

South Woodham Ferrers



What Should I Do If My Ex Doesn't Pay Child Maintenance?

Update on Mobile Breast Screening Unit

Interview part 2 with Paul J King Funeral Directors

Competitions - Fantastic prizes to be won this month

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Issue
13

FREE



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WOODHAM FISH BAR

FISH

Cod	Medium: £9.50 Large: £11.00
Cod Bites (approx)	£7.00
Haddock	£9.00
Shrimp	£12.00
Legend Box (Cod)	£15.00
Cod & Chips with creamy garlic sauce, coleslaw, dill pickle	
Legend Box (Haddock)	£15.00
Haddock & Chips with creamy garlic sauce, coleslaw, dill pickle	
Legend Box (Shrimp)	£15.00
Shrimp & Chips with creamy garlic sauce, coleslaw, dill pickle	
Scampi	£8.00
Fish Cake	£3.00
Calamari (approx)	£3.50
Cod Roe	£4.50
Chips	Medium: £3.50 Large: £5.00
Pot Chips	Medium: £4.00 Large: £5.50
Chips Roll	£4.50



SAUSAGE

Sausage	£2.50
Barbecued Sausage	£2.50
Sausage	£2.50

PIES

Chicken & Mushroom	£4.00
Steak & Kidney	£4.00
Minced Beef & Onion	£4.00
Spring Roll	£2.50



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2 Pcs Fried Chicken	£3.50
3 Pcs Fried Chicken	£5.00
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5 Pcs Fried Chicken	£8.00
Make it Meal (Chips & Drink)	£3.90



HOT WINGS

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12 Pcs Nugget Chunks	£10.00
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1/2 Pounder Burger	£9.00	£9.50
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Woodham Stackers		£8.50
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The Hammer	£6.50	£7.00
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Halloumi Burger	£6.00	
Letterm & mayo		
Add Halloumi	£2.00	
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Add Mushroom	£0.50	
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Any Sausage & Chips
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Sharing #3

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Sharing #4

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OUR TOWN BLOG

Hi everyone,

I hope you all enjoyed the first part of our interview with Paul J. King. We're delighted to bring you the second and final part in this month's issue.

What a dramatic finish to the World Cup! As always, the England squad certainly kept us on the edge of our seats. Finishing with the bronze medal was a fantastic achievement, and every player should be incredibly proud of what they accomplished. Congratulations also to the eventual winners—although I have to admit I found the final itself a little disappointing. You would expect the two best teams in the world to produce a more exciting match!

How have you all been coping with the recent heatwave? I've been starting work much earlier each day to avoid the midday temperatures. Thankfully, things have cooled down a little while I've been putting together the August issue.

My two Bernese Mountain Dogs have certainly been making the most of the weather by cooling off in their paddling pool. We'd love to see how your pets have been keeping cool too, so please send us your favourite photos and we may feature them in a future issue.



Have you been checking our online events section? It's always worth confirming with organisers before setting

off, particularly for events involving animals. Sadly, several dog shows have had to be cancelled because of the extreme temperatures, which was absolutely the right decision. If these hotter summers become more common, perhaps organisers will need to rethink when and where these events are held.

There is also some good news if you've been following the progress of the NHS Mobile Breast Screening Unit—turn to page 12 for the latest update.

Many of us were saddened to hear about the explosion at Highlands Farm in Rettendon. Our thoughts are with everyone affected, especially the businesses that have suffered. We wish you all the very best and hope to see you back up and running again soon.

By the time this magazine lands on your doorstep, many of you will hopefully be enjoying a well-earned staycation or summer holiday. Wherever you're spending your time, I hope you have a wonderful break and create plenty of happy memories with your family and friends.

As always, we'd love to hear from you. If you have a story to share, an event to promote, or simply want to get in touch, please contact us by email, phone, or through our social media channels.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

e: wendy@ourtownmagazine.co.uk

t: 01245 203123

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Press Release

FIREFIGHTERS' PLEA TO ESSEX RESIDENTS DURING BUSIEST WEEK OF THE YEAR



*L/R Firefighters at the scene of a fire in Tendring Green
Firefighters at the scene of a fire in Little Waltham*

Essex firefighters are urging residents to avoid fireworks, bonfires and disposable barbecues after crews responded to 570 incidents during one of the Service's busiest weeks in four years.

Between 8am on Friday 24 July and 8am on Thursday 30 July, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service's Control team received 2,029 emergency 999 calls, resulting in firefighters being mobilised to 570 separate incidents.

Crews responded to multiple serious and complex incidents across Essex, often at the same time, while maintaining emergency cover throughout the county. These included major fires and incidents requiring a significant multi-agency response.

The most significant incident was the major industrial fire at Highlands Farm in East Hanningfield, the largest fire tackled by the Service in decades. At its height, more than 100 firefighters and 20 fire engines were at the scene.



Firefighters at the scene of a fire in East Hanningfield

During the fire, a large amount of fertiliser exploded and 20 firefighters were taken to hospital. Four suffered minor injuries, while the remainder received precautionary assessments, including checks for possible hearing damage following the explosion. All were discharged that night.

Rick Hylton, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, said:

"I want to personally thank every firefighter, fire control operator and member of staff who has played a part in what has been our busiest week in four years. On many occasions this week, we've had multiple large incidents



*L/R Chief Fire Officer / Chief Executive Rick Hylton
Area Manager Dan Partridge*

ongoing simultaneously and we've been able to respond to every emergency call. Summer is usually a busy period for us and our crews have been attending back-to-back incidents for several weeks now."

In a direct appeal to Essex communities, Rick added: "We really need you to help us by taking steps to minimise fire and water risks in our county and give our firefighters some respite from the relentless incidents of recent months."

Here's how you can help Essex Fire this summer:

- **Avoid using fireworks, lighting bonfires or having barbecues on dry grass or in the countryside**
- **Dispose of cigarettes safely**
- **Take litter home, particularly glass bottles, which can increase the risk of fire**
- **Report fires immediately by calling 999**
- **Download the free what3words app to help emergency services identify your location if needed**
- **Stay safe in and around water, remembering "Float to Live" if you or someone else is struggling in the water**
- **Report any information about deliberate fires anonymously to FireStoppers**

Crews have also attended major fires involving fields, crops and other outdoor areas as weeks of hot, dry weather have left large parts of Essex particularly vulnerable to fire. Two large field fires over the weekend are believed to have been caused by fireworks.

