

GREAT DUNMOW BOOKFEST



We're turning our whole town into a bookshop!

Creating the First Essex Book Town

A pro-town, pro-local event to turn the whole of Great Dunmow into a bookshop for one day. We're doing this to promote local authors, local shops and establish Dunmow as the first Essex Book Town.

BookFest links

<https://www.talliston.com/great-dunmow-bookfest>

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1143572694423273>

Part of the Essex Book Festival 2026

<https://essexbookfestival.org.uk/>

TIME & DATE

Saturday 13 June 2026

High street closed: 11:30-17:30

BookFest: 12:00-17:00

TARGET AUDIENCE

Essex readers

BOOK CATEGORIES

Adult Fiction

Young Adult Fiction

Children's Fiction

Non-fiction in all genres

Fantasy & Science Fiction

Thriller, Suspense & Mystery

Romance

Crime

Horror
Historical
Contemporary Fiction

THE PLAN

Celebrating books, reading and our local high street with a new, unique and magical event.

JOHN TARROW

Author and creative director

When local author John Tarrow wrote the first novels set in the town, he found Great Dunmow was missing one important retailer: a bookshop. So was born the idea of turning the whole town into a giant book store for a single day.

“Essex is a county of deep history and fascinating stories, filled with writers and authors who tap into its unique sense of time and place. Great Dunmow was the perfect place for creating ‘Britain’s most extraordinary home’ (The Times) and the setting for my young adult fantasy series. And I’m looking forward to spilling a little of that Talliston magic into the town.”

CAROLE SULLIVAN

Town Mayor, Town Councillor and Author

Carole is currently Town Mayor of Dunmow, having moved into the area four years ago and working as Town Councillor since then. She is also a wellbeing author and co-founder of The Happy Ladder, a podcast investigating how to increase happiness and improve wellbeing.

“When two friends and I founded *The Happy Ladder* and wrote *Life Balance*, we set out to create something practical, a guide to living a happier, more content, and relaxed life. Over 17,000 copies later, it’s clear that people are seeking tools to reconnect with what truly matters and navigate life’s challenges with greater ease. That same spirit of reflection and resilience runs through my work in Great Dunmow, where I serve as Town Councillor and Town Mayor, championing inclusive governance and community wellbeing.

“Great Dunmow is evolving, and with it, the opportunity to build a more resilient and joyful community. I believe wellbeing isn’t just personal; it’s civic. Through creative events, environmental stewardship, and shared leadership, I’m committed to helping our town grow stronger together.”

ROS GREEN

Director of Essex Book Festival

Ros has worked across multiple artforms as a creative producer/director, journalist, arts consultant, and educator, both in the UK and Australia. She began working as Manager of the Canal Café Theatre, a tiny venue located above a pub in Little Venice, London

(which taught everything ever needed about survival in the arts), and finally ‘landed’ at Essex Book Festival following completion of her PhD in Literature at the University of Essex.

Now recognised as one of the leading festivals of its kind in the East of England, it invites writers and artists from all over the world to take part in its activities and events. Each year the festival hosts 100+ events in a range of venues across Essex, extending from Basildon Library, Hylands Estate, Chalkwell Hall, University of Essex and Anglia Ruskin University, Harlow Library, and Electric Palace Harwich, to Jaywick Martello Tower, Grays Library, Chelmsford Cathedral, Crossing Temple Barns, and Tudor Palace Layer Marney Tower.

“Essex Book Festival is hugely excited to be involved in Great Dunmow BookFest. For a town without a bookshop, it is a fantastic idea to bring the community together through storytelling and books. And then, perhaps - you never know - a bookshop might be born in Great Dunmow. Wouldn't that be nice!”

ABOUT GREAT DUNMOW

Great Dunmow is a charming and bustling historic market town in Essex, known for its Roman and medieval history, including its unique Flitch Trials where couples prove their marital happiness.

The town boasts over 160 listed buildings, including the 16th-century Old Town Hall and the Grade I-listed 13th-century Church of St. Mary the Virgin. Yet beyond the historic Market Place are a host of unique places and attractions such as The Maltings Museum, Doctor's Pond and The Flitch Way.

The town has a strong sense of community and is filled with creative and passionate people drawn by Great Dunmow's mix of old and new architecture, a thriving high street notable for its independent shops, cafes, and pubs.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Dunmow

ABOUT TALLISTON HOUSE & GARDENS

Ten years ago, a once ordinary house in an ordinary street was revealed to be a wonderland hiding in plain sight. Covered on every terrestrial TV channel and Netflix and unique in many ways, Talliston is also the setting of a YA series of novels that makes stepping into its 13 fantastical rooms a journey inside a living and breathing storybook.

The Stranger's Guide To Talliston and its sequels are the only novels set in Great Dunmow. Equal parts *A Monster Calls*, *His Dark Materials* and *The Lion, Witch And The Wardrobe*, the books are classic tales of adventure that introduce readers to an otherworld hiding in plain sight, cloaked in magic and steeped in imagined history. Yet beyond its fearsome huntsmen and battling magicians lies the story of children discovering the secret that lies within all of us – the power to live an extraordinary life. The novels will delight, challenge and inspire children and adults alike – and show that the world of our dreams can be found in the most unlikely of places.

www.talliston.com

ABOUT ESSEX BOOK FESTIVAL

Essex Book Festival is unique. It is the only festival of its kind to take place over a one-month period, hosted by over thirty five venues, across one of the UK's largest and most diverse counties.

Including both established writers and emerging artists, the festival delivers a broad programme of events including author talks, conversations, guided walks, workshops, panel discussions, family activities, writing surgeries, performances, talk & taste events, live podcasts, exhibitions, writing residences and book club events.

<https://essexbookfestival.org.uk/>