



MERSEA ISLAND FESTIVAL 2026



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Arrivals from 4.30pm: Please check in at Reception to collect a copy of the Festival programme and your wristband. One of our volunteers will show you to where you're staying.

For safety reasons, please use your hazards lights if driving on the grass during arrivals and departures.

Parking: After unloading, please leave your vehicle in the long stay car park and leave the short stay car park free for our day visitors. If you need close access to essential medical items, please speak to the Festival Co-ordinator.

Dinner on the first night (Sunday/Friday): Served from 6.30pm to 8pm. Please let us know if you're arriving late. Our entertainment starts at 8.30pm and our activity programme starts the next morning.

Assistance – daytime/evening: In the first instance, your Village Leaders and the volunteers are there to help you if needed. Otherwise, please go to Reception.

Assistance – overnight: Please go to your Village Leader at their tent. For First Aid assistance overnight contact the Duty Person via the radio or the phone number at Reception. If you feel the situation warrants it, call 999 and then inform the Duty Person.

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Fire Alarm: If you hear a fire alarm in one of the buildings, or six blasts on an air horn, please make your way towards the seawall and the assembly point along the fence.

If you see a fire, raise the alarm by shouting 'FIRE' and then use the air horn in your Village Marquee or activate the nearest 'Break glass' call point.

First Aid: This is available via Reception. If needed overnight, contact the Duty Person via the radio or the phone number on the counter. If you feel the situation warrants it, please call 999 and then inform the Duty Person.

The Festival makes sure that there are qualified first aiders on site to help anyone who might need urgent treatment. Beyond that we can provide details of the nearest pharmacist, medical practice or hospital.

Medication storage: Any medication that needs storing in a fridge can be done so in the First Aid Hut. Access is arranged via the team in Reception.

Hoists: There are six accessible toilet and shower rooms on site and an accessible toilet. We have a shower table and two changing tables. One of the toilet and shower rooms has a ceiling hoist and there is a hoist for access to the swimming pool. We have several portable hoists for general use, but cannot allocate them to individuals. We do ask that visitors bring their own slings.

Going off site: Other than for a Festival activity, please sign out and then back in at Reception. We then won't be looking for you should there be an emergency.

High Tides: Not all high tides cover the road on to the island (The Strood). Please see the info below. Heights can be subject to weather conditions on the day. Details will also be in the programme provided on arrival.

Date	High Tide	
Sun 23 rd	8.57am	Strood will not be covered
Mon 24 th	10.22am	Strood will not be covered
Tues 25 th	11.23am	Strood will not be covered
Wed 26 th	12.09pm	Strood will not be covered
Thur 27 th	12.49pm	Allow 30 minutes either side of high tide
Fri 28 th *	1.26pm	Allow 45 minutes either side of high tide Lunch is at 12noon
Sat 29 th	1.59pm	Allow 1 hour either side of high tide
Sun 30 th	2.31pm	Allow 1 hour either side of high tide
Mon 31 st	3.03pm	Allow 1 hour each side of high tide Lunch is at 12noon

*The tide on Friday will be clear of the Strood for the 4.30pm arrivals.

Lost Property: Please ask at Reception, in case it's been handed in.

Smoking and Vaping: Smoking and vaping is not allowed anywhere on site other than in the designated area in your village or near the main building. Please use the cans provided for cigarette butts.

Photo and videos

Our volunteer Media team take photos and video to compile a DVD of everything we get up to, and well as to use in promotional material. The DVD is shown on the last morning of each camp. **If you do not wish us to use your image, please let Reception know.** With your own photos, please respect that not everyone likes appearing on social media.

Dogs: Only assistance dogs can be brought to the Festival, and after prior agreement with the Festival Co-ordinator.

Beach, Seawall and Lake: These areas beyond the gates and fences are not part of the Festival site. Keep clear of the crumbling seawall and at low tide keep to the sand. The mud is very soft and deep!

Fire pits, camping stoves and disposable BBQ's: These are not allowed on the site.

Security: The Mersea Island Festival accepts no responsibility for the loss of valuable items during your time at the Festival. If you wish to store anything in the Centre's safe, please ask at Reception.

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Cash facilities: There is no cashpoint machine or cashback facility on site. The nearest cashpoint is at Waldegraves Leisure Park (CO5 8SE), a 10-minute drive or 20-minute walk away. Please ask at Reception for further details.

