans and updates from our many clubs, committees and residents who are busy creating events for us to enjoy.

Happy Easter!  
Judith

News Editors: Maria Turner, Andrea Burgess & Judith Malim  
Please send emails before 10th April 2025 for the May Issue to:  
speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred.

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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, pdf or Publisher file. The editors reserve the right to amend submissions where they feel it is appropriate.

# Local Happenings & Gatherings

## DRAMA CLUB PRODUCTION - THE CALENDAR GIRLS

A huge thank you to the village from all at The Drama Club for your support of our show The Calendar Girls! Over 200 of you came to see it from Speldhurst and the surrounding villages. Our amazing actors had the audience laughing and crying in equal measure, each touched by the beautiful writing and sensitive performances. We were so proud to have had The Pickering Cancer Drop in centre with us for our final performance, and we are thrilled to have donated 10% of our ticket sales to them directly. This show has been a very special time for us all and we are delighted so many of you were able to be with us to support local theatre! Thank you.

We meet at 9.30am on fortnightly Monday mornings. Class is £5 an hour. If you fancy trying a new skill, come and join us for coffee and cake one Monday. Our classes are very relaxed, and we are a super friendly bunch. No experience necessary. Just email [acting@bethanwalker.com](mailto:acting@bethanwalker.com) to book.





## *Thank you from Speldhurst Recreation Ground Committee!*

We're so pleased to report that over £2,500 has been raised in the recent JustGiving campaign and Thank You! also to the Bowls Committee who very kindly donated £300 from their recent 'Magic Night'. This means that we are now ordering the netting which will protect the playground from footballs. Any further contributions will be very gratefully received.

Our AGM is coming up and everyone is welcome to join. Come and ask anything you like about the recreation ground. We're still looking for some new recruits who have an interest in fundraising to join the committee.

**The AGM is upstairs in the G&D on Thursday 15th May at 6.00pm.**

### What's on in Speldhurst for the Under 5's in April

As I write spring is well underway. Now the clocks have changed, the birds' song in the morning is getting earlier and earlier, the daffodils are magnificent and there are even signs of bluebells emerging in the woods around the village.

**Bumps and Babes**, the coffee mornings for new Mums meets fortnightly on a **Monday from 10.30**. Message Jenny if you have a child under 2 and would be interested in joining this group.

**Praise and Play**, St Mary's Toddler Group, meets in the church every Wednesday and Friday morning during term time. We begin again after the Easter holidays on **Wednesday 23rd & Friday 25th April**. We're there from **9.30 – 11.00am** on a Wednesday and **9.00 – 10.30 on a Friday**, so feel free to arrive when you can. We always start with free play and a craft, then gather for a story, some songs and to ring the church bell.

Meanwhile if you are new to the village and have pre-school children, or know someone in that position, do get in touch with Jenny on 07891318123 or at [jenny50fitz@gmail.com](mailto:jenny50fitz@gmail.com)



### **Speldhurst News Subscriptions**

Since my article in the last edition of Speldhurst News advising of the forthcoming collection of annual subs. we have been notified by our printers that there will be an 8% increase in printing costs from April which will increase our annual printing bill by around £450. Consequently I am writing to all readers to ask for a VOLUNTARY extra subscription donation of £1 - making the individual giving £6 .

We are trying to find alternative printers and fill advertising vacancies (there are currently 4 unfilled slots 'starting from £55 for 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a page).

If you would like to fill one of these gaps, please let the editors know at [speldhurts.news@gmail.com](mailto:speldhurts.news@gmail.com).

If we cannot cover the shortfall, I anticipate an annual loss of around £250 and hope that you will understand the need for our request.

Many thanks,

**David Lamey** Hon Treasurer

## Speldhurst Bowls Club

If you would like to give bowls a try this year, why not pop along for a free trial session or two. We have a practice/social evening every Tuesday evening (weather permitting) from 5.30pm to 7pm

during the season. The 2025 season runs from 5th April when we have our enrolment evening to 20th September, our last match. No previous experience is necessary and no there is no need to pre-book or bring any equipment, just turn up with a pair of flat soled shoes.