Following four heatwaves and a prolonged period of very little rain, the risk of outdoor fires remains high. Crops, grassland and vegetation are extremely dry, meaning a single spark can start a fire that spreads rapidly.

Area Manager Dan Partridge said:

"While these hot and dry conditions continue, we are asking people not to use fireworks, light bonfires or have barbecues on or near dry grassland. It only takes a single spark or ember to start a fire that can spread rapidly through dry crops and vegetation.

"We've seen first-hand this week how quickly these fires can develop. They put lives at risk, place significant demand on emergency services and can devastate farmland, wildlife and people's livelihoods in a matter of minutes.

"Most wildfires are preventable. Everyone has a part to play in protecting our countryside and communities."

More info on the link below:

<https://ourtownswf.co.uk/whats-the-address-of-your-emergency/>

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June's Competition Winners

CAPTION CORNER - WHAT A FANTASTIC ENTRY SEE BELOW!

When your Uber arrives, but it's powered by biscuits - Jayne Harrington

This week's BOGOF offer! - Carol Webster

Hey Rambo, next time it's my turn to sit up front - Jan Talikowski

Next time I think we should get an Uber to go home! - Brian Ashton

Why does he always get to sit at the front? Frances Ashton

Are we nearly there yet? Jill Hunt

Not wheelie enjoying this - Katie Harris

I'm not turning around until you apologise - Rosie Shurmur

Doggie power! - Elsie Clark

Our chauffeur works for biscuits - Daren Butcher

The Tour De Bark has officially begun - Sam Clark

Who let the dogs out! - Gareth Clark

Tour De Sainsbury starts here. - Laraine Clark

They said "Get on your bike" so I brought a pal! - Lucy Deacon

Russel's on a race - Ollie Ridgwell

Two peas in a pod - Gracie Ridgwell

Two jacks in a box! - Claire Ridgwell

What you looking at, fool - Chris Bohannan

That's what daddy meant when he said he was going dogging - Steve Lucas

**Jayne Harrington - £50 Winning caption,
When your Uber arrives, but it's powered by biscuits**

Kacey Hammond - £20 winner photo competition

Gracie Ridgwell - £10 second prize photo competition



Junes's Caption Photo



Winner - Kacey Hammond



Second place - Gracie Ridgwell



**For more competitions
see page 30**

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ESSEX POLICE CHIEF'S PROMISE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES SEES NEW ADVISORY GROUP SET UP;



Members of the farming community discussed the formation of the new Essex Rural Independent Advisory Group during a visit to Essex Police Headquarters last month

Essex Police is working closely with rural communities and listening to their concerns by setting up the first Essex Rural Independent Advisory Group.

Borne out of a meeting between Chief Constable Ben-Julian Harrington, local farmers and the National Farmers' Union, the Rural IAG will provide a direct line of communication between rural communities and Essex Police.

Superintendent Darren Deex says: "Setting up a Rural IAG was one of the Chief's promises to our rural communities after he met with local farmers and the NFU. The first meeting is due to take place in early September so it really is a case of 'you said, we did'.

"We know rural communities face unique challenges, so we must work with them, not just for them, to improve confidence and tackle issues and crimes which affect them.

"Setting up the Rural IAG will help us to do this by bringing together people who live and work in our rural communities for open, honest conversations about what matters to them" adds Darren.

"This will help the force shape our response to rural crime and policing, now and in the future, and to identify emerging issues and developing crime trends.

"We expect to be challenged by members when we don't get it right and to work on practical solutions with them."

Uttlesford farmer Matt Register welcomes the new Rural IAG.

"It's a fantastic idea. The Rural IAG will really help the rural community. And I think it will help Essex Police to better understand rural life because farming is not a job, it's a way of life," he says

"I know that, from the outside, it can sometimes be difficult to fully appreciate the effect rural crime has on farmers and the rural community. It brings fear, intimidation and distress.

"That's why I hope that, by working together with Essex Police – who I have the utmost respect for – the Rural IAG will help strengthen relationships between the police and our rural community, enabling us to learn from one another and work together to reduce rural crime."

In May, Mr Harrington pledged to improve the force's response to rural crime and hare coursing, in particular.

"The Essex Police Rural Engagement Team does an excellent job dealing with this issue and has had some good results securing charges and seizing vehicles," he said at the time.

"But I know there is more we can do to improve our immediate response to calls."

Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst says of the move: "Rural communities are impacted by specific forms of anti-social behaviour and crime. The police response must recognise that and be able to work with rural communities to increase confidence.

"That is why establishing a Rural Independent Advisory Group is so important. By bringing together members of our Rural Crime Forum and representatives from across the rural community, it will help provide valuable insight, constructive challenge and independent scrutiny.

"Working closely with those who live and work in rural Essex means we can strengthen trust, improve communication and ensure policing continues to meet the needs of our rural communities."

The force's Rural Engagement Team is currently delivering specialised training to local policing teams, who are usually the first officers to respond to calls about hare coursing in progress. This will be followed by refresher training for neighbourhood policing teams.

Inspector Terry Jacobs says: "We are sharing our team's specialist knowledge of how hare coursers operate and the specific legislation relating to this barbaric crime.

"We're also reminding them of what policing powers they have to disrupt and deter hare coursers, such as issuing banning orders and seizing vehicles and dogs."



Inspector Terry Jacobs heads up our Rural Engagement Team

Response officers and neighbourhood policing officers in Braintree and Uttlesford are also being trained to drive 4x4 vehicles off-road and two more 4x4s have been made available in the Uttlesford district.

Improving communications is key and members of the Essex Rural Crime Forum will now be meeting with the force's Rural Engagement Team each month.

Terry explains: "We want to hear their concerns, explain how we can support them and identify pressing issues affecting victims and the wider rural community so we can resolve them quickly."

All this will supplement the work the Rural Engagement Team already undertakes in rural communities and on rural roads.

But police can't do it without everyone's help, Terry stresses. "We rely on reports from the public to identify emerging crime trends and to provide evidence to build good cases which will lead to successful prosecutions.

