

23rd April - Coronavirus Update and Tourism News

We are now into another three weeks of lockdown and we hope that you are all keeping safe and well.

In this e-news we include a few recent updates for you, plus we have kept the links in for key information updates, so that you can click and check at any time for the latest news.

There is also information on some new pages we have added to visitthanet.co.uk plus details on a new book on Ramsgate by Historic England.

Many of you will by now have received your business grant payment. As of Wednesday 22 April, Thanet District Council has paid out a total of over £23m to 2,100 businesses.

If you know somebody who would like to read our e-news, please forward it on, or let them know they can register to receive it themselves on www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters

Government Information

The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has [opened for applications](#) for businesses who have put staff on furlough due to COVID-19.

HMRC has published [step-by-step guidance](#) on how to [make a claim](#) including a calculator to help you work out your claim.

The online system can process up to 450,000 applications per hour and employers should receive the money within six working days of making an application. Please keep a note or printout of your claim reference number as you will not receive a confirmation SMS or email.

[HMRC is also holding webinars](#) providing an overview of the scheme to help employers and employees deal with the economic impacts of COVID-19. Next one scheduled is **Friday, 24 April from 10.15am to 11am**.

Further updates to the [CJRS eligibility guidance](#) include:

- Moving the eligibility date from 28 February to 19 March
- How to report fraud or abuse of the scheme
- Clarifying how holiday pay should be treated
- Further clarifications on agency workers and fixed-term contracts and on claims for employees made redundant

[Read more](#)

HMRC Guidance on Self-Employment Support

HMRC has published updated guidance on the Self-Employment Support Scheme to clarify eligibility and provide more details of the scheme.

[Read more](#)

It has also separately published details of allowable expenses, how to calculate trading profits and clarification that total income includes things such as dividend payments, pensions and any Government paid benefits.

[Read more](#)

Recovery planning

The Chancellor has spoken about planning for recovery and the need to encourage businesses and jobs of the future, to drive growth. Two initiatives to support this have been launched:

- A £500 million Future Fund for high growth companies, helping them to access the financial support they need. The Future Fund will provide UK-based early stage companies with convertible loans between £125,000 and £5 million. This fund is subject to at least equal match funding from private investors.
- Innovate UK, £750 million of funding for innovative firms across the UK.

The new initiatives are part of a [£1.25 billion government support package](#) announced on Friday 17 April to help UK businesses driving innovation and development to get through the COVID-19 outbreak.

[VisitBritain/VisitEngland](#)

#StrongerTogether

VisitBritain/VisitEngland has sent an open letter of support to the international events sector to show unity with the industry as it grapples the COVID-19 crisis. The #StrongerTogether campaign shares the message that the UK is ready to support them and the industry's recovery, and is ready to welcome their events to the UK when the time is right. The UK business events industry is encouraged to get involved and join the conversation. A video asset can be downloaded to share on your own social media channels. [Click here](#) to download the video and find out more.

VisitEngland Annual Attractions Survey

VisitEngland is continuing to run the Annual Attractions Survey in partnership with Historic England and would like as many attractions as possible to complete a questionnaire on 2019 performance by Monday 25 May, 2020.

All attractions completing the questionnaire will receive a personalised benchmarking report comparing their own results against similar attractions, will appear in VisitEngland's attraction listing, and everyone taking part will be entered into a prize draw to win £100.

If you would like to complete a survey, contact annualattractionssurvey@visitengland.org

[Visit Kent](#)

Visit Kent needs your feedback if you have had problems accessing funding or claiming on your insurance or if there are any specific areas that you, or your team, would benefit from additional support or training.

They are inviting you to complete a short survey, looking at the impact that COVID-19 has had on your business. The information you provide will be fed into various Government groups, including the DCMS Select Committee, to improve the support offered to the industry. Your feedback will also be invaluable in helping to inform their recovery strategy.

[This survey](#) will replace data collection for the March Business Barometer and all responses will be confidential. Please submit your responses by **Friday 8th May**.

