# Monthly What’s On Guide May 2025

Welcome to your monthly update of accessible services and events in Bristol, Bath & NE Somerset, and South Gloucestershire covering May 2025.

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# Sight Support Events and Notices

## New hubs launching across Bristol

We are expanding the areas we cover in Bristol and are excited to announce new monthly hubs launching this spring and summer. Our aim is to have hubs near as many communities as we can, making it easier for people to access support and meet others locally. We look forward to welcoming you.

**Easton Hub**
Launch Date: Monday 19th May
3rd Monday monthly – Drop-in: 11am – 12pm, Social: 11am – 1pm
Easton Community Centre (Kilburn St, Easton, Bristol BS5 6AW)

**Hartcliffe Hub**
Launch Date: Monday 24th June
4th Tuesday monthly – Drop-in: 11am – 12pm, Social: 11am – 1pm
Symes Community Building (Peterson Ave, Bristol BS13 0BE)

**Avonmouth Hub**
Launch Date: Monday 7th July
1st Monday monthly – Drop-in: 11am – 12pm, Social: 11am – 1pm
Avonmouth Community Centre (257 Avonmouth Rd, Avonmouth, Bristol BS11 9EN)

**Cotham Hub**
Launch Date: Monday 14th July
2nd Monday monthly – Drop-in: 11am – 12pm, Social: 11am – 1pm
The Elmgrove Centre (Elmgrove Rd, Redland, Bristol BS6 6AH)

## Accessible Voting for the West of England Combined Authority Mayoral election

### Bristol

If you live in Bristol and are blind or partially sighted, and wish to vote in the West of England Combined Authority Mayoral election on the 1st of May, you can vote with the most accessible voting solution currently available in the UK – the McGonagle Reader.

The McGonagle Reader is an audio-tactile device that enables voters to read the ballot paper and make their mark independently and in secret.

**How to vote using the McGonagle Reader on election day**

To request the use of the McGonagle reader, a request can be made via an online form via the Bristol Government website, click here: [Accessibility areas in polling stations](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/voter-accessibility) or by calling the Electoral Services team on 0117 922 3400 and they will obtain the information needed to pre-book a McGonagle reader.

Please note that for pre-booked requests, McGonagle readers are only available between 10am and 8pm. They can also be requested on the day at any polling station, but please be aware there may be a wait while the device is delivered, as it might be in use at another location.

There will also be a text only version of the ballot paper available online via [The West of England Combined Authority](https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/election) election web page by Friday 11 April 2025 and there will be a link from the accessibility page to this text version of the ballot paper.

Staff at the polling stations will be able to show you how to use the reader.

### Bath and North East Somerset

If you are a voter in B&NES and have any accessibility needs for the election on May 1, you can call the council’s elections team in advance on 01225 477333 or email elections@bathnes.gov.uk

There is also more information on the council website at: [BathNes Government Website](https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/accessibility-and-voting)

## Could our Moving Forward Course help you or someone you know?

Click here: [Moving Forward event listings pages](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/?tags=20)

Our online Moving Forward Course is designed to help people adjust to life with sight loss, build confidence, and learn practical skills. Taking place across three Zoom sessions in May, the course covers rehabilitation, accessible technology, and ways to stay active and independent.

The sessions are delivered by our experienced team and include plenty of time to ask questions and share experiences.

**Course schedule:**
**Session 1 – First Steps:** Tuesday 13 May, 2pm-3.15pm
Introduction to mobility, safety, and local support.
**Session 2 – Bigger, Bolder, Brighter:** Tuesday 20 May, 2pm-3.15pm
Simple tools and technology for everyday life.
**Session 3 – Staying Social, Staying Active:** Tuesday 27 May, 2pm-3.15pm
Specialist tech and social groups to stay connected.

We encourage attendance at all three sessions, but you are welcome to join just one if preferred.

The course is open to anyone supported by us, Wiltshire Sight, or Insight Gloucestershire.
To book, call us 0117 322 4885 or email info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

## Connect Online with Virtual Hubs

Our Virtual Hubs are open to anyone affected by sight loss. Hosted on Microsoft Teams, training is available for newcomers.

**Join one of our hubs:**

**Parent Support Group:** Third Thursday of the month 7:30 pm.

**University Students Group:** Fortnightly, Wednesdays at 7 pm.

**Working Age Group:** Third Thursday of the month at 7 pm.

**Young Adults Group (18–30):** Fortnightly, Wednesdays at 7 pm.

Would you like to join? **Contact us –** 0117 322 4885 / info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

# Sight Support Hubs and Social Groups

[Click here for our hub and social group listings webpage.](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/events/)

Our monthly advice hubs offer consultations with local advisors across the region. At a hub you can get tailored information and guidance and explore accessible aids. Most hubs also host social groups where you can meet others living with sight loss. Full listings are available on our website (linked above) You can put your postcode in the search bar to find your nearest hub. or give us a call on 0117 322 4885.

