

ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE | BOOKS ALIVE!
24 - 31 OCTOBER 2026

BOOKS ALIVE!



2026
SOUTHPORT
Elegantly eccentric

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Accessibility Guide Introduction

Books Alive! is a FREE family literature and storytelling festival taking place across Southport Town Centre from **Saturday 24th to Saturday 31st October 2026**. The event transforms the town into a celebration of books, stories and creativity, featuring three main elements: [The Jolly Postman Trail](#), [Festival of Stories](#), and the [Books Alive! Fringe Festival](#).

The event includes:

The Jolly Postman Trail

Inspired by Janet and Allan Ahlberg's beloved children's book The Jolly Postman, families can follow a self-guided trail through Southport Town Centre, discovering nine large-scale storybook installations inspired by classic fairy tales and characters. Trail locations include:

- Town Hall Gardens
- Wayfarers Arcade
- Mermaid Gardens
- Lord Street
- Market Street
- Tulketh Street
- Chapel Street (Waterstones)

Festival of Stories

Taking place at The Atkinson and Southport Children's Library on **Thursday 29th and Friday 30th October 2026**, this programme features:

- Children's authors and illustrators
- Storytelling sessions
- Interactive performances
- Creative workshops
- Arts and crafts activities

All events are free to attend, although advance booking is recommended as capacity is limited.

Book sessions [here](#).

Books Alive! Fringe Festival

A programme of book-themed activities and experiences hosted by local businesses, community organisations and venues across Southport Town Centre. Activities vary between venues and provide additional opportunities for families to engage with stories, creativity and reading throughout the week.

Browse Fringe events [here](#).

Travel to Southport

Travelling to Southport is accessible and straightforward, with direct train routes from Liverpool and Manchester.

- ***By Rail***

Southport Station is in the Town Centre – Chapel Street. This is within proximity to all of the attractions including The Jolly Postman Trail installations, and The Atkinson (Festival of Stories). The station is approximately a 3-minute walk to The Atkinson. The station offers step-free access, lifts, and accessible toilets (radar key required).

More info: [National Rail Southport Station Accessibility](#).

Journey planner: [National Rail Journey Planner](#)

- ***By Bus***

Local services operated by Arriva and Stagecoach are wheelchair accessible.

Plan your journey: [Merseytravel Journey Planner](#).

More Info: [Accessibility via Merseytravel](#).

- ***By Road***

There are two major routes into Southport: one from the north and one from the south. Both start on the M6 motorway. If you're travelling from the north, exit the M6 at junction 31 and head towards Preston. From there, take the A59 and follow the signs.

If you're travelling from the south, exit the M6 at junction 26 to join the M58. After you pass Skelmersdale, join the A570, which will take you all the way to Southport.

Finally, if you're travelling from the east, you should take the M62 or M65 instead.

- ***By Taxi***

Wheelchair-accessible taxis are available via local taxi firms, **we always recommend ringing and booking ahead** as many are booking only. On the day availability is not always available.

- Alpha Taxis – 01704 537777
- Central Cabs – 01704 544414
- One Call Taxis - 01704 547000

Car Parking

Blue Badge holders: Free parking in Pay & Display bays throughout the town centre and dedicated accessible spaces marked as disabled. Blue Badge holders can also use parking places on street where waiting is free but time limited – for example ‘free parking for one hour’ - badge holders don’t have to leave they can stay all day.

More info: [Sefton Council Parking](#).

Locate Blue Badge Spaces: [Blue Badge Parking](#).

*** Please note, the Blue Badge Parking website is an independent website and not operated by the council so we cannot guarantee the content.**

- Most council car parks have disabled bays, level access, and accept contactless payment. If you park in a private car park, please refer to the specific disabled parking T&Cs as they are not always free.
- Ocean Plaza and major retail parks provide wide bays and step-free access.

Car parks within close proximity to the start of the trail:

Tulketh Street – West (PR8 1AN)

Disabled Bays: Yes

Charges:

Free for Blue Badge holders

Price range: £1.00 - £3.50

Payment: Pay & Display, cards, cash, contactless.

