

Speldhurst News



February 2023

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Guide



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Welcome

Dear Readers,

This month is traditionally about cleansing (after the Latin word *febuum*, which means purification). We are now looking forward to spring, whilst still breathing in ice-cold air, sitting in front of fires and maybe still sticking to our resolutions!

Those of us with gardens are tentatively looking for those first bulbs appearing and ensuring birds are fed and watered during these harsher spells. With nature in mind, Allotment News, on Pages 16 & 17, provides a wealth of tips for the coming month and Alan Ford offers us some fascinating insights into the Wildcat and its reintroduction into the wild, on Page 13. As ever, you can find all the usual diary of local events detailed as well as locally relevant council news.

Please note that our dedicated delivery team are negotiating some treacherous weather on the way to your front doors; where possible, please could access be made safe. Thank you.

We look forward to hearing and welcoming any new articles that you may like to include for next month. Please send to the email below. Until then, keep warm!

Best wishes, Maria

On behalf of Speldhurst News Editors:

Maria Turner, Sara Turner, Judith Malim

Please remember that copy for the **March 2023 edition** should be sent before 10th February 2023 to: speldhurst.news@gmail.com. Word, Publisher or pdf files preferred. Thank you.

SPELDHURST NEWS endeavours to include articles in addition to village, church and chapel news. These are taken in good faith and without prejudice, therefore the committee will not be held responsible for the accuracy of the content, nor will it be held responsible for any work or treatment received from the advertisers. Readers should satisfy themselves of advertisers' abilities before accepting a job quotation or undertaking a course of treatment. All articles & inclusions should be sent as a word document attachment. The editors reserve the right to amend submissions where they feel it is appropriate.

Diary at a Glance

February

Sat 4th	Blackham Village Cafe	p.11
	Penshurst Farmers' Market	p.12
Mon 6th	Bumps & Babes	p.4
Mon 6th	Full Council Meeting	p.9
Wed 8th	Praise & Play	p.4
Mon 13th	Book Group	p.5
Mon 20th	Bumps and Babes	p.4
Wed 22nd	Praise and Play	p.4
Mondays	Library	p.5

Future Dates

Sat 17th June	Summer Fete	p.7
Sat & Sun 28th & 29th October	Speldhurst Art Show	p.11

News & Announcements

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

Bumps and Babes, coffee mornings for new Mums meets fortnightly in The Chapel from 10.30am. this month we meet on 6th & 20th February. If you have a young child you would be very welcome to join this friendly group. Contact Jenny for more info or just turn up.

Praise and Play, St Mary's Toddler Group meets in the church fortnightly on a Wednesday from 9-10.30am. This month we will be there on Wednesdays 8th & 22nd. We enjoy a time of free play to start with before gathering to ring the church bell which everyone loves, to hear a story and to sing our favourite nursery rhymes; before we share refreshments together. Again, feel free to turn up on the day or contact Jenny for more details.

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

Abi Dawson & Speldhurst News

A massive thank you to Abi for all her commitment to the Speldhurst News over the last 15 years. We all agree that it has been an absolute pleasure working with her on both the committee and as a fellow editor.



We wish her continuing success developing awareness of the work of Sepsis Research FEAT a UK Charity.

If anyone would like to help fundraise I am sure Abi would be delighted to hear from you!

Speldhurst Library - A great local service!

The library is open each Monday afternoon stocking a rotating selection of books. This is run on a voluntary basis and we need to build our team of volunteers to ensure that the library facility can continue. This is a great local service and the more people who can support it the better.

We would also love to see more visitors to the library, including children after school and nursery school children too. It is a relaxing and friendly place to enjoy books.

The library is open from 2 – 4.30. Please come along and see what is on offer.

Speldhurst Library Book Group

If you like reading, come along to the new book group that started in December. We are a friendly group who meet in Speldhurst Library once a month on a Monday at 2.30 pm. If you would like to join please come along to the next meeting on Monday 13th February. If you'd like to know the latest book that we are reading, please contact:

Jane Bamgbola (jbamgbol@icloud.com)
Ann Lovering





Happy 2023 to all our customers and volunteers! We had a very busy December in the shop and we look forward to seeing you all this year! We will be 4 this year, where has the time gone!