Debbie Moon



## *Tunbridge Wells Lifeboat Fundraising Branch*

The RNLI have reviewed how best to focus their fundraising efforts and 'make the best of their resources'. Their efforts will be concentrated on more profitable locations closer to the coast. This has resulted in smaller branches such as ours no longer having access to the usual range of souvenirs and gifts that we sell. We would now be restricted to 10 (unsuitable) items instead of our usual selection of over 40 items! We are, of course very disappointed by this decision. In light of this, we have taken a hard look at the future of our branch.

We have an aging committee and a diminishing active supporter base, restricting our ability to undertake street collections. Since COVID we have seen far fewer opportunities for collections at supermarkets etc and pitch fees for venues have risen significantly, which impacts our profits.

Alongside a number of other small branches, we have come to the very sad decision that we will no longer continue as an official RNLI branch. We will, however continue to have our stall at Rusthall Community Coffee Mornings (last Saturday of every month at The URC Church hall, 9am- noon) where we will continue to sell our orange and lemon marmalade, small toys, donated items and seasonal plants. All money taken at these stalls will be privately donated to RNLI and gift-aided and this info will be displayed on the stall.

We are enormously grateful to all Speldhurst residents and friends who have supported us over the years, by donating in our collecting boxes and supporting our stall at the village fete and our annual coffee morning. Thank you all.

Bright blessings, **Jan Pierce**

## London Marathon - 27th April

When I crossed the finish line at London over 20 years ago, I vowed that I'd completed my 12th. and most definitely final marathon! However, in the intervening years the memories of the pain involved seem to have receded and every time I've seen the TV coverage and heard the rousing theme music I've had a strange irrational urge to complete just one more marathon.

So for about the last 15 years I've entered the London Marathon safe in the knowledge that I had a greater chance of winning the National Lottery than gaining a ballot place!

This year for example a staggering 840,000 people applied for a mere 17,000 ballot places. I was somewhat surprised/alarmed therefore when I found that my application for this year had been accepted.

As places are like gold dust and also non transferable it's a case of use it or lose it. I've, probably unwisely, decided on the former. My days of properly running a marathon are sadly now long behind me. I've decided instead to adopt my cunningly devised Jog/Walk/Stagger technique in a vain attempt to complete the 26.2 miles before the streetlights come on!

In order that some good might come out of my stupidity I will be raising funds for Nourish Community Foodbank. This is a very worthwhile local charity that has been generously supported by the Village over the last couple of years. I will be posting details of my Just Giving page on Speldhurst Community Facebook in due course and would be very grateful for any donations, large or small.

In the meantime, if you see me plodding painfully along the Langton Road feel free to give me a hoot and a cheery wave.

Many thanks,  
**Paul Eames**

**JustGiving**

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/paul-eames-1?utm>



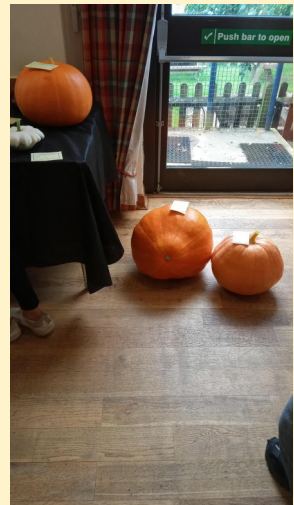


## *Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show*



The Speldhurst Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show Committee are delighted to report that the show held in September 2024 made a profit of £1,351.30, of which £650 was donated to the Village Hall and £650 to the Recreation Ground funds. Huge thanks to all involved for making the show such a success. If you missed out on entering your prize spuds, choicest blooms, bakes or art/craft works, fear not! The show will be back on **Saturday 6 September 2025**, and it is always a joy to see what you talented folk have been growing and making. It's time to start planning, now that the weather is getting warmer.

As well as the usual vegetable categories, which will include potatoes, beans, courgettes, beetroot, tomatoes and more, a special one this year will be an **'Emoji Pumpkin'**. Did you ever, as a child scratch your name into a pumpkin when it was young, and watch with amazement as your 'personalised' pumpkin grew? Our twist on this idea is for you to scratch your own emoji design on to your young pumpkin – let us know how you are feeling – we're hoping some emoji-pumpkin fun will cheer us up in September! Start sowing your own pumpkin seeds soon (check the seed packet for instructions) or **come and buy some pumpkin plants at the flower show stall at the Village Fete on 21 June!**



We would also happily welcome any new members to the committee – if you are interested (horticultural prowess not required) please contact Iain Fenn on 864908 or Katya Hall on 07747808833



## THE FILLING STATION

West Weald

**Wed 30th April**  
**7:30 for 8pm - 9:30pm**



Fordcombe Village Hall, Fordcombe,  
Kent, TN3 0RY  
Every 4th Wednesday (not July, Aug, Dec)

Join us in April at West Weald Filling Station for worship, teaching, prayer, fellowship & great hospitality!

