



Speldhurst News

September 2026

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Welcome!

Dear Readers,

Summer 2026 will be remembered for many reasons. Perhaps you have happy holiday memories? Perhaps you achieved wonderful exam results which have enabled your future plans to proceed? The possibilities are endless but I suspect that many will also remember it for the weather. Many say that we Brits are obsessed by the weather and we have certainly had plenty to talk about this year. As I write this we have just entered the 5th heatwave of the year so far (will there be more?) and rain is a phenomenon of the very distant past. Speldhurst has gone brown and lies in wait for the deluges that will no doubt come in time, after which we are promised that all will be green again.

September is a month of new beginnings and in this magazine you can find out about new events which are on their way and accessible to us all. We welcome those new to our village school and wish them a happy and successful time there. Our good wishes also go with those leaving and moving on both from our village school and from local secondary schools.

The next major happening in our village calendar is the Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show. I hope to see you there.

Andrea

Please send emails **before 10th September 2026 for the October issue** to: speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred.

News Editors: Maria Turner, Judith Malim & Andrea Burgess

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



The Speldhurst Flower, Vegetable & Craft Show Saturday 5th 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. Hopefully you have received a schedule through your letterbox by now and have had a chance to browse through it so that you can prepare to show off your prize-winning efforts on 5th September! If you haven't received your copy or have any other queries, please contact Katya Hall on 07747808833 for more information.

Not planning to enter anything? Please come along anyway and bring the family – admire the lovely artwork created by the pupils of Speldhurst School and enjoy the legendary tea and home-made cakes. You're guaranteed to meet some friends at this much-loved annual village event. You can also check out our Facebook page: Speldhurst Flower, Vegetable and Craft Show.





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

Bumps and Babes is a group for Mums with babies up to 18 months old which meets fortnightly on Monday mornings in each other's homes in the village.

After our break in August, we start up again on Monday 7th September. Do get in touch if you are interested in joining the group.

If you are looking for a social group in the village for under 5's, Praise and Play, the St Mary's Church Toddler Group, is the place for you. We meet weekly, in term time, in the church on Wednesday and Friday mornings. The Wednesday group will run from 9.30-11am, beginning again on 2nd September, and the Friday group from 9-10.30am beginning again on 4th September. We'll have a craft, some time to play and a short story and song time as well as giving the little ones a chance to ring the church bell, which they absolutely love. So do come along.

All are welcome.

All we ask for is a donation towards refreshments.

For more information about either of these groups, especially if you are new to the village, contact Jenny Fitzsimmons on 07891 318123 or at jenny50fitz@gmail.com



Churchyard Strimming 2026

Hi to all churchyard strimming enthusiasts, past, present and future. Here is my annual call for assistance.

As most of you already know, part of the churchyard grass is left uncut during the year as a nature conservation area and the grass is only cut once in the autumn.



Last year spreading the strimming work over a longer two week period with smaller groups worked well, so the plan is to do the same again this year with two Friday/Saturday sessions - the first on 4th & 5th September and the second on 11th & 12th September.

I will arrange for Anthony Hare's trailer to be there for the second session for loading up. Previous week's strimmings will be piled near the Barden Road gate to load the following week.

The grass is dry this year so easier to cut providing we don't get a deluge between now and then. We have also had a go at some of it already, and may add another earlier strimming date in nearer the time to get ahead of the game, if that suits some of you.

We have 3 church strimming machines and PPE but if you have any useful additional tools of your own which you can bring (strimmer, rakes, shears, barrows, gloves, loppers, secateurs) that would be useful.

Refreshments will be provided.

If you are able to help for a few hours, please confirm your availability by phone or e mail which will then help me to put a rota together (see contact details below).

Your efforts in past years have been very much appreciated and make a big difference to our churchyard tidiness, also helping to reduce maintenance costs, so I look forward to seeing you there for as much time as you can offer.

Many thanks

John Fitzsimmons for St Mary's Church
jejmfitzsimmons@hotmail.com

07814 412984

SPELDHURST

ART

EXHIBITION

Thurs 29 October - Sun 1 November
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Speldhurst CEP School

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Speldhurst CEP Primary School News



What a summer we've had - day after day of scorchingly hot weather with record-breaking temperatures. A memorable school holiday of endless sunny days or a warning of climate change?

