

December's Tourism Matters: Government updates and survey support

Dear Colleagues,

Herewith the most recent Government updates regarding COVID-19 restrictions and the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme new claim deadlines.

Visit Kent would like as many people as possible to complete their survey on the impact of Covid-19 and the EU Transition, to help them lobby for support for the industry. Kent County Council is seeking people's views on proposed changes for local walking and cycling improvement schemes.

In the 'Our News' section, we have included the results of the Cambridge Model Economic Impact Study 2019, which give us the most recent figures for the volume and value of tourism to Thanet.

We anticipate that this will be our last e-newsletter of 2020, so we would like to wish you all the best possible Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year.

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 [visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters)

Thanet District Council

Additional free christmas parking

To encourage people to shop local this Christmas, we are providing free parking on Saturday 19 December in the following car parks:

- Market Street – Margate
- Croft Place – Broadstairs
- Royal Harbour – Ramsgate

This in addition to the free Saturday parking offered year-round in four locations. There is also a further 30 minutes free parking with a valid pay and display ticket in Birchington's High Street until 31 December.

Consultation for amendments to the dog fouling, exclusion and dog control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) 2020

The consultation which covers minor amendments to the PSPO to protect people's enjoyment of the district's beaches and wildlife, is open until Tuesday 22 December.

Full details can be found here www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/dog-pspo-consultation/

Business Grant updates

Since applications for the business support grant opened in November, 1,565 businesses in Thanet have applied. To date 77% of all applications have been reviewed and over £1m has been paid into accounts.

1,239 applications relate to businesses that were legally required to close as a result of national lockdown restrictions. Of these, the 1,140 applications made before Monday 14 December have been reviewed and either paid, or further information requested. The remaining 99 are currently being worked through.

A further 326 applications relate to businesses that were not forced to close but were severely impacted, or do not pay business rates. These are more complex cases and 63 have been dealt with.

Extra staff resource has been added to try and clear as many of the remaining cases as possible, before Christmas.

Unlike the business support grant scheme in the spring, this time every individual claim has to be reviewed against set criteria. Due to the high number of applications received, the review process takes time.

[Latest news on Business Grants](#)

Wet-led Pubs

There will also be £1,000 grants for “wet-led” pubs - those whose income from food is less than half their total income. Applications will also be invited in January.

Council Christmas Operations

For details of changes to services and council opening hours during the festive period please see www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/christmas-council-information/

Government updates

Thanet remains in Tier 3, you can read what you can and cannot do in [Tier 3 restrictions here](#)

Detailed guidance for tourism businesses for each tier is available in the [working safely during the coronavirus guidance](#).

UK Government's common arrangements for the five-day Christmas period

The four UK Governments met on Wednesday to confirm the common arrangements for the five-day Christmas period and as a result have issued [updated guidance and recommendations](#). All four UK Governments strongly recommend that the safest way for people to spend this Christmas is with their own household or existing support bubble in their own home.

People are encouraged to think very carefully about the risks of forming a bubble. Discuss alternatives to meeting up in person, or ways of meeting up outdoors instead. People should only form a bubble if they feel they absolutely need to.

If people live in an area with the highest level of protection, for example, tier 3 in England and level 4 in Scotland, they should avoid travelling to lower prevalence areas where possible. Each administration will issue specific travel advice based on its own circumstances.

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme step by step guide for employers](#) has also been updated to reflect recent changes to the scheme.

Guidance on how to recognise, contain and report incidents of coronavirus

[COVID-19 early outbreak management information](#) has been created for people who run businesses or organisations. Sector-specific ‘[action cards](#)’ have been designed for specific situations where an outbreak could occur.

- [Residential workplaces](#) (including hotels & guest accommodation, caravan parks and holiday resorts)
- [Food and drink](#) (including restaurants, pubs, bars, cafes and takeaways)
- [Small and large gatherings workplace](#) (including tourist attractions, arts, heritage and cultural venues, business event venues, cinemas, theatres, comedy and music venues, grassroots sports, gyms and leisure facilities, sports grounds and venues)
- [Travel](#) (including airports, stations, trains, coaches and private hire vehicles)
- [Commercial workplaces](#) (including offices)
- [Consumer workplaces](#) (including hairdressers, spas, sports therapy, shops and branches)

Extension of furlough and loan schemes

The [Chancellor announced on Wednesday that the furlough scheme](#) has been extended until the end of April 2021 with the government continuing to contribute 80% towards wages. In addition, businesses will now have until the end of March to access government loan schemes.

A successor loan scheme has already been announced to provide support beyond March. We will share more details on the scheme when available. The government has said it will provide a further update on wider COVID-19 economic support at the Budget on 3 March.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) update and new deadlines for claims

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) has been updated to inform employers that they do not need to be facing a wider reduction in demand or be closed to be eligible to claim for employees who are clinically extremely vulnerable or at the highest risk of severe illness from coronavirus.