"If we don't know about it, we can't take action. So please, if you have any information about a crime or anti-social behaviour, tell us.

"You can report it online via our website or, if it's a crime in progress or someone's in danger, ring 999. You can also contact Crimestoppers, anonymously, online or by calling 0800 555 111.

"Please, provide as much information as you can – in the case of hare coursing, for example, a What3Words location, a description of the people involved, vehicle registration numbers, vehicle descriptions. However, it is very important that you don't confront suspects or put yourself at risk."

Rural crime has fallen overall across Essex in the past year, including a halving of incidents where machinery has been stolen, but there was a marked rise in incidents of hare coursing compared with previous years.

Since August 2025, the Rural Engagement Team has seized seven vehicles believed to be involved in hare coursing and issued seven community protection notices (CPNs), and five community protection warnings (CPWs), with 12 individuals dealt with.

What is an IAG?

Independent Advisory Groups are panels of volunteers who provide impartial feedback, community perspectives and constructive challenges to police forces to improve trust, ensure fair policing practices and promote equality.

Members raise issues of concern or community tension with police and provide a critical analysis of policing policy and practice.

As well as the new Rural IAG, Essex Police also has a Strategic IAG, which looks at forcewide policing issues, and ten district IAGs which look at more local issues.

<https://www.essex.police.uk/iag>



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LONDON MARATHON RUNNERS RAISE OVER £160K FOR FARLEIGH HOSPICE

Farleigh Hospice is celebrating a record fundraising total, as its 2026 London Marathon runners raised £162,833 this year.



44 runners joined Team Farleigh to take on the capital's iconic sporting challenge on Sunday 26 April. 34 of them had successfully applied for charity places through the hospice, while the other 10 had secured their places through the London Marathon ballot and chosen to fundraise for Farleigh.

Their fantastic fundraising total was revealed at a special celebration evening at the hospice on 26 June.

Debbie de Boltz, Head of Fundraising at Farleigh, said, "Thank you to all of our amazing Team Farleigh London Marathon runners who trained so hard and gave so much on the day to complete the 26.2-mile course. We are very grateful to you and your families, friends and colleagues for raising £162,833. This is an amazing achievement which will help Farleigh to continue to be there for the local people who rely on our hospice care."

Farleigh Hospice provides compassionate care and support to adults living with life-limiting illnesses and their families across mid Essex, including Braintree, Burnham, Chelmsford, Halstead, Maldon and Witham. This takes place both in their homes and at the hospice's specialist Inpatient Unit. The charity makes no charge for its much-needed services and relies on public fundraising and sponsorship.

Farleigh's fundraising team is already looking ahead to the 2027 London Marathon, which will make history as a special one-off, two-day event. They have secured an additional 25 charity places for this world-famous race, giving even more supporters the chance to tick this challenge off their bucket list, while raising vital funds for Farleigh Hospice.

The charity provides plenty of encouragement every step of the way - from the start of training through to race day - along with a comprehensive package of support. This includes organised training runs,

training tips and resources, an e-newsletter, fundraising support, a Farleigh running vest, a pre-race pasta party and a free coach to take runners into London for the marathon.



Adele Mortlock took part last year. She said, "If anyone is looking for a local charity to represent at the London Marathon, Farleigh Hospice is for you. The support throughout, from the fundraising team and the Team Farleigh running group, was just phenomenal - you feel like you're part of a family."

"When you are training, you're out there pounding the streets alone, so I found the wonderful group training runs very helpful. And on marathon day, Farleigh provides a coach to take the runners to the start, so there's no stress at all."

Farleigh's charity places are in high demand and will be allocated quickly. Anyone interested in running the London Marathon for Team Farleigh is encouraged to contact the hospice as soon as possible. To find out more, please visit: www.farleighhospice.org/marathon.

Running for a cause that matters!

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Hi, I'm Sonia, a counsellor and hypnotherapist based in South Woodham Ferrers, and I've been working in this field for over 10 years.



Sonia Barker

I wanted to share a little about the work I do.

Much of my work involves helping clients gain a deeper understanding of themselves and make sense of why they're feeling the way they do. When someone comes to me experiencing symptoms such as anxiety or depression, my focus is on understanding the root cause, because that's what needs treating.

The first thing I look at is what's happening in their current life. Are they in an unhealthy relationship? Are they struggling at work, worried about money, or dealing with ill health? If none of these seem to explain their symptoms, we look a little deeper.

Often, unresolved experiences from the past can continue to affect us without us realising it. Grief, trauma, or difficult life events that haven't been fully processed can have a significant impact on our mental and emotional wellbeing.

I'm also trained to recognise when someone's difficulties may be linked to neurodivergence, such as ADHD or autism. With greater awareness in recent years, many more children are being diagnosed, and because these conditions can run in families, many adults are now discovering they are neurodivergent too. For many people, it's not about having a label—it's about finally understanding themselves.

Historically, research into ADHD focused mainly on hyperactive boys. As a result, many girls were overlooked for years, sometimes decades. Their hyperactivity was often internal rather than physical, and they were more likely to be described as daydreamers, shy, or simply distracted.

Women often present differently to men, which is one reason the average age of diagnosis for women has traditionally been much later than for boys. ADHD can present in different ways, including predominantly hyperactive, predominantly inattentive, or combined presentation. Some people also have both ADHD and autistic traits, often referred to as AuDHD.

In an ADHD brain, dopamine—the neurotransmitter involved in motivation, reward, and pleasure—is regulated differently from a neurotypical brain. This can make motivation, focus, and task initiation more challenging. It can also increase the likelihood of seeking dopamine through activities such as scrolling on a phone, shopping, gambling, excessive caffeine or sugar consumption, alcohol, or other addictive behaviours.

For many women, symptoms become much more noticeable during perimenopause, when hormonal changes can significantly affect ADHD symptoms, making it much harder to continue masking or coping in the ways they always have.

Many neurodivergent people also find they have a shorter social battery and need more time to rest and recover after social interaction.

There are many ways to support the brain and improve day-to-day wellbeing. Simple lifestyle changes can make a real difference, such as stretching in the morning, getting outside into daylight early in the day, drinking water before coffee, eating a protein-rich breakfast, moving your body regularly, prioritising good sleep, creating a relaxing bedtime routine, and avoiding your phone for at least an hour before bed where possible.