### Future dates

27th May - Jan Ransom  
25th June

### Main Speaker

**Paul Perkin**

#### Easter Hope

Our Speaker this month is Paul Perkin who will unpack Easter for us. Paul and

Christine led a large church plant in Battersea for 33 years and they are passionate about marriage and family life.



More info at...

[www.thefillingstation.org.uk/station/west-weald](http://www.thefillingstation.org.uk/station/west-weald)



# SPELDHURST CEP SCHOOL NEWS

As I write this, sunshine is pouring through my window and the birds are singing outside. Spring is well and truly on its way. By the time this article is published, parents and many in the village will already know the wonderful news that **Speldhurst School has achieved 'Outstanding' in its recent Ofsted inspection.** All five areas were judged 'Outstanding' by the inspectors –  
\*Quality of education, \*Behaviour and attitudes, \*Personal development,  
\*Leadership and management and \*Early years provision.

There is a galaxy of wonderful comments in the report as well. *"Pupils love coming to this friendly and welcoming school"*, the report says, describing the School as a *'safe and nurturing environment'* where pupils are *'hungry to learn'* and *'aspire to be the best they can be'* and *'where hard work and achievement are celebrated'*.

Head Stephanie Hayward says: *"I'm thrilled and proud. It is a testament to the hard work and commitment of the staff, pupils and the entire school community"*

The Ofsted inspectors also reported on the importance given to pupils' emotional and physical well-being, commenting on *'additional enrichment opportunities provided before, during and after school'*, featuring the popularity of the 'climbing wall' and of kick-boxing club - particularly amongst the girls

As I have written previously, the **Forest School** programme is also a popular addition to the curriculum, offering a unique opportunity for children to experience learning in the outdoor environment - from team activities such as building a shelter to learning skills including wood whittling and cooking over a fire. It may not be Bear Grylls survival exactly but it increases confidence and raises self-esteem whilst giving pupils experience, appreciation and understanding of nature and the outdoors.

This term has seen the much-needed addition of a new Forest School shelter which will offer space for even more exciting activities and outside learning whatever the weather. Fully funded by a BUPA grant, the shelter was erected by our school caretaker, the wonderful Martin Steibelt and his team of trusty volunteers, who gave their time, skills and sheer hard graft to build the shelter. (see photo below). A very big thank you to Martin and all those who helped.

Speldhurst School has a long-standing debt of gratitude to all those who have volunteered in School over the years and continue to help out in so many different ways, enriching pupils' learning and experience. There are those who organise and coach sport, others who listen to children reading and regular visitors like Min Flemmington and her beautiful black labrador Gus who volunteer through the **Pets4 Therapy** charity.



As the Ofsted inspectors commented in their report, '*sport has a high profile*' at Speldhurst and this term Years 3, 4 and 5 girls were treated to expert coaching by Francis Booth and Tom Churton from Speldhurst cricket club. The hope is that these fun and exciting sessions will encourage more girls to take up the sport. To find out more about the cricket club in Speldhurst which welcomes all ages to their friendly and sociable weekly sessions, please contact Francis Booth at [speldhurstcricketclub@gmail.com](mailto:speldhurstcricketclub@gmail.com)



Meanwhile Year 4 pupils in Empire class were invited to take part in a schools' **Recorder Festival**, organised by local music teachers at Tunbridge Wells Girls' Grammar School. The children had prepared six pieces and their fabulous playing showed the musicality of the recorder which is sometimes overlooked. The instrument has even featured in the finals of the BBC Young Musician of the Year but for our young recorder players, it is an instrument which is very much at the beginning of their musical journey. As the Ofsted inspectors also said in their report: "*Drama and music, including an impressive orchestra with a repertoire that includes Rossini and Coldplay, promote character and nurture pupils' talents.*"



But despite this month's fantastic news, I couldn't leave you without sharing some photos from **World Book Day** where the children excelled themselves with their creativity and costume designs with the likes of Harry Potter, Alice in Wonderland, Gangsta Granny and Captain Underpants, to name but a few. The whole day was filled with books, books and more books. Pupils swapped their favourite books with friends and immersed themselves in fun activities including 'stop, drop and read sessions'.