There are now [monthly deadlines for CJRS claims](#), some of the dates mean employers may have to submit earlier than they were required to in earlier months.

- 14th January 2021 - final date to submit claims for December 2020 by 11:59pm
- 15th February 2021 - final date to submit claims for January 2021 by 11:59pm
- 1th March 2021 - final date to submit claims for February 2021 by 11:59pm
- 14th April 2021 - final date to submit claims for March 2021 by 11:59pm

Business evictions ban extended until March

[Business owners](#) affected by the pandemic will be protected from eviction until the end of March 2021. This final extension to protections from the threat of eviction will give landlords and tenants 3 months to come to an agreement on unpaid rent. Where businesses can pay any or all of their rent, they should do so.

Further guidance to support negotiations between landlords and tenants will be published shortly.

Letter re Caravan Park closures

A letter on Monday 7th December from [Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government](#), Kelly Tolhurst to trade bodies representing caravan and park home site owners regarding caravan park closures has been published on Gov.UK.

The [letter outlines](#) the rules around the tiers. Holiday caravan sites in Tier 1 and 2 will be able to open as usual. Those in Tier 3 are expected to close (except between 22 and 28 December). Exemptions that allow businesses to remain open include households using the accommodation as their main residence. Site owners should work with local authorities to ensure families and vulnerable people are not displaced should they be required to close this time of year for other reasons than the pandemic.

Other updates

On Friday 11th December, the self-isolation period on arrival into the UK was changed from 14 days to 10 days. As a result, several pages have been updated on the [GOV.UK](#) website to reflect this change:

- [How to self-isolate when you travel to the UK](#)
- [Test to Release for international travel](#)
- [Working safely during coronavirus](#)
- [Safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
- [Safer air travel for passengers](#)
- [Travel corridors](#)
- [Jobs that qualify for travel exemptions](#)
- The latest updates to the [Working Safely during Coronavirus guidance](#) include clarification for restaurants, pubs, bars and takeaways in Tier 3. The guidance has been updated to state that customers can enter the premises to collect or place an order between 5am and 11pm.
- The [safer travel guidance for passengers](#) has been updated with [local restriction tiers](#) information and how it impacts travel.
- [The guidance on meeting with others safely](#) has been updated in line with the latest government guidance on social distancing within the different tier levels.
- [Performing arts guidance](#) has been updated in section 3.10. to clarify that in tier 2 venues should also only serve alcohol without a substantial meal to ticketed customers during the performance and for a maximum of 60 minutes, which can be split either side of the performance or screening if required.

HM Treasury VAT and the Sharing Economy: call for evidence

HMT has issued a [call for evidence on the VAT challenges](#) created by the Sharing Economy. HMT are seeking stakeholder views on the government's assessment of these challenges, including whether existing VAT rules enable fair competition and a level playing field for traditional businesses. Please submit your responses to the call for evidence to HMTVATandExcisePolicy@hmtreasury.gov.uk by Wednesday 3rd March 2021.

Visit Kent

Covid-19 and EU Transition Impact Survey

Visit Kent would like your valuable feedback to help them support you better.

Visit Kent is inviting all visitor economy businesses from across Kent to complete a short survey, looking at what impact the second lockdown and the Tier 3 restrictions have had on your business so far. With the end of the EU transition approaching, the survey also contains a few questions about the impact you anticipate this will have on your business.

Your feedback will be fed into various Government committees allowing Visit Kent to lobby for much-needed support for the industry, in addition to informing their recovery strategy going forwards.

[Click here](#) to complete the survey. **The deadline for completion is Thursday 31st December 2020**

Tourism Exchange Great Britain (TXGB)

As part of Visit Kent's trial as a distributor with VisitBritain and VisitEngland on TXGB, they are keen to understand businesses' existing booking systems, along with any thoughts and comments on the new TXGB platform.

Visit Kent would appreciate businesses completing their [short and simple questionnaire](#)

[TXGB](#) is a new booking platform that allows businesses to manage distribution and sales of their product across multiple platforms in one place.

September Business Barometer

Visit Kent has published their [September 2020 Business Barometer](#). The September survey incorporated some COVID-19 and BREXIT related questions, allowing them to gain an insight into its impacts, such as business concerns, priorities and support needed.

Businesses who would like to sign-up and provide figures for the Barometer can do so [here](#), all information supplied is treated with the strictest confidence.

Other News

Arts Council England announce second round of funding

Following the news that 9 venues in Thanet were awarded funding amounting to £669,838, the Arts Council has announced a second round of funding through the Culture Recovery Fund, administered by the Arts Council. Details are still being finalised and guidance for applicants, including eligibility, will be published shortly. Interested organisations are being asked to [sign-up to their newsletter](#) to make sure they hear as soon as guidance is available.