If any of this sounds familiar, the good news is that access to ADHD assessments has improved. Through the NHS Right to Choose pathway, eligible patients in England can often be referred to approved independent providers, which may reduce waiting times compared with some local NHS services.

An ADHD diagnosis must be made by a qualified psychiatrist or another appropriately qualified clinician working within an ADHD assessment service. As a counsellor and hypnotherapist, I can't diagnose ADHD, but I can often recognise when someone's presenting difficulties may be ADHD-related and support them in seeking the right assessment if appropriate.

If you'd like to explore what's behind your anxiety, low mood, overwhelm, or other emotional difficulties, I'd be happy to help you better understand yourself and find the support that's right for you.

Thanks for reading.

Sonia Barker

SONIA BARKER
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Dr John Cormack recently wrote to NHS England (re: Whatever happened to the Mobile Breast Screening Unit Ref. issue 10)

Latest update.

SWF Sainsbury's store manager offers to do her best to help solve the mobile breast screening unit problem.

In the aftermath of the mobile breast screening fiasco brought about by the NHS's decision to sell off the town's NHS Health Clinic together with its car park – which accommodated the unit – before giving any thought to a replacement, we have repeatedly been told that the local supermarkets have been approached and have refused to assist. This culminated in the response to a Freedom of Information Act Request sent to East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust: "Discussion has taken place with local supermarkets, who have been unable to support provision of a site and with two GP practices who were unable to help."

The GP practices were unable to help because the GPs repeatedly asked the NHS decision makers if a suitable bay could be incorporated into the CVMC site – and they were ignored – so there's no way a mobile unit could be squeezed into the already 'under pressure' CVMC car park.

As for the supermarkets ... we know that ASDA hasn't always been a friend to primary healthcare in SWF – having been involved (when it was run by Walmart) in the 2000 ECC lease scandal. This resulted in large sums being diverted from SWF's healthcare budget to a private investment company based in London and it, additionally, greatly disadvantaged the South Woodham Alliance of Businesses (SWAB). I'm sure that Cllr Lisa Kelly, who has championed early diagnosis of breast cancer in SWF for many years, will have done her best to persuade the supermarket to be as public spirited as the Chelmer Village branch of ASDA which is currently hosting a state-of-the-art mobile lung cancer screening unit.

With regard to Sainsbury's, however, I decided to approach the store again on the basis that information supplied by the 'local NHS' should always be taken with a large pinch of salt. I received a swift reply from the Store manager, Michelle. She wrote:

"I am not aware of the route through which enquiries have been made about providing breast screening services within the Sainsbury's car park. I have been in post for two years and have not received any requests relating to this service during that time.

Sainsbury's is supportive of hosting health screening services, subject to the appropriate requirements being met. I have spoken with our Estates Management team and can confirm that there are no operational concerns that would prevent such a request from being considered.

As with any third-party activity, health and safety assessments would need to be completed, and

approval would be required from the Regional Director and Field Safety Manager.

Subject to the proposed dates, however, I am confident we would be able to support this service.

I understand that a customer care complaint was previously received and responded to on the basis that no record could be found of any request for the service at this store. I am unsure which health organisation was involved or which area of Sainsbury's any previous communication may have been directed to."

This was followed by a phone call during which she was very helpful and supportive. We will meet up when she returns from holiday to discuss the next step. So ... we're not quite there yet as, whilst Michelle has the capacity to act swiftly, the 'local NHS' moves at the speed of a three-toed sloth after a Valium overdose. We will, therefore, have to anticipate and parry any excuses that will be made for further delays in an attempt to bring this long running debacle to a successful conclusion ASAP.

Dr John Cormack

Hi,

I have read this article with great interest. As I am over 73 I have to call to have a screening. I did so then I found out it was in Chelmsford, due to various reasons I could not go.

The units are the best thing for areas I used to go to the one in Basildon and then Maldon. I hope that the powers that be are looking at returning them, to state the obvious it saves lives. That is also a benefit to the NHS.

Thank you for highlighting this. Anon

Hi Wendy,

In Jan 2026 I asked my Kingsway practice nurse when I last had a mammogram, it was Feb 2023 (in the mobile unit) so it was due, she said I would be called soon.

Having had Breast Cancer diagnosed in 2007 I felt longer than 3 years between tests was too long for me. I asked to be referred to Broomfield and lo and behold when I went along in Feb 2026 I was found to have advanced Breast Cancer again stage 2 grade 3. I have since had surgery and radiotherapy and am on the road to recovery. I have still not been called for a routine mammogram ! Anon

Since we have been running the Mobile Breast Screening Unit campaign, it has to be said that it is been one of the most read pages on our online website. It continues to be an important issue that the town needs to get behind. So have your say and let us know your thoughts. We must keep the momentum going! Editor.

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WFSC Summer article

1500m Killerwales event

Huge well done to Casey and Izzy B who swam the 1500m freestyle at the Killerwales Long Distance meet. Silver and bronze medals! Brilliant swims girls!



Home Essex Mini League

Well done to our home EML squad. A fantastic evening was had with brilliant swimming! Lovely to see some new faces, we really hope you enjoyed yourselves.



A huge thank you to our coaches and volunteers, we couldn't have done it without your support!

East Region/National Open Water Championships



We are incredibly proud of Casey who signed up to the 5k East Region Open Water Championships earlier this month with very little open water experience. She had a brilliant swim, becoming a County medalist whilst also qualifying for the National Open Water Championships, which she took part in two weeks later! The National Championships was tough with a 7.5k swim, but Casey took it in her stride and smashed it! Well done Casey, brilliant achievement!

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THE BEST BOOKS FROM JULY

by Hazel Murrell

Summer is here and whether you are going to the beach, sunbathing by a pool, sitting in the park or relaxing in the garden, a book makes the perfect companion.

I have enjoyed watching families come in, eagerly choosing books together to take on holiday. This is something I enjoyed doing as a child and it is lovely to see so many carry on this tradition. For a lot of our customers, a holiday is the only time they get a chance to read and they look forward to it.

