



# Speldhurst News

May 2026

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# Welcome!

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our May magazine.

You may remember being introduced to my character cat in my editorial just over a year ago and you are possibly anxiously awaiting further news of him. Well, he has had a quiet and uneventful winter and spring with nothing of any interest to report, but we are hoping for a resurgence of interest in the outdoor world as the weather improves. Perhaps we may have something remarkable to mention in a future month?

Meanwhile, I hope you will enjoy reading this magazine. Remember we always love hearing from you, so do get in touch on any subject of your choice.

*Andrea*

News Editors: Andrea Burgess, Judith Malim & Maris Turner

Please send emails before 10th May 2026 for the June 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.

# News & Events



Judith Malim and Maria Turner, two of our magazine editors, representing our magazine at the Annual Parish Meeting on 13th April. More about the meeting can be found later in the magazine.

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

As I write spring is well underway. Now the clocks have changed, the birds' song in the morning is getting 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. We meet on 13th & 27th April this month. Do 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 22nd & Friday 24th 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 07891 318123 or at [jenny50fitz@gmail.com](mailto:jenny50fitz@gmail.com)



## Junior Cricket Summer Season 2026

The highly successful and well attended Winter coaching finished on Sunday 30 March and the Summer coaching started on 10 April - not quite sure what happened to the Spring Season!

This is the time of year when you can look forward to four full months of Junior Cricket and the most exciting thing is - you really don't know what is going to happen.

Will the Girls group continue to build on a successful 2025?

How will the 2025 Under 11s, our most successful ever team, cope playing against Under 13s in the Championship division - our first ever venture into this division?

What will the season hold for our first Under 15 League season since before COVID?

Will one of our youngest cricketers in All Stars turn out to be a first team captain of the future?

Will one of our players who are currently in the Kent Regional or Area squads be selected to join a Kent County age group squad?

One thing that is guaranteed though is that our coaching team of well over 30 parents will be doing their very best to ensure that each young cricketer who attends coaching sessions is given every possible opportunity to enjoy themselves and develop a love of cricket which we hope will last a lifetime.

Francis Booth  
Head of Junior Cricket



# The Speldhurst Flower Vegetable & Craft Show

Saturday 5 September 2026 from 2pm

Speldhurst Village Hall

Whether you are a gardening enthusiast, keen crafter, dab hand in the kitchen or a budding photographer or artist there is something for everyone of all ages at the Speldhurst Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show.

TIME TO GET PLANTING!

Check out our Facebook page: Speldhurst Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show. Contact Katya Hall 07747808833 for more information



# Garden & Allotment News

## Planting at a Stress-Free Pace

May is the month when gardeners start itching to plant everything out at once, if that didn't happen in April. One bright afternoon arrives, the seedlings look desperate to escape their pots, and suddenly we are halfway down the path with tomatoes in one hand and optimism in the other. But May is not a race.

Some crops are usually safe to plant out now: lettuce, beetroot, chard, kale, cabbage and salad onions can all make steady progress as the soil warms. The more tender stars - tomatoes, courgettes, pumpkins, sweetcorn, French beans and cucumbers - are better planted or sown outside only once the frost risk has really passed. One cold night can undo weeks of nurturing or blustery day.

Before planting out anything raised indoors, it's best to harden it off first. A week or two of gradually longer spells outside help seedlings adjust to wind, cooler nights and brighter light. It feels fussy, but it is far kinder than pushing them out too early and hoping for the best.

And really, there is no need to rush. Charles Dowding's sowing timeline is a useful antidote to spring panic: May is still a very good month for sowing beetroot, chard, lettuce, kale, cabbage, salad onions, carrots, parsnips and French beans, with courgettes still timely too. Later sowings often move quickly once the soil is warmer and the days are longer.

The main hazards now are familiar ones: late frost, sodden ground, sudden dry spells and the annual banquet for slugs and snails. Young seedlings are the most vulnerable, so this is the moment for precaution rather than heroics.

A few simple tricks make all the difference. Keep fleece, cloches or cut-off plastic bottles ready for tender plants on cold nights. Mulch around crops after watering with compost, leafmould or a light layer of grass clippings to help hold moisture and keep weeds down (so don't put your cut grass in the black bin).