Departures: There are no activities on the last day of each camp. The camps officially finish after we have watched the Festival DVD, taken some group photos and had lunch. While we hate to see you go...

- Friday: Lunch is at 12noon. We will be providing pre-filled rolls and other items for quick serving before the high tide.
- Monday: Lunch is at 12noon. As a precaution, aim to be off the island by 1.30pm

If you know you'll be leaving before lunch, please let Reception know the day before if you can.

Drinks: Tea, coffee, chocolate and squash are available in the village marquees and the Dining Hall during the day and evening. All the cold taps outside are drinking water. There are vending machines in the Dining Hall and the Main Hall lobby. A Tuck Shop is open during the day. The Snack Shack is open each evening, selling non-alcoholic cocktails. The Bar is open each evening.

Laundry: There is a laundry room with a standard washing machine and tumble dryer for any emergency washing and drying. Washing tablets are available from Reception.

Meal Times: Breakfast is served from 8am to 9.30am and lunch from 12.30 to 1.30pm. Dinner is from 5.30pm to 6.30pm, with the exception of the first day of each camp (Sunday/Friday) when it's from 6.30pm to 8pm.

Menu: Any dietary needs you advised us about in your booking, including vegetarians, have been passed to the Catering Team. A menu will be available on arrival, and any specific needs can be discussed with the Catering Manager then. If you have a dietary requirement please ask for a yellow wristband on arrival to highlight this to the servers.

Phone charging: Your mobile phone, power pack or other electronic device can be left and charged at Reception. Please bring your own charger (we don't have spares) and make sure the device is on silent. You'll be given a ticket which will need to be handed over when you collect your item.

Shop: From Reception you can buy a Festival t-shirt and cap and order a copy of the Festival video for each camp. Toiletries and other items are also available. If you need anything else, please ask. Card payments are accepted for transactions of £5 and over.

Snack Shack: Open each evening for when you've got the munchies. Run by our volunteers, the Snack Shack sells hot food along with non-alcoholic cocktails. When it's gone, it's gone!

Spending money: Here's a guide to the things you can buy at the Festival.

- Festival T-shirt £10.50
- Festival Cap £6.50
- Festival Video £6.50
- Snack Shack food and drink: £1 - £2
- Badge/Magnet (Art Tent) £1 – £1.50
- Tie-dye t-shirt (Art Tent) £2.50

As a guide to bar prices: Pint of Beer £5, Bottled Beer £4.50, Spirits: £4.50

Toilets and Showers: There are numerous toilet and showers on the site, including accessible facilities for those with disability. Please ask a Volunteer or at Reception if you can't find what you need.

Wi-Fi: There is Wi-Fi available on the site, but it's not great. Best signal will be near the decking area by the Bar. The password will be available from Reception.

Wristbands: All campers and day visitors are given a Festival wristband on arrival, to be worn at all times. If you have a dietary requirement (Vegetarian, Gluten free etc.) you'll also need a yellow one.

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Activities

You'll be given full details of the programme on your arrival. Every effort is made to deliver the activities shown, but they can be subject to change. Any changes will be posted on the notice boards in your village, the Dining Hall and Reception.

Activity Accessibility: There are a few activities that are not fully accessible, but our Instructor staff and volunteers will do their best to get everyone involved where it is safe to do so. If you use a wheelchair, please see the kayaking and paddleboarding details in our activity list, or ask at Reception, about access for activities on the lake.

Off-site activities marked with a **W** have wheelchair accessible transport (2 spaces)

Activity clothing: For most activities, participants should wear loose, comfortable clothing.

Footwear must be worn for all activities on the land, on the sea or on the lake. Sandals, sliders, flip flops and similar are not permitted.

For kayaking and paddleboarding, wear your swimwear and a t-shirt plus trainers or water shoes.

For the boat rides you may wish to wear a waterproof top to keep out the wind – and spray!

Activity equipment: Any safety or other equipment required for an activity will be provided by the Instructors.

Activity booking: Booking is only required for offsite activities (crabbing, pitch & putt, foot golf, fishing and boat rides) and your act in the Camp Concert. It would be great to be able to offer everyone a place on offsite activities. Unfortunately, this is not possible due to the

limitations of the activities and not the transport available. There may be spaces left on a departing minibus but it doesn't mean there are spaces at the other end.

Booking takes place in the Main Hall.