Tulketh Street – East (PR8 1AW)

Disabled Bays: Yes

Charges:

Free for Blue Badge holders

Charges: *Similar to West (approx. £0.90–£3.50)*

Payment: Pay & Display, cards, cash, contactless

London Street NCP (Southport Train Station PR9 0TJ)

Disabled Bays: Yes

Charges:

Please note: this car park is NOT free for Blue Badge holders

Price range: £2.00 - £4.50

Payment: NCP App, card, ANPR system

There are many other private car parks throughout Southport which may be suitable for your visit.

Please check individual car park closing times.

Where to Stay

Southport offers a range of fully accessible and partially accessible accommodation options. We always recommend ringing ahead; to discuss your needs in detail so that the hotel can make direct recommendations and accommodations. The below list is not exhaustive:

Hotel Name	Rating	Accessible Rooms
Waterfront Southport Hotel	4★	Accessible rooms with interconnecting options, roll-in showers, emergency pull cords: The Waterfront Hotel - Accessibility Tel: 01704 516220
Premier Inn Southport Central	3★	Accessible rooms with wet rooms or lowered baths; all on ground floor: Premier Inn Tel: 0333 0919 817
Travelodge Southport	3★	Wheelchair-accessible rooms with adapted bathrooms; lifts available: Travelodge Tel: 08715 591862
Lord Street Hotel	4★	Fully accessible room available with wet room, shower seat, rails and lift access. May not be fully suitable for wheelchair users due to heights of facilities: Lord Street Hotel - Accessibility Tel: 01704 829027
The Vincent Hotel	4★	Fully accessible room available with additional rooms with walk-in showers: The Vincent Hotel - Accessibility Tel: 01704 883 800

There is also a wide range of B&Bs, Air BnBs and private accommodations across Southport - available to view and gain more information on via the internet: [Google](#), [Air BnB](#), [Booking.com](#). We recommend checking out other hotels and their facilities directly or contacting them individually based on your specific needs – as there may be many other fantastic options available for your stay.

Changing Places Facilities

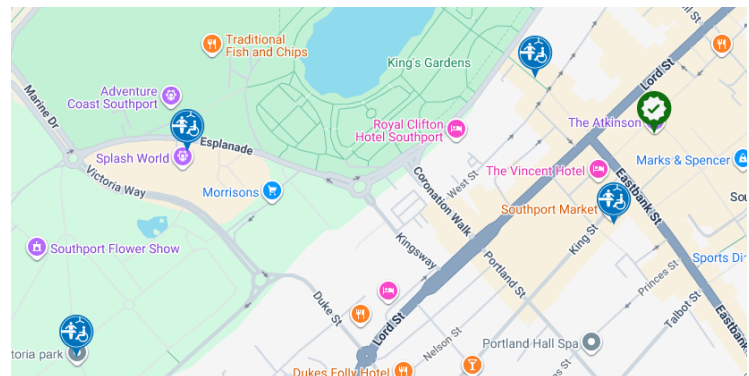


A Changing Places toilet is a larger, fully equipped accessible toilet with a hoist and adult-sized changing bench for people with complex disabilities. A radar-key is required.

For more information on Changing Places toilet facilities in Southport, and for specific details, use the [‘Find a Changing Places Toilet’](#) website.

The Atkinson (Lord Street)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	10:00 – 16:00
Tuesday	10:00 – 16:00
Wednesday	10:00 – 16:00
Thursday	10:00 – 16:00
Friday	10:00 – 16:00
Saturday	10:00 – 16:00



Southport Market (Market Street)

Day	Opening Hours
Wednesday	10:00 – 22:00
Thursday	10:00 – 22:00
Friday	10:00 – 23:00
Saturday	10:00 – 23:00
Sunday	10:00 – 18:30

Dunes Splashworld (The Esplanade)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	07:00 – 22:00
Tuesday	07:00 – 22:00
Wednesday	07:00 – 22:00
Thursday	07:00 – 22:00
Friday	07:00 – 22:00
Saturday	09:00 – 16:00
Sunday	09:00 – 16:00

Victoria Park (The Esplanade)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	09:00 – 16:00
Tuesday	09:00 – 16:00
Wednesday	09:00 – 16:00
Thursday	09:00 – 16:00
Friday	09:00 – 16:00
Saturday	09:00 – 16:00
Sunday	09:00 – 16:00

The Life Rooms (Scarisbrick Avenue)

Day	Opening Hours
Monday	09:00 – 16:30
Tuesday	09:00 – 16:30
Wednesday	09:00 – 16:30
Thursday	09:00 – 16:30
Friday	09:00 – 16:30

The Jolly Postman Trail Map



Books Alive! The Jolly Postman Trail, Festival of Stories & Fringe Events

The Jolly Postman Trail

Overview:

There are nine large-scale story installations to discover from 24th – 31st October, 10am - 4pm daily.