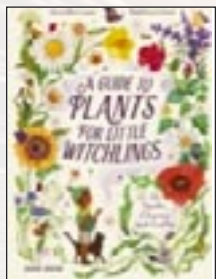
In other bookish news, 'The Odyssey's cinema release has seen a surge of interest in the classic as readers have their pick of a wide choice of editions. We often see how books coming to screen have heavily influenced their popularity with readers, as recently demonstrated with the Off Campus series and Heartstopper series. Meanwhile, we are delighted to see that debut novels still draw attention such as recent Women's Prize Winner, 'The Correspondent' by Virginia Evans which has held its place at the top of the Indie bookshop chart for four consecutive weeks. There are always new stories and authors to discover on the bookshelves.

So here are just some of the recommended new books that have been published in July.

For children, one of the picture book highlights has to be **'The Supersonic Fart' by Helen Rose and Garry Parsons (9781035085460)**. Children will love this story of the incredible birthday party that is almost ruined by the stinkiest fart that could exist. But who dealt the smell? Who will take the blame? And how bad is this fart on the fart chart? We love this book so much that we have invited Helen Rose to hold a special storytime in our shop at 11am on Wednesday 19th August. A perfect mid-week giggly distraction for little ones.



Another book for little minds and hands that is perfect for this time of year is, **'A Guide to Plants for Little Witchlings' by Jennifer Layn and Adelina Lirius (9781836271130)**. A gorgeous book for children who enjoy discovering the magic of nature, making potions from plants and casting spells. This is perfect for feeding the imagination during the summer break.



As we mentioned before, **Heartstopper** has seen a lot of popularity and fans were excited to see volume 6 come out this month, the final chapter by Alice Oseman (9781035085460). We have



watched the love blossom between Nick and Charlie and everyone is sure they will be together forever. With their own priorities starting to take hold and Nick preparing to leave for uni he is starting to wonder who he will be without Charlie.

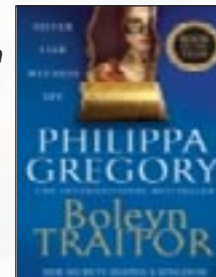
For our young adults we have discovered **'The Heirs' by Faridah Abike-Iyimide (9781835401002)**. Fans of the Inheritance Games and Knives out will enjoy this mystery with five prodigies who are children of the billionaire Leontes Button. They are trained under the 'Button Method' and have no choice but to be brilliant. However, brilliance comes at a deadly price. When Leontes is murdered, the mansion is full of suspects taking readers on a rollercoaster of twists and turns with secrets, lies, murder and money.



New out in adult books we have **Ever Land by Amy Abdelnoor (9781529155129)**. A story of two teenagers. Safa, a Palestinian who was shot and killed decades ago but is caught in the in a limbo and unable to move on until she finds out what happened to her sister. Safa needs the help of Dinah, a Jewish teenager from London, arrives in Israel with her family in 2000. Ever Land is a gripping and powerful story that sheds light on the ongoing occupation of Palestine and we are thrilled to be inviting Amy for an author evening in September.



Phillip Gregory readers will be happy to see her new book, Boleyn Traitor now in paperback (9780008745028). In the dazzling, dangerous world of the Tudor Court, nothing is more powerful, or more deadly, than a secret. This is an explosive story of one woman's survival in the treacherous heart of the Tudor court.



I could go on and continue to recommend so many new books and would love to hear about the stories you have enjoyed, over the shop counter at The Book Nut.

Until next time, happy reading.

thebooknut.co.uk

"LOCAL FITNESS COMMUNITY HELPING BEGINNERS FALL IN LOVE WITH EXERCISE NAMED NATIONAL AWARD FINALIST."

A local outdoor fitness community that believes "Showing Up Is Enough" has been recognised on the national stage after being named a finalist in the UK Small Business Awards 2026 in the Best New Business category.

Founded by local fitness coach Wes Chimmunchlam, MOTIV8 Fitness Community was created with one simple mission: to make fitness welcoming, inclusive and accessible for everyone—especially those who feel traditional gyms or fitness classes aren't for them.

Since launching its first location in South Woodham Ferrers, MOTIV8 has expanded into Burnham-on-Crouch and is preparing to launch in Brentwood, building a growing community of members who train together in supportive outdoor sessions.



business is also developing relationships with local schools, councils and community organisations to make fitness more accessible across Essex.

Founder Wes Chimmunchlam said: "When I started MOTIV8, I didn't want to build another bootcamp. I wanted to create a place where people who thought fitness wasn't for them could finally feel like they belonged. Being recognised as a finalist in the UK Small Business Awards is an incredible honour, but the real achievement is seeing people who never believed they could enjoy exercise now turning up every week with confidence and a smile.

This recognition belongs to every single member who has taken that first step and become part of our community."

The nomination recognises not only MOTIV8's rapid growth but also its commitment to building genuine community through fitness. The business has developed its own member platform, launched its unique 8 Club reward programme, and continues to expand while staying true to its values of inclusion, encouragement and belonging.

As MOTIV8 continues to grow, its vision remains the same:

To become the UK's most welcoming outdoor fitness community.

Move • Belong • Grow
Showing Up Is Enough.

Wes Chimmunchlam
Founder – MOTIV8 Fitness Community
wez@motiv8fitnesscommunity.com

Tel: 07900 858280



Unlike many fitness providers, MOTIV8 isn't focused on creating elite athletes or promoting unrealistic transformations. Instead, it helps beginners, returners to exercise, older adults and people rebuilding confidence after injury discover that movement can be enjoyable, supportive and free from judgement.

The community has already welcomed more than 70 people onto its platform and is growing. The



PAUL J KING FUNERAL DIRECTORS INTERVIEW - Part 2

Meet Paul King, a professional funeral director with a passion for his profession serving South Woodham Ferrers and the surrounding areas. A family business offering compassionate support when you need it most. Providing professional funeral services with dignity, care, and respect for every family.



How long did it take you to learn your skill?

I have been learning my profession since 1990 and am still learning every day

Finance for some people is a big worry, what advice would you say to them, is there help out there and do you offer pre-planned funeral packages?

We do offer pre-paid funerals through a regulated plan provider who securely hold the funds until time of need, which can be paid by instalments, but it is often best to discuss and plan your funeral in advance with us even if you don't pay at the time. Knowing your wishes we can give people a budget that they can work towards with a savings plan. The key is to discuss things ahead of the time.