## Changes to Note for Upcoming Hubs

* The Ashton Coffee meeting is reverting to a Tuesday from the start of May. The first May date is the 6th of May

## Need help with your smartphone, tablet, or smart speaker?

We offer free one-to-one tech support appointments at all of our hubs that include a social group. Whether you're just getting started and know nothing, want to learn how to make your device more accessible or have a specific question, our friendly team can help. We can show you how to use useful apps, adjust settings for easier use, get the most out of features like voice assistants and more.

If you’d like a tech support appointment, either give us a call on 0117 322 4885 or ask at one of the following hubs: Bedminster, Whitchurch, Henleaze, Yate, Midsomer Norton, Keynsham, Bath, Kingswood.

# Events & Notices From Other Organisations

## Seeking Collaboration to Recruit Participants for Visual Art and Sight Loss Study

Do you have low vision and an interest in art?

Cardiff University invites you to explore innovative ways to enhance your ability to see paintings at Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

What’s Involved?

* Use “smart glasses” to visually enhance paintings at the museum.
* Discover hidden details in the artwork.
* Provide feedback to refine this technology.
* Receive a £30 Love2Shop e-Gift Card (£10 for incomplete participation).

Who Can Join? People with low vision, partial sight, or sight impairment.

Duration: Up to three hours by appointment.

Location: Bristol Museum and Art Gallery

For more information and to book an appointment, contact Paul Goddard: goddardpm@cardiff.ac.uk or 029 225 10051

## Bristol Council launch housing advice and information online service.

 Click here: <https://bristol.adviceaid.uk/start>

Whether you’re worried about your tenancy, are concerned about a situation with people you’re living with, or you need advice about finding somewhere else to live – this service can help. No need to enter any personal details – just answer a few simple questions on their website for support (linked above).

## Free Travel Support from TravelWest

Click here: [TravelWest travel support](https://travelwest.info/for-communities/individual-support/)

TravelWest offers free travel support to help people travel more confidently. Includes bike loans, guided cycle rides, free bus and train taster tickets, and basic cycle training. Available to residents in the West of England.

## Platinum Bus Pass in BANES

B&NES Council has announced that registered visually impaired residents can apply for a Platinum Bus Pass. Those not registered can apply using a Certificate of Vision Impairment (CVI) or DB8 form. The pass allows free, unlimited travel 24/7 across B&NES, Bristol and South Gloucestershire. (North Somerset may join in future.) First Bus drivers have been instructed to accept passes without scanning due to technical delays. Residents with a disabled pass can request a free change of entitlement, and companion passes are available for those unable to travel alone.

# Local Leisure and Sporting Activities / Events

## Regular Groups

Click here: [Regular sport and leisure groups webpage](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/sport-and-leisure-groups/)

For a list of regular sport and leisure groups that don’t change each month and offered by other organisations, please see our website (linked above).

## British Blind Sport launches new membership tiers

Click here: [www.britishblindsport.org.uk/membership](http://www.britishblindsport.org.uk/membership)

To celebrate 50 years, British Blind Sport has launched new membership tiers to support blind and partially sighted people to get active. The free Active Membership offers access to events, resources, a community Facebook group, a discount on BBS shop items, and more. New Professional and Friends of BBS memberships are also available for coaches, volunteers, and supporters. To find out more and join, visit their website (linked above) or email info@britishblindsport.org.uk

## Westonbirt the National Arboretum at Tetbury - Sensing Nature and Wellbeing Walks

Click here: [Sensing Nature Walks](https://www.forestryengland.uk/westonbirt/activity/sensing-nature-walk)

Let our visually impaired guides lead you through an immersive and interactive sensory experience that aims to shift your perception, enjoy the arboretum at a slower pace and explore the trees of Westonbirt through your nonvisual senses.

Walks occur at 11:30am every Friday of the month from April - September.

Please note that dogs are not permitted on these walks (except assistance dogs). Some of our visually impaired guides will be assisted by a guide dog. Please do not disturb the assistance dogs while they are working.

How long? Approx. 1.5 hours

How much? Free after admission.

Where to meet? Meet at the Welcome Building, where you will be guided to the starting point for the walk.

Do I need to book? No.

What to wear? Please wear suitable clothing and footwear for outdoor walking as you will be going off path and over grass.

Accessibility? Dependent on weather, these sensory walks may not be suitable for wheelchair users due to the off path experience.

