



# Speldhurst News

## February 2026

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# Welcome!

Dear Readers,

**Welcome to our first magazine of 2026!**

We're just a month into the New Year and what a mad few weeks we've had - lots of rain, snow, ice and ... what, no water?

You may have been wondering why I chose a picture of a simple bottle of water to adorn the front cover this month? Following recent experience, the significance of water has never been so paramount in my life. A lack of water has always been a problem for other countries rather than our own, but redundant taps for just a few hours has certainly taught me to respect our liquid resource.

As I have got older snow and ice have been things to avoid, and excessive rain has just been an impediment to therapeutic dog-walking. Perhaps the best resolution to draw from this experience is to be grateful for what we have and to do what we can to help those less fortunate than ourselves who live in adverse conditions all the time?

On another note it is good to welcome a new contributor this month - Rob Hindmarch, our new Priest-in-Charge. Rob, we welcome you and your family to our village. We hope you are settling into our midst and look forward to sharing many events with you over the years to come.

Have a good month.

Andrea

News Editors: Andrea Burgess , Judith Malim & Maria Turner

Please send emails before 10th February 2026 for the March issue to: [speldhurst.news@gmail.com](mailto:speldhurst.news@gmail.com). Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred.

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.

## Thank You Eric Roughley

Eric has been the backbone of Speldhurst News for many decades. He saw the transformation of the magazine from the Church News to its current wider remit and from a printing press production method to our current use of specialist printers.

Eric has helped Speldhurst News continue to thrive over the years and his efforts have ensured that the magazine is fondly regarded by many, both in the village and by those who still subscribe despite having moved away.

In future, Andrea who joined the team last year as a co-editor has kindly agreed to take on the additional role of advertising administration.

Enjoy your retirement, Eric!

## ANN SIMPSON

It is with sadness that we report the death of Ann Simpson, who sadly died on 31st October 2025 from Alzheimer's which she was diagnosed with 10 years ago.

Phil Simpson writes:-

We moved to the village in the summer of 1994. I would like to thank people for their kind words to me. It was very humbling to realise how much she will be missed by so many.

The amount of local people who made the effort to attend her funeral was very much appreciated by myself and Charlie our son.

Ann delivered the parish magazines for many years on Speldhurst Hill area, before her illness stopped her from doing so. I then took over.

She was an active participant in village life, the pram race, Fido at the fete and was involved in the PTA at the village school in many events, when our son was there in the early 2000s.

Many thanks

Phil Simpson



# News & Events



## 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 9.30 – 11.00 and on Fridays from 9.00 – 10.30 in St Mary's Church during term time. 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 a preschooler of any age. All are welcome.

For more information contact Jenny Fitzsimmons on 07891 318123 or at [jenny50fitz@gmail.com](mailto:jenny50fitz@gmail.com)

## Speldhurst (Ladies) Stoolball Club

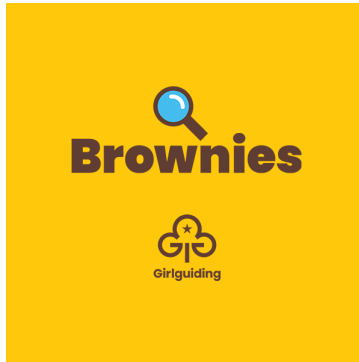
Fancy trying something new? Speldhurst (Ladies) Stoolball Club is looking for new members, a great traditional village sport for all ages from age 11 (Year 7) upwards.

We are part of the West Kent Ladies Stoolball League and our matches are on Monday and Wednesday evenings (6.15pm until approx. 8.30pm), from May until end of August. Home matches are played at Speldhurst Recreation Ground, away matches are in local villages.

Practice for the 2026 season starts during April (weather permitting). 6.15pm every Monday & Wednesday (you can come along both nights or just one to suit you), with the first league match on Wednesday 6th May. If you are interested or would like any further information please come along to practice and have a chat or contact Donna Burden 07810 048599 or Sue Chalklin 07889 167651.

# Looking for a New Year Challenge

**\*YES**



## Speldhurst Brownies needs your help!

Our Brownie unit has been a staple of the community for over two decades. To ensure we continue providing a high-quality experience for our girls, we are seeking a **dynamic Volunteer** to join our Tuesday evening team.

This is a unique opportunity to join an established, highly experienced team and bring fresh perspectives to our weekly term-time sessions. You will play a key role in helping girls earn badges, develop resilience, and build self-esteem through games, crafts and skill-building activities.

