FOSS4G 2027 Proposal for Bristol (UK) - Letter of Intent

1. Who are your conference co-chairs?

Dennis Bauszus
Principal Software Engineer for GEOLYTIX, GIS professional, and graduate geographer. Dennis recently joined the OSGeo:UK board as DEI officer and co-chaired the FOSS4G:UK 2025 in Leeds.

Illya Sparkes-Santos
Illya Sparkes-Santos is a lead geospatial engineer at Strava. A long term contributor to FOSS4G projects, based in Bristol for the past 15 years, he has fostered the local community and organized informal geo-based meetups for over a decade. Recently Illya has expanded his community involvement by serving on the LOC for OSGeo events in Bristol.

Paul Wittle
Paul is a geospatial web developer for Dorset Council. Paul has been involved with organising local FOSS4G events and code sprints with the local OSGeo chapter for the past few years and has experience running entertainment events.

2. Who is on your local organising committee (LoC)?

Dennis Bauszus, GEOLYTIX	Ant Scott, MapAction
Illya Sparkes-Santos, Strava	Nick Bearman
Paul Wittle, Dorset Council	Jonathan Lewis, Geovation
Weiming Huang, University of Leeds	Joe Allnutt, Ordnance Survey
Gabriella Edghill	Nicholas Duggan, Idox Geospatial
Jeremy Morley, UCL	Steven Feldman
Json Singh	Samantha Lavender, Pixalytics
Akintunde Kuye, UoN	

3. What is the experience of committee members with similar events?
Members of our LOC have experience with organising FOSS4G 2013 in Nottingham, including Steven Feldman who chaired the 2013 conference and Jeremy Morley (vice-chair) who was the local liaison with the University of Nottingham conference facility.

We recently organised FOSS4G:UK in Leeds [2025] which attracted 180 delegates with an expenditure of £22,860 and managing a surplus of £9,831. This was mainly achieved through overwhelming support from corporate sponsors.

We also organised FOSS4G:UK South West 2024 in Bristol, and FOSS4G:UK Local in 2023 and 2022. These are events where keynote presentations are streamed to a number of local in-person events across the country. Typically we had 7 or 8 in-person events and in total attracted ~150 participants across the whole of the UK. After COVID we hosted FOSS4GUK Online 2020 entirely online and prior to the COVID lockdown we organised FOSS4G:UK in person events in Edinburgh [2019], London [2018], and Southampton [2016].

4. **What is your proposed venue?**
   The University of Bristol provides managed venues which are concentrated in an area of the city centre referred to as the "University Precinct". Among these venues is the great hall of the Wills Memorial Building which sits up to 800 delegates.
   A series of lecture theatres sitting between 80 and 240 delegates is available to provide up to 10 parallel sessions. We will be able to provide for 1000+ delegates with the option to stream key presentations across multiple auditoria.
   We are able to run 5 parallel workshops for 30 participants each in the modern Humanities complex.
   Catering for conference delegates and workshop participants will be provided by the venue.
   There is an option to move some elements of FOSS4G into the Temple Quarter Enterprise Campus which is currently being built and expected to open in September 2026.

5. **What are your provisional dates for the conference?**
   We are required to host FOSS4G in the second week of July 2027. The venue booking for this date will open in April 2026 by which time we are expected to know whether we are awarded to host FOSS4G 2027 in Bristol. We propose to run the workshops on Monday and Tuesday with the main conference to run from Wednesday to Friday. We will be able to provide spaces for code sprints on the Saturday and Sunday following the conference.

6. **Early thoughts on prices of conference attendance?**
   The 3 day conference ticket should be no more than $500.
   The venue offers us a DDR day delegate package at $81.
   We expect good support from industry sponsors which would allow us to reduce the ticket price. Sponsor support will allow us to offer significant discounts for students and delegates from lower income economies.

7. **What is the price range and general location of your proposed accommodations?**
   Booking.com lists for the proposed week in 2026:
   100+ budget properties [$100 or less]
   300 mid range properties [$100 to $200]
   And 300 luxury properties [$200+]
   With a minimum of 30 guests the University of Bristol offers accommodation in their Student Halls from $65pp/night.

