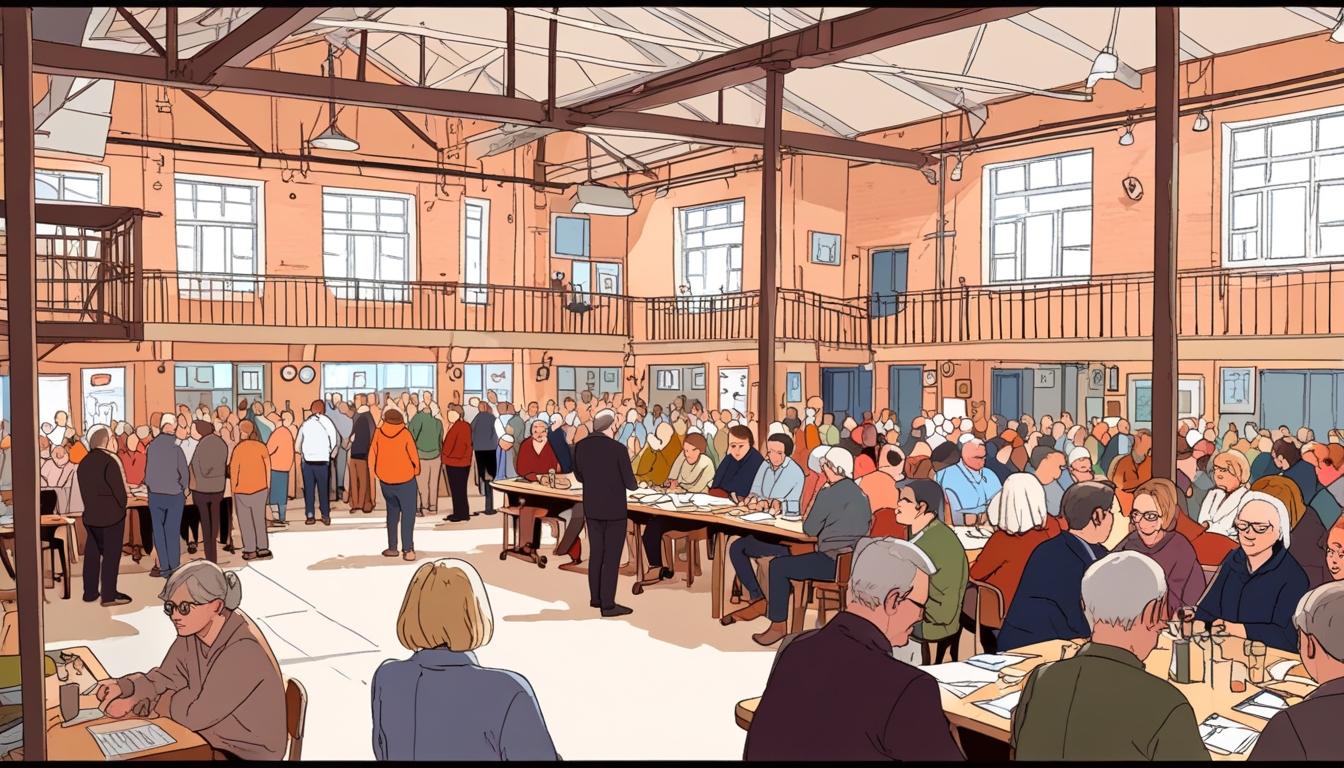
# Bristol community forum to host hustings for metro mayor election



A community forum in Bristol is gearing up for a hustings event as part of the West of England metro mayor election scheduled for May 1, 2025. Organised by the Lawrence Hill Neighbourhood Forum in collaboration with Acorn Bristol, the event will take place at the St Anne’s Board Mill Social Club in Redfield on Tuesday, April 29, from 7pm to 9pm. While tickets for the event are free, attendees must RSVP to secure their participation.

The choice of location is significant as it lies within the controversial East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood, a site that has been a focal point for local discussions surrounding urban living conditions. The venue also serves as a community hub for residents of Redfield and Barton Hill. Notably, it hosted the launch of a report by the medical charity MedAct, which examined trauma experienced by residents of a nearby facility, Barton House.

Four candidates are expected to participate in the hustings: Helen Godwin from Labour, Oli Henman from the Liberal Democrats, Mary Page representing the Green Party, and Steve Smith from the Conservative Party. However, the inclusion of Reform UK candidate Arron Banks remains uncertain. Despite prior invitations being sent to the Reform UK party locally, Banks did not attend the earlier hustings focused on transport at the Watershed, claiming he was not informed of the invitation.

Banks has been at the center of controversy regarding his remarks about Bristol’s Somali community. Previously commenting on social issues, he referred to Bristol as resembling "Little Somalia," a statement that provoked backlash, including from MP Kerry McCarthy, who stated that Banks would not be welcome in the city. Earlier this month, Banks made claims regarding crime rates and the Somali community in Bristol, suggesting that Somali individuals were disproportionately involved in serious crime. However, research by the Local Democracy Reporting Service debunked his claims, indicating a much lower involvement of the Somali community in violent crime and arrests.

In light of the ongoing debates, some members of the Somali community in Barton Hill have expressed willingness to engage with Banks at the hustings. Fadumo Farah, a resident of Barton House, stated, “I am looking forward to seeing all candidates, yes, even Arron Banks. Respect goes both ways.”

As the event approaches, preparations are underway to confirm the final list of candidates who will feature in the discussions, marking an important occasion for community members to engage with those vying for political office in the upcoming election.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_West_of_England_mayoral_election> - This URL provides information about the 2025 West of England mayoral election, including the election date and the candidates involved. It supports the claim that the election is scheduled for May 1, 2025.
* <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/about-us/democracy-funding-transparency/2025-west-of-england-mayoral-election/> - This page offers details about the West of England mayoral election, including how to vote and key deadlines. It corroborates the voting process and election timing mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council/voting-and-elections/combined-authority-mayor-election-for-the-west-of-england-weca-2025> - This URL provides Bristol-specific information on the mayoral election, including registration deadlines and voting methods. It supports claims about voting procedures and timelines.
* <https://www.bristol247.com/news-and-features/news/greens-tipped-tight-victory-mayoral-election/> - This article discusses the competitive nature of the election and predictions for the outcome. It supports the idea that the election is closely contested among multiple candidates.
* <https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/BD17126-MCA-Election-2025-6-CANDIDATES-ONLINE.pdf> - This document lists all candidates running in the West of England mayoral election and provides information on voting. It includes details about each candidate and supports the claim of candidate participation in the election.