**December’s Tourism Matters: Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

Dear Colleague

Welcome to December’s Tourism Matters and our last for the year. We appreciate the announcement of the new strain of Covid-19 and the reintroduction of some restrictions has left a few of us feeling a bit low, so we have decided to focus the start of this Tourism Matters on some of the positives from the past year.

* Thanet was one of the first destinations to sign-up to the new Beach Check App UK, launched in June
* Successful bids for Margate and Ramsgate from the Levelling-Up Funding received
* Opening of Margate’s Crab Museum and start of Murky Margate Tours
* Ramsgate Royal Harbour celebrated 200 years of royal status
* Turner Contemporary celebrated its 10th anniversary
* Thanet Coast Project celebrated its 20th anniversary
* Welcomed The 149th Open to neighbouring Sandwich
* The first of 17 new Thanet Experiences as part of the Interreg Experience project, became bookable [www.visitthanet.co.uk/experiences](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/experiences)
* Lonely Planet announced 'Kent’s Heritage Coast' as the #4 of the world’s best regions to visit in 2022. The only UK destination to make the list.
* Congratulations to Award Winners
  + Angela’s, Margate - The Michelin Green Star and Plate Awards 2021
  + Moon Lane Children's Books & Toys, Ramsgate - UK Book Retailer of the Year 2021,
  + Eli and Heather Thompson from Olbys Soul Café, Margate - Kent Community Award Legends in the Taste of Kent Awards,
  + Quex Livery Glamping Holidays - Bronze in the ‘Glamping Business of the Year’ in the Beautiful South Tourism Awards
  + Flotsam and Jetsam, Broadstairs - included on the Good Food Guide Platinum List

**We would like to wish you all the best for Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year**

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Visitor Information Centre - Christmas and New Year operations**

The Visitor Information Centre office at Droit House will be operating the following hours over the festive period

* OPEN: Thursday 23rd, Wednesday 29th, Thursday 30th December and Sunday 2nd January 10am-5pm
* OPEN: Friday 31st December (New Year’s Eve) 10am -4pm
* OPEN: Saturday 1st January (New Year’s Day) 11am-4pm
* CLOSED: 24th (Christmas Eve) to Tuesday 28th December
* Return to usual opening hours Wednesday to Sunday 10am-5pm W/C 3rd January 2022

**Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre** at The Custom House will be closed for the festive period from Friday 24th December until it reopens on Tuesday 4th January

**Christmas Attraction Opening**

To assist visitors and local residents with visiting attractions during the festive period we have put together the following details of attraction opening during this time [www.visitthanet.co.uk/xmasopen/](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/xmasopen/)

If we have not got your details included or there is a change to them, please let us know at [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

**Christmas Ideas**

Don’t forget if you are looking for things to do this Christmas we have a dedicated page on our website [www.visitthanet.co.uk/christmas](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/christmas)

Still struggling with present ideas? Looking for something different? We’ve put together a blog of some alternative christmas present ideas [www.visitthanet.co.uk/visit-thanet-blog/gifts-with-a-difference/](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/visit-thanet-blog/gifts-with-a-difference/)

**NCTA Survey Wave 4 Results**

Thank you to everyone who took part in the latest National Coastal Academy Survey back at the start of October.

The headline results have now been published on the [academy’s website](https://coastaltourismacademy.co.uk/resource-hub/resource/impact-of-covid19-on-tourism-businesses--2021-business-barometer)

**Thanet District Council**

**Shop and Eat Local this Christmas**

We have launched a new campaign to support our local high streets in the run up to Christmas. Supported by the Welcome Back Fund, our festive illustration will be seen on the sides of buses around the district, in newspaper advertising, on the radio, and across social media.

Thanet's first Shop Local online advent calendar is live on our [website](http://www.thanet.gov.uk) (from Wednesday 1st December). Local businesses have been invited to take part, with a door to the calendar opening each day to reveal a different 'Festive offer’ to encourage people to our high streets.