8. **Are you partnering with other organizations?**
   University of Bristol, Levi Wolf; The School of Geographical Sciences at Bristol University consistently aims to be one of the major international centres for integrated research and teaching in environmental processes, environmental systems and human sciences.
   Ordnance Survey, Joe Allnutt; The national mapping agency for Great Britain.
   Geovation, Jonathan Lewis; A community of location-data, Geotech and Proptech innovators looking to make positive change happen.
   Geomob, Steven Feldman; An event series and podcast for geospatial enthusiasts.
   HOT-OSM, Petya Kangalova; HOT is an international team dedicated to humanitarian action and community development through open mapping, contributing to Sustainable Development Goals. The UK has 12 voting members.
   MSF UK | Médecins Sans Frontières, Jorieke Vyncke; Missing Maps is an open, collaborative initiative founded by Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), the British Red Cross, the American Red Cross and the Humanitarian OpenStreetMap Team (HOT).
   VisitWest, Helen Applin; Visit West is the Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for the West of England.
   Office for National Statistics [ONS], Olive Powell; The UK's largest independent producer of official statistics and the recognised national statistical institute of the UK.
   MapAction, Antony Scott; A UK-based humanitarian mapping NGO, to highlight the value of open source GIS in responding to disasters and building resilience in local response organisations worldwide.
   Women+ in Geospatial, Mariam Crichton; A multi award-winning global professional network dedicated to promoting diversity and gender inclusion in the geospatial industry.
   British Geological Survey; John Stevenson; A world-leading independent research organisation providing objective, expert geoscientific data, information and knowledge.
   DataMapWales / **Welsh Government**, Tom Colley & Morgan Commins; A source for public sector data in Wales, providing a shared data platform to members of the public and public authorities.
   Royal Geographic Society [RGS], Liz Fox-Tucker; The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers), is a learned society and professional body for geography based in the United Kingdom.
   Satellite Applications Catapult, Liz Scott; The Satellite Applications Catapult is a unique government innovation and technology company which boosts UK productivity by helping organisations harness the power of satellite-based services.
   AGI, Fergus Craig; The Association for Geographic Information is an independent and impartial organisation that represents the geospatial sector.
   OGC, Nigel Edmead; The Open Geospatial Consortium is a global network supporting the development of geospatial standards.

9. **What makes FOSS4G in your proposed location and with your team compelling?**

OSGeo:UK is one of the few local chapters who are actively sponsoring OSGeo and its projects. We have a large community of maintainers, developers, and FOSS advocates representing OSGeo community projects - both local and international organisations. We believe that a global FOSS4G in the UK would attract generous sponsorship from a range of geo-technology companies which are based here or have a significant organisational interest in the UK, as well as *Free and Open Source Software for Good*.

OSGeo:UK would be representing all the member countries; England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. The Welsh capital Cardiff is just 1hr from Bristol.

Bristol has a long history of innovation in technology and engineering and was at the heart of British ship building and waterways; part of a canal system which reaches all the way west back to London. Bristol also has a rich engineering history as part of the great steam revolution of the Victorian period. The [SS Great Britain](#), built by Isembard Kingdom Brunel, is a must see attraction for visitors to the city. Bristol is famed for its bridges ([Avon](#) and [Severn](#)), railways and later the aerospace industry. We would like to invite visitors to experience the [Concorde](#) exhibited at [Aerospace Bristol](#). In 2025 the UK's most powerful supercomputer, [Isambard-AI](#), launched as part of the University of Bristol with the aim to support the creation of competitive, open-source AI models.

Bristol is the only UK city to win the [European Green Capital award achieved in 2015](#) and the [UK's greenest city in 2019](#).

We would encourage overseas delegates to extend their stay and experience the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty of the [Cotswolds](#), [Mendip Hills National Landscape](#), [Quantocks AONB](#) and the [Bannau Brycheiniog (Breacon Beacons) National Park](#) in Wales.

The capital and cultural hub of the UK, London, is easily accessible by National Railway or coach; less than a 2 hour journey away.

Bristol Airport is 30 minutes from the city center with regular bus connections and taxi services. The airport is serviced by 12 airlines with around 30 destinations across Europe, North Africa, and North America. Heathrow airport is a major international hub and is a 2 hour journey by public or private transport. There are regular train and bus services from Heathrow terminals right into Bristol city center. Similarly, Cardiff Airport is approximately 1 hour drive from Bristol city center.

Bristol Temple Meads Train Station is a 10min walk from the proposed venue and serves the whole country, providing easy train travel for delegates attending from within the UK and Europe via connections with Eurostar through London.

Nationals from some countries (e.g. U.S. citizens) need an [Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)](#), while others (e.g. from some high TB incidence countries) may need a Standard Visitor Visa (for more details see [gov.uk/check-uk-visa](#)). Many other nationals can visit visa-free for up to 6 months.

10. **What are your safety plans to cover travel restrictions or other threats? What is your financial strategy to make the event sustainable in complex situations?**

In the case of limited travel restrictions we would be able to reduce the size of the event. We would for example be able to book an auditorium for 600 instead of 800 delegates. OSGeo:UK has experience in running remote [FOSS4G:UK 2020] and hybrid [FOSS4G:UK Local 2022 & 2023] events in response to the COVID pandemic. OSGeo:UK will include a comprehensive event insurance into the detailed budget. The [UK Government has well prepared action plans for complex scenarios](#) and our [National Health Service [NHS]](#) is held in high regard internationally.

11. **Conclusion**

We anticipate FOSS4G 2027 Bristol to be the biggest post-COVID meeting (excluding Hiroshima 2026 which is yet to happen). By hosting FOSS4G in the UK we hope to expand the OSGeo community and its support in our region. We expect to secure most of the required funding from previous and new FOSS4G and OSGeo sponsors. Several companies like MapTiler, IDOX, and Geolytix have already confirmed their financial support for our bid. Our LOC has vast experience in working with OSGeo, sponsor organisations, and FOSS4G in particular. Several LOC members are expected to attend FOSS4G 2026 for an in-person handover and we would like to offer our experience and support to future FOSS4G organisers.