It's Valentines this month! We have cards, chocolates and fizz all available in the shop for your nearest and dearest. As well as groceries, wine, cheese, bread, milk, cleaning materials and all your usual goodies, did you know we have wool and knitting needles?! We also hire out cake tins for your little ones birthdays.

The post office is always ready for your mail and parcels and now you can select Speldhurst Post Office as the collection point for your Amazon and DPD deliveries if you're not going to be in. Any Christmas presents that are still lurking in the back of the cupboard waiting to be returned? We're very happy to help you get them back to the retailer.

Remember we can do most of your banking at the post office. You can withdraw and pay in cash, deposit cheques and pay bills over the counter. Planning a ski trip (or any other trip overseas)? We can order in whatever foreign currencies you may need. We can order them over the counter for you, or you can order online for collection at the post office.

Don't forget you can order bread, or wine, or cheese from us too. Whether it be a regular order or a one off for an occasion, we are always happy to order for you (48 hours notice required).

Are you having work done on your house, have you a team of builders that need lunch or a mid-morning snack? Please send them to the shop! We are open from 7.30am on weekdays. We have a good selection of fresh sandwiches from Groombridge Bakery every day and we always have lots of snacks and cakes to go with a coffee or a hot chocolate from our coffee machine.

Would you like to volunteer at the shop? Please contact Jo Eames on 07896 932716.

A vibrant summer-themed poster for a village fete. The background is a solid light blue. At the top, a string of triangular bunting flags in yellow, pink, and yellow with pink stripes hangs across the frame. A large, bright yellow rounded rectangle serves as the central backdrop for the text. To the left and right of this rectangle are several large, inflated balloons in yellow and pink. In the bottom left corner, there is a detailed illustration of a cupcake with yellow frosting, pink sprinkles, and a strawberry on top, sitting in a pink and white striped paper liner. In the bottom right corner, there is an illustration of a pink and white ice cream bar on a wooden stick. The text is arranged as follows: 'SPELDHURST VILLAGE' in pink at the top of the yellow rectangle; 'SUMMER FETE' in large, bold, white letters with a slight shadow in the center; 'SATURDAY' in white letters on a pink ribbon banner below it; '17th June' in white below the banner; a list of activities in pink below the date; and 'SAVE THE DATE!' in pink at the very bottom of the poster.

**SPELDHURST
VILLAGE**

SUMMER FETE

SATURDAY

17th June

• BOUNCY'S • GAMES • BBQ AND FOOD •
• ICE CREAM • MUSIC •
• AND MORE •

SAVE THE DATE!



NEW YEAR NEW COUNCILLORS *Millie Woodliffe resigned from the Council in December, and we'd like to say a big thank you for all her hard work. We've now co-opted two new Councillors; Domenico Tarricone from Ashurst and Kay Dooley from Langton Green.*

Domenico was born in Italy and moved to Ashurst in 2021 with his fiancé after living in Surrey and Hertfordshire while completing his UK and European legal qualifications. He works for a large European financial institution, where in addition to his professional role, he is a proud Sustainability Ambassador. An antiques enthusiast and collector, Domenico also enjoys reading and learning about domestic and international history, art and literature. He is happy to be helping the local community thrive and preserve its special character.

Kay has many years' experience as a teacher, most recently as a Senior Leader at a local primary school. She and her family have lived in Langton Green for 16 years. Kay loves being in the great outdoors enjoying walks on our beautiful parish footpaths. Kay is also passionate about the environment. She looks forward to serving her local community as a member of the Parish Council.

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE PARISH COUNCIL IN 2023?

As we write, the minutes of our first Full Council meeting of the year are being produced. At this meeting, we finalised the precept for the year ahead (more news on this soon), listened to grant requests from local organisations, and approved a trial of non-pesticide methods of weed control at Langton Green Recreation Ground.