Get in touch customerrelations@forestryengland.uk /

Call 0300 067 4890

## Nature in Art near Gloucester launches project to make art accessible

Nature in Art museum (located near Gloucester) has recently been awarded a Small Open Grant from Museum Development South West, with thanks to support from Arts Council England. This is to support our project ‘Art for Every Sense’, which aims to remove barriers for blind and visually impaired people to engage with art. We are planning to use audio commentary and tactile prints of our paintings to do this.

If you are interested in supporting this project through feedback, testing or other means, please ring 01452 733 942 or email Hattie Revans at keeper@natureinart.org.uk

## News from Ignite Bristol

**Inclusive Multi-Sport Taster Afternoon**
Join an exciting free taster event for d/Deaf, disabled, and neurodivergent people and their families on Wednesday 28 May, 1pm to 4pm at Oasis Academy Brislington. Try out a range of accessible sports and meet inclusive local clubs. To express interest, email James.Snook@AccessSport.org.uk

**Sailing at Chew Lake with CLADS**
CLADS offers inclusive sailing sessions at Chew Valley Lake, welcoming people with a disability, with or without sailing experience. Enjoy fresh air, meet others, and build confidence on the water. Two free taster sessions available. Email info@clads.co.uk to find out more.

**Inclusive tennis at Winterbourne**
Weekly tennis sessions for young people aged 8 to 18 who are disabled, d/Deaf or neurodivergent. Thursdays 5–5.45pm and Fridays 11.15am–12pm at Winterbourne Tennis Club. First session is free. Sign up via: <bit.ly/winterbourneAcez>

**Inclusive Table Tennis – Share Your Views**
Ignite Bristol is exploring a new inclusive table tennis programme and would love your input. If you’re interested in taking part or helping shape the sessions, fill in this short form: <https://forms.gle/iLEMMsS9GV17vmyEA>

## VIP Reading Group – Bristol Central Library, College Green

Takes place on the last Thursday of every month from 10.30am till 12pm. New members welcome. Audio books are chosen from RNIB’s talking book service so it’s helpful to sign up before joining. The next books are:

* 29 May - The Second Sight of Zachary Cloudesley by Sean Lusk - An historical novel that roams from a clockmakers shop, in 18th Century London, to Constantinople in the heart of the Ottoman Empire.
* 26 June - The Island of Missing Trees by Elif Shafak. Set in Cyprus and England. Before and after the inter communal conflict between Greek and Turkish Cypriots.
* 31 July - The Gift of Rain by Twan Tan Eng. 1939 Penang. The story of a man of Chinese / British heritage who feels alienated from both communities. He befriends a Japanese diplomat but questions of loyalty arise when Japan invades Malaya.

Further information email vibookgroup.bristol@gmail.com or Katharine Seymour, Central Library on 07880 069877

## Goalball Taster Session - Bristol

Goalball UK are holding a free taster session in Bristol!

Come along to have some fun and learn all about this exciting Paralympic sport!

Sighted family and friends are also welcome.

Date: Sunday 4th May

Time: 1pm to 3pm

Venue: Fairfield High School, Allfoxton Road, Horfield, Bristol, BS7 9NL

For more information:

Contact Kathryn Fielding

Tel 07795 263642

Email Kathryn.Fielding@goalballuk.com

## Open studio day with Touchdown Dance - Bath

Click here: [www.touchdowndance.co.uk](http://www.touchdowndance.co.uk)

Come and join us to learn inclusive ways of working with movement facilitation with non-visual methods, through the body.

We will cover fundamentals and skills to bring participants together; to find ease, safety, self-awareness and curiosity. Based in Contact Improvisation we include principles from yoga, dance, aikido and somatic practices.

Touchdown Dance invites you to join them at the Natural Theatre Institute in Bath, from 10.30 to 4 pm on Saturday May 10th. Cost £25 (waged) or £15 low waged or £10 unemployed.

Please register with Katydymoke@gmail.com or 07932 038730 (WhatsApp or phone).

Please do let us know if you require a sighted guide or support to find the building.

## All Aboard Watersports – Rowing Sessions

All Aboard Watersports are holding a rowing taster morning for 8 – 25 year olds on Saturday 3rd May.

Suitable for children 8 years old and above

To register your interest and find out more get in touch with Jemma on centremanager@allaboardwatersports.co.uk or call 01173 018 158 If you are unable to make this date, they are looking to hold another, so do get in touch

## Bristol Arrow Bowls Club.

Click here: [Bristol Arrow Bowls Club website](https://www.bristolarrowbowlsclub.org.uk/)

Sessions for people living with sight loss take place every Monday and Friday from 2pm at the Bristol Arrow Bowls Club, 80 Redland Road, Bristol, BS6 6AG. Contact Mike Blunsden, Chair, for more information on 01179 567354.