**New Chair of Margate Town Deal**

The Margate Town Deal Board has appointed a new Chair of the Board, Mr Brian Horton. Brian is a housing and development professional who has worked in senior positions in both the public and private sector. He will play a leading role in the exciting next phase of the Town Deal projects. [Read more here](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/new-chair-for-margate-town-deal-board)

**Local plan public engagement**

Thanet District Council is preparing an update of the Local Plan for Thanet. The Local Plan sets out the strategy for the future development of our local area, and is drawn up by the council as Local Planning Authority, in consultation with our communities.

The council will shortly be publishing the supporting evidence documents on their website, and will invite members of the public and stakeholders to comment on them.

There will be a further opportunity to comment on the allocation of housing and sites later on in the process, likely to be midway through 2022.

**Ramsgate HAZ Conservation Area Appraisal - Public Consultation**

The Ramsgate Conservation Area covers most of Ramsgate town centre, and has not been appraised since its designation in the 1970s. As part of the Ramsgate Heritage Action Zone scheme (HAZ), specialist consultants Alan Baxter have prepared an appraisal of the Ramsgate Conservation Area, which is subject to a public consultation - launched on Monday 1 November.

The [online consultation](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/ramsgate-heritage-action-zone/) will be open until Monday 13th December 2021 and an online briefing will be held with the consultants on Wednesday 8th December at 6pm. You can join the briefing using this [link](https://meet.google.com/jys-fjcr-huk)

**Bird Wise East Kent**

Bird Wise East Kent has teamed up with Beeching Animal Behaviour Consultancy to create a series of training videos for dogs and their owners, each focussing on a specific command: Sit, Stay, Leave, Heel and Recall.

The videos show how we can safely share the coast with nature and avoid disturbing migratory birds and are promoted on Facebook and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D68ke19HmtM&feature=youtu.be).

**Photography competition**

Bird Wise East Kent and Thanet Coast Project have teamed up to host a photography competition to celebrate our coastal environment and wildlife.

By entering your images, you will help inform others of the importance of our coastal environment and highlight Thanet’s amazing biodiversity.

Two winning photographs will be selected from each category and will be featured in a local exhibition that will showcase our stunning coastline and its wildlife. We will also select one overall winner from adult and junior entrants.

The competition is open to everyone and the closing date for entries is midnight on Monday 31st January 2022.

Find information on the categories and full T&C's on the Bird Wise East Kent [website](https://eastkent.birdwise.org.uk/photography-competition/).

**LitterLotto**

Thanet District Council is the first UK council to sign up to [LitterLotto](https://www.litterlotto.com/). LitterLotto is a new app which actively encourages people to bin litter by giving users the chance to win thousands of instant cash prizes each month.

Download the free app, then take a picture through it as you bin litter for an entry into the LitterLotto to win a monthly jackpot of £10,000. There are also spot prizes of up to £250. All prizes associated with using the app, including jackpot prizes, are supported by LitterLotto’s corporate partners, like McDonald’s. You can scan the QR code on stickers on our litter bins to find out more.

**VisitBritain/VisitEngland**

**English Tourism Week 2022**

VisitEngland have announced English Tourism Week will return on **18-27 March 2022** to celebrate the sector and champion its significant contribution to the UK economy, to stakeholders including Government, MPs, ministers and media, to support the industry’s recovery.

A toolkit will be available in due course to help share the message using the hashtag **#EnglishTourismWeek22**.

[Find out more about the week here](http://www.visitbritain.org/english-tourism-week)

**Visit Kent**

**Cycle UK: FREE accreditation and webinar - Thursday 9th December 12noon**

Does your business go the extra mile to welcome cyclists? If you are a tourism business based in Kent, then Cycle UK's new accreditation scheme is for you.