And as for the staff, they dressed up too – with the highlight of the day being their performance of a well-known children's book. This year, it was Mr Wolf's Pancake! I hope it had a happy ending – and the Wolf has given up gobbling children – at least for Lent!!

Hope you have a wonderful Easter break.

**SARA ANDREW COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNOR SPELDHURST SCHOOL.**



The Medical Centre  
Greggs Wood Road  
Tunbridge Wells  
Kent TN2 3JL

**Greggswood and  
Speldhurst Medical Group**

The Old Bakery Surgery  
Penshurst Road  
Speldhurst  
Kent TN3 0PE

Tel 01892 541444

Tel 01892 863040

To our patients in Speldhurst and neighbouring villages,

As you've probably seen on the news, pharmacies are facing tough times and **we are no exception.**

Last year, pharmacies were closing at an alarming rate – a total of 436 community pharmacies closed permanently in the UK, and there were 13,863 temporary closures, which stopped patients from obtaining health advice and medication. The Department of Health and Social Care and NHS have announced £645,000,000 of funding for pharmacies. However, none of these funds are available to rural practices who run a dispensing service. Also, recent analysis by the Dispensing Doctor's Association suggests GP services will now be over £30,000 worse off each year.

We dispense to just under 2000 local patients who live 1.6km or more away from a local community pharmacy. This number has been declining over the last few years, due to many reasons, but mainly there are so many home delivery options which can be more convenient for some.

We can be flexible and would love to hear from any patients who would consider coming back to us so we might understand how we can make it easier for you to get your prescriptions from us.

The Dispensary's income is through processing patient prescriptions, every prescription counts no matter if it's a one off antibiotic or your repeat prescription.

**What are the benefits of having a dispensary right on your doorstep?** The benefits include: trained, friendly staff to offer on-hand advice to help with enquiries; being able to go straight upstairs to collect your prescription after seeing your GP; being able to collect items on foot without travelling to the town centre.

**So what can you do to keep our dispensary open?** We need you to use us to supply your medications that you need.

To lose the dispensary would be a great loss to the community, as many of our elderly patients are within walking distance. We are dedicated and committed to providing the best possible service to our patients, hopefully for many years to come.

Yours Sincerely

Mandy Cole, Practice Manager and the Dispensary Team  
Dr Sawyer and Partners, The Old Bakery Surgery, Speldhurst



Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office

**SPELDHURST'S**  
EST. **SHOP** 2019

Dear Reader,

As the village comes out of hibernation, especially this last weekend, with bright sunshine, daffodils out, bluebells on the way and a spectacular display of mimosa along the Penshurst Road, I feel compelled to say we are nearly in Spring!!

I know you are all awaiting news on the renovation of the Chapel, by the time you read this copy you will have seen that works have begun as planned. More news can be found under separate cover in this edition.

As far as your Village shop and Post Office, it remains in its old clothes for a little longer but we are still as keen as ever to serve the community.

Easter is on its way!

We have everything to make your Easter weekend special. Start the day with a kitchen filled with the aroma of fresh coffee. Delicious bakery goods such as sourdough breads and hot cross buns as well as your usual breads. Serve delicious muesli with fresh fruits. We stock bacon and local eggs, delicious cheeses, crackers and chutneys.

Unexpected visitors? We stock tasty pies from our freezer which I have been told are the best around and a good standby for those unexpected meals.

As an Easter treat, we have of course, Easter Eggs, both for the children and those of you adults who have a sweet tooth. Easter cards are also available. If giving flowers is more to your taste, then why not order your bouquets of flowers from your own village shop and Tunbridge Wells Flower Company will deliver them here for you? No traffic, no hassle.

Be prepared, why not place your order for foodstuffs the week before to ensure that we get the best for you. Leave a list of your special food requirements in order that we can box up for your collection.

Flowers are by order only, please fill the form in the shop or online.