Inspired by the beloved children's book by Janet and Allan Ahlberg, The Jolly Postman Trail transforms Southport Town Centre into a living storybook, inviting families to follow his journey as he delivers letters to favourite fairytale characters.

Make CIC have been commissioned to work with artists from across the Liverpool City Region to create the nine installations and bring memorable characters and moments from the story to life.

The installations can be visited in any order, so you can create your own storybook adventure through the town centre.

Discover where each tale begins by clicking the links and exploring the locations below:

Please note: the links will also direct you to further Accessibility information for each installation – such as light, visual, music and noise considerations.

'Postman Greeting'

Location: Marble Place Shopping Centre, Tulketh Street/Chapel Street

 Level entrances and exits to the Shopping Centre. This is a mural installation located in the window on Tulketh Street side of the shopping centre – level pathways throughout the exterior.	 There are no specific public seating areas within the shopping centre, however public benches are located within close proximity on Chapel Street.
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'Postbox'

Location: Market Street

 Level pathways with dropped kerbs throughout location.	 Public bench seating is available at this location.
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‘The Wicked Witch’**Location:** Wayfarers Arcade – The Junction, Lord Street

 Level access via Lord Street, ground floor installation located on flat surfaces.	 Multiple seating areas are located within the arcade, including cafés and restaurants.
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Dedicated Wayfarer’s Arcade Accessibility Information can be found [here](#).**‘The Giant’****Location:** Wayfarer’s Arcade, Lord Street

 Level access via Lord Street, ground floor installation located on flat surfaces.	 Multiple seating areas are located within the arcade, including a ‘selfie seat’ on the installation itself – along with existing cafés and restaurants.
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Dedicated Wayfarer’s Arcade Accessibility Information can be found [here](#).**‘Grandma’s Cottage’****Location:** Wayfarer’s Arcade, Lord Street

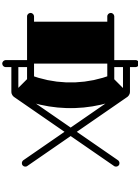
 Level access via Lord Street, ground floor installation located on flat surfaces.	 Multiple seating areas are located within the arcade, including cafés and restaurants.
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Dedicated Wayfarer’s Arcade Accessibility Information can be found [here](#).

‘The Giant’s Postcard’**Location:** Former Beales Shopfront, Lord Street

 Level pathways along Lord Street, this is a mural installation located in the shop window.	 Public bench seating available along Lord Street and in the adjacent Town Hall Gardens.
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‘Cinderella’**Location:** Waterstones, Chapel Street

 Level pathways along Chapel Street, this is a window display installation located on the shop front.	 Public bench seating available along Chapel Street.
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‘Goldilocks’**Location:** Town Hall Gardens, Lord Street

 Level pathway access to the gardens and level surfaces throughout.	 Public bench seating is available within the Town Hall Gardens.
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‘Postman’s Hometown’**Location:** Mermaid Gardens, Lord Street

 Level pathways through the gardens, wheelchair accessible entrances and exits to Mermaid Gardens are located via Lord Street.	 Public bench seating is available within Mermaid Gardens and Lord Street.
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Festival of Stories

Overview:

Discover what's on during Books Alive! Festival of Stories and start planning your visit. Taking place at The Atkinson and Southport Children's Library on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th October, the Festival of Stories brings together authors, illustrators, storytellers and performers for two days of inspiring events, creative workshops and family fun.

Browse the event listings below to find out what's on, learn more about each session and book your place. From live storytelling and author talks to interactive activities and hands-on workshops, there's something for readers and imaginations of all ages.