Specially designed by experts in leisure cycling, as part of the EXPERIENCE programme, Cycle Friendly Places accreditation will help you make the most of year-round tourism and meet the needs of visitors who are travelling to your business by bike.

Join a dedicated webinar and hear more about Cycle Friendly Places accreditation, a FREE scheme developed by Cycling UK to help small and medium-sized businesses attract more visitors by bike.

In this session they'll be looking at why attracting cyclists to your business makes sense, explain how you can easily adapt to welcome them, what Cycling UK is doing to attract more cyclists to Kent, and how you can take advantage of the free Cycle Friendly Accreditation scheme. This event is for small business owners, stakeholders, professionals working in the hospitality or tourism sectors in Kent.

[To register for the webinar, click here](https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6684109725403951374)

**Visit Kent’s Business Barometer**

Visit Kent is actively working to increase the sample of businesses that contribute to their monthly business barometer. They encourage any businesses that isn’t currently taking part to sign-up, as the barometer is a valuable and timely benchmarking tool for tourism organisations.

To find out more and to sign up, head to the [Visit Kent Business website](http://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/insights-and-resources/business-barometer/)

**Other News**

**Technology Resilience Voucher Scheme | C-Care**

Kent County Council has recently launched its ‘Technology Resilience Voucher Scheme’ as part of the C-CARE (Covid Channel Area Response Exchange) Interreg project.

Kent-based businesses are able to apply for a voucher to implement a digital or technology solution or project to help them with business resilience and economic recovery. Each voucher will cover costs up to a maximum of £1,000. The scheme runs for 9 months or until the voucher budget has been fully allocated.

Businesses will be able to redeem a voucher for services from a range of suppliers that KCC has procured in the following areas:

* Web-based Activities.
* Remote Working Technologies.
* Software solutions & Apps.
* Digital Marketing & Promotional Activities.
* Skills & Capacity Building.
* Equipment & small Investments to facilitate digital activity.

Businesses can book a slot with a specialist digital advisor prior to applying for the scheme to ensure that they maximise the voucher.

[For more information, please visit](http://www.kent.gov.uk/business/business-loans-and-funding/technology-resilience-vouchers)

To apply to the scheme, businesses can [complete the online application here](https://kentcc-self.achieveservice.com/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-2d4c17d4-e76f-44f9-ad56-275c11e5cedc/AF-Stage-05231bea-a84c-4c8b-beff-7ba587a3ff63/definition.json&redirectlink=%2Fen&cancelRedirectLink=%2Fen&consentMessage=yes)

If you have any questions or need any further information, please email me directly or the C-Care team on [international.affairs@kent.gov.uk](mailto:international.affairs@kent.gov.uk).

**Business support from South East LEP**

Two free, fully-funded programmes are now available for businesses via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

**Adapting with Digital** – looking at the exciting new world of digital technologies available to help you run your business more efficiently, freeing up time for you to concentrate on what you do best and connect with new customers.

**Starting and Succeeding in Business** - two courses that are designed for those who are looking to or recently started a new business, as well as those made redundant or have become unemployed as a result of COVID-19.​

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Once you’re signed up, you’ll have full access to exclusive interactive events, a library of tutorial videos and 1-2-1 calls. Plus be able to take advantage of support grants being made available.

Find out more <https://digital.wsxenterprise.co.uk/>

**2022 Taste of Kent Awards (TOKA)**

Now in its 17th year, the TOKA awards is an event dedicated to showcasing the best that Kent has to offer, and the winners will be crowned in a splendid ceremony in May. Voting will run from Monday 10th January to Monday 28th February 2022 and further information can be found on the [Taste of Kent Awards website](https://tasteofkentawards.co.uk/)

**Your News**

Congratulations to the **RAF Manston History Museum**, who was recently announced ‘Aviation Heritage Museum of the Year’. The museum has undergone a period of redevelopment to the entrance, shop, displays and introduction of the NAAFI Cafe. Find out more at <https://rafmanston.co.uk/>