



The 154th Open at Royal Birkdale

Update Bulletin December 2025

Welcome and Overview

The 154th Open will return to Royal Birkdale from 12th – 19th July 2026, with Practice Days running from Sunday 12th July to Wednesday 15th July, followed by Championship Days from Thursday 16th July to Sunday 19th July. This will be the first time since 2017 that Sefton has hosted golf's original Championship, which brings global attention, substantial visitor numbers and significant economic benefit to the borough.

As preparations progress, this bulletin will provide regular updates for residents, businesses and visitors. Over the coming months, you will see information on community engagement activity, business support, opportunities to get involved, local service updates and details of how Sefton Council is working with The R&A and partners to ensure the Championship is a positive experience for everyone.

More detailed operational information will be shared in early 2026 as plans develop. Official updates on The Open can also be found at TheOpen.com.

Community Updates and Resident Information

From early 2026, regular updates will begin to give residents advance notice of any changes to Sefton Council services during the Championship period, along with clear information on how to raise queries, access support and get involved.

The R&A has also appointed a dedicated Community Support Lead to engage directly with local communities and businesses throughout the build-up to The Open. The support lead aims to provide a consistent and accessible point of contact during a period when detailed planning is still underway, as well as providing advice, reassurance and a direct link into The R&A.

The R&A will also hold weekly drop-in sessions, giving residents the opportunity to ask questions and receive updates in person. The full schedule will be confirmed and published this month.

A local community engagement event will take place on Thursday 12th February at Southport Market, offering a first look at early plans and a chance to speak directly with The R&A, Sefton Council and other delivery partners. A second community engagement event is being planned for May, when more detailed arrangements will be ready to share as we get closer to the Championship.



Local Businesses – Preparing for The Open

The Open is one of the world's largest sporting events and brings significant economic benefit to host communities. Its return to Royal Birkdale represents a major opportunity for Sefton's businesses across hospitality, retail, accommodation, food and drink, visitor services and the wider local economy.

To support this, Sefton Council and The R&A are developing a Business Toolkit to help local businesses prepare. This will be available in early 2026 and will focus on areas such as:-

- Where to access business advice and training.
- Marketing and promotional opportunities.
- Key contacts and support services.
- Licensing and regulatory considerations.
- Expected demand patterns during the lead-up and event week.

Ahead of this, the Council is already engaging with local business groups to understand priorities, share early information and ensure businesses are well-placed to make the most of the opportunities The Open brings. Business briefing dates, supplier information and recruitment activity will be shared in the New Year.

Skills, Volunteering and Opportunities to Get Involved

Information on recruitment drives, training opportunities and the off-course volunteer programme will be provided once application links and details are confirmed by The R&A. Updates will be included here as soon as they are available, with more detail expected early in 2026.

Engagement Events and Key Dates

Weekly R&A drop-in sessions will be commencing Tuesday 20th January with all remaining dates being published early in the New Year.

- Wednesday 12 February - Community Engagement Event, with information boards and representatives from The R&A and Sefton Council. Venue information and timings will be shared early in the New Year.
- May 2026 – Our second Community Engagement Session, focussing on detailed arrangements and helping residents plan for the Championship.

Further community updates and engagement opportunities will be promoted through this page and Sefton Council's communications channels.



Looking Ahead

Future bulletins will focus on the key subjects' residents and businesses have told us matter most as preparations progress. This will include advance notice of any changes to local services during the Championship period, updates on access, travel and operational arrangements as they are confirmed, as well as further opportunities for communities and businesses to engage with The R&A and Sefton Council.

We will also share updates on business support, volunteering, recruitment and wider community and business engagement activity as it becomes available, with further detail to follow after the planned engagement events in February and May. As we move closer to July 2026, these updates will become more frequent to ensure everyone has clear, timely and practical information ahead of The Open.

FAQ's

Q. When will detailed information about travel, access and parking be available?

A. More detailed information on travel, access and local arrangements will be shared after the first community engagement event on 12 February 2026. Residents will be able to register their interest for the event and receive updates via this link: communitysupport@theopen.com. Additional updates will follow in spring as plans are confirmed with The R&A and partners.

Q. How can I ask questions or speak to someone about The Open?

A. General enquiries can be directed to The R&A via:

<https://helpcentre.theopen.com/support/tickets/new> Community enquiries can also be sent to: communitysupport@theopen.com. In addition, The R&A's Community Support Lead will hold weekly drop-in sessions starting on Tuesday 20th January, providing an accessible point of contact for local questions. The full schedule will be published shortly.

Q. Will local services be affected during the Championship?

A. Some services may operate differently during the Championship period. Any changes will be communicated well in advance through this bulletin, Sefton Council's website and official social media channels. Further information will also be available at the February and May engagement events.

Q. How can local businesses get involved or prepare for The Open?

A. Sefton Council and The R&A are developing a Business Toolkit to help local businesses prepare for the opportunities The Open brings. This will include guidance on training, marketing opportunities, licensing considerations and expected demand periods. Business briefing dates and sign-up details will be shared here in early 2026.

Q. When will volunteering and recruitment opportunities be announced?

A. Information on volunteering and recruitment opportunities linked to The Open will be shared once confirmed. Further details will also be posted on The R&A's official channels and shared through future bulletins.