

GREAT DUNMOW BOOKFEST



SATURDAY 13 JUNE 2026

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

Newsletter & Progress Report #1

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The Vision

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

Final Festival Name

Great Dunmow BookFest

We're Turning our Whole Town into a Bookshop!

Time & Date

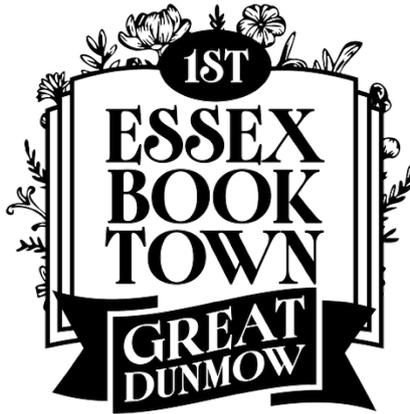
Saturday 13 June 2026

High street closed: 11:30-17:30

BookFest: 12:00-17:00

Target Audience

Essex readers



Countdown to BookFest

Thanks for joining us for this extraordinary event!

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.

We're inviting Essex authors, independent bookshops, libraries and schools to be part of this event as we establish Great Dunmow as the first Essex Book Town.

We will be publishing four newsletters in the run up to the event. These will cover different aspects of the BookFest as we countdown to the big day. These will be sent by email to all participants and be posted online on the main website page and Facebook event.

JANUARY 2026: Great Dunmow BookFest progress report #1
General information, time, date and top-level organisation, FAQs

MID-MARCH 2026: Great Dunmow BookFest progress report #2
List of shops & authors, General information, time, date and top-level organisation, FAQs

EARLY MAY: Great Dunmow BookFest progress report #3
Finalised map and detailed organisation of how things will run, including final parking, setup and takedown, FAQs. This will also be the time we will publish a visitor information pack.

START JUNE: Great Dunmow BookFest progress report #4 final
Final details, plus any last minute updates or issues. We will also publish a final visitor information pack.

Happy to field questions for the FAQs, but if that topic is to be covered in future editions, we'll ask you to wait until then.



Key event information

SATURDAY 13 JUNE 2026

HIGH STREET CLOSED: 11:30-17:30

BOOK FESTIVAL: 12:00-17:00

END OF PLAY FRIDAY 12 JUNE 2026 Shop/author setup

For those authors travelling a distance, and cannot setup the day before please get in touch and we will discuss – as setup must happen before shops open or soon after to avoid disruption on site.

SHOP OPENINGS ON SATURDAY As per shop opening times

AUTHORS ARRIVAL ON SATURDAY Latest two hours before 12:00 start time

The event is a major task of management and organisation, and our team is a small one, so please bear with us. In the final newsletter we will give contact details for key people on the day, but as long as each author and each shop liaise together, the day will run itself.

This is a free event for authors, shops and visitors.

Marketing & social media commitment

The Great Dunmow BookFest will live or die on the footfall we get for the event. Every newsletter we will attach what we'd like you to share online, the tags for Instagram and Facebook and images and artwork to make our communications consistent and familiar.

Every shop and author, by signing up to be included, is required to socially post about this event. If anyone runs a writing, community group or similar we also ask that you share to those too. This will also be a way to promote your books, attendance, our unique shops and highlight any special offers or discounts for customers, or to share timings for giveaways or other events.

Tags #dunmowbookfest

 #essexbookfestival

 #dunmow

 #essexbooktown

 #bookfestival

 #tallistonhouseandgardens

As Talliston is the host website, and main organiser we do ask that the house and gardens are tagged as the primary point of contact. The main online place for centralised information is:

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

Sponsorship opportunities

Every event needs supporters! We would love your involvement to propel your business into the heart of the community, increase your footfall and bring new customers through your door. Sponsorship opportunities include: bronze, silver, gold and platinum packages and include:

- brand visibility
- logo placement on BookFest town map (limited opportunities available)
- branded banner: displayed throughout the day
- Essex Book Festival programme: 30,000 copies circulated + online
- Outlook magazine: 5,000 copies circulated to Great Dunmow
- events directory online
- social media coverage leading up to the event, Facebook and Instagram
- tote bag inclusion for discount vouchers or products

These will be limited, so to get involved and support your local community, please contact:

Deborah
07903 624665
dgevents2025@outlook.com

regarding the sponsorship packages and availability and any questions that you may have. We look forward to hearing from you!