With Councillors committed to a busy year ahead, we want to ensure you are as engaged with what we do as we are. So do keep up with our activities by signing up for news alerts on our website or following us on Facebook. You are always most welcome to attend our meetings too.

EMERGENCY ROAD CLOSURES

Have you, like us, been frustrated by all the emergency road closures in recent months? Here's an update which might help.

As you will know, utility companies such as UK Power Network and Scottish Gas Network have undertaken emergency works which have disrupted travel, including the school bus routes that pass through Speldhurst. Kent County Council have told us these closures are unavoidable. The closure on Speldhurst/ Langton Road for example, was due to a fault with a high-voltage cable which affected power in several homes. The view seems to be that the knock-on effect of the pandemic – among other factors – meant routine maintenance was not carried out. This has led emergencies further down the line, with more to come.

We advise emailing County Councillor McInroy – James.McInroy@kent.gov.uk – to request that KCC don't exacerbate disruptions by scheduling non-essential roadworks of their own. We also advise saving <https://one.network/uk> to your favourites bar. This gives advance warning of all scheduled works so you can plan ahead. Finally, we've contacted utility companies asking them to communicate better with local schools and bus companies about emergency works so schools know pupils may arrive later than usual and alternative routes can be planned.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Full Council Meeting 7.30pm, Monday 6th February, Committee Room, Speldhurst Village Hall.

HOW TO CONTACT US To contact the parish council, call the Clerk, Katie Neve on 01892 862927/07760 769513 or email

clerk@speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk

For helpful information about SPC, visit www.speldhurstparishcouncil.gov.uk or follow us on Facebook as 'Speldhurst Parish Council'.

News from Cllr Matthew Sankey

Cycle Path

During my election campaign I promised I would work on a cycle path from Langton to Tunbridge wells across the common. This won't impede on the road and will also help beautify parts of the common too. The good news is that we have secured funding for the design aspect of this project, this is the first stage of council work on this and its super exciting.

Boundary Review

In the December council meeting I was disappointed that we didn't get the required number of votes to change the way our council is voted in. Sadly, the Liberal Democrat group decided to ignore overwhelming survey results - 65% called for a change from the current elections by thirds, where we vote every year for one of 3 Cllrs, preferring to have them as all outs where we vote once every 4 years for all 3 Cllrs. This would have saved hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Bus issues, again

I doubt this will be new news, but there are issues with our school buses again, with a lack of drivers being blamed this time. I have been working with Greg Clark to try to resolve this but am finding KCC a very hard nut to crack.

Water Supply Issues

Thankfully this is now a thing of the past, but it certainly alarmed me and brings the proposed local plan into the spotlight – South East Water state that our boroughs system has plenty of capacity and doesn't need any major work to accommodate all the new homes that are projected in the Local Plan – Now I'm not expert but if a week's worth of snow can make it fall over then what will thousands of new homes do. I am not convinced and have started work on questioning this. We need infrastructure first!

Your Borough Councillors

	Contact Details	Re-Election Date
Cllr Matthew Sankey (Alliance)	07881 674 310 matthew.sankey@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024
Cllr Lucy Willis (Alliance)	07958 634 185 lucy.willis@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2023
Cllr Harry Allen (Conservative)	07523 005 178 harry.allen@tunbridgewells.gov.uk	May 2024

BLACKHAM VILLAGE CAFÉ AND MARKET

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2023

10.00am - 12.30pm

BLACKHAM VILLAGE HALL



Lots of lovely produce for sale:
homemade pasties, cakes, scones
free range eggs, bread, bird food,
flowers



preserves, handmade pottery, and lots more
Also enjoy a delicious tea/coffee with a piece of homemade
cake or scone.

*Blackham Village Hall is a registered charity whose sole purpose is to
promote and maintain the hall for the enjoyment of and benefit of the
community*

Speldhurst Art Show 2023

We are pleased to announce that the Art Show is back this October!
It will be a two days event with a fantastic range of 2D and 3D work
on display. We will have a diverse group of talented artists selling
their work at affordable prices.