We wish all of you a Happy Easter, and a huge thank you once again to our manager Dima, the staff and all of the volunteers who enable our shop to remain open.

From The Shop Committee.



### Speldhurst Chapel update

It's been a busy few weeks at the Chapel. We've finalised our technical drawings and layouts so that we can get the final costings in. Our structural engineers have been essential in ensuring a small layout change will make our new retail space more versatile. We can't wait to share our new space with you! We're hoping to open the new shop in November this year. But watch this space!

We've appointed Gavin Riley as our builder for the project. Gavin lives in the village and is very community minded. He's keen to get started as soon as possible.

The first stage of the build will be to clear the inside of the chapel. By the time you read this, that should hopefully be well underway. We'll then be knocking through from the existing kitchen to open up the space for our new stock room. Foundations for the extension will start when the weather has warmed up a bit.

We have also appointed a building control consultant. It's really important that we make sure the building is fit for purpose and efficient for many years to come. We're drastically improving the eco credentials of the building with lots of insulation and an upgrade to the windows, heating/cooling systems and lighting.

We've also set up an Instagram and Facebook page where you can follow our progress! Just search "Speldhurst Chapel" and you should be able to find us. A big thank you to Em Foster who will be leading on our social media for the build and for the shop going forward.

Deb Cambridge and the shop staff have been busy working out the best layout for the inside of the shop. We're keen to hear from you if there is anything you would like to see in the new Shop, or how we can improve our current offering. There is a suggestions box in the shop for anyone who would like to see something new or different in the shop.

Here's one of the elevations of the new building. You can see all of the plans on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Planning website, again search for "Speldhurst Chapel".

### Elevation looking from Northfields





# Speldhurst Charity Celebrates its 50th Year!



In 1975 a young couple with a son diagnosed with muscular dystrophy failed to find a suitable venue which would accept a guest with disabilities. Even the holiday venues who would accept families with a disabled member did not have the facilities needed to provide a safe and comfortable holiday.

The couple knew that looking after a family member with disabilities also left their carers in need of a period of respite and therefore set out to provide holidays where children with disabilities could have fun and their parents had time to recuperate.

So in that year a small band of volunteers which included parents of children with disabilities, raised funds to be able to take a group of children with disabilities away. That first holiday was a huge success and inspired them to carry on and start The 3H Foundation charity.

The charity quickly grew and in 1977 over 200 guests both young and old went away on a supported holiday after £5000 had been raised through fetes, raffles and 'knit-ins'!

In 1980 the charity opened one of the first charity shops in Tunbridge Wells, one that many locals still remember to this day. Enid Brown, one of the charities dedicated supporters, managed the shop and through her hard work and leadership of wonderful helpers, she made it a financial success earning her an MBE.

Many enjoyable holidays have taken place in the last 50 years. The charity has grown and developed to include support programmes for carers. The charity now offers low income families with a disabled member a UK holiday, carers to have a period of respite, adults with a disability to have an independent holiday away from their care routine and activities for young people with disabilities and young carers aged 13 - 25.

This year is our 50th Anniversary and we look forward to supporting more people with disabilities and carers for years to come!



## Happy Birthday!

Anne Cresswell, who is known to a good many people in Speldhurst particularly for her involvement with the Crèche and the allotments, celebrated her 90th birthday with family and friends at Ferbies Close in Saturday 8th March.



**Penhurst Farmers' Market will be on  
Saturday 5th April 9.30am—12.00pm**

**Penshurst Point to Point 12th April**



**SAT 5TH APRIL**

**10:00AM TO 12.15 PM**

Tea, coffee and homemade cakes served from 10am

Lots of lovely things to buy : bread, locally made pasties and cakes,  
homemade preserves, local honey, eggs, bird food,  
craft items, bric-a-brac





## Garden & Allotment News



### April – A Risky Month for Weather

After what can often be the dismal months of November to February, March lulls us into a false sense of security with some sunny, warm days (by comparison with the months gone). Then we move into April (the year is just zooming by). At this time of year we are in a transition period between the winter months, and the warmer spring and summer.