### **We are looking for someone with**

- Energy and enthusiasm.
- Able to commit a few hours on Tuesday evenings (6pm – 7.30pm)
- A desire to mentor and support young girls in a fun, safe environment.

Brownies meets weekly during term time working on badges, growing our skills, the girl's self-confidence, playing games and having lots of fun.

The girls are a lovely, lively bunch and working with them is extremely rewarding and fun. We also are extremely lucky to have some amazing young leaders.

**If you are interested and would like to know more, please contact  
Louise Scott at [firstspeldhurstbrownies@gmail.com](mailto:firstspeldhurstbrownies@gmail.com)**



# Speldhurst Village Fete 2026

## Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June

*At the Rec, 11am-4pm*

Save the date!

The Fete is booked in with all the usual fair-fun and good village vibes.

This year with added DONKEYS!

Tickets will be on sale from May.

Enquires and volunteers can contact Mike Harrowing:

**[speldhurst.f8@gmail.com](mailto:speldhurst.f8@gmail.com)**

**0772 556 1154**

And yes, our traditional (secret) afterparty for locals will be back too...

**Spelfest!**

***7pm-11pm***

*Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office.*

By the time you read this we will have flown through Christmas and New Year and will be tucked up in the thoughts of spring to come with warmer breezes and lighter days around the corner.

Our beautiful new home has been a welcome hug for many of you, with Christmas Speldhurst Shop branded speciality goods as well as the usual shopping list. We are expanding the own brand well-received range.

Our social space has over the last few weeks become a warm and friendly place to meet friends and share a cuppa and share news. We now have a lending library on the bottom shelf in the social space.

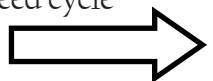


We also have new “Ocean Saver” washing and cleaning products, not just to do our bit for the environment but they take less cupboard space as well.

The old shop has been cleared. We have been extremely busy recycling, donating and selling many items all to the benefit of the community and to top up the coffers of the shop.

The Committee would, some-what belatedly, like to extend a huge thanks to everyone who planted, dug, rubbed down, painted, mended, installed, sorted, moved, wired, rewired, labelled, decorated, collected, stored, washed, cleaned, advertised, recorded, advised, recommended, donated, and supported in every way possible, the Build Project. It was a Village Success and it could not have happened without you. Thank you one and all!

We have doggy tie up posts and water bowls outside the shop. We have bike racks and will replenish your water bottles with pleasure free of charge... we have a puncture repair kit also for those who need cycle assistance.



We welcome Mary Marshall as our new Chairperson to the Committee. Mary is a long term Speldhurst resident and is known to many of you as a volunteer already.

We say farewell to Em Foster who was incredibly helpful during the build, keeping you abreast of progress and promoting the original shop alike.

We wish Em all the best with her impending addition to her already busy family. Em is still around though and you will no doubt see her around the village.

As we had hoped, we have a number of new volunteers who are enjoying the lovely space, and ease of access and company that is part of being in the shop. As ever we can never have too many volunteers and so if you wish to try it, do come along and see how it all works.

The cold January and February days and winter warmers go hand in hand. The shop sells delicious savoury and sweet pies, fresh veg, yummy cheese, cake, delectable wine and fresh soups.

If you require "off the shelf medication" we can offer cough linctus and aspirin to name a few items.

Valentine's Day is just around the corner. How about a gift-wrapped beer or bottle of wine? We will have spring flowers in the shop and Valentines Chocolates for your loved one. How easy is that?

Please do not forget dry cleaning is collected and returned to the shop, you can order your currency if you are escaping to snow or sun from the post office, and in addition to our usual supply, fresh crunchy bread of varying types is available to order.

One last thing.... Cars were parked in our car park over the Christmas period outside business hours. Please can we ask that you only use the car park for the duration of your visit to the shop or post office and social space. Our delivery drivers and regular customers who have been restricted will be very grateful. Thank you.

With warmest wishes

Your Shop Committee.





## Speldhurst CEP Primary School News for February 2026

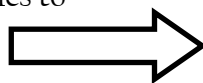


It's amazing how much we take water for granted until it's not on tap – the on-going problems with water supply in Tunbridge Wells has had a devastating impact on businesses, families and individuals alike .... and then one Monday morning at the beginning of term after a spell of freezing weather, we woke up to find the village was also affected. South East Water has given all kinds of reasons for its weeks of supply problems including treatment plant issues, burst pipes and even, although it was raining on that day, low reservoir levels.



The School had to close for a day as lack of water posed all kinds of well-being issues for the children from hygiene and toilets to access to drinking water. Many thanks to our wonderful caretaker Martin Steibelt who after assessing the situation very early on Monday morning, stayed late into the night to receive a much-needed delivery of bottled water to ensure the school could open the following day.