Refreshments will also be available. Put it in your diary!

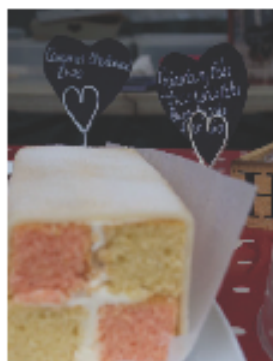
28th & 29th October 2023

For more details about visiting or exhibiting, please contact Maria
Turner at: mariamarianni63@gmail.com



FARMERS' MARKET AT PENS HurST

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



**Saturday,
February
4th, 2023**

**9.30 am
to
12.00 pm**

**Penshurst
Place Visitor
Car Park**



We're back in Penshurst Place car park for our first full market of 2023 with all our regular stallholders back with us after a new year break. As usual there's plenty to try and buy.

If it's comfort you're after, look out for home-made cakes and pies, brownies and craft chocolate, cuts of grass-fed beef and lamb or wild venison perfect for slow cooking.

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

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

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

Find us on Facebook

Find us on Twitter and Instagram

www.kfma.org.uk/penshurst

Nature Watch

The wildcat is Scotland's rarest and most threatened mammal. Once widespread, the species is now on the brink of extinction. A sad history of habitat loss, persecution and interbreeding with domestic cats has forced the Highland tiger to a point where the population is no longer viable. Without urgent action, wildcats will be lost forever from Britain.

Wildcats in zoos, wildlife parks and private facilities now hold the key to saving their species, enabling captive-bred cats to be restored to the wild. PTES [Peoples Trust for Endangered species] is providing funds for a critical new partnership project called saving wildcats. This six-year project, led by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, will bring about the urgent action needed to prevent wildcats from becoming extinct in the UK. Having crossed over to Britain at the end of the last ice age, approximately 9000 years ago, wildcats were a widespread species, at home in our countryside.

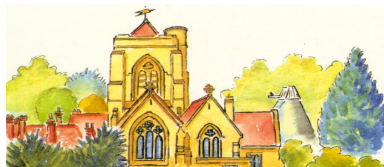


But with intensification of land use during the Victorian era and subsequent habitat loss, wildcats were eradicated from England and Wales by the late nineteenth century. More recently, one of the biggest threats to the remaining wildcat population is interbreeding with feral domestic cats. With so few wildcats left in the wild, it seemed as though we were facing an impossible challenge to overcome. Luckily, decades of research have identified how and where to boost wildcat numbers sufficiently. It's not just about suitable habitat but also making sure the local community is enthusiastic and that any threats that could stop the release being successful, are removed.

This will also involve supporting a neutering programme for feral domestic cats in and around the project area. The first group of wildcats should be ready for release into the Scottish wilderness in 2023. There has been talk from local wildlife trusts about releasing them in southern England,

Alan Ford

February 2023



5th February

10 am Communion

10 am Online Worship available via
<http://youtube.com/StMarysSpeldhurst>

12th February

10 am All-Age Worship

19th February

10 am All-Age Communion Service

10 am Online Worship available via
<http://youtube.com/StMarysSpeldhurst>

Wednesday 22nd February

8 pm Communion for Ash Wednesday

26th February

10 am All-Age Worship

Baptisms

27th November 2022 Matilda Star Lush Mansell

8th January 2023 Lara Rose Taylor

Confirmations

5th December 2022 George Carter
Jacob Cogger
Camilla Fleetham
Amy Goodsell
Olivia Lewis

Funerals, followed by Burial in the Churchyard

17th November 2022 Richard (Ricky) Ames Fawcett

29th November 2022 Audrey Stuart-Black

**The Church Office can be contacted on 861187 or
speldhurst.church@btopenworld.com**

Normal office hours: 9 am to 12.30 pm

See our website: www.speldhurstchurch.org

St Mary's Facebook page: facebook.com/StMarysSpeldhurst/

A Letter from St Mary's

February 2023



Dear Friends,

I love The Great British Bake Off - all that wonderful food, the humour and seeing contestants develop their talents – but I squirm when the person who is going home is named. The decision may be accurate and obvious but the judgement, when someone

stands over the best attempts of another, is painful.