The harbinger of better weather to come can get us enthused again about sowing, transplanting and planting our vegetables for the year to come. Some plants like as long a growing season as possible, so there is every incentive to get started. According to the RHS, April is a month of expectation for gardeners who become excited by the prospect of new growth and opportunity. However, a wise gardener will know that for all its promise, April can also deliver the occasional shock of challenging conditions.

These conditions have provided lessons painfully learnt during years past when there has been damage to relatively tender plants. Any tops of potatoes poking their heads above ground will be 'burnt' by a frost as well as onions being susceptible to heavy freezes i.e. temperatures below  $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$ . In the UK, the last frost date differs significantly by region and varies from year to year. Estimated dates range from early March to the end of June, with the majority falling between mid-March and late April.

Yet during April, there is an average of just over four days when temperatures can fall to  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$  or below. In contrast, the hours of daylight increase dramatically during the month, beginning with around 13 hours of daylight and ends approaching 15 hours. Sunshine hours see a dramatic increase during April, with the UK on average seeing almost a 50% increase in sunshine hours when compared with an average March, helping to warm soils.

So there are a lot of risks in April and it pays to be careful and not to plant out too soon.

**Robert Kyte**

# Nature Watch

We have had a much colder winter this year. The Blackthorn is much later coming into flower. This is always the first of the native trees and scrubs to flower. In mild winters they start to bloom in late January but this year its been the first week in March, so we cannot rely on climate change to give us warm winters just yet.



The Government has approved the release of Beavers into the English countryside. It is hoped this will help to cut down on flooding risks and restoring nature. A licensing system has been introduced to allow the reintroduction of the semi-aquatic animals, whose dams, canals, and ponds enhance wildlife and offer protection against floods and droughts.

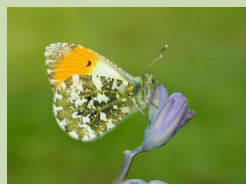
As the ivy berries ripen they have been eaten by Wood Pigeons, Squirrels, mice etc. They are an important food source at this time of the year as well being a home for hibernating Butterflies, Beetles, many types of Flies and Moths and it does not kill trees, just uses them for support.

There is a chance to see our first damselfly of the year, the Large Red, in April, around farmland and garden ponds, with the larger Dragonflies appearing in May.



At least 2 more species of Butterfly should be found in April. The Holly Blue is seen flying along hedgerows in gardens and woodland edges. These early ones will lay eggs on Holly and the 2nd batch in the late summer will lay their eggs on Ivy. The second species is the Orange Tip. The females are white on the top of the wing and the males have the top

half orange and the under sides are a mottled green. These lay their eggs mostly on Garlic Mustard plants and Milk maids /Cuckoo Flower.



**Alan Ford**



## NEWS FROM SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL



### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING, 19<sup>TH</sup> MAY, ASHURST VILLAGE HALL FROM 7 PM**

This year's APM will have an environmental theme, with presentations from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's Landscape and Biodiversity Officer, David Scully, and Tree Officer, Rhodri Jones.

We also look forward to sharing all we've been doing this year to tackle environmental issues, from biodiversity to EV chargers and recycling.

Join us from 7 pm for a drink, meet our parish councillors, and browse our displays of recent biodiversity projects. The meeting will start at 7.30 pm, and, along with the environmental presentations, there will be updates from our Planning, Highways, and Amenities Committees, plus an overview of how we will spend this year's precept.

Throughout the year we try to share important information with as many residents as possible via our online media, council meetings, and articles in village magazines. But we don't always manage to reach everyone, so, we want you to see this meeting as a chance to find out more and have your questions answered. There's no need to RSVP – just come along!

### **KENT COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 1<sup>ST</sup> MAY 2025**

A list of candidates who will stand as County Councillors for Tunbridge Wells West will be published after 2<sup>nd</sup> April, and you have until 11<sup>th</sup> April to register to vote if you haven't already done so. Visit

<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote> to find out how.



*Photo of deer on Broom Lane Langton Green, courtesy of a parish resident*

#### **DEER SIGHTINGS – CAN YOU HELP?**

Following numerous reports of near misses and collisions with deer on Groombridge Hill, we have asked Kent County Council to install a deer warning sign. They have replied that they require more data about the number of deer and how frequently they are seen on the road. If you can help by letting us know when you next see deer in Groombridge (or if you often see them in other parts of the parish) we'd really appreciate it. If you have a passenger who can safely take a photo then even better! Our contact details are below.