Speldhurst is a happy school and well-being initiatives that ensure physical, emotional and mental well-being are part of life here. Now alongside these, the school is excited to be the first UK school to pilot a 15-week programme called the 'Friendship Guide for Schools' with the help of PTA funding. It is based on the work of American psychologist and author Dr Eileen Kennedy Moore whose book 'Growing Friendships', aimed at children, helps them navigate difficult relationships including bullying, to grow strong relationships and deal with upsetting situations. Dr Kennedy Moore also has an agony aunt style podcast where she replies to



individual children who write for advice with individual 'fallings out' or friendship problems.

During the pilot Speldhurst teachers will be collaborating with child psychologist Rosie Davies and teacher Ellie Dickenson to include drama and play based sessions, links to on-line material from quizzes to advice for parents, a relevant podcast and an enhanced environment to encourage positive social interaction and quiet spaces.



Now if you look at this photo you will probably recognise the painting as a version of one of Monet's famous haystacks series. It is one of many outstanding pieces of work created by Year 5 children in Crispin Class.

This is just one example of our pupils' artistic flare and talent which will be on show this month with the return of the Art Expo. Each student will exhibit two pieces of specially created work in the Art exhibition which will be on sale to parents and visitors with all monies raised going to the PTA.

Now look at this photo. The red box for a well-known brand of trainers is not advertising or product placement, it is a science experiment. Year 3 children in Bramley class conducted experiments this term to answer the question... 'how can we see without light?' as part of their exploration and experimentation around light. Answers next month. Hopefully by then the days will be longer and Spring will be round the corner. And also those Year 6 pupils who opted to complete their 'Bikeability' training will be thinking about pedal power as a sustainable transport to School – where safe to do so of course.



**SARA ANDREW , COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNOR**



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

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# February 2026

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## **1<sup>st</sup> February**

- 10am Holy Communion (CW) at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am Matins at St John's, Groombridge

## **8<sup>th</sup> February**

- 10am Morning Worship at St Mary's Church, Speldhurst  
11am Holy Communion (BCP) at St John's, Groombridge

## **15<sup>th</sup> February**

- 8am Holy Communion (BCP) at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
10am Holy Communion (CW) at St Mary's, Speldhurst  
11am Morning Service at St Martin's, Ashurst

## **18th February**

- 10am Ash Wednesday Holy Communion at St Mary's, Speldhurst

## **22<sup>nd</sup> February**

- 10am All Age Worship at St Mary's Church, Speldhurst  
11am Holy Communion (CW) at St Martin's, Ashurst

Priest in Charge: Reverend Rob Hindmarch

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/)

# Letter from St Mary's



The Christmas trees have been folded away (or taken outside and left by the roadside for the less environmentally friendly like me – sorry, I can't resist them), the decorations are back in the box, and the lights are packed away ready for next year.

And it's about now that we check our progress on those new year resolutions that we made; some hastily, others more thoughtfully. My new year resolutions included 'always exercise every day and never have three different desserts after a meal ever again.'

According to 'experts' in an article I read this week, (are there really new year resolution experts?) I had made some significant errors when making my NY resolutions. Most of us who make NY resolutions make them about our health and apparently two words that we shouldn't use are 'always' and 'never' because, according to the experts, it creates an all-or-nothing approach that sets us up for a fall.

They're probably right. I haven't exercised every day, and I probably will eat multiple desserts after a meal at some point this year. But for those like me who are not very good at making or keeping NY resolutions, there is great comfort in knowing that *God always keeps his resolutions*.

The experts wouldn't approve but God repeatedly uses all-or-nothing words when he makes his resolutions. Just before entering the promised land, after rescuing his people from slavery in Egypt, through Moses God tells Israel "Be strong and courageous... The Lord himself goes before you; he will *never* leave you nor forsake you" (Deuteronomy 31: 7-8, italics mine).

And Jesus' last words in Matthew's gospel, known as the Great Commission, to go and make disciples of all nations, are these: "And surely I am with you *always*, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:20, italics mine).

What a wonderfully uncompromising and reassuring resolution.

Now is a great time of the year, after the tinsel and the turkey, to step back and think about the God of the bible who never breaks his promises and always keeps his resolutions.

*What would it mean for you if you believed this to be true?*

Happy New Year and my very best wishes for 2026.

Rev. Rob Hindmarch

Priest in Charge

St Mary's Speldhurst, St John's Groombridge, St Martin's Ashurst, All Saints Langton Green

[rob.hindmarch@speldhurstchurch.org](mailto:rob.hindmarch@speldhurstchurch.org)

## SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL NEWS



We hope the start of 2026 has been to you so far.

