

EPPING FOREST FAMILY SUMMER GUIDE July 2026

FUN!



Events, activities, things
to do, places to go in
the school holidays.

To download your own copy or to see the updated
version - please visit www.essexpublications.co.uk



Helping families to discover everything
happening locally this summer



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North Weald Village Life, Epping Town Life &
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Welcome to summer in Epping Forest

Local places to go, things to do and local events for children and families

Welcome to our first Summer Guide, including lots of suggestions for things to do locally for children and families during July. We will be updating this guide continually during the Summer to add more events and suggestions, so please check at www.essexpublications.co.uk or keep an eye on social media to plan your school holidays.

How many Lions will you find?

Family activity, free, fun and full of adventure—It's going to be Roarsome.

Throughout the summer of 2026, Harlow, Epping and Loughton will be transformed by a pride of super-sized lion sculptures, each one uniquely decorated by talented artists from across the region and beyond. These eye-catching works of art will form an exciting, interactive trail for locals and visitors to explore.

Alongside the main trail, a collection of 'little lions'— created by local schools and community groups — will also be on display, showcasing the creativity of our young people.

A trail map will navigate avid art adventurers across the trail. When the trail ends, the large sculptures will be auctioned to raise funds for St Clare Hospice.

By taking part, you'll be helping support the patients and families who rely on the care of St Clare Hospice.

To find out more please visit lionsontheloose.co.uk



IDEA: Go bird watching and see how many birds you can see. • Which one was your favourite?

IDEA: Read a book and draw a picture of your favourite character

SUMMER ART CAMP
- SO STUDIOS -
Brickfield House, High Road, Thornwood, Epping, CM16 6TH
Dates: 20th & 22nd, 27th & 29th July • 3rd & 4th Aug
Ages 6-12 • 9am-3:30pm
All materials provided
Canvas Painting
Charcoal Drawing
Mixed-Media Collage
Bubble Painting
Watercolour Salt Magic
Max 8 Children
£30 per morning or afternoon session
£55 for the full day
info@so-studios.co.uk
07368466310
Scan to Book Your Space!

Picnics

Picnics are great fun for the whole family. They can also be good value, as you can take your own food and drink, picnic mat etc. You can often bring a ball and the kids can get some exercise and include the adults.

Some local popular picnic spots include:-

High Beach

A classic picnic favourite. Wide open grassland, tall trees for shade and plenty of room for children to run around. It's also close to cafés and ice cream stops, making it ideal for a full family day out.

Connaught Water

A beautiful lakeside setting with ducks, gentle paths and lots of benches. Perfect for younger families or anyone wanting a peaceful, scenic spot without a long walk.

Stonards Hill Recreation Ground, Epping

There is a play area and a great café if you do want to buy an ice cream or even spoil the family pet as they often do treats for the dogs.



IDEA: Try writing a short letter to a friend or relative and posting it.

Play in the Park

Monday 20 July

Abridge 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Abridge Village Hall Field, 39 Ongar Road, Abridge RM4 1UD

Tuesday 21 July

Loughton 10am to 12 noon

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (near tennis courts), Roding Road, Loughton IG10 3BS

Chigwell 1:30pm to 3:30pm

The Limes Green, Copperfield, Chigwell IG7 5LF

Wednesday 22 July

North Weald 10am to 12 noon

Memorial Playing Field, Queens Hall, School Green Lane, North Weald CM16 6EY

Buckhurst Hill 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Roding Valley Recreation Ground, Spider Park Field, Buckhurst Hill IG9 6BX

Thursday 23 July

Waltham Abbey 10am to 12 noon

Town Mead Leisure Park, Waltham Abbey EN9 1RS

Ongar 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Shelley Park, St Peters Avenue, Ongar CM5

0BT

Friday 24 July

Ongar 10am to 12 noon

Willingale Cricket Club, 183 The Street, Ongar CM5 0SJ

Epping 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Epping Green, Doorstep Green CM16 6PN

Monday 27 July

Ongar 10am to 12 noon

High Ongar Village Hall Field, Mill Lane, High Ongar CM5 0RN

Ongar 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Love Lane Playing Fields, Love Lane, Chipping Ongar CM5 9BL

