



# The 154th Open at Royal Birkdale

Update Bulletin January 2025

## Welcome and Overview

The Open will return to Royal Birkdale from 12<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> July 2026, with Practice Days taking place from Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July to Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, followed by Championship Days from Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July to Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July.

As we move into 2026, preparations for hosting golf's original Championship are progressing steadily. January has marked an important stage, with planning across Sefton Council, The R&A and partner organisations moving from early coordination into more detailed preparation for activity starting on site from spring onwards.

This bulletin provides an update for residents, businesses and visitors, highlighting recent progress and setting out how people can stay informed and involved over the coming months. Official updates on The Open can also be found at [TheOpen.com](https://TheOpen.com).

## Latest Updates & Planning Progress

Sefton Council's dedicated webpage for The 154<sup>th</sup> Open is now live and will act as the main source of local information as preparations continue. The page will be updated regularly and can be accessed at [www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026).

During January, all the multi-agency planning groups have met, covering transport, safety and security, technical and regulatory matters, and business and community engagement. These groups are now working through more detailed arrangements, particularly in readiness for activity on site beginning in spring.

## Community Updates & Resident Information

Community engagement activity is now underway and will continue to build as plans for The 154th Open Championship progress.

From 20<sup>th</sup> January, The R&A will be hosting regular weekly drop-in sessions to provide residents and businesses with accessible opportunities to ask questions, raise concerns and receive up-to-date information. These sessions will take place on:-

Tuesdays at The Atkinson (10:00am–2:00pm)

Wednesdays and Thursdays at Southport Market, with sessions running in the afternoon and evening on Wednesdays and during the day on Thursdays.

Please note that some weeks will vary due to operational requirements.



## Community Engagement Days

Alongside the weekly drop-ins, larger Community Engagement Days are planned at key points in the lead-up to The 154th Open Championship. The first will take place in February 2026, providing an opportunity to view early information boards and speak directly with representatives from The R&A, Sefton Council and partner organisations. A second engagement event is planned for May 2026, when more detailed arrangements will be available to share as the Championship approaches.

Full dates, times and any changes to the programme will be communicated via Sefton Council's website, through ongoing partner updates, or by scanning the QR code.



## Public Information & On-Site Updates

From the week commencing 9<sup>th</sup> February, public information boards will be installed across Birkdale Common. These will provide general information about The Open, updates on ecology works and guidance on Public Rights of Way. Several of the boards will focus specifically on ecology, including information relating to the new hitting tee at Hillside Golf Course.

Further information about any Public Rights of Way closures or diversions on Birkdale Common will be shared at the February Community Engagement event, alongside opportunities for residents to ask questions and understand how access will be managed.

## Local Businesses – Preparing for The Open

Work to engage and support local businesses is well underway. The R&A and Sefton Council are meeting with business groups in Hillside, Ainsdale and Birkdale, supporting early planning and ensuring businesses are engaged as preparations progress. This approach is focused on collaboration, shared planning and delivering a strong welcome for visitors during the Championship.

A Business Toolkit is currently being developed with the launch planned for February 2026. It will provide practical guidance for businesses, covering business support, marketing opportunities, licensing considerations and anticipated demand patterns before, during and after the event. Further business engagement activity and briefing opportunities will be shared as plans develop.



### Skills, Volunteering & Welcome Programme

Planning is underway for a local volunteer and welcome programme to support the visitor experience in the run-up to and during The Open. This work is being developed in partnership with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's Liverpool Welcome team, The R&A, Sefton@Work, Hugh Baird College and Southport College.

Funding applications have been submitted to support this activity, including an application to the National Lottery, with the aim of ensuring strong local participation, welcome training and skills development. Further details on volunteering opportunities will be shared once funding outcomes and delivery arrangements are confirmed.

### Looking Ahead

From early spring, activity associated with preparations for the Championship will begin on site, with increased activity and footfall in and around Southport in the months leading up to July. This reflects an important message for residents and businesses alike - The Open is not just about Championship week itself, but about the wider period leading up to the event, which also brings increased visitor activity and economic benefit.

FAQs relating to The Open are available on Sefton Council's dedicated webpage and are being updated on an ongoing basis, informed by the enquiries being received from residents and businesses.

### Stay Updated / Contact Information

For the latest updates and information, please use the following channels:

**Sefton Council – The 154<sup>th</sup> Open:** [www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026)

**Official Championship Information:** [TheOpen.com](http://TheOpen.com)

**R&A Community Enquiries:** [communitysupport@theopen.com](mailto:communitysupport@theopen.com)

**Championship Enquiries (Sefton Council):** [tourism@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@sefton.gov.uk)

Residents and businesses are encouraged to check the webpage regularly, as information will be updated as soon as it becomes available.



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:communitysupport@theopen.com). In addition, The R&A's Community Support Lead will hold weekly drop-in sessions running from 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 and you can also find out more at [www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/TheOpen2026)

### **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 February 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.