### DEFIBRILLATORS



We recently made one of our quarterly checks on all the defibrillators maintained by us in the Parish with the help of Hopkins Defibrillator AED Aftercare/Governance and Support. Make sure you know where your nearest one is located:

Langton Green - The Pavilion and Ashdene House  
Ashurst - Ashurst Sports Pavilion and Ashurst Village Hall  
Speldhurst - Speldhurst Village Hall  
Groombridge - The Crown Inn

Watch this space for future information on potential training which we hope to be able to offer during this year (spaces will be limited).

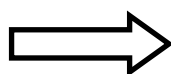
### SPELDHURST CHAPEL - COMMUNITY SHOP AND POST OFFICE

We hope everyone is enjoying the new shop, post office and community space. It is lovely to see it being used so much and to hear all the lovely feedback from Speldhurst residents and visitors alike.



### PRECEPT 2026/27

Look out for update on the 2026-27 precept – the portion of your council tax allocated to us – and a breakdown of how it will be spent in our article next month.



## PARKING AND SCHOOL CROSSING PATROL

Please try to park considerately wherever you are so as not to cause issues to pedestrians/parents with buggies and those with mobility issues . A reminder that Dragonfly Farm Shop & Cafe in Speldhurst kindly offer their car park to parents at drop-off and pick-up times to help with congestion along the Speldhurst/Langton Road.

Could you be a  
**LOCAL HERO?**

Join our  
School Crossing  
Patrol

For more information call  
03000 422401, email [scp@kent.gov.uk](mailto:scp@kent.gov.uk)  
or visit [kent.gov.uk](http://kent.gov.uk) and search for  
'school crossing patrols'

@KCC\_SCP



Langton Primary School is also looking for a person or group of people to take over the School Crossing Patrol to improve safety for the children travelling to and from school. If you know anyone who might be interested then please ask them to get in touch with the school on: Telephone: 01892 862648 Email: [office@langton-green-school.org](mailto:office@langton-green-school.org) or KCC directly.

## POCKET PARK BIODIVERSITY PROJECT



We're looking forward to seeing how the flower meadow will start to develop in the Spring. We hope you like the updated noticeboard.

### FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME

Monday 2nd  
February

**TO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL** Call the Clerk, Katie Neve:  
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)



### *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. Our first fixture is

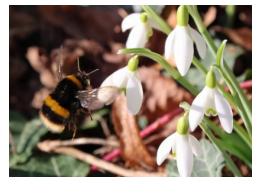
on 2nd May in Eastbourne. No previous experience is necessary and there is no need to pre-book or bring any equipment, just turn up with a pair of flat soled shoes.

To read more visit [www.speldhurstbowlsclub.co.uk](http://www.speldhurstbowlsclub.co.uk)

## NATURE WATCH - LOCAL

### Bumblebees on Snowdrops

Early signs of growth are in the church yard now - snowdrops are emerging and beginning to flower. These beautiful blooms are crucial early food sources for queen bumblebees and other hungry insects emerging from winter, providing vital nectar and pollen when little else is available.



# Garden & Allotment News

## Keeping Garden and Household Waste Where It Belongs – In the Garden

In the Autumn, the easiest option to deal with fallen leaves, faded plants and vegetable matter is to put it all into the council bin and let it be taken away. But there is a simpler and more rewarding alternative: keeping garden and suitable household waste at home and returning it to the soil.

This autumn I collected the leaves that fell around the house and during early January spread them directly on to the allotment beds. They were not fully decomposed, but instead of bagging them up I covered them with ground-cover plastic and left them in place. The plan is that over the winter moisture, worms and soil organisms will break the leaves down so that by spring, when I lift the covering and start planting, much of that material should have turned into a useful mulch, improving the soil underneath.

This approach works because what we often think of as “waste” is actually a valuable resource. Leaves, grass cuttings, spent plants and vegetable peelings all contain nutrients. When we send them away, those nutrients are lost to our own gardens. When we keep them, they help to build healthier soil, which in turn produces stronger, more resilient plants.

Using garden waste in this way also improves soil structure. Leaf mould and compost add organic matter. Even partly decomposed material provides winter protection, reducing erosion, suppressing weeds and encouraging earthworms and beneficial insects. There are household benefits too. Many kitchen scraps – vegetable peelings, tea bags, coffee grounds and eggshells – can be composted at home. This reduces the amount of rubbish in general waste bins, cutting down on smells and the need for frequent collections. Even small gardens can accommodate a compost bin, and for very limited spaces a wormery is an option. Reducing what we put out for collection has wider environmental advantages. If there were fewer bins, there would be fewer lorries on the road, less fuel used and lower emissions. Composting at home closes the loop locally, turning waste into something useful without transport or processing. It's what our ancestors did habitually when so many of them grew their own produce.