Water well after planting, then watch the weather instead of watering by habit. And if slugs are about, plant sturdy seedlings rather than tiny ones.

May rewards patience. A seedling planted into warm, welcoming ground will often overtake one that was hurried out too early and left sulking.

Interested in having a Speldhurst Allotments and giving it a go?  
Contact Phil Hall at [speldhurstallotments@gmail.com](mailto:speldhurstallotments@gmail.com).



## Speldhurst CEP Primary School News



Spring has finally arrived – bluebells, lambs and Easter Bonnets. Speldhurst KS1 pupils paraded through the village wearing a show stopping riot of colourful bonnets and hats. It is a longstanding annual tradition with parents and neighbours turning out to support the children. Even the supervising teachers wore appropriate headgear. Lovely white rabbit ears, Sir.



Now if you are one of those who remember the recorder as a less than tuneful musical experience when you learnt it at school, you haven't been to the annual recorder festival which this year took place at Skinners School. Year 4 pupils in Empire class were amongst children from local primary schools invited to attend and play six pieces they had learnt in their class music lessons. Accompanied by Skinner's School Orchestra, it was a wonderful opportunity for pupils to make music together. And it's worth remembering that the recorder has been a solo instrument played by winners of the BBC Young Musician of the Year.

The recorder also has strong Royal connections. King Henry VIII, for example, wrote pieces for the instrument. This term Year 2 pupils in Galaxy Gala are learning about 'Magnificent Monarchs' in their final topic of the year and what better place to visit than Penshurst Place with its rich royal history, once being a hunting lodge of Henry VIII. The day began with a tour of the house and a variety of activities based on royal residences. After lunch, they explored the gardens and grounds, taking part in other activities to enhance their class science work on living creatures and habitats.

Back in School, the Cooking Pioneers have returned. An outside company, they bring practical culinary skills to pupils who until recently have been mainly taught about the theory of healthy eating as part of the Design and Technology curriculum. Now children are having the chance to prepare and cook recipes such as tuna pate, mango and banana cheesecake, chicken fajitas, Spanish omelette and bruschetta. Yum. As well as how to stay safe in the kitchen.

Healthy body, healthy mind and spirit. Just off the main playground is a quiet area for children to breathe in the calmness and nature of their surroundings and take time out to share quiet reflection with friends. However as you'll see from the

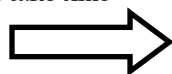
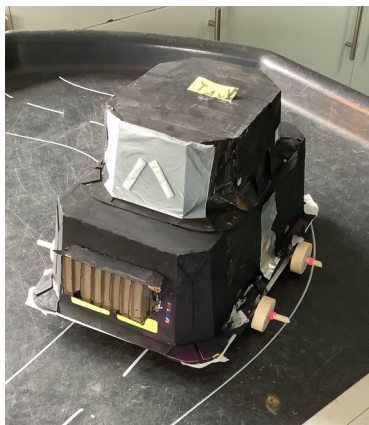


photo below, it needs some TLC. Many thanks to Polly Joyce from St Mary's who is heading up a team of wonderful volunteers to redesign this outdoor prayer and contemplation space. I'll be keeping you updated. But for the time being, here is a photo of what it looks like now.



Now finally if you remember, Year 1 children in Jazz Class have been learning about the 'wheel, axles and chassis.' At the end of term these pupils, who are amongst the youngest in the school, concluded this 'hands on' topic by designing and building their own taxis. As this photo below shows their attention to detail was quite outstanding.



Hasta luego everyone

SARA ANDREW

COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNOR

Speldhurst Allotment Society  
will be holding a  
**Seedling Sale**  
on  
**Saturday 16th May**  
(or on 23rd if 16th is a total washout)  
in the Shop Car Park



After a wonderfully busy Easter — when the shop sold almost all the Easter stock bar one lonely Easter egg — you could be forgiven for thinking we'd all earned a summer break. The sunshine has brought our gardens into bloom, lambs are frolicking in the fields, and lawnmowers are humming away each evening. It's a lovely reminder of how lucky we are to live where we do. Every day, the shop quietly opens its doors with fresh bread, milk in the fridge, and all the essentials ready for you. This doesn't happen by magic. It takes planning, teamwork, and the kindness of the volunteers who help keep everything running.