You can see information [here](#) for all Arts Council England grant and repayable finance data across the Culture Recovery Fund.

Kent County Council Active Travel Consultation

Kent County Council (KCC) is seeking people's views on proposed changes for walking and cycling improvement schemes across five areas including Thanet - Birchington to Margate Sands.

KCC have successfully secured funding from the Government's Active Travel Fund, to seek to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of local people, as well as support the local economy. [A consultation](#) is open until Tuesday 19th January 2021.

Heritage Open Days 2021 and New Wave Opportunity

The dates for the 2021 Heritage Open Days scheme have been announced Friday 10th - Sunday 19th September with the theme of '**Edible England**'. From woodland foraging to factory floor, forgotten recipes to regional delicacies. You're encouraged to explore the past, present, and future of culinary heritage and culture. [Find out more here with registration opening in March](#)

Always getting the same people attending your event? Want to reach new audiences? Keen to engage and work more closely with young people in the local area? For a second season, 'New Wave' is a specially devised project, which will guide and support a small group of organisers as they develop innovative Heritage Open Days events aimed at engaging young adults.

If successful you will receive

- Attend 5 training days - initially online followed by in-person if/when possible
- Each participant will receive **up to £1,000** towards the delivery of their New Wave event
- Dedicated marketing

The deadline to apply is midnight Sunday 24th January 2021 with a full application pack available to [download here](#) including more on the project brief, dates, entry criteria and how to apply.

Tourism and Visitor Services News

Cambridge Model Economic Impact Study 2019

Visit Kent has just published the results of the Cambridge Model Economic Impact Study 2019, which shows the volume and value of tourism to the county. Alongside this is a report showing the volume and value of tourism to Thanet in 2019.

These reports establish a benchmark from which to measure the impact of COVID-19, and an extremely useful vehicle in aiding the recovery of the industry. The Cambridge Model Economic Impact Study press release, full report and infographic highlighting key figures from the report can be found [here](#)

What's New and Anniversaries 2021

Remember to let us know if you have anything new of touristic appeal planned for 2021, or if your venue is celebrating a key anniversary. This information will be used in our PR activities and will appear on our website and in social media posts where relevant. Please send information and images to tourism@thanet.gov.uk

Visitor Information Centre (VIC) - Christmas and New Year operations

The Visitor Information Centre office at Droit House will remain physically closed until at least Wednesday 6th January, in light of the ongoing Coronavirus situation. However, the team will still be working over the festive period and will be available via telephone, email and social media. Please see below availability:

- W/C 14th December the team will be available as usual Wednesday - Sunday 10am-5pm.
- W/C 21st December the team is available Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th only, 10am-5pm.
- W/C 28th December the team are available everyday 10am-5pm, except New Years Day when there will be no staff working.
- Usual opening returns W/C 4th January, although we do not currently know whether this will mean the Thanet Visitor Information will be open physically.

Google Maps information

Fran (Visitor Services Officer) recently attended a Google Business and Maps session delivered by Visit England in partnership with Google Digital Garage. Lots of information was covered, exploring how a presence on Google Maps can increase customer engagement, trust and revenue and how in the current Pandemic environment, it is important to update your listing regularly to keep opening times etc. up to date.

If you'd like to find out more about this, please contact Fran directly: francesca.sayer-doyle@thanet.gov.uk and she can discuss findings from the training.

You may also be interested to know that Google offers completely free 1:1 business help to improve your presence on Google Maps and Search with a Digital Expert. Go to goo.gle/ukmentoring to book a call.

Your News

POW! Fringe Festival Call Out

For the first time in their five year history, POW! is introducing a Fringe Festival as part of POW! Festival 2021.

The Fringe Festival will take place in Thanet from 1st-31st March 2021 and POW! is inviting applications from people to run events during the festival, with the exception of 5th-8th March when the main POW! Festival will be taking place.

Further information and a link to the application form can be found [here](#). The deadline for applications is Saturday 30th January 2021

New Murky Margate Tours - images needed

Johanne Edgington is looking for suitable historical images to help promote her new guided historical murder town trail - Murky Margate. Images are needed of The Metropole Hotel, Margate jetty and The Parade Cinema. Ideally they should be free to use with a credit, but other options will be considered.

Johanne can be contacted on murkymargate@gmail.com or on 07784 471110

Submissions to the Turner Contemporary Open 2021

Turner Contemporary are inviting submissions of work for their open exhibition which will span all four of Turner Contemporary's galleries in 2021.

To mark their 10th anniversary year, they want to hear from practising artists living and working in Kent & Medway or those working nationally and internationally who studied in Kent & Medway. The aim is to celebrate and showcase the wealth of artistic talent living, working or trained in Kent.

To find out more and to make a submission visit <https://turnercontemporary.org/open/> The deadline is Sunday 31st January 2021.