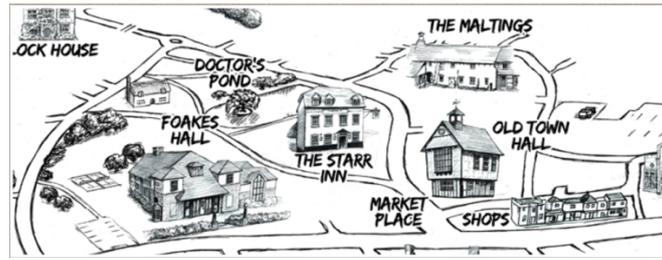
A media pack can be sent on request or downloaded from the BookFest website.



BookFest Tote Bags

Talliston is sponsoring the tote bags for the event given away free to the first 500 visitors. These will allow visitors to store bought books, promotional literature, bookmarks et. al.

The images shown above are rough mock ups: final design is to be decided in March.



BookFest Town Map

For the festival author and illustrator Murray Fisher (*Underlings: The Spark Engine*) is working on a fantasy town map that will include every shop and author for the big day. This will be printed as an A3 parchment map and given out to all visitors. This will be a major sponsorship area of the event.

The images shown above are rough mock ups: final design is to be decided in March.



For our Shop Owners

Firstly thank you for working with us and for taking part. It is going to be a wonderful opportunity for local businesses.

How will it all work?

Basically we want every shop window to look like a bookshop, and generate footfall to your businesses driven by this unique event. Earlier this year we mocked up books in two shop windows to give a quick visual of how things might look.

What author is in my shop?

We will be announcing which author (or authors in the case of multiple authors or larger venues) is paired with which shop mid-March and that newsletter will include additional information about organisation of the day. A full list will also be shared online including all the shops involved etc. and a single link to your business. This will also be the time when you will receive contact details of your author owner and start planning with them.

What is happening on the day?

On Friday 12 June we have asked that authors come in and set up the shop window displays and arrange their internal spaces for opening on Saturday. For some venues this will not be possible and set up will have to be on the day, or you may prefer to set up earlier in the week.

On Saturday 13 June you will open as usual (start of event is 12:00 midday) and we ask you to be open until the official end of the event (17:00).

There will be no central programme of events (as on this scale it is likely to quickly go out of date!) Instead shops and authors are asked to use shop-by-shop signage to promote book readings, giveaways and more. Authors will work directly with you to maximise visibility and encourage people inside. Every shop is a unique space and has individual requirements, so use your shop owner as first point of contact and work together to create a mutually successful experience.

All payments for authors' books and merchandise are their individual responsibility. We are also suggesting authors could work with you to offer shop discounts (perhaps if they buy an

authors' books?) The possibilities are for you to explore and exploit. There will be a map listing all venues and their authors, but on-street visibility is key.

Safety & security

We want to make sure that your shops do not become too packed, so perhaps create signage allowing only so many people inside or The key here is not for us to tell you how to manage the event – as who else is better to organise than you!

High Street road closure

The entire High Street will be pedestrianised for this event. Exact details will be shared in future newsletters, but this will allow you to use the space outside your shop if you wish. This will be especially important for cafés and similar.

Set up and takedown

We will be sending more information about specifics in our March newsletter.



For our Authors

Firstly thank you for sending your information, images and contact information.

What shop am I in?

We will be announcing which shop is paired with which author (or authors in the case of multiple authors or larger venues) mid-March and that newsletter will include additional information about organisation of the day. A full list will also be shared online including bios etc. and a single link to whichever place you have shared with us. This will also be the time when you will receive contact details of your shop owner and start planning with them.

What can I do on the day?