**LOOK OUT FOR...**Our article on how to report low-flying planes elsewhere in this magazine.

#### **FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME**

7.30 pm, Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April, Ashurst Village Hall

**TO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL:** Call the Clerk, Katie Neve on 01892 862927/07760 769513 or email [clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk)

For helpful information, visit [www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk)



## LOW-FLYING JUMBO JETS IN OUR PARISH

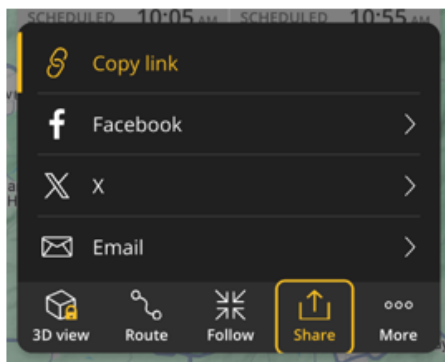
We recently wrote to National Air Traffic Services (NATS) about our concerns that Emirates A380 jets – among others - fly very low over our area.

NATS wrote back asking us for flight data so they can investigate. They also helpfully clarified that A380s are larger planes, so can appear to be closer than they actually are. So, if you see a plane flying suspiciously low, we'd like you to send us the flight track. You can get this by visiting <https://www.flightradar24.com/> or via the Flightradar24 app. Find the relevant plane on the live map and tap it so you can see the track:



Then click the 'Share' icon and a menu like this will appear:

Now press 'Copy Link'. You can then send us the track to inspect, group together, and forward to NATS for investigation. Please send the track links to: [clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk) with the subject 'Low plane'.



# A Letter from St Mary's

## THE HOPE OF EASTER



In a couple of days' time it will be Easter, the most important festival in the Christian calendar. A time for celebrating the day that Jesus Christ rose from the dead – the resurrection, the most momentous event in human history and one that has changed and is changing millions of lives.

If this were a blockbuster film, you might expect the resurrection to be accompanied by claps of thunder and flashing lights. Surprising, then, that in John's gospel it is described through the eyes of a lone woman called Mary Magdalene, reportedly a lady of dubious character and not at all the sort of person you would write about in a respectable village magazine.

Mary had been at the foot of the cross as Jesus died and knew for certain that he had breathed his last. Now, before daybreak, she is headed to his tomb to pay her last respects to the only person who had treated her with dignity. To her horror she finds that the stone that covered the entrance has been rolled away and that Jesus' body is missing. Distressed and confused she rushes off to find Peter and John with the news of the missing corpse and brings them to the grave. Unable to process the scene before them they simply return to their hiding place in Jerusalem leaving Mary alone with her grief.

Still weeping, Mary looks into the tomb and through her tears sees two angels, one at the foot and one at the head of where Jesus' body should have been. The angels ask a strange question, *"why are you crying?"* From our perspective the answer seems obvious. After all she has witnessed the mock trials, torture and murder of the man she loved, the only person to show her any respect is dead and even in death he is abused; his body has been stolen. Isn't it natural that Mary should sink into a pool of tears? But from the point of view of these heavenly beings, these angels, there is nothing to cry about. If there is any point in human history when tears of sadness should be replaced with tears of joy it is in the empty tomb on the first Easter morning.

Of course this story is not just about Mary. This encounter between a fallen woman and two angels encapsulates the grief of messed up and abused people throughout history. Mary weeps for all of us. Mary weeps for the way this fallen world has treated her and the man she loved. In answer to the angels she simply says, *"They have taken my master."* If we read today's newspaper headlines or examine our own experience, the answer could be, *They have taken my freedom by invading my country, taken my home by bombing my city, taken my son's life in a drone attack or any situation where we feel a sense of injustice or loss.* In her answer, the world's grief is compressed into Mary's grief.

It's at this point of utter desolation that Mary senses another presence. Maybe tears blur her vision but even when Jesus asks her a mischievous question, Mary doesn't recognise him and mistakes him for a gardener. Jesus asks, *"Who are you looking for?"* One thing we do know about Mary is that she was no quitter. She was grief stricken and alone. She had been abandoned by the men and quizzed by angels and now even by Jesus but she was single minded in her mission to find him. Mary answers, *"Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."*

Then, the wonderful moment of recognition. Just one word transforms her world and that word is her name, *"Mary"* spoken by Jesus.