Now Speldhurst School is back with a new academic year and a new class of reception children taking their first step on their school journey. This year their teacher is the lovely Laurie Bird who is also new to Pippin Class. Welcome everyone – as well as new parents joining our school community.

There is always a buzz of excitement and anticipation in September at the beginning of the academic year as the pupils settle into the school day which for the reception children includes a teddy bears picnic when they are encouraged to bring a cuddly 'friend' to help them feel at home.

Meanwhile the oldest pupils in Russet class will be thinking about the next step in their educational journey and the secondary school which is right for them – and for some this means taking the 11+ only days after their return from the summer holidays. Fortunately there are many good schools in the area to choose from and here are the destinations of last year's Yr 6.

16 pupils went to grammar schools - Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School (5) and Tunbridge Wells Boys Grammar School (3) Tonbridge Grammar School (1) and Skinners School (5), Weald of Kent Grammar School for Girls (1) and St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar (1). Other pupils chose Bennett Memorial Diocesan School (7), and St Gregory's Catholic school (2) whilst a further 2 went to Skinners Kent Academy, 2 to Bethany and the remaining 2 pupils to Sackville and Kent College. Congratulations to all.

At Speldhurst, however, the 'joy of learning' is never forgotten. The school offers a caring and supportive community which encourages pupils to achieve their potential. In Yr 6, Russet class pupils take on even more responsibilities in their final year as prefects and peer mentors looking out for the well-being and giving support to younger pupils. There are also high points for them to look forward to including the Leavers production in their final term and a residential trip in the summer.

Last year's Russet class went to Hindleap Warren just outside East Grinstead. Although not very far away geographically, the Outdoor Centre offers an experience away which is a true rite of passage for our primary school children. Set in 300 acres of woodland and beautiful countryside, it gives them the opportunity to relax, have fun together and, most importantly gain confidence and independence as they discover their inner courage to tackle a range of outdoor and team-building activities from archery and abseiling to water activities such as kayaking.

As always, last year's Year 6 pupils threw themselves into every activity with enthusiasm and resilience. They also had the opportunity to reflect on the friendships built during their time at Speldhurst and the special memories created together.

All our very best wishes go with them as they start at their new schools this September - a new chapter in what will hopefully be a life-long journey of learning. We will miss them and many a tear was shed at last term's packed leavers service at St Mary's Church.

SARA ANDREW –
COMMUNICATIONS GOVERNOR



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As the summer holidays have reached their end, we are still basking in temperatures of mid 30's, our gardens look like prairies and we may even do a rain dance if the long awaited rains appear. This is not normal for good old blighty, but we should spare a thought for the poor people both at home and abroad who have suffered with the fires, and the farmers whose crops are suffering, and whose animals are in some cases having to rely on this winter's feed already.

We will all feel the effect of this when buying our food this autumn onwards. You will however, as always, receive a welcome smile from the volunteers and staff at your local shop. They continue to supply fresh strawberries, vegetables, wine, cheeses and breads on a daily basis, all from the corner of Northfields and Barden Road.

The plethora of builders in the village have been stalwarts recently purchasing copious cold ice creams and drinks and they are always early in bagging their lunch for the day. They are very important contributors to the success of the shop.

Martha has already been planning for the Christmas months which is hard to get one's head around at 30 degrees. We are also testing a frozen food company for upmarket choices of food.

Our social media has been upgraded hugely with the skills of volunteer Jo, who helps advertise the shop daily with recipes and hints on Instagram and Facebook.

Our volunteers all have busy lives and we are very grateful for their input in the running of the shop. Where would we be without them? The holidays in particular are a classic example of being short of volunteers to keep the shop open. We have been close to closing the shop on a number of occasions this holiday period, but thanks to the few who have come to the rescue, they have enabled our shop and post office to remain open. It does beg the question though. Where would we be without these volunteers?

We are always looking for more volunteers, particularly in the Post Office. If you are someone who has training in finance and have maybe recently retired, would you be interested in becoming part of our team? Training is given and the current team is very helpful and willing to assist. It is so very important that we maintain the Post Office, and we cannot take for granted that there are always enough people to man it.

Please consider what skills you may have to offer the shop and Post Office. As shown on Instagram, our volunteers love being involved from a social perspective, and because it is a real confidence booster. Go on, do give it a go.