Although you'll always see someone behind the till or stocking the shelves, that doesn't mean we have enough hands. A small group of dedicated volunteers is working incredibly hard to keep the shop and Post Office open every day. With only a few paid staff, we rely on volunteers to serve, stock, clean, and help with the many behindthescenes tasks, and all of these volunteers are busy people! Everyone has busy lives — caring for family, working parttime, helping elsewhere in the village — yet our volunteers still find a way because they care deeply about having a shop and Post Office in Speldhurst. They care that we can all walk to buy our essentials, that we have a place to meet neighbours, and that this wonderful community asset continues long into the future and the best bit is that our volunteers say they really enjoy being part of the shop.

If you've ever thought about volunteering, even for a short shift once a week or once a fortnight, we would love to welcome you. We offer friendly training, and there's always someone nearby to help if you forget how to put something through the till or can't find something in the stockroom.

As with so many village organisations, the shop thrives because people give a little of their time. So why not join us? A few hours from you could make a real difference to your village. If you would like to know more, please pop into the shop and leave your name and contact details and we will be in touch.

Meanwhile we are looking forward to the summer months. The fabulous local asparagus and strawberries are now in stock. Always a winner!

Best wishes from your Shop Committee.

Note for your diary: The Annual Members meeting for the Shop and Post Office is to be held at the Speldhurst Village Hall on June 23rd at 8.00 pm. All are welcome.

# SPELDHURST

# ART

## EXHIBITION

### CALLING ALL LOCAL ARTISTS

This October, we're delighted to welcome back our Speldhurst Art Exhibition. Taking place from **29th October - 1st November 2026**, with a PV on 28th October, the Exhibition offers artists the opportunity to present and sell their work directly to the public. If you are working in painting, sculpture, mixed media, printing or ceramics we'd love to hear from you.

We want to celebrate local talent and encourage a creative space for conversation, connection and collecting.

Please email: [mariamarianni63@gmail.com](mailto:mariamarianni63@gmail.com) if you would like to exhibit or be involved.



### ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The newly formatted Annual Parish Meeting took place at the Pavilion on Monday 13th April and proved to be a great success. Local community groups and charities were on hand to showcase their work, highlighting the wide range of activities and support available within our parish villages. The evening got off to a wonderful start with an energetic and enjoyable performance from Happy Me Dance. Those showcasing were: Thrive, 3H Foundation, Flourish/Community Crossways, Langton Green Community Sports Association, Langton Village Society, Langton's Café, Langton Green Village Hall, Speldhurst Shop & Post Office, Speldhurst History Society, Speldhurst News, Kent Police, Langton Ladybirds; Community Lunch, Langton Green Short Mat Bowls, and the Parish Churches.

#### KALC Community Award 2026

A particular highlight was the presentation of the Kent Association of Local Councils' Community Award to recently retired ex Cllr Rowe, recognising his outstanding contribution to our community. His dedication and hard work have made a real and lasting difference, and it was a pleasure to see him receive this well-deserved award. We were delighted to announce on the evening that Alan had been awarded this for his excellent work on the Speldhurst Chapel conversion into the new Speldhurst Community Shop and Post Office.

The KALC Community Award Scheme recognises individuals and groups who make a significant, positive difference in their local Kent communities. It honours volunteers for long-term service, fundraising, and enhancing local life in our villages.

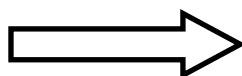
#### THE PIG AT GROOMBRIDGE

A recent petition has raised concerns about a perceived slowdown in the development at Groombridge Place. Several residents contacted the council and discussions were held with the planning officer, the petitioner, and the applicant. We understand the project remains active and is progressing.

#### BURRSWOOD

Residents recently raised concerns about public access to the site, and following several site visits, the developer has confirmed that access will be reopened as soon as possible. An engagement officer - who also serves as a Borough Councillor - has now been appointed to help keep communication open with the community.

The developer is planning a significant redevelopment of the area, including new buildings, to support the restoration of



several listed structures that are currently in poor condition. They have been open and frank about the need for some residential development in order to make the restoration work financially viable.

#### FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME

Tuesday 5th May 2026 7.30pm Annual Statutory Parish Meeting –  
Langton Green Village Hall

Monday 1st June 2026 7.30pm - Speldhurst Village Hall

#### TO CONTACT THE PARISH COUNCIL

Call the Clerk, Helen Chater : 01892 862927/07760 769513 or email  
clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

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

Speldhurst parish covers the villages of Ashurst, Langton Green, Old Groombridge and Speldhurst. The councillors representing these villages are: Paul Curry (Chair); Jade Dickens (Vice-Chair); Neil Barrington-Johnson; Hugh Cleaver; Richard Ellery; James Farley; Rebecca Leach; Giles Littlefield; Simon Norton; Domenico Tarricone; John Turner.





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

## May 2026

### 3<sup>rd</sup> May

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

### 10<sup>th</sup> May

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

### 17<sup>th</sup> May

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

### 24<sup>th</sup> May

- 10am All Age Worship at St Mary's Church, Speldhurst  
10.30am Holy Communion at St Martin's, Ashurst (*Followed by coffee and nibbles at the Syers home.*)

### 31<sup>st</sup> May

- 10am All Age Worship at St Mary's Church, Speldhurst  
11am Morning Service 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)  
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BLACKHAM VILLAGE HALL



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The Chair (or Co-Chairs) work alongside the Treasurer and committee members with responsibility for the strategic direction of the nursery and oversight of the finances. They provide support to the Nursery Leader through structured supervisions and ensure strong governance and compliance.

This is an unpaid volunteer trustee role, ideal for someone who enjoys collaborative working and making a practical difference in our community.

Countless families have benefited from our wonderful nursery and we are looking for members of the local community who are interested in ensuring the nursery is open for future generations of local children.

For more information please contact: [co-chairs@chiddingstonenursery.co.uk](mailto:co-chairs@chiddingstonenursery.co.uk)

# Letter from St Mary's



I was watching the sun rise over the Bidborough Ridge on Easter Sunday and thought back to the Easter days as I was growing up. As a teenager, with little idea of the Christian Faith, Easter was a #rather boring time with the song “Easter Parade ” regularly played on the radio, all the shops closed, and friends always seeming to be away on holiday.

Now however, as my understanding of the Easter message deepens with my faith, I can now see that the message of the risen lord is so powerful and full of love and hope that I realise how it supercedes all that mankind can offer.

We do not need shops, pop music or any man-made tangible items to grasp the strength and depth of the message of hope and love that the risen Jesus has bought us. We only need to be aware of the depths of suffering that Jesus encountered on the cross and the grief his Father went through on Good Friday on our behalf that we can put the message of Easter in true perspective.

We should not look back on those apparently shallow memories of the past but look forward with faith and love and hope to the true fulfilment of what Easter really means .

It is a message for us all, not just locally but worldwide.

David Lamey

Reader St Marys Speldhurst

## Opening Hours & Local Information

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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| 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                                                                                                            |

## SPELDHURST VILLAGE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

|                                   |                                   |               |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Age UK Lunch                      | Jan Mann                          | 863931        |
| Allotments                        | Phil Hall                         |               |
|                                   | speldhurstallotments@gmail.com    |               |
| 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                        | Jade Dickens                      |               |
| Clerk                             | Helen Chater                      | 862927        |
| Parish Councillors                | Richard Ellery                    | 864077        |
| Police Community Support Officer  | Lisa Whitehead                    | 101/ 999      |
| 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                     |               |

|                     |                                    |              |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Administrator       | rob.hindmarch@speldhurstchurch.org |              |
| Stoolball           | Rachael Foster                     | 07960296027  |
|                     | Donna Burden                       | 524793       |
|                     |                                    | 07810 048599 |
| Scouts              | Nick Burgess                       | 07773044374  |
| Shop & Post Office  |                                    | 862824       |
| Village Fete: Chair | Mike Harrowing                     | 0772 5561154 |
| Village Hall        | Meredith Thomas                    | 07786901312  |
| Village Website     | Miranda Hawkins                    | 863601       |
| Walking Group       | Brian Tasker                       | 862301       |

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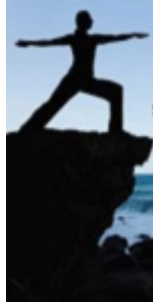
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