It has been suggested that society is more judgemental than it was. It's certainly easy to see that in politics: whatever you thought of Liz Truss' premiership there was hardly anything positive said about her by anyone after she resigned.

If judgement is about standing over someone then the opposite is mercy, which can be defined as standing alongside someone and lifting them up.

I'm not sure that it would make good television if the contestant with the soggiest bottom was given extra help and encouragement rather than being sent home but in life, help and encouragement can be powerful and life changing. Perhaps that's why the apostle Paul writes about how our relationship with God doesn't "depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy". This doesn't mean that nothing is called out as wrong or even evil. Terrible things happen in our world, and they need to be exposed and responded to. Mercy is about how we do that. It's about how we hate the sin and love the sinner.

None of this is easy, in my experience. I have fallen from my high horse too often to pretend that I am good at mercy but that doesn't stop me recognising its value, appreciating it when I receive mercy and taking what steps I can to stand alongside others.

Douglas

PS I can be contacted at douglas.wren12@gmail.com or on 01892 862821 or at The Rectory, Southfields, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN3 0PD



~ Allotment News ~



Biodiversity, Our Allotments and Gardens

When I was a youngster, few people ever thought of such things as biodiversity. It's not that species were not threatened or extinct – they were. It's just that there was not really an awareness of the significance of biodiversity. Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life to be found in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life. But when there are so many stories about our threatened world, why and how are our gardens of any importance or significance? What is biodiversity in our own backyards and how do we encourage it? Here are a few things we can do.

Get wild and messy

If you're not the tidiest of people, then here is some good news. When it comes to a biodiverse garden, some messiness is good. So let a section or corner of it grow wild as its wildness is great for biodiversity, with natural debris offering food and habitat for many species. But if that doesn't suit, simply allow a patch of the garden to grow into a mini wildflower meadow. A mix of long grass and wildflowers, such as common poppies, corn marigold and ox-eye daisy will attract pollinating bees and butterflies, and provide shelter to other animals. If you don't have room for, or don't want, a full-scale wildflower meadow, simply allowing patches of lawn to grow longer will provide shelter for small mammals such as wood mice, voles and shrews, and food for some butterfly caterpillars – not all of these eat cabbages or nettles, contrary to popular belief.

Add some wildlife-friendly extras

An old rotting log pile, tucked away from sunlight to prevent it from drying out, will make a perfect home for many insects and species of fungi. Decaying wood provides an ever-rarer habitat to a range of specialist wildlife that is growing increasingly uncommon in the countryside, such as stag and bark beetles and their grubs, and many species of fungi. It also provides cover and hibernation sites. Any unstained or unpainted wood is suitable, although big, natural logs are best, ideally partly buried. Log piles can look quite architectural and rustic, though many people prefer to tuck them out of sight. A piece of corrugated iron laid flat somewhere shady will provide cover for

animals such as newts, toads, lizards and snakes.

Compost heaps and mounds of grass clippings can provide the ideal habitat for slow worms. If you think these biodiversity-rich piles look a little untidy, try locating them in corners out of sight. Water is also a great magnet for wildlife. So, include a pond, bird bath, or even just a container of water in your garden to help many creatures thrive, from birds and dragonflies to frogs and newts. A bird feeder is also a good addition to your garden, especially during the winter months when food sources are more scarce.

Use compost

Heaps of organic matter provide shelter for creatures that make the most of the heat emitted by decomposition. Composting garden waste helps all garden plants and wildlife, as it speeds up the natural recycling of nutrients by harnessing native decomposer organisms (saprophytes), especially fungi and soil bacteria.

