Bristol Walk Fest 2026 launch: an evening of walking, art and inclusion

Friday 22 May, 2026

Bristol Walk Fest launched its 2026 programme on Friday 1 May with an evening at Hamilton House, Stokes Croft, bringing together artists, advocates and innovators to explore the connections between walking, creativity and inclusion in the city.

More than 20 people joined an exclusive pre-launch walking tour through Bristol city centre, led by Show of Strength Theatre Company, before heading inside for the main event.

The evening featured seven guest speakers alongside the Bristol Walk Fest team, and opened with a specially recorded video message from **Helen Godwin, Mayor of the West of England.**

> *"The Bristol Walking Festival has been a key event in the city's calendar for as long as I can remember, offering access to the whole city and its hidden corners to so many people. Walking is the best way to get around for our health, our wellbeing and our environment, and I'm glad we are continuing to work to make our streets as safe and welcoming as possible."*

An evening that started on foot

Starting at Queen Square, Sheila Hannon and Gerard Cooke from Show of Strength led walkers through the old city - historic lanes, hidden churchyards and medieval streets - emerging into the bustle of Broadmead, the Bear Pit and Stokes Croft to arrive at Hamilton House for the launch. Along the way, walkers heard stories of Blackbeard, Cary Grant and Long John Silver, and the location of the prison where ten Bristol women were held before transportation to Australia.

Photo story from the walk: bristolwalkfest.com/bwf-launch-walk-in-photos

The speakers

Jennifer Graham, Bristol Walk Fest event manager, introduced the evening and thanked supporters before handing over to the guest speakers.

Misfits Theatre Company - Anita Karla Kelly, artistic lead, talked about the company's work supporting people with learning difficulties to find their creative voices. Misfits members Bill Loveridge and Rob Traill then shared poems from the poetry audio trail they have created, inspired by their walks around Bristol Harbourside.

> *"The embodiment of being inclusive!" - audience member*

Dr Subitha Baghirathan, who received an honorary doctorate from UWE in 2025 for over a decade of work advancing health equity in Bristol, shared the creative and practical approaches she uses to make walking inclusive and accessible, particularly for women of Caribbean and South Asian heritage, through her work with SoulTrail Wellbeing.

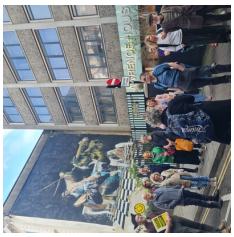
> *"Really interesting to hear about her work so widely across the community and how she's driving to get minority groups involved. So positive!" - audience member*

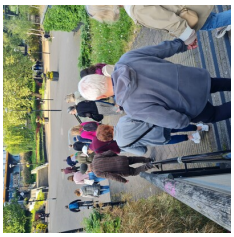
Hana Sutch, co-founder and CEO of Go Jauntly, talked about the multi-award-winning walking app and its mission to make walking accessible for everyone. Hana also introduced the brand new Bristol Ring - a 33-mile circular route around the city in six sections, each accessible by public transport, created in partnership with Bristol City Council, Bristol Ramblers and the Bristol Walking Alliance.

Sheila Hannon and Gerard Cooke from Show of Strength Theatre Company rounded off the evening with stories of real Bristol characters, intensely researched and told in the actual places where events unfolded. For the people who go on these walks, hearing history brought to life on the streets where it happened creates an experience no theatre or page can replicate. Sheila ended with a call for Bristol to be recognised as a Walking City.

> *"There's much more to Bristol than I knew! So interesting how the stories have developed over time as participants have contributed their own insights." - audience member*

Media:







Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Education & Human Resources :: Environment & Nature :: Home & Garden :: Leisure & Hobbies :: Lifestyle & Relationships :: Sport :: Transport & Logistics :: Travel & Tourism :: Women & Beauty ::

Related Keywords:

Walk :: Walking :: Festival :: Bristol :: May :: Health :: Wellbeing :: Free :: Accessible :: Urban :: Community :: History :: Art :: Culture ::

Scan Me:

> *“A room full of people thinking creatively about how walking can be truly accessible and beneficial for everyone - it set the perfect tone for the month ahead.”*

Jennifer Graham, Bristol Walk Fest event manager

Full event write-up: bristolwalkfest.com/an-evening-of-walking-art-and-inclusion

Company Contact:

_

Bristol Walk Fest

E. comms@bristolwalkfest.co.uk
W. https://www.bristolwalkfest.com/

Additional Contact(s):
Jen Graham, Event Coordinator info@bristolwalkfest.co.uk

View Online

Additional Assets:

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.bristolwalkfest.pressat.co.uk