Tuesday 28 July

Waltham Abbey 10am to 12 noon

Town Mead Leisure Park, Waltham Abbey EN9 1RS

Theydon Bois 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Theydon Green, corner of Poplar Row/ The Green, Theydon Bois CM16 7LW

Wednesday 29 July

Epping 10am to 12 noon

Stonards Hill Recreation Ground, Epping CM16 4QF

Buckhurst Hill 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Hornbeam Road Recreation Ground. (Near

Newton Court). Buckhurst Hill IG9 6JT

Friday 31 July

Loughton 10am to 12 noon

Jessel Green Playground, Colebrook Lane, Loughton IG10 2HP

Epping 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Epping Green, Doorstep Green CM16 6PN

Tuesday 4 August

Loughton 10 am to 12 noon

Roding Valley Recreation Ground (near Tennis Courts), Roding Road, Loughton IG10

These sessions are free with no booking required. The sessions are fantastic for local families due to its accessibility, variety, and community feel. This is a great opportunity for parents and carers to socialize with other families and even bring a picnic while the children safely play.



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Epping Ongar Railway

Climb aboard and enjoy a truly memorable journey through time – perfect for family days out in Essex, days out with grandparents, and anyone who loves classic rail travel. Travel through picturesque countryside, ancient woodland, and charming historic towns as you experience the magic of Britain’s railway heritage together – perfect for families.



With one great-value ticket, you can enjoy three heritage experiences in one day – bus, steam train, and diesel train – with unlimited travel throughout your visit. Throughout the year, they host a wide range of family events in Essex, seasonal experiences, and enthusiast days – so there’s always something new to discover.

For details of ticket prices, how to visit and events taking place please visit www.eorailway.co.uk

Introducing Epping Forest’s Brand New Treasure Trails

Discover the brand new **FREE**, self-guided clue-solving adventures in Waltham Abbey, Ongar and Loughton - fun for all ages!

Explore your local area, crack clues and uncover hidden stories on engaging walking trails, each taking around 2 hours to complete.

1. Simply visit treasuretrails.co.uk
2. Search your postcode and select one of the three Epping Forest trails.
3. Then use the corresponding code at checkout to download it for free:

CODES: Ongar2026 | WalthamAbbey2026 | Loughton2026



Brambley Hedge Trail

1.5 miles through the forest.

Along the Trail you will find 17 carved oak sculptures of characters from the Brambley Hedge books in Epping Forest. A Trail map is available to buy from the Epping Forest Visitor Centre at Chingford, enabling you to tick off each character as you go and return to collect a completer's sticker at the end.

Every sculpture is hand-carved from sustainably sourced wood, to blend with the ancient woodland surroundings.

Starting point Visitor Centre at Chingford, Chingford, 6 Ranger's Road London E4 7QH

To find out more - www.visiteppingforest.org

PLUM PICKING

Bloomfield Fruit Farm is lovely for families. Everyone can have fun picking your own plums and pay for those that you pick. You can always reward yourself with a piece of cake and a lovely cup of coffee. Open from mid July to end of August Ashlyns Lane, Ongar CM5 0NB

Read to the Beat is coming to a library near you this summer!

This year’s Summer Reading Challenge will inspire children to explore the connection between stories and songs, discovering how reading and music both ignite imagination and creativity.

The challenge runs from Saturday 18th July to Saturday 5th September in all Essex libraries and mobile libraries.

There are six stickers for children to collect over the summer. They earn them by telling staff in libraries about the books they have read, or doing related activities. After collecting six stickers, they earn their certificate and medal. A ribbon to show off their medal can be bought from the library (while stocks last) for 50p each.

Children can read any library book of their choice; fiction, non-fiction, picture books or books they share with parents and carers – they all count. Children under four are not forgotten, with a special version of Read to the Beat just for them.

This challenge is open to all children, free of charge.



Children’s Photo Competition

When you are out and about enjoying our local area or at home, why not take a photo and send it via email to the editor—june@essexpublications.co.uk. There are two age categories 5—10 and 11—16 years. So please include name and age. All entries will be judged by the editor and Sarah Oliver who runs her own photography studio. Prices will include Amazon vouchers. And the winning entries will be featured in the magazines. The competition will close on 31st August 2026. So get snapping!