Do you offer the whole package including the gravestone. I found it really hard to get a stone mason, for my parents' headstone. Why do you think this is, are people finding it too expensive, so no demand these days for headstones?

We have our own monumental masonry contractor so deal with every aspect within our business to fully support our families through the entire process.

There has been some bad press recently, how does it make you feel when you hear stories giving the industry a bad name?

Frankly disgusted at some of the recent stories around incidents in Hull and Kent that have been heavily publicised. The reason both of these cases came about was the reluctance to be part of a trade

association that monitors care and procedures. We are part of the National Association of Funeral Directors who regularly inspect us, without notice. To put yourself under this voluntary scrutiny demonstrates best practice. We always encourage families to ask questions, view our facilities ahead of time without reserve - to give confidence. Government are hoping to bring Regulation into England and Wales like they have recently done in Scotland. From my part, the sooner the better.

Being constantly surrounded grief, has this changed your perspective on life. What has this profession taught you about living and how do you switch off?

I think it is important to talk to colleagues, our own families at home about our days as it is often very difficult work. It certainly encourages you to not take tomorrow for granted. Being in business for so long shouldering the responsibility I never switch off fully, but I love what I do so much that I prefer to always be engaged in some aspect and therefore take very few holidays.

Do you do home visits?

We offer visits to families although most tend to favour coming into our office. We are always happy to accommodate house arrangements and have recently employed another team member purely to fill that role.

Can you share a story about a specific funeral service you planned that felt particularly meaningful or unique?

Each funeral is unique in its own way. I have conducted funerals with Royal Family present down to that of a tramp and everything in between. From services with one mourner to thousands.

What qualifications or accreditations do you have in the industry and what do they all mean?

I hold my Diploma in Funeral Directing which I qualified for in the early 1990's before opening in the town. It is the most recognised certificate of excellence in our profession. Education is important so we ensure all members of our team are constantly involved in industry recognised training courses leading to Certification.

What is it you like about South Woodham as a Community and what do you do in your spare time, or do you do anything to support the community?

South Woodham Ferrers is a lovely town despite some negative comments people sometimes raise. I have been part of the town for over 30 years and now am one of the older businesses in the town. Over the years I have been part of the towns Rotary Club and have served as the Club President in 2008, I have been involved in the numerous business networking groups that have come and gone over the years.

I was made a Freeman of the City of London and now am a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Upholders which is our trade livery company which is over 600 years old

Professionally I served for two years as the Chairman of Essex and Suffolk Funeral Directors.

Over the years we have sponsored the Seniors Film Club, Swimarathon, Cricket Club and established the Bereavement Support Group. We used to sponsor the fireworks and also participated in various fetes and shows.

Alongside this I have a small holding where we have cows, pigs and sheep and a collection of vintage tractors and some classic funeral vehicles which are often seen at shows all over the UK.

Apart from South Woodham what other areas do you cover?

I have five other offices, namely Chelmsford, Maldon, Braintree, Burnham-on-Crouch and Hullbridge. Despite looking like a large business, we are still very small so any family can receive my personal attention as well as that of my amazing team.

In one sentence what is it that you enjoy about the job that you do?

I enjoy and take pride being able to guide families through the worst journey of their life.

On a lighter note, could I ask if that is your mother's real surname?

Yes Margaret Bone is my Mother who works alongside me and has run the Bereavement Support Group in South Woodham Ferrers for over 25 years. My Step-Dad Antony Bone works on the IT side of the business. His father the late Professor Roger Bone was one of my biggest fans along with my other grandparents who I hope I have done proud.



Paul King

PUPILS PRESERVE 2026 FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS IN 60TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE



Runwell Community Primary School in Wickford recently commemorated its 60th anniversary with an event for its school community that included the burial of a time capsule, a flower display, a community picnic, workshops and stalls, pupil performances, and more.

The school, which opened its doors to the community in 1965, started the celebration with the burial of a time capsule, filled with contributions from each of the school's classes for future generations to discover and study. The contents reflected the personality of its current cohort of pupils, the school's ethos and the present world, including items such as photographs, paintings, t-shirts, squishes, fidget toys and memes. In preparation for the event, the school's pupil-led eco council entered a competition with a local garden centre, Meadow Croft, to plant a celebratory flower display and rejuvenate the school's green spaces.

Charlotte Castle, Headteacher of Runwell Community Primary School, said: "It was an absolute joy to see our incredible community walk through our lovely school grounds and celebrate our diamond anniversary together. We were incredibly proud of how involved all the pupils were, surprising the community with live music, performances and obviously, a beautiful green space. A particular thank you goes to the children who helped bury our time capsule, filled with memories and messages from every class in 2026. It is amazing to think that it will be opened in another 60 years' time, allowing future generations to discover what life at Runwell was like today. For 60 years, we've been at the heart of the Runwell community, and we look forward to continuing to give back to it for decades to come."

A pupil at Runwell Community Primary School said: "My friends and I had so much fun! I enjoyed learning about the history of our school, as well as playing games and singing to everyone. I hope the people who dig up our time capsule have as much fun opening it as we did making it."

Runwell Community Primary School has held numerous celebratory events throughout the academic year, such as an invitation for alumni to return to the school, discuss their experiences and receive a tour of the updated school. To learn more about the school and its upcoming events, visit: <https://runwellprimary.co.uk/>

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY SWF U3A



20 years ago, Blackwater u3a encouraged a small group of women in South Woodham Ferrers to start a u3a. An advert was placed in Focus inviting interested residents to the first ever meeting of South Woodham Ferrers u3a;

approximately 40 people responded. At that meeting a Steering committee was formed, Rosemary Dorado became Chairperson and five groups were set up: Walkers, Gardening, Wine, Water Colours and Luncheon.

Jennifer Brunning, Joy Wren and Delphin Corderoy were early members and are still active in the u3a today.



The 20th anniversary event was held at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome and was attended by many of our members on what was a very hot day. The volunteers took groups of us round the site and explained some of the history. There were displays by some of the u3a groups, flowers on the table arranged by the gardening group and the opportunity to have a go at needle felting. Following a delicious picnic lunch provided by the venue, the Find Your Voice group entertained everyone with topical songs including of course "Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines". A selection of cakes made by our members were available to have for afternoon tea.