Mary was the first to see the risen Lord Jesus but she wasn't the last. That same evening Jesus would appear to his disciples. In the next 40 days leading up to his ascension into heaven hundreds of people were met Jesus and they, like Mary, were able to declare, *"I have seen the risen Lord."* But the truly amazing thing is that through his spirit, Jesus still seeks to welcome by name anyone who perseveres in their search for him.

The Easter message is of hope and new beginning; of stepping out of darkness into a fresh way of looking at life. It tells us that our God is a personal God who calls us by name and that nothing, not even death can separate us from his love and from the promise of eternal life in his heavenly home.

Happy Easter and God bless

John Perkins - revjohnp@outlook.com





# Join us this Easter

St Mary's Church, Speldhurst

## 13th April Palm Sunday

10am All Age Worship  
4pm All Age Praise Party with  
Cabin Worship

## 17th April Maundy Thursday

8pm Holy Communion (shared  
service at All Saints Langton  
Green)

## 18th April Good Friday

10.30am Good Friday Service -  
A Passion Play

## 20th April Easter Sunday

8am Holy Communion (BCP)  
10am All Age Worship & Holy  
Communion (CW)

[www.speldhurstchurch.org](http://www.speldhurstchurch.org)





St. Mary's Church, Speldhurst | St. John's Church, Groombridge | St. Martin's Church, Ashurst

## April 2025

### 6th April

- 10am All Age Worship with Holy Communion at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am Matins at St John's, Groombridge

### 13th April Palm Sunday

- 10am Palm Sunday All Age Worship at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am Holy Communion (BCP) at St John's, Groombridge  
4pm All Age Praise Party (with Cabin Worship) at St Mary's, Speldhurst

### 17th April Maundy Thursday

- 8pm Maundy Thursday Holy Communion (shared with All Saints)  
at All Saints, Langton green

### 18th April Good Friday

- 10.30am Good Friday Service - A Passion Play at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am An Hour at the Cross at St John's, Groombridge  
4pm Reflections on Good Friday at St Martin's, Ashurst

### 20th April Easter Day

- 8am Easter Day Holy Communion (BCP) at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
10am Easter Day All Age Worship with Holy Communion at  
St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am Easter Day Holy Communion (shared with St John's, Groombridge)  
at St Martin's, Ashurst

### 27th April

- 10am Morning Worship at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am Morning Prayer (followed by AMW) at St Martin's, Ashurst  
6pm Evensong at St Mary's, Speldhurst

The Church Office can be contacted on 07960296027  
or [admin@speldhurstchurch.org](mailto:admin@speldhurstchurch.org)  
[www.speldhurstchurch.org](http://www.speldhurstchurch.org)  
[facebook.com/StMarysSpeldhurst/](https://facebook.com/StMarysSpeldhurst/)

## *Easter lilies and flowers in St Mary's church*

At Easter we decorate the church with flowers and lilies in memory of loved ones. In the church porch there will be a poster sized paper where you can write names of loved ones with accompanying words if you so wish. After the Easter service you are welcome to take a lily home with you in remembrance. The flowers used to decorate the church will be made into posies after Easter Day and given to village residents.

We welcome donations for the lilies and the flowers and ask that they may be put in a marked envelope and delivered to the village shop. Any excess money will be used to buy flowers for the other church festivals during the year.

Thank you



### St Mary's Church Speldhurst Electoral Roll

In 2025 every church must delete its existing Electoral Roll and prepare a new one. This means we must prepare a completely new Electoral Roll and everyone who wishes to be on the Electoral Roll, even if they have been on it previously, needs to complete an application.

The deadline date is Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2025. Forms will be available in the church and on the church website and need to be submitted before that date.

For any further information you can contact  
[min.flemington@speldhurstchurch.org](mailto:min.flemington@speldhurstchurch.org)



**Do check out the village website  
[www.speldhurst.org](http://www.speldhurst.org) for  
details of what's on, who to  
contact, local walks and  
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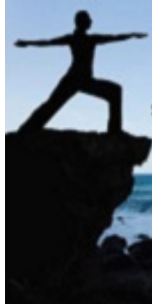
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