Our social space is displaying yet another budding artist's work. Have you been and seen it? It's worth a trip and enjoy a coffee at the same time.

Plans are afoot for a number of events in the social space, and with many people enjoying our shaded terrace the whole concept of a social space has been a resounding success.

With best wishes to all of our customers, and thank you for your continuing support.

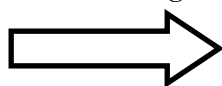
ALLOTMENT NEWS

Perhaps the Future of the Allotment Lies in its Past

There is a question that occasionally occurs to me on the allotment: why am I growing these?

After all, supermarkets sell onions, carrots and potatoes for remarkably little money. By the time you have bought the seed, prepared the ground, planted, watered, weeded and tried to stop various creatures eating the crop before you do, growing your own can look like a rather poor economic proposition.

Of course, cost isn't really the point. There is great satisfaction in eating something you have grown yourself.



You know how it has been produced, it has virtually no food miles and, if you choose to garden that way, no pesticides, fungicides or artificial fertilisers have been used.

But perhaps there is another argument.

If supermarkets are very good at providing us with cheap potatoes, onions and carrots, why try to compete with them? Why not use at least some of the allotment to grow things that supermarkets simply don't sell?

Go back a few centuries and people ate a much wider range of plants than most of us would recognise today. Many were once perfectly ordinary foods but have gradually disappeared from our kitchens.

Take skirret, for example, an old root vegetable. Or Good King Henry, a perennial whose young leaves can be cooked rather like spinach. Then there are Alexanders, scorzonera, rampion and orach.

Even the names make me want to try them.

Suddenly the allotment becomes something more than a miniature version of the supermarket vegetable aisle. It becomes a place of exploration: an opportunity to discover flavours and textures that have largely vanished from modern life.

Some of these vegetables we might love. Others might make us conclude that there was a very good reason they fell out of favour. But either way, wouldn't it be interesting to find out?

There is something appealing, too, about growing the same plants that gardeners may have cultivated hundreds of years ago. It creates a small connection with our horticultural past and keeps unusual varieties alive. None of this means abandoning the potatoes, peas or runner beans. But perhaps a corner of the plot could be given over to something less familiar.

Instead of asking, "What vegetables do I normally buy?", perhaps we should ask: "What could I grow that I can't buy?"

Perhaps our allotments could become little living food museums - with the considerable advantage that we get to eat the exhibits. And ... my skirret seeds have arrived. So, I'm on the first step in a new road towards discovery in what our forefathers used to grow and eat.

Rob Kyte

SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

NEW DIGITAL SUPPORT WORKSHOP

Need help with your phone, tablet, laptop or just getting online?



Join our **FREE** new Digital Support Workshop, taking place on the **1st Monday of every month** at

Langton's Café Sports & Community Hub, The Pavilion, Langton Green Recreation Ground.

Whether you are looking to build confidence online, learn new digital skills, or get help with a specific problem, our friendly Digital Champion will be there to help.



Starting Monday 7th September 2026 and monthly thereafter on the 1st Monday of every month* (*subject to pre - booking an appointment)



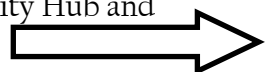
1:00pm – 3:00pm



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Please sign up in advance by Friday 4th September for the September workshop, emailing admin@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk or call 01892 862927 and remember to bring your device along to the session. This initiative is brought to you by Kent County Council (KCC) in conjunction with Langton Café's Sports & Community Hub and Speldhurst Parish Council.



DEFIBRILLATOR AND BLEED TRAINING PLANNED

We shall be holding more sessions on Saturday 14th November in Langton's Café Sports & Community Hub, within the Pavilion on Langton Green Recreation Ground for anyone living in the Parish wanting to attend. Ken Hopkins from Hopkins Training and Support will lead the sessions again to include specific bleed training separately. Places will be limited and offered on a first come first served basis but if you would like to attend, please reserve your space by emailing amin@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk with the time you would prefer and your contact details by Thursday 12th November. Timings on Saturday 14th November will be: 1.30 pm AED Training (approx. 2 hrs) 4pm Bleed training (approx. 1 hr) 6pm AED Training (approx. 1 hr).