As Spring approaches, I am looking forward to uncovering my allotment beds and seeing the results. What was once a nuisance to be cleared away will have become a valuable soil conditioner, ready for the new growing season.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/305824050847755>.

Hope to see you there.

Rob Kyte



## 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                      |               |
|                                  | firstspeldhurstbrownies@gmail.com |               |
| Bumps and Babes                  | Jenny Fitzsimmons                 | 541200        |
| Cricket Club                     | Ed Wesson                         | 07799 731247  |
| Junior Cricket section           | Francis Booth                     | 07738474144   |
| Cubs                             | Karol Leeves                      | 531104        |
| Flower Show                      | Iain Fenn                         | 864908        |
| Football: Speldhurst Rangers     | Ollie Crees                       | 07919467576   |
| GP Surgery                       |                                   | 863040        |
| Guides                           | Sybil Oddy                        | 862746        |
| Library                          | Pat Carter                        | 861646        |
| Men on Wednesday                 | John Perkins                      | 863239        |
| Mothers' Union                   | Christine Baker                   | 540793        |
| Mothers & Toddlers               | Jenny Fitzsimmons                 | 541200        |
| Nursery School                   |                                   | 07984 793 974 |
| Parish Council: Chair            | Paul Curry                        | 07515 938765  |
| Vice Chair                       | Alan Rowe                         | 863404        |
| Parish Clerk                     | Katie Neve                        | 862927        |
| Parish Councillors               | Richard Ellery                    | 864077        |
| Police Community Support Officer | Laura Horn                        |               |
| Primary School                   | Stephanie Hayward                 | 863044        |
| Rainbows                         | Julia Constable                   |               |
|                                  | 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        |
|                                  | Judith Malim                      | 864268        |
|                                  | Andrea Burgess                    | 863362        |
| Speldhurst News Advertising      | Speldhurst.News@gmail.com         |               |

|                                   |                 |              |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| St Mary's Church Priest in Charge | Rob Hindmarch   | tbc          |
| Administrator                     | Rachael Foster  | 07960296027  |
| Stoolball                         | Donna Burden    | 524793       |
|                                   |                 | 07810 048599 |
| Scouts                            | Nick Burgess    | 07773044374  |
| Shop & Post Office                |                 | 862824       |
| Village Fete: Chair               | Mike Harrowing  | 0772 5561154 |
| Village Hall                      | Rachel Bourdin  | 07766 830303 |
| Village Website                   | Miranda Hawkins | 863601       |
| Walking Group                     | Brian Tasker    | 862301       |

## Opening Hours & Local Information

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Buses                       | Timetables for bus 285 Speldhurst to Tun Wells - Hams Travel 01580 879629<br>For info: <a href="https://hamstravel.com/services">https://hamstravel.com/services</a> |
| George & Dragon PH:         | Mon - Fri 12pm - 11pm<br>Sat 12pm - 12pm<br>Sun 12pm - 8pm<br>01892 280494                                                                                           |
| Dragonfly Farm Shop & Café: | Mon closed<br>Tues- Shop 8.30am - 5 pm; Café closed<br>Wed-Sat 8.30am - 5 pm<br>Sun 10 am - 4 pm                                                                     |
| GP:                         | Mon - Fri 8am-6pm Tel: 01892 863040                                                                                                                                  |
| Dispensary:                 | Mon - Fri 8.30am -1pm; 2.30pm - 6pm<br>(dispensary calls 8.30am -11.30 only)                                                                                         |
| Library (village hall):     | Monday 2.00 - 4.30pm.                                                                                                                                                |
| Speldhurst Shop:            | Mon-Fri 7.30am - 5.00pm<br>Sat 8.00am -1.00pm<br>Sun 9.00am -11.00am                                                                                                 |
| Post Office:                | Mon-Fri 9.00am - 5.00pm<br>Sat 9.00am -1.00pm;<br>Sun Closed                                                                                                         |

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www.clockcare.co.uk.

**GREAT GARDENS:** Tim Welch HND MCI Hort.

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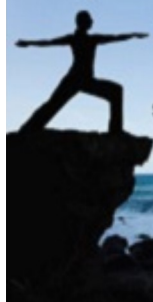
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