When	For when
Monday 10.30am	Monday and Tuesday and the Camp Concert
Tuesday 12.30pm	Wednesday and Thursday and the Camp Concert
Saturday 10am	All weekend activities

We need the name of each person going on a trip. To help ensure as many people have a chance to participate in these activities, 1 person can book up to 4 places on an activity.

Under 18's should be accompanied by a responsible adult for offsite trips.

For some on-site activities there is a limited number of places, as shown in the detailed programme. These are available on a first come, first served basis, or a managed system will be used if high demand.

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Activities A to Z

Activities marked with a **W** are off site and have wheelchair accessible transport (2 spaces).

Activities marked with a **B** need to be booked for.

Due to availability not all activities are on every day, or for both camps, but there's still plenty to do. A full timetable will be available on arrival.

Aerial Adventure: With helmet and harness, work your way around the aerial obstacle course.

Aerobics: Have a gentle limber up each morning to get ready for the day.

Adapted Bikes: A range of bikes and trikes to try on our marked track.

Adventure Course: Wear a helmet and clamber round an obstacle course under the watchful eye of an Instructor. Unfortunately this activity is not wheelchair accessible.

Animal Show and Tell: There'll be the opportunity to get up close to some animals – big and small - and learn more about them.

Archery: Our Instructors will help you try and hit the target, with the use of a standard or adapted bow.

Art Tent: A range of creative activities included encaustic wax painting, badge making and tie-dye t-shirts.

Band Workshop: Come and have a go at being a rock star!

Beauty Workshop: Get yourself looking fabulous for the evening parties.

Biscuit Decoration Workshop: Have a go at decorating your own cookie. Can be eaten afterwards!

***NEW* Boat Rides at West Mersea B W:** For the first time we are offering a boat trip around the estuary on 'Rozmaur', a new accessible boat launched earlier this year by Freedom Boat Adventures. Each trip will be approx. 1 hour and an accessible shuttle bus

will take those going over to the West Mersea jetty. Wear a waterproof to protect you from the spray. If the time of a trip is while lunch is served, a packed lunch will be organised.

Boccia (week only): A taster session in this inclusive sport, related to bowls and petanque.

***NEW* Boomwhacker Workshop:** Essex Music Services will be running sessions for you to have a go at playing a tune on the tubes. No experience required.

BSL Workshop (week only): Learn some basic British Sign Language in a fun taster session.

Bushcraft Workshop: Making keepsakes from natural sources to take away.

Camp Concert B: Our version of Britain's Got Talent (though no judges). Please book your act for the Camp Concert on Monday morning, Tuesday lunchtime or Saturday morning, and look out for the running order to see when you're on.

****NEW** Chair Yoga** (week only): Chair yoga is exactly what it sounds like: yoga that is performed while seated in a chair. Every pose, breathing exercise, or meditation is done while sitting down.

Climbing: The instructors will help you climb the wall, or hoist yourself from your chair to the top.

Crabbing in Brightlingsea by ferry B: Meet at the Sports Hut and take a short minibus trip then ½ mile walk to catch a foot ferry over to Brightlingsea. This trip is not wheelchair accessible. Bring a waterproof and a sun hat. A buoyancy aid is provided. Please note the times of departure may be different to the trip via road. For the trips at 12.45pm, participants will be given priority to have lunch earlier. Please see Reception for details.

Crabbing in Brightlingsea via road B W: Meet at the Sports Hut to take the accessible minibus round to Brightlingsea (approx. 45 mins) and crab off the jetty. Bring a waterproof and a sun hat. A buoyancy aid will be provided. Please note the times of departure may be different to the trip via ferry. For the trips at 12.45pm, participants will be given priority to have lunch earlier. Please see Reception for details.

Drumming Workshop (week): Our local tutor will lead you through a session and help you keep to the beat on the African drums.

Fishing B W (week only): Travel by minibus to a nearby lake for an afternoon's fishing. Wear something to keep out the wind and wet or keep off the sun. A buoyancy aid will be provided. Booking required. Accessible transport available.

Foot Golf B: Travel by minibus to a nearby course for a kick around the course.

Giant Swing: Wearing helmet and harness, get strapped to the bar and pulled in the air, before letting yourself go. Please speak to the Centre Staff about the accessibility of this activity to wheelchair users.

Golden Boot Football Tournament (week only): Our annual informal tournament for the coveted trophy.