Open Golf 2020 postponed

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The R&A has decided to cancel The Open Golf 2020 and it will now return to Royal St George's Golf Club from 11 - 18 July 2021. See the [149th Open 2021 Guidance for Local Accommodation Providers & Businesses](#) from Visit Kent.

Other Tourism and Coronavirus News

Campaign for Tourism

You can show your support for our industry by joining the campaigns created to ensure that the critical issues facing our industry are made clear to the government and the gaps in support are filled. See the following two items and the VisitBritain/VisitEngland entry above.

#SaveFutureTravel – ABTA are calling for amendments to the UK Package Travel Regulations with the aim of protecting jobs within the industry and speeding up the process of refunding the consumer.

#ProtectTourismJobs – The campaign launched by the Tourism Alliance, The British Holiday & Home Parks Association and UKHospitality seeks answers on how the government will support the crucial seasonal roles and presses on them to extend their support over the coming winter months to ensure business survival.

Professional Association of Self-Caterers - Self-catering Support Website

PASC has set up a website to provide support and information for self-catering businesses regardless of whether they are members.

<https://www.pascuk.co.uk/covid-19>

Financial Conduct Authority

The FCA published a [letter on 15 April from its CEO to insurance sector CEOs](#) specifically about conduct in relation to business disruption insurance. It has set up a new small business unit to respond to issues whereby insurers aren't paying out where businesses think they should be, amongst other things. This relates to smaller companies, classed as firms with turnover of less than £6.5m and fewer than 50 employees. They can now take complaints directly to the financial ombudsman.

Historic England

Historic England's COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund extends a safety net to small heritage organisations at this challenging time.

The fund has been set up in response to [their recent survey](#). The grants available will help organisations, voluntary groups and self-employed contractors survive the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic, and to prepare for recovery. [Read more](#)

Ramsgate - The Town and its Seaside Heritage

A new book from Historic England celebrates the story of Ramsgate's rich maritime and seaside heritage, from a quiet fishing village to a prosperous port and popular seaside resort.

Ramsgate: The Town and its Seaside Heritage was written by architectural investigator Geraint Franklin and is part of Ramsgate's successful Heritage Action Zone initiative. The book includes over 100 stunning new photographs of the town's architectural legacy. Find and more and order a copy [here](#)

Attraction sector reads

Plus here are links to two insightful reads - [three areas of focus for attractions](#) during closure and [predictions for the attraction sector](#) after COVID-19

Our News

Visit Thanet Content

There are new pages on visitthanet.co.uk that we are using social media to drive traffic through during the lockdown. The pages include colouring activities for children, links to online resources for some of our attractions, plus a section on virtual Thanet where we have pulled together all of our destination films.

- Colouring sheets - www.visitthanet.co.uk/colour
- Attractions Resources - www.visitthanet.co.uk/resources
- Virtual Thanet - www.visitthanet.co.uk/virtual

As mentioned in our previous e-news, it is really important for all of us that we keep the Isle of Thanet in people's minds at the moment, but in line with the safety messages set down by the government.

If you have relevant content that you would like us to include, please send it to tourism@thanet.gov.uk

Accessibility Guides

At the start of the year, the team produced accessibility guides for some of our beaches in preparation for the 2020 Blue Flag and Seaside Awards.

We would like to share this VisitEngland scheme which allows you to create a simple [Access Guide](#) for your business. The site provides templates that are easy to use, and you will be steered by questions to build your guide. Doing this enables you to not only have a complete access guide on your website for visitors with additional needs, but will also allow us to include a link to this on your attraction entry on our website. We are always looking to increase information on our website for all groups of people.

We appreciate that at this time, many of you may be busy with finance issues and trying to plan for the future, but we thought it may be pertinent to include this now for those who have time and resources to work, but are unable to operate as usual.

Please do let us know once you have completed a guide by emailing visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk so we can include this on our website.

For an example of a completed guide, please [click here](#)

As ever, we are here to support you wherever possible and will continue to share the latest official advice and support.

Your News

Looping the Loop's Creative Distance Festival

You can see all the work so far on the [Creative Distance Youtube channel](#), from bedtime stories with Brenda Blethyn to spending the night in with fabulous Drag Queen Dame Jame and special guest Brigitte Aphrodite