There will be no central programme of events (as on this scale it is likely to quickly go out of date!) Instead shops and authors are asked to use shop-by-shop signage to promote book readings, giveaways and more. Think of your shop as *your* shop. Work with the owners to maximise visibility and encourage people inside. Every shop is a unique space and has individual requirements, so use your shop owner as first point of contact and work together to create a mutually successful experience.

Taking payments

All payments for your books and merchandise are your individual responsibility. We encourage you to take card payments over cash as this will definitely increase sales over the day. We also recommend BookFest exclusive offers or discounts on the day. You could also work with the shop to offer discounts if they buy one of your books. The possibilities are for you to explore and exploit. Ask: what would make me come inside this shop. There will be a map, but visibility is key.

Set up and takedown

We will be sending more information about specifics in our March newsletter.

Prize giveaway

We are going to set up some prize giveaways on the day, so we are asking authors to donate one book each. We will order prizes by genre, so people get the books they read. If you could have that available before the start of the event we will pickup from everyone on the day. Thank you.



Talliston House & Gardens

Newton Green, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1DU

www.talliston.com

The host for this event is Great Dunmow's extraordinary home, Talliston. Ten years ago, a once ordinary house in an ordinary street was revealed to the world to be "Britain's Most Extraordinary Home" (The Sunday Times), "a mystical journey through time and space" (The Telegraph), and "one of the seven wonders of the modern world" (Philip Carr-Gomm).

Covered on every terrestrial TV channel and Netflix, plus winner of several UK awards as a top attraction and AirBnb's best places to stay, Talliston House & Gardens is a truly eccentric and unique experience. Completed in October 2015, the house has regular tours of its thirteen magical rooms, plus hosts afternoon tea and more.

Owner John Tarrow is also an author of six novels and non-fiction guidebook to the house – including the Talliston Chronicles, the only fiction books ever set in our historic town.



Talliston Writers' Circle

Did you know there's a monthly social night for authors, writers & poets at Britain's most extraordinary home? Well, you do now! This is a supportive and challenging creative group in a unique location, meeting on or around the second Monday of the month. There is also an online login to join from afar and a virtual-only meeting every other month. This is a group for all levels of talent and experience, with the aim to inspire their best, most engaging new work, and to share stories that delight and surprise. Be great to see a few of your there!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If there's something not included in the main newsletter or in this list, please email info@talliston.com with the information you need and we'll add it to the March edition.

What is the Great Dunmow Bookfest?

In a nutshell, each author (or group of authors in the same genre for larger venues) will be paired with a shop. On the day, each shop window will be your book display. You will work with your individual shop to organise setup, signage and programme. The High Street will be closed to form a pedestrian central area.

Full details are found online in the information section at:

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

When is BookFest?

Great Dunmow BookFest will run from 12:00 midday to 17:00 on Saturday 13 June 2026. There is also a A Criminally Good Night event run by Essex Book Festival at Foakes Hall on the evening of Friday 12 June 2026.

Where does the Festival take place?

The BookFest takes place all around the town of Great Dunmow, but specifically the High Street, Market Place and Angel Lane.

Are there tickets for the Festival?

No. This is a free event for everyone.

Are there events for children and families?

Yes. We have authors from most every book genre and audiences from picture books, teenagers and adults, both fiction and non-fiction. There will be a specific children's section of the BookFest in and around the Dunmow Library.

How will the Bookfest work?

Each shop will be paired with an author to create a unique shopping experience.

How is parking allocated?

Dedicated BookFest parking is being arranged.

Can I buy books by participating authors?

Yes, this event is focused on meeting the authors themselves and pick up free stuff, discounted books, merchandising and signed copies of our authors' books.

How accessible is the Festival?

Dunmow is committed to removing barriers for all and we are doing our best to ensure the BookFest is as accessible as possible for everybody.

Does BookFest endorse the views voiced by participating authors?

The views and opinions expressed by our authors are their own and do not necessarily represent those of the organisers, suppliers, sponsors, or town.

What should I do if I have other questions?

If your question is not answered here then please email info@etalliston.com and we will endeavour to respond to you in a timely manner.

