

Tourism Matters: Happy New Year and Latest COVID-19 Restrictions

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on Monday 4 January announcing the third national lockdown, we wanted to provide you with the latest information on these changes. Plus there is information on the £4.6 billion in new lockdown grants to support businesses and protect jobs.

We are here to help, so please get in touch if there are any issues you would like to discuss. We may not have all the answers, but we will certainly do our best to find them for you.

It is not the start to 2021 that we would have liked, but with vaccinations now taking place perhaps the remainder of the year will improve and we can look forward to fewer restrictions and welcoming visitors back to the destination and your 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

Thanet District Council

Business Support

The council has so far administered almost £1.5 million of Government funding to local businesses impacted as a result of COVID-19. That's more than 1,000 grants issued to Thanet businesses.

The Government has announced there will be further one-off grants available as a result of the new national restrictions. We are waiting to receive further guidance on this funding. Understandably, there have been lots of questions about the various business support grants and the recently updated [Frequently Asked Questions](#) section of TDC's website should help answer these.

Testing Available

If you are symptom free

There are now two asymptomatic testing sites available in Thanet. One at the Port of Ramsgate and one at The Centre in Birchington. These sites are specifically for people who are not displaying any of the symptoms for COVID-19. To attend, you must book in advance - please [follow this link](#). Please note that booking for these sites is now open to all members of the public and appointments at The Centre, Birchington start from Thursday 7 January.

If you have symptoms

[If you have any symptoms](#) or suspect you have the virus you should use alternative testing sites at Dreamland Margate or Manston Airport. Details on how to book a test can be found [here](#).

Clinically extremely vulnerable

The Clinically Extremely Vulnerable have been advised by the Government to shield again.

If you are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable you should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential. You should not attend work but can work from home.

Community Hub

The council's [community hub](#) remains in place and has been operational throughout the Christmas period. This provision will continue to ensure that vulnerable members of our community are supported at this time.

Leaving the EU - Use of Manston

New rules apply

The transition period for leaving the EU has now ended. New rules apply to things like travel and doing business with Europe. The Government has published advice for individuals, businesses, UK nationals in the EU and EU citizens in the UK. You can see the latest information at [Gov.uk](#)

Use of Manston

You'll be aware that the Manston airport site is now being used as a temporary, back-up lorry holding facility as part of the Government's plans to mitigate the potential traffic disruption due to changes at the border.

The use of Manston started prior to the Christmas period when services at the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel were suspended temporarily due to the French borders being closed. Since reopening, and since the start of the New Year, there has been less disruption. We will continue to monitor this as although the levels of the Port and EuroTunnel activity are low, there remains an expectation that those levels will increase over the next couple of weeks.

Although Thanet District Council is involved as part of the wider multi-agency efforts to manage the impact upon Kent, we are not the lead agency. We will continue to monitor the situation and keep you informed. Additionally you can keep up to date by following:

- [Highways England website](#) and [@HighwaysSEAST on Twitter](#)
- [Kent Police Twitter](#)
- [KCC Highways website](#)
- [www.eurotunnel.com](#)
- [www.doverport.co.uk](#)

Impact on council services

The council has robust business continuity plans in place to ensure that key services can continue to operate for residents as a result of COVID-19 and leaving the EU. These will be monitored closely and we will keep you informed if services are impacted.

Currently, services are operating as they were before the Christmas break.

Government News

National lockdown in England

The [Prime Minister](#) addressed the nation on Monday 4 January [outlining a national lockdown in England](#). In summary:

- England will be entering a national lockdown, the Government is instructing people to stay at home and this will be backed up with legislation
- People will be permitted to leave home for limited reasons, including shopping for essentials, work if you cannot work from home, exercise, or to seek medical assistance.
- Shielding will begin again, those at risk will receive a letter.
- Primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges must move to online learning – except for vulnerable children and children of key workers. Nurseries will continue to be open.

- All non-essential retail, hospitality and personal care services must close, or remain closed. Restaurants can continue delivery, takeaway or click-and-collect of food and non-alcoholic drinks, but venues will no longer be able to serve takeaway or click-and-collect alcohol.
- Essential shops and garden centres can remain open. Entertainment venues and animal attractions such as zoos must close, but the outdoor areas of venues such as heritage homes and botanical gardens can remain open, to be used for exercise. Playgrounds may also remain open.

Everyone should follow the new rules, which became law from 00.01 this morning (Wednesday 6 January). The restrictions are expected to last until the middle of February if the situation in hospitals improves.

[The following guidance has been published on GOV.UK](#) for people who are fit and well.