All Festival of Stories events are free to attend, but advance booking is recommended as places are limited. Explore the programme below and secure your tickets to make the most of your Books Alive! experience.

Programme:

Date	Time	Location	Session	More information	Booking Link & Further Access Info
29 th October	10am – 10:45am	Southport Children's Library	Lydia Monks: Meet the Artist – The Tooth Fairy and the Crocodile	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whats-on/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/lydia-monks/
29 th October	12:30pm – 13:15pm	Southport Children's Library	Natalie Denny: Meet the Author - Keisha Jones Takes on the World		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whats-on/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/natalie-denny/

29 th October	15:15pm – 16:00pm	Southport Children's Library	Dapo Adeola: Meet the Artist - Super Goat Girl	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/dapo-adeola/
29 th October	11:15am – 12:00pm	Southport Children's Library	Salomey Doku: Draw Along - You Can Do Anything, Tyrone!	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/salomey-doku/
29 th October	14:00pm – 14:45pm	Southport Children's Library	Metaphrog: Graphic Novel Workshop	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/metaphrog/
29 th October	10:30am – 11:15am	The Atkinson Studio	Altru Drama: Hansel & Gretel		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/hansel-gretel/
29 th October	12:30pm – 13:15pm	The Atkinson Studio	EggPeople: Poetry Slammed!	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/poetry-slammed/

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29 th October	14:30pm – 15:15pm	The Atkinson Studio	Tmesis Theatre: The Wondershelf		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/the-wondershelf/
29 th October	10am – 13:00pm / 14:00pm – 16:00pm	The Atkinson Foyer	Noisy Noise Noise		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/noisy-noise-noise/
29 th October	11am – 15:00pm	The Atkinson Art Box	Make-It! Workshops		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/make-it-workshops/
30 th October	10am – 10:45am	Southport Children's Library	Kate Pankhurst: Meet the Artist - Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/kate-pankhurst/
30 th October	12:30pm – 13:15pm	Southport Children's Library	Ashley Thorpe: Meet the Author - The Boy to Beat the Gods		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/ashley-thorpe/
30 th October	15:15pm – 16:00pm	Southport Children's Library	Joseph Coelho: Meet the Author - Rapunzel is a Lettuce	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/joseph-coelho/
30 th October	11:15am – 12:00pm	Southport Children's Library	Ruth Awolola: Interactive Poetry Workshop		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/ruth-awolola/
30 th October	14:00pm – 14:45pm	Southport Children's Library	Gabrielle Kent: How Stories Begin Workshop	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/gabrielle-kent/

				(BSL) interpreter.	
30 th October	10:30am – 11:30pm	The Atkinson Studio	Little Seeds Music: Tales from the Lighthouse	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/tales-from-the-lighthouse/
30 th October	13:00pm – 13:45pm	The Atkinson Studio	Tmesis Theatre: The Wondershelf	This session will be supported by a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.	https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/the-wondershelf/
30 th October	10am – 13:00pm / 14:00pm – 16:00pm	The Atkinson Foyer	Noisy Noise Noise		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/noisy-noise-noise/
30 th October	11am – 15:00pm	The Atkinson Art Box	Make-It! Workshops		https://www.visitsouthport.com/whatson/top-events/books-alive/festival-of-stories/make-it-workshops/

Dedicated Accessibility Information for all areas within The Atkinson and Southport Library can be found here:

[Access - The Atkinson](#)

Accessible seating can be purchased in person at the Box Office or by calling 01704 533 333.

Should you have more questions, or want to discuss your needs during your visit further with a member of staff, please contact:

info@theatkinson.co.uk

Fringe Events

Overview:

A programme of book-themed activities and experiences hosted by local businesses, community organisations and venues across Southport Town Centre. Activities vary between venues and provide additional opportunities for families to engage with stories, creativity and reading throughout the week.

Browse Fringe events [here](#).

The Books Alive! Fringe Events are hosted externally by local businesses and organisations, therefore for further information and assistance regarding accessibility and event details, **please contact the hosts directly** – as these events are not programmed by Sefton Tourism.

Need Additional Help?

- Should you find anything in this guide unclear, or need further assistance discussing your specific needs, please contact: **tourism@sefton.gov.uk**