The main benefit of using a defibrillator is to significantly increase the chance of survival during a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). While CPR helps circulate oxygenated blood to the brain and vital organs, only a defibrillator can deliver a shock to a heart in a shockable rhythm, allowing the heart's normal electrical activity to restart. Modern defibrillators (AEDs) are designed to be used safely by members of the public and will only deliver a shock if one is needed and often, depending on the model, will talk you through what to do.

BONFIRES AND OTHER FIRE HAZARDS

Following the extended dry weather over the summer, gardens, parks, and fields are extremely dry and present a high wildfire risk, which is dangerous for people, wildlife, habitats, livestock and crops. Be vigilant - if you have a BBQ, have water readily available, cigarettes should be properly extinguished and disposed of responsibly and if you are going out for the day take a picnic not a disposable BBQ.

SPELDHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL JUBILEE AWARD 2026

Congratulations to the two children who were both awarded the Jubilee Award by Cllr Jade Dickens on Friday 17th July. The school told us “We are incredibly proud of them. Inspired by the amazing work of our



school's new global charity partner, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF). they took it upon themselves to organise an art show to raise funds. They clearly listened to the message that any amount of money can make a real difference in helping MAF reach isolated communities



around the world with vital aid and independently decided to take action. We are therefore delighted to nominate them for this year's Jubilee Award.”

FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS – EVERYONE WELCOME

Monday 7th September 2026 7.30pm – Speldhurst Village Hall

Monday 5th October 2026 7.30pm – Ashurst 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
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); Kristi Bains; Neil BarringtonJohnson; Hugh Cleaver; Richard Ellery; James Farley; Rebecca Leach; Giles Littlefield; Simon Norton; John Turner

A Letter from St Mary's



As we come to the beginning of a new season, September always seems to bring with it a sense of new beginnings. The summer holidays draw to a close, schools and colleges begin again, and the familiar rhythms of autumn gradually return.

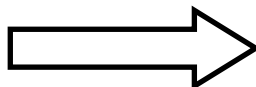
We would particularly like to send our love and prayers to all the children and young people in our churches and across our communities as they return to school. For some, it will be the excitement of a new year with old friends; for others, it may mean a new school, a new class, or perhaps the very first day of school. Whatever this new term holds, may they know God's presence with them, giving them courage, joy and peace. We also pray for parents, teachers and all those who care for and support our young people.

For much of August we gathered together on Sundays and explored the topic of Prayer in our worship. It provided an opportunity to look at the topics of praise, repentance, asking and yielding. September also gives us a wonderful opportunity to join with Christians beyond our own parish. During the month, churches across Tunbridge Wells will be joining together for the **Global Week of Prayer**, an opportunity for Christians to come together in prayer for our town, our communities and the wider world.

Prayer is one of the simplest and yet most powerful things we can do as Christians. It reminds us that we do not carry the needs of our communities alone but bring them before a loving God who hears us. We hope many of you will be able to join with our friends from the churches across Tunbridge Wells during this special week. It is a lovely opportunity not only to pray together, but also to strengthen the bonds of fellowship between the churches in our area.

There are also two particularly special occasions coming up at St Mary's this month.

On **Sunday 20th September**, we shall be celebrating a **Baptism Service at St Mary's Church, Speldhurst**, with baptism taking place in a baptismal pool. Baptism is always a joyful occasion as we welcome people into the family of Christ, and this promises to be a particularly memorable service. Do come and join us if you are able and share in the joy of this celebration.



Then, on **Sunday 27th September**, we shall gather for our **Harvest Festival at St Mary's**. Harvest is a wonderful opportunity to pause and give thanks for all that God provides: for the food we enjoy, for those who grow and produce it, for the beauty of creation, and for the many blessings we can so easily take for granted. It is also a time to remember those who do not have enough, and to give generously to support others in our local community and beyond.

As the seasons change, may we remember that God is present in all the changes and transitions of our lives. Whether beginning a new school year, returning to familiar routines, or simply enjoying the beauty of autumn, may we have eyes to see God's goodness and hearts ready to give thanks.

With every blessing for the month ahead, and with our prayers for all who live within our parish.

With love and prayers,

The Parish of Speldhurst with Groombridge and Ashurst



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Library (village hall):	Monday 2.00 - 4.30pm
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