## Thornbury Bowls Coaching sessions

Olveston And District Bowling Club, Alveston Road, Old Down, Tockington, Bristol, Uk BS32 4PH.

There is a Bowls Coaching session running alongside VIBE, supporting people with sight loss to enjoy bowls.

They will be running the sessions on 15 May, 10am to 12pm at Thornbury Bowls ClubSupport Groups and Courses

# Support Groups and Courses

## Regular Support Groups

Click here: [Webpage for regular support groups and services](https://www.sightsupportwest.org.uk/support-groups-and-services/)

See our website for a list of regular support groups offered by other organisations that take place locally and online.

## Helping young people with tech and skills – VICTA Tech Week webinars

Click here: [Parent Workshops: Technology for your VI Child Website](https://www.victa.org.uk/victa-calendar/parent-workshops-technology-for-your-vi-child/)

To celebrate Global Accessibility Awareness Day 2025, VICTA and TAVIP are hosting three free webinars for parents and carers. Topics include the latest accessible tech (6 May), online safety for young people with SEND (12 May), and preparing for the move to university (15 May). Each session brings expert advice, practical tips, and a chance to ask questions. Choose the sessions you would like to attend when signing up. Find out more and register by contacting VICTA or visiting their website (linked above).

## Bath Macular Group

The Bath Macular Support Group next meeting will be held on Wednesday21st May at 2.0 pm in The Good Living Centre ( was called The Bubble) at St Johns Foundation. Our speaker will be Frances Leonard talking about her experiences on being an expat. All Welcome.

Contact Jo Fishwick on 07947 373 244 or Jo.Fishwick@macularsociety.org to find out more information or find other local groups.

# Local Audio Described Arts Events

## Galleries and Museums

### Arnolfini Gallery

Arnolfini, 16 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

* 10 May from 10-11 – An exhibition by British artist Barbara Walker, whose compelling figurative work – spotlights black British, history, immigration and life.

Sighted guides will be there to assist you and complimentary tea and coffee will be served in the café bar, afterwards. Free event - but please email to book a space community@arnolfini.org.uk

### Bath – Victoria Art Gallery

Victoria Art Gallery, Bridge Street, BA2 4AT

Art on Mondays talks for VI Visitors

* 19 May - First Impressions: Trial Proofs of Prints by Great 20th Century Artists
* 23 June 2025 - Geri Waddington, Artist – Against the Grain
* 21 July 2025 - Sue Wales, Artist – Landscapes, Interiors, and Still Lives

Sessions run from 10–11.30. The gallery is closed to the general public on those days so please ring 01225 477232 for access information or email

Kersti Haabjoern - Kersti\_Haabjoern@bathnes.gov.uk

## Theatres - Upcoming Audio Described Shows

### Bristol Hippodrome

* 12 June – War Horse
* 16 July - Moulin Rouge
* 1 November – The Book of Mormon

Book touch tours separately. Contact Access for All bristoladmin@theambassadors.com or call the access booking line 0333 009 5399 for tickets

### Bristol Old Vic

* 31 May – The Beautiful Future is Coming - a fast-paced, inventive look at 250 years of history through the eyes of three couples.
* 5 July – How to Win against History – A Comedy Musical telling the riches to rags story of the 5th Marquis of Anglesey - one of the world’s wealthiest men - until he lost it all by being too damn *fabulous*.
* 4 October – Starter for Ten. The musical of David Nicholls book returns with Mel Giedroyc

For more details and to book - ring the Box office – 0117 987 7877

### Bath - Theatre Royal

* 21 May – The Midnight Bell – Performed by Matthew Bourne’s dance company. It’s set in the pubs and fog-bound streets of Soho and Fitzrovia during the 1930s
* 12 June – By Royal Appointment – starring Anne Reid as the Queen and Caroline Quentin as her dresser.
* 12 July – Grace Pervades – with Ralph Fiennes
* 30 August – As You Like It – with Harriet Walker

Both shows have touch tours. For more details and tickets phone 01225 448844. Make sure you subscribe to the Theatre’s Access List.

You will receive a link emailed, beforehand, with pre-show audio notes. Hearing devices can be collected from all bars when the house opens - half an hour before the show.

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Tel 0117 322 4885, Email info@sightsupportwest.org.uk

Sight Support is a registered charity no 1178384. Registered Office: St Lucy’s Sight Centre, Browfort, Bath Road, Devizes, Wiltshire, SN10 2AT