



The 154th Open at Royal Birkdale

Update Bulletin May 2026

Welcome and Overview

Preparations for The 154th Open at Royal Birkdale (12–19 July 2026) continue to gather pace, with activity now progressing across several operational areas ahead of the Championship this summer.

As build activity continues onsite, a significant programme of destination marketing, business support and volunteer recruitment is also now underway across Southport and the surrounding villages. This is being designed to help maximise the opportunities associated with The Open by encouraging visitors to explore the wider area during Championship week.

This bulletin provides an update for residents, businesses and community groups as preparations continue to progress towards the final stages ahead of the Championship.

Official updates for The 154th Open can also be found at TheOpen.com.

Site Build & Birkdale Common Areas

Construction activity at Royal Birkdale continues to progress in line with programme, with grandstand installation now underway alongside the development of hospitality structures, operational compounds and wider course infrastructure.

Build activity across the site will continue throughout May and June, with increased contractor presence and vehicle movements expected across the local area as preparations continue.

Access restrictions remain in place across parts of Birkdale Common to ensure public safety during the construction period. Residents and visitors are asked to continue following all signage and temporary closures in place around working areas.

Community Engagement & Liaison

Community engagement activity continues across Southport and the surrounding areas as planning progresses towards Championship week.

The R&A Community Liaison team continues to host weekly drop-in sessions, providing residents and businesses with an opportunity to ask questions and receive updates regarding preparations for The Open.



Session currently take place:-

- Tuesdays at The Atkinson (10:00am–2:00pm)
- Wednesdays at Southport Market (afternoon and evening sessions)
- Thursdays at Southport Market (daytime sessions)

Please note that timings may occasionally vary depending on operational requirements. Further community engagement activity and operational updates will continue to be shared through www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026

Marketing & Local Business Promotion

Destination marketing campaigns linked to The Open will begin rolling out from mid-June, promoting Southport and the surrounding area as part of the wider Championship experience. Delivered regionally by a specialist marketing agency, the campaign will use local content, events and hospitality offers to showcase what Sefton has to offer and encourage visitors to explore the wider area during Championship week.

Dedicated landing pages are also being developed on VisitSouthport.com featuring local activity, promotions and visitor information linked to The Open. Alongside this, Royal Birkdale Golf Club has agreed to support an incentive initiative offering the opportunity to win a golf experience linked to the Championship, helping encourage visitors to explore the local area and support businesses during the event.

Local businesses are encouraged to submit content, events, offers and promotions for inclusion within the campaign and supporting communications activity via:

<https://marketingsouthport.typeform.com/to/Vp6fD9Z0>

Submitted information will also help shape the destination awareness training being delivered through the volunteer and ambassador programme, helping direct visitors towards local businesses and experiences during Championship week.

Volunteer & Ambassador Programme

The Open Host Team volunteer programme is now officially live, with applications actively being encouraged from across the local area. Volunteers will play an important role in supporting the visitor experience during Championship week, helping provide welcome, orientation and destination information to visitors arriving into Southport and the surrounding area.

Applications can be made through: <https://www.theopen.com/work/volunteer-the-open-host-team>



Alongside the recruitment programme, destination awareness training is also being developed to help volunteers promote local businesses, amenities, events and visitor experiences across the town and villages.

Travel & Transport Information

Transport and operational planning for The Open continues to progress in partnership with The R&A, emergency services, transport operators and local authorities. The Traffic Management Plan for the Championship has now been completed, with detailed operational planning continuing ahead of implementation in July.

Residents and businesses directly impacted by traffic management measures, temporary restrictions or local access arrangements will receive detailed notification letters during June. As planning progresses, more detailed travel and transport information is now becoming available. Residents, businesses and visitors are encouraged to view the latest updates via:-

[Getting to Royal Birkdale](#) | [Travel Options](#) | [The 154th Open](#)
www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026

This includes information relating to spectator travel routes, public transport, local access arrangements and traffic management measures. Additional local orientation maps and visitor information are also being developed to help spectators navigate the area and raise awareness of local amenities, hospitality venues and retail offers.

Southport Station & Station Approach Improvements

Works continue on the major improvement project at Station Approach, the covered mall linking Southport Station with Chapel Street. The project, delivered by the site owners in collaboration with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, will improve the appearance, functionality and overall experience of this key gateway into the town centre ahead of The Open.

Pedestrian access through Station Approach remains open throughout the works and all businesses continue to remain accessible.

Open for Business - Skills & Business Support Opportunities

A range of funded business support and training opportunities continue to be available to help businesses prepare for the summer period and maximise opportunities associated with The Open.

In partnership with Southport College, the Customer Service & Inspiring Leaders Programme continues to support customer-facing teams across the visitor economy.



Businesses can book places via:-

Employer.Partnerships@southport.ac.uk

Tel: 01704 392874

InvestSefton also continues to provide free business support alongside practical workshops focused on social media, customer service and visitor economy readiness.

Remaining workshop dates are 8th & 9th June for Next Level Customer Service with sessions taking place at Formby Hall Golf Resort & Spa, Lifeboat Road Formby L37 0AB

To book your FREE place or explore support opportunities, businesses can contact:-

investsefton@sefton.gov.uk

The Open Legacy Fund - Community Projects Programme

The Open Legacy Fund remains open to support projects that will create lasting environmental and social benefits for Southport.

Not-for-profit community and voluntary organisations whose activities directly benefit local residents can apply for grants of up to £20,000. Projects must align with one of four Greenlinks sustainability priorities:-

- Low carbon solutions
- Moving towards a circular economy
- Protecting and enhancing nature
- Delivering meaningful social value

Applications will be reviewed by a panel including representatives from The R&A, Sefton Council and local stakeholders.

Enquiries regarding the application process can be directed to greenlinks@randa.org

Business Toolkit Launching Shortly

The Open Business Toolkit is now in final production and is expected to launch within the next two weeks.

The toolkit will be available through:-

· VisitSouthport.com

· www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026



The toolkit will provide practical guidance and operational information for businesses linked to The Open, including anticipated visitor patterns, staffing considerations, licensing and operational guidance, marketing opportunities and customer service advice.

Businesses with specific questions relating to The Open can continue to contact:
tourism@sefton.gov.uk

Stay Updated

Residents, businesses and community organisations are encouraged to regularly check the dedicated Open webpage and sign up for updates as additional operational information becomes available over the coming weeks.

Useful links and contacts:-

- Sefton Council – The 154th Open: www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026
- Visit Southport: www.visitsouthport.com
- Southport BID: [Your Southport | The Local Guide to Southport](#)
- Business Support Services & Advice: investsefton@sefton.gov.uk
- Official Championship Information: TheOpen.com
- R&A Community Enquiries: communitysupport@theopen.com
- Championship Enquiries (Sefton Council): tourism@sefton.gov.uk

Looking Ahead

Over the coming weeks, construction and operational planning activity will continue to intensify across the Championship site and wider area.

At the same time, the launch of the destination marketing campaign, volunteer programme, local activation initiatives and business engagement activity will provide increasing opportunities for local businesses, organisations and communities to participate in and benefit from The Open.

Businesses are encouraged to actively engage with the campaign activity, submit content and participate in local initiatives to help maximise awareness and visitor movement across Southport and the surrounding villages during Championship week.