People can exercise in a public outdoor place alone, with the people they live with, with their support bubble (if you are legally permitted to form one), in a childcare bubble where providing childcare or, when alone, with one person from another household

Public outdoor places include:

- Parks, beaches, countryside accessible to the public, forests
- Public gardens (whether or not you pay to enter them)
- The grounds of a heritage site
- Playgrounds

Outdoor sports venues, including tennis courts, golf courses and swimming pools, must close.

Travel

- People must not leave their home unless they have a reasonable excuse (for example, for work or education purposes). If people need to travel, they should stay local – meaning avoiding travelling outside of their village, town or the part of a city where you live – and look to reduce the number of journeys made overall.
- People can only travel internationally – or within the UK – where they first have a legally permitted reason to leave home. In addition, they should consider the public health advice in the country being visited.
- People cannot leave their home or the place where they are living for holidays or overnight stays unless you have a reasonable excuse for doing so. This means that holidays in the UK and abroad are not allowed. This includes staying in a second home or caravan, if that is not a primary residence.

Businesses and venues which must CLOSE

To reduce social contact, the regulations require some businesses to close and impose restrictions on how some businesses provide goods and services. The full list of businesses required to close can be found in the guidance on closing certain businesses and venues in England, but includes those listed [here](#)

Businesses and venues which can remain OPEN

Other businesses and venues are permitted to stay open, following COVID-19 secure guidelines. Businesses providing essential goods and services can stay open. The full list of these businesses will be available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) shortly but some businesses in the tourism, hospitality and leisure sector that can remain open include:

- Outdoor parts of botanical gardens and heritage sites for exercise
- Car parks, public toilets and motorway service areas
- Outdoor playgrounds
- Places of worship
- Essential retail such as food shops, supermarkets, pharmacies, garden centres and off-licences, market stalls selling essential retail
- Petrol stations, taxi and vehicle hire businesses

Weddings, civil partnerships, religious services and funerals

- Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies and funerals are allowed with strict limits on attendance, and must only take place in COVID-19 secure venues or in public outdoor spaces unless in exceptional circumstances.
- Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people. Linked religious, belief-based or commemorative events, such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 6 people in attendance.
- Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies must only take place with up to 6 people and in exceptional circumstances.

View [the stay at home guidance for England](#).

New lockdown grants to support businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors

The [Chancellor has announced](#) grants for businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors.

The one-off top-up grants will be provided on a per property basis to businesses closed as a result of the latest restrictions as follows:

- £4,000 for businesses with a rateable value of £15,000 or under
- £6,000 for businesses with a rateable value between £15,000 and £51,000
- £9,000 for businesses with a rateable value of over £51,000

A further £594 million is also being made available for Local Authorities and the Devolved Administrations to support other businesses not eligible for the grants, that might be affected by the restrictions. Businesses should apply to their Local Authorities.

The new one-off grants are in addition to the existing business support, including grants worth up to £3,000 for closed businesses, and up to £2,100 per month for impacted businesses once they reopen.

[Support for Businesses](#)

Kent County Council Strategic Recovery Fund

Kent Community Foundation (KCF) is administering this fund on behalf of Kent County Council (KCC) to help organisations to adapt to the “new normal” post COVID-19. It is intended to support organisations to develop/adapt business plans and strategies to put

them in a stronger position to thrive, including accessing a range of funding sources. This is about recognising that organisations will need to diversify their business models to adapt to the current challenges and increase the sustainability of organisations. It's about helping businesses to think through a strategic problem facing their organisation.

[Click here for more information](#)

Kent County Council Arts Investment Fund – reset and forward plan

Applications are being invited for Arts Investment Funding for the financial year 2021/2022. KCC is providing funding to help the sector to reset and forward plan to adapt to the new environment. They are offering grants of up to £2,500 to help you respond to the immediate challenges you are facing and develop plans for the future. This fund does not require match funding. The deadline for applications is **Thursday 11 February 2021**.

[Click here for more information](#)

[VisitEngland](#)

Coach Travel - Building Towards Recovery (free webinar)

Thursday, 14 January, 11am to 12pm

Take a look at how coach travel operators from across the sector plan to build demand and aid recovery. The session will include case studies from both small and large operators.

Further information and a link to register [can be found here](#)

[Other News](#)

Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

The FSB has three upcoming webinars which are free and open to all small businesses and the self-employed across the UK.

The FX of Brexit - What's next for Pound Sterling and what this means for SME currency planning

Tuesday 12th January, 12pm to 1pm - Further information and registration [here](#)

How to get control of your cash in 2021

Thursday 21st January, 12pm to 1pm - Further information and registration [here](#)

Business Bootcamp: Re-boot 2021

Monday 25th January, 9.30am to 1pm - Further information and registration [here](#)