What began as a modest initiative has grown into a thriving network bringing together members from diverse backgrounds. Over two decades it has

evolved not just in size but also into a spirit of participation, inclusivity and collaboration at the heart of everything. Today we have nearly 300 members and 31 Activity groups.

A defining feature of our u3a's success has been its volunteers. Drawn directly from the membership our Group Leaders generously give their time and expertise to create and lead a wide range of activity groups for us all. As members join these groups they not only learn new skills or deepen existing interests but also build meaningful connections with others, turning participation into lasting friendships and shared experiences.

Thank you to those ladies who took the initiative originally and also to Tracey Dowling for organising a memorable anniversary event.

Ann Woolley, Secretary

<https://swf.u3asite.uk/>



CLAIR DADE TELLS THE CLUB ABOUT THE DANDELION APPEAL.

The Mid & South Essex Hospitals Charity and Voluntary Services mission is simply to make patients lives better by enhancing hospital environments, funding specialist equipment and supporting projects that go beyond what the NHS can provide alone.

The simple mission but enormous challenge was explained to the Rotary Club of SWF in an very interesting talk given by Clair Dade (her first she admitted). The scope of the charity's aims extends to improving wards; family rooms; waiting areas; comforting spaces; backing specialist centres including burns, plastics, cardiothoracic and cancer services.

Our immediate Past President Derek Hutchinson, from personal experience, nominated the Dandelion Appeal to receive £2000 through the generosity of the people of SWF participating in and sponsoring the 2026 Swimathon run by our Club.

This was gratefully received by Clair on behalf of the Charity in its constant quest for funding its work for local people.



Five questions you asked about Shockwave Therapy

1. I've had this pain for ages – nothing works, am I stuck with it?

"Chronic pain doesn't have to be forever - Shockwave therapy helps stubborn tendon injuries heal when nothing else has worked."

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2. I'm terrified of needles – is an injection the only option?

"No needles. No surgery. Just soundwaves that trigger your body to restart healing – even in injuries months or years old."

✓ Great for: Anyone nervous about invasive procedures but looking for real results.

3. Does it take a long time to see results?

"Results that speak for themselves: Most patients feel improvement within 1-3 sessions!"

✓ Highlighting: Fast pain reduction, improved mobility, and tissue repair.

4. I have to be on my feet a lot – will this work for me?

"On your feet all day? Shockwave is a game-changer for heel pain and foot injuries that are keeping you off your game."

✓ Focus: Busy professionals, athletes, healthcare workers, or retail staff with plantar fasciitis or stress injuries.

5. I'm a wuss! Is this going to hurt?

"Worried it will hurt? Most people describe it as mildly uncomfortable - and totally worth it."

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1		TARGETS THE ROOT CAUSE Shockwave therapy stimulates your body's natural healing response to treat the source of pain, not just the symptoms.	 IDEAL FOR: Long-term tendon problems, plantar fasciitis, tennis elbow, shoulder pain, heel pain and more.
2		FAST, EFFECTIVE RESULTS Many patients feel noticeable improvement within 1-3 sessions, with long-lasting results and reduced pain.	 RESULTS YOU'LL FEEL: Less pain, better movement, and a quicker return to the activities you love.
3		GET BACK TO DOING WHAT YOU LOVE Whether you're an athlete, active professional, or weekend warrior - shockwave therapy helps you recover and perform at your best.	 WHO BENEFITS: Athletes, active individuals, office workers, manual workers, and anyone living with low back pain.
4		SAFE, NON-INVASIVE & DRUG-FREE Shockwave therapy is a safe, non-surgical treatment with no medication, injections or downtime.	 WHAT TO EXPECT: A quick treatment with minimal discomfort and no need for anaesthesia.
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REGGAE SKA'S
My Soul Event
Saturday 10th October
Burnham Village Hall
7pm till 11:30pm

The Reverend REGGAE & SKA SET
+ plus DJ Dan

Rachel Francis
SOUL / DIVA SET

OUR TOWN

If you missed our previous competitions then fear not - we have brand new ones for you to enter with cash prizes up for grabs!

DJ Dan is offering 3 sets of tickets to the Reggae Ska's event.

How to enter:

Scan the QR code or visit the online website.

Winners will be notified by email on the 7th September 2026.

Good luck everyone!

*Only one entry per person per competition will be accepted.
Competition Terms & Conditions apply which can be viewed on the website.*



**CAPTION
CORNER**

What do you think I am thinking?

**First prize for the
best caption is £50**

Just scan the QR Code which will direct you to our website, fill out the details on the competition form and submit it.

Only one entry per person per competition will be accepted.

Competition Terms & Conditions apply which can be viewed on the website.

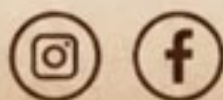


— COMING SOON —

SOMETHING AUTHENTIC

— IS ON THE WAY —

We can't wait to see you!



SWF MEN'S SHED – JULY UPDATE: COMMUNITY, WILDLIFE, AND A VERY LARGE BUG BOX



July has been a month of gratitude, graft, and a few laughs at the SWF Men's Shed. First and foremost, we want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to the anonymous donor who gifted us an incredible £500 after seeing our GoFundMe link shared by The Focus. Whoever you are, you've made a real difference. Your generosity brings us one step closer to securing our new premises, and every penny will be used carefully to support the Shed's future. If anyone else would like to know exactly how donations are spent, our door is always open.

Speaking of premises, we're still awaiting the council's full response to our planning application for a move to a quiet corner of Marsh Farm. Some locals have joked that we might become the farm's next big attraction. While we doubt children will queue up to watch a group of seasoned shedders drilling, sawing, and perfecting the art of tea-making, we suppose anything is possible.

Inside the Shed, the work continues at full pace. Our wildlife projects are still as popular as ever. Bird boxes are flying out (pun intended), and bug boxes are in high demand too. Dave has been hard at work on one particularly enormous bug hotel—so large, in fact, that we're convinced it should be listed on Trivago. It started out as a shoe rack!