Provide food and water for birds all year

Garden birds are some of the most conspicuous of garden wildlife, and easy to attract with supplemental feeding. Over the winter supplementary food can mean the difference between life and death for many, especially when winters are particularly cold. Ideally, offer a mix of food including peanuts, sunflower hearts, seeds, kitchen scraps and fat balls, or proprietary seed mixtures, to supplement natural food such as berries and seedheads. Don't forget that a supply of clean, unfrozen water is just as vital for feathered visitors – and ensure feeding tables are not accessible to cats. These are just a few of the things that can be done to encourage biodiversity in our gardens.

Rob Kyte

And finally:

If you are interested in acquiring an allotment, please contact Mark Oddy on 01892 862746.

If there is any topic you would like to address relating to matters gardening or horticultural, please send an email to kytehouse@stepex.co.uk.

If you would like to submit something for this article, please also email it to kytehouse@stepex.co.uk.



SPELDHURST VILLAGE CLUBS & ORGANISATIONS

Age UK Lunch	Jan Mann	863931
Allotments	Mark Oddy	862746
Beavers	Jo Smith	518706
Bowls Club	Debbie Moon	861317
Bridge Club	Heather Hughes	863367
Brownies	Louise Scott	862972
Bumps and Babes	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Cricket Club	Nick Coffin	07867 803121
Junior Cricket section	Francis Booth	07738474144
Cubs	Karol Leeves	531104
Flower Show	Alan Ford	863276
Football: Speldhurst Rangers	Ollie Crees	07919467576
GP Surgery		863040
Guides	Sybil Oddy	862746
Library	Olive West	863234
Mothers' Union	Christine Baker	540793
Mothers & Toddlers	Jenny Fitzsimmons	541200
Nursery School		860557
Parish Council: Chair	Paul Curry	07515 938765
Vice Chair	Katrina Lyle	862070
Parish Clerk	Katie Neve	862927
Parish Councillors	Richard Ellery	864077
	Kim Rajah	863852
	Alan Rowe	863404
Police Community Support Officer	Gemma.Gilbert@kent.police.uk	
Primary School	Stephanie Hayward	863044
Rainbows	Alex Brown	
	speldhurstainbows@gmail.com	
Recreation Ground	Ed Wesson	07799 731247
Running Group	Paul Eames	07975 577630
Speldhurst Association of Men	Brian Tasker	862301
Snooker Club	Nick Fenton	864144
Speldhurst Art Exhibition	Maria Turner	863394
Speldhurst News Editors	Maria Turner	863394
	Sara Turner	863226
	Judith Malim	864268
Speldhurst News Advertising	Eric Roughley	863222
St Mary's Church Rector	Douglas Wren	862821
Administrator	Andrea Burgess	861187

Stoolball	Donna Burden	524793 07810 048599
Scouts	Nick Burgess	863362
Shop & Post Office	Jo-Anne Dekker	863158
Village Fete: Chair	Mike Harrowing	0772 5561154
Village Hall	Sam Van Niekerk	07894 903979
Village Website	Miranda Hawkins	863601
Walking Football	Brian Shilling	07940 013135
Walking Group	Brian Tasker	862301

Opening hours & local info:

Buses	Timetables for bus 285 Speldhurst to Tun Wells - Hams Travel 01580 879629 For info: https://hamstravel.com/services
George & Dragon PH:	Open midday till 11pm daily (Sun 10pm) 01892 338549
GP:	Mon - Fri 8am-6pm Tel: 01892 863040
Dispensary:	Mon - Fri 8.30am-1pm; 2.30-6pm (dispensary calls 8.30-11.30 only)
Library (village hall):	Monday 2-4.30pm.
Shop:	Mon-Fri 7am-5pm; Sat 8-12; Sun 9-11
Post Office:	Mon-Fri 9am-5pm; Sat 9-12; Sun Closed

To advertise: email e.roughley222@btinternet.com

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## Louise Renton

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Pilates teacher

## PILATES



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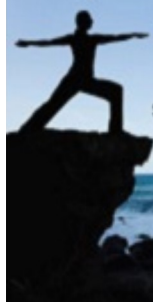
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