Kayaking and Paddleboarding: Try a sit-on kayak or paddleboard and make your way across the lake with friends. Wear your swimwear, a t-shirt and closed shoes you can get wet. No sandals, sliders, or flip flops. A buoyancy aid and helmet will be provided.

To help ensure everyone takes part safely, those wishing to try, including wheelchair users, should first go to the meeting point in the corner of the site beyond the Giant Swing. The Instructors will kit you up. Access to the lake for all is then available nearby. There is no access to the lake car park or toilets on Monday.

Pedal Karts: Take a spin around our marked out track.

Pitch & Putt B W: Travel by minibus to a nearby golf course for a session with a golf club and ball. Accessible transport available on some sessions.

****NEW** Planetarium:** Enter the Wonderdome for a 20 minute presentation to take you to the stars.

Quiet Zone: When not being used for an activity or evening film, this room can be used for reading, jigsaws, quiet game playing or just taking some time out.

Signing to Music (week only): Crafty Drama are a Colchester-based group that promote inclusion and sign language through music and dance. Come and watch or maybe take part.

Singing Workshop (week only): After a gentle warm up a local tutor will lead you in some simple songs to show off your vocal talent.

Swimming: The pool is 1m deep from end to end. It is only available at the time in the programme when a lifeguard will be present. A hoist is available.

Trampolining: Local qualified coaches help you have a 'low' bounce on the trampoline – on your feet, your back ~ or your bottom.

Water Aerobics: Limber up in the 1m deep pool. This is not a swimming session.

Zipwire: Climb up inside the tower or be hoisted up the wall, then 'zip' to the end of the wire.

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Evening Entertainment

First Sunday: Our 'Welcome Party'. Catch up with old friends and meet new ones as you dance to the music.

Monday: Dance the night away to Big Jim's disco.

Tuesday & Friday: Neon Party. Wear something bright yellow, pink, green, orange or purple – or all of them! The more colourful the better!

Wednesday & Saturday: Camp Concert – our legendary talent show.

Thursday & Sunday: Our 'Sci-Fi' fancy dress party, with dancing to a live band. Come dressed as your favourite character from a sci-fi movie. Who – or what – could you be? There are lots of films and TV shows to get some ideas from. Star Wars, Men in Black, Doctor Who, Avatar, Jurassic Park and pretty much anyone from the Marvel and DC Comics universe.

We realise fancy dress isn't for everyone, and please don't think you have to have a costume to join in the fun.

Evening Film: Watch a film or two on our large screen. Details of what's showing each evening will be displayed in Reception in the afternoon.

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MERSEA ISLAND FESTIVAL - What to bring



Clothing

For the day-time activities, please bring lots of loose fitting clothes which you don't mind getting dirty. As a guide, these could include:

- ☐ Sweaters or sweatshirts
- ☐ Jogging bottoms/loose trousers
- ☐ Shorts
- ☐ T-shirts
- ☐ Socks and underclothes
- ☐ Swimming costume
- ☐ PJ's
- ☐ Anorak or cagoule (essential for boat trips)
- ☐ Closed trainers for activities*
- ☐ Closed footwear for wearing in the water*



Party Gear!!

Tuesday & Friday:

NEON Party

Wear something bright yellow, pink, green or orange - or all of them! The more colourful the better!

Thursday & Sunday:

Sci-Fi Party

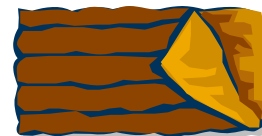
Who - or what - could you be?

* **Open footwear (e.g. sandals and flip flops) cannot be worn for activities on land, the lake or in the sea.**

Remember to bring clothes for the cold and wet as well as the hot weather!

Other items you will need are:

- ☐ Wash kit/toiletries
- ☐ Sun Cream
- ☐ Sun hat
- ☐ Towel (preferably 2)
- ☐ Torch (with maybe some spare batteries)
- ☐ Sleeping bag
- ☐ Pillow. Preferably not feather



Please note: Bedding is not provided in any of our accommodation

Spending money

All meals (breakfast/lunch/dinner) are provided, but some cash will be useful for the sweet and drink machines and our evening snack bar. There is a bar facility open each evening, with a card machine, and a DVD and t-shirt are also available to order or buy. There is no cash machine or cash back facility on site.

Please don't bring expensive items e.g. cameras, electronic games and jewellery. Come prepared to enjoy yourself and not have the worry of losing or damaging precious possessions.

Lost property will be held for 3 weeks after the Festival before being disposed of.

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