Our resident hedgehog expert, Byron, has also been busy. He's been building hedgehog houses and feeding stations for months, and now he's passed the baton to the rest of us while he settles into his new home. If you'd like to learn more about hedgehogs, Byron hosts a drop-in session at the Shed on the first Tuesday of every month, 10am–1pm.

You'll find us at 19 Woodham Halt, SWF, CM3 5GL. Whether you're interested in joining, donating, learning, or simply having a cuppa and a chat, we'd love to welcome you.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-swfshed>

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MONDAY 17TH AUGUST
1.45pm - 2.45pm

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- SWF residents only

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Giant brick wildlife trail comes to RHS Garden Hyde Hall this summer

**Families invited to discover 10 wildlife sculptures and hands-on building
activities near Chelmsford**



Families looking for summer holiday inspiration can enjoy a brand-new brick-themed adventure at RHS Garden Hyde Hall this summer, with the launch of Brick Explorers, an interactive wildlife trail featuring spectacular brick sculptures, creative play and storytelling experiences.

Running from 18 July to 31 August, the event, created in partnership with Iconic Bricks, will transform the Essex garden into an outdoor wildlife discovery trail where visitors can search for ten giant brick-built creatures inspired by nature's own "superheroes".

Set within the beautiful gardens near Chelmsford, the trail encourages children to learn about the fascinating skills and behaviours that help wildlife survive, from pollinators and insects to birds and other garden creatures.

Young explorers can collect wildlife "superpowers" in a special activity booklet as they make their way around the garden, discovering how plants, animals and fungi are connected within the natural world.

Alongside the trail, visitors can take part in hands-on brick building sessions throughout the summer, creating their own nature-inspired designs and imaginative green spaces. Special storytelling walks will also bring the gardens and their wildlife to life.

Elin Simonsson, Head of Public Engagement at the RHS, said:

"Brick Explorers is a fun way for families to connect with nature during the summer holidays. The sculptures spark curiosity and encourage children to explore the gardens, discover wildlife and learn about the amazing creatures that share our outdoor spaces."

Brick Explorers is included with normal garden admission. Tickets start from £5.25 for children and £13.75 for adults as part of the Great British Summer Savings campaign*.

For more information and advance booking, visit:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/hyde-hall/whats-on/summer-holidays>

Event Highlights

- Brick Sculpture Trail: until 31 August
- Brick Explorer Build Stations: Tuesdays to Fridays, 10am to 4pm
- Storytelling Walks: 28 July and 18 & 25 August

* The RHS is proud to support the Great British Summer Savings scheme this summer – a UK Government initiative to support family-friendly days out by reducing VAT from 20% to 5%.



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WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY EX DOESN'T PAY CHILD MAINTENANCE?



With the cost of living becoming more challenging, more people are having to make difficult budgeting decisions to make ends meet.

One thing that should not be cut is child maintenance, so if your ex has stopped paying, then you need to understand what to do next.

Can a parent suddenly stop paying child maintenance?

Once child maintenance is agreed, it will need to be paid at the specified rate.

There might be an end point baked into the agreement, such as if the child reaches a certain age or leaves education, but this will be known to you ahead of time.

Even a drop in income is not a justification for stopping child maintenance outright.

If the parent who is supposed to pay child maintenance is genuinely struggling to do so, they need to reach out to you or the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) if they are the ones overseeing the arrangement.

What happens when a parent stops paying child maintenance?

The best thing to do if you find that child maintenance payments are being missed or delayed is to get in touch with a solicitor.

If child maintenance is being managed through a private agreement, a solicitor can help you to review the agreement and determine the next steps.

It may be that negotiation or mediation will work to resolve the issue if there has been a genuine mistake.

A solicitor can also help to represent you in court if this proves to be necessary.

Private agreements can be made legally binding through a Consent Order and these can be enforced if either party seeks to break the terms.

Even if the CMS are managing your child maintenance agreement, it is still helpful to have a solicitor support you as they can keep you informed and advise on appealing against any decisions you feel are unfair.

The CMS should make sure that the other parent pays what they owe.

They can directly take money from the person's bank account, make deductions from their pay or benefits or get a court order for payments.

However, it may not be possible to reclaim all of the owed child maintenance as the other person must be left with enough to live on once other debts like mortgage repayments, rent, utility bills, taxes and court fines are taken into account.

At Palmers Solicitors, we work to support the people of Essex with their legal concerns so that they can continue living comfortably.

If you are having issues with your child maintenance, then our team can support you in finding a resolution that protects your legal rights. Get in touch with our team for compassionate support with child maintenance issues.

Contact: 01245 322111

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If you missed our previous competitions then fear not - have brand new ones for you to enter.
We have a Gift Experience donated by Stow Maries Aerodrome.

How to enter:

Scan the QR code or visit the online website.

Winners will be notified by email on the 7th September 2026.

Good luck everyone!

Only one entry per person per competition will be accepted.

Competition Terms & Conditions apply which can be viewed on the website.

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the coolest drink in Our Town!

Collect your **Free Slush** at the Eatery by scanning the voucher.

Full details on pg. 31.

Slush Boy is a blue slushy character with a straw, wearing a yellow shirt and blue shoes, holding a small slushy cup.

Slush Boy is hiding on three pages throughout the magazine. Can you find him?

Simply scan the QR Code on the voucher, tell us which three pages Slush Boy is hiding on, and complete your details. Once we've received your entry, we'll email you a unique redemption code.

Take your code to The Eatery, 14-18 Heralds Way, South Woodham Ferrers, and enjoy a FREE Slush in your choice of three delicious flavours:

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A **Mr. A.M**
1 review



A huge thank you to Grace for making the purchase of our first home such a smooth and stress-free experience. She was incredibly helpful, professional, and always available to answer our questions. We wouldn't have been able to do it without her support and guidance & and we couldn't have asked for a better person to help us.

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D **Mrs. D.M**
2 reviews



From our initial meeting with Ollie, going on the market the next day and our house selling within two days, our experience of Palmers has been brilliant. Grace and Alfie in particular were so helpful and supportive and, honestly, although it was a hugely stressful process, they did everything they could to help. I would have lost the plot with stress if not for the support of Grace and Alfie throughout. Wouldn't hesitate to recommend and would use them again... not that I plan on doing it again in a hurry!!
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