**January’s Tourism Matters: Grant Updates, Accessibility Guides and HODS 2022**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Welcome to 2022, which we hope will be a good year for everyone.

In this issue we bring you all the latest government grant information announced just before Christmas, the chance to have an Accessibility Guide created for your business, the Heritage Open Days theme for 2022 and how you can have your say on the update to Thanet District Council’s Local Plan

**Government Updates**

On Tuesday 21 December, The Chancellor announced [additional support](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-billion-in-support-for-businesses-most-impacted-by-omicron-across-the-uk) would be available for businesses who have been impacted by the Omicron variant.

The package of support includes a new grant scheme for businesses in hospitality and leisure, a top up to the Additional Restrictions Grant, the reintroduction of the Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme and further funding released through the Culture Recovery Fund.

**Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant**

Businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors in England are eligible for one-off grants of up to £6,000 per premises. These grants are property-based and will be payable to the business rate payer of properties in the Rating List in these sectors. As with the earlier grant schemes, the amount of grant to be paid will be based on the rateable value of the property

The scheme will provide eligible Thanet companies with a one-off grant based on the rateable value of their business on Thursday 30th December 2021, with grants ranging from £2,667 to £6,000.

For full details of the grants available, the criteria and how to apply please, see the [Thanet District Council website](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/omicron-hospitality-and-leisure-grant-scheme) **with applications open until midday on Monday 14th February 2022**

**Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG)**

More than £100 million discretionary funding has been made available via the Additional Restrictions Grant for local authorities in England to support other businesses.

All ARG funding, including this third round will be distributed by Thursday 31 March. ARG is allocated at the discretion of distributing local authorities, however, this grant has been designed to support those who may have missed out on the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.

Please keep an eye on [Thanet District Council's website](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/covid-19-support-for-businesses-who-pay-business-rates) that will be updated with the latest information as soon as its scheme is available

**Statutory Sick Pay**

Government will cover the cost of Statutory Sick Pay for Covid-related absences for small and medium-sized employers across the UK. Businesses with fewer than 250 employees will be able to apply for reimbursement for the cost of Statutory Sick Pay for Covid-related absences, for up to 2 weeks per employee. Firms are eligible for the scheme from Tuesday 21st December and they will be able to make claims retrospectively from mid-January. [Statutory Sick Pay Factsheet](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1042699/Public_fact_sheet_SSPRS_Dec_2021.pdf)

**Culture Recovery Fund**

£30 million further funding has been made available through the Culture Recovery Fund for cultural organisations in England such as theatres, orchestras and museums, who can apply for support during the winter

Further information can be found on the [Government website](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/emergency-funding-available-for-arts-culture-and-heritage-doubled-to-60-million-to-tackle-impact-of-omicron) with applications open until **12 noon on Tuesday 18th January**

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Sustainability Survey and Green Tourism Toolkit**

Thank you to those of you who kindly completed the Sustainability Survey we circulated towards the end of last year. We had a total of 31 responses from a good cross-section of the local tourism industry. It was good to see the steps people are already taking to make their businesses more sustainable.

We are in the process of finalising a free, online Green Tourism Toolkit to help even more businesses begin their sustainability journey and we hope to be able to share this with you shortly. The toolkit contains information on small steps you can take to start making a big difference, how your business can benefit and where you can find inspiration and further resources, plus more.

We have received some individual requests relating to sustainability, which we have responded to directly, but please let us know if you would like further details. In the meantime, watch this space [www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk/green-tourism/](https://www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk/green-tourism/)

**Visitor Service Open**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House Margate is open Wednesday-Sunday 10am-5pm, operating within covid-safe guidelines. The team are available in person, over the phone or via email, for any visitor related queries and indeed any advice for your business.

The team are finishing up their work on collecting information updates for the 2022/23 Visitors’ Map so may be in touch regarding this, if they haven’t already.

Please do get in touch with the team either on 01843 577577 or visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk should you have any queries for the upcoming season and we will try our best to help or signpost you to support

**Vegan and Vegetarian Venues**

As part of our work over the autumn/winter months we are looking at the sustainability offer and green tourism in Thanet, both from a ‘what we currently have’ perspective and potentially training needs. The aim is to raise awareness of our sustainable businesses and make it easier for potential visitors to find this kind of information on our website.

We are in the early stages, but one of the ‘quick wins’ we have put together is a website page highlighting venues that serve vegan and vegetarian options [www.visitthanet.co.uk/vegetarian](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/vegetarian) in the area . If you run a vegan venue in the area, or know somebody who does, please get in touch via tourism@thanet.gov.uk so we can add you to the page

**Thanet District Council**

**Local Plan Public Engagement**

Public engagement for the ‘partial update’ to Thanet District Council’s Local Plan is now live. A ‘partial update’ of the Local Plan for Thanet will extend the plan up to 2040. It involves updating certain parts of the Plan and reviewing topics that previous Local Plan Inspectors recommended. This is not an update of the whole plan. Everyone is invited to give their views on a number of studies, via the [consultation website](https://thanetcouncilplan.inconsult.uk/PREREG18/consultationHome).**The closing date is 5pm on Friday 4th February.**

Find out more on the [Thanet District Council website](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/council-launches-public-engagement-of-partial-update-to-thanets-local-plan/) or [watch this video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc9LDJVxyw0)

**Margate Winter Gardens Statement**

As you may have read and heard in the media, Thanet District Council is working on securing a long term viable future for Margate Winter Gardens. Bookings will pause at the venue from Sunday 14 August 2022, while an appraisal is carried out to identify a new long term direction. To read the full statement visit [Thanet District Council website](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/update-on-margate-winter-gardens)

**Calling Margate Businesses**

The [Margate Town Deal](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/campaigns/margate-town-deal/) is a £22.2 million investment that will help Margate prepare for the future with a focus on creating jobs, supporting town centres, boosting businesses and connecting people to where they live and work either through infrastructure or digital.

Thanet District Council would like local businesses to get involved and will be hosting a digital workshop on **Tuesday 18th January at 7pm.**

This is your opportunity to talk to the town deal team about:

* The potential benefits of the town deal to businesses in Margate.
* How we can work with you to deliver the town deal.

If you would like to join the conversation, you can [register for the event online](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-margate-town-deal-means-business-workshop-tickets-227560819537). If you have any questions about the Town Deal you can contact the project team at margate-town-deal@thanet.gov.uk

**Westbrook Promenade Resurfacing**

Part of Westbrook lower promenade will be closed on Monday 24th January for one week for resurfacing and repairs to sea wall. During this time, members of the public will be diverted to the Royal Esplanade and the upper promenade / footpath. These works are part of an Environment Agency funded Coastal Erosion Risk Management scheme.

**High Streets Task Force Submits Report**

Following a visit to Margate in October, the Government’s High Streets Task Force has submitted a report of its findings and recommendations to help inform plans for the regeneration of the town. In its report, the High Streets Task Force acknowledged Margate’s many strengths, including the cultural offer of the town centre, the planned upgrading of connectivity and the scaling up of creative industry and jobs. Find out more on the [Thanet District Council website](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/high-streets-task-force-boosts-margates-transformation-plans-with-expert-support/)

**Community Parks Grant Funding**

Thanet District Council has been awarded £221k of Community Parks grant funding as part of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). £170k will be used to replace and improve the play area equipment at Ethelbert Crescent and at other parks in the district to encourage the use of outdoor spaces.

**Temporary closure of Ramsgate lifting bridge**

Due to essential maintenance work which began on Friday 17 December, the lifting bridge at Ramsgate Royal Harbour is closed until mid-January 2022. This will affect access between the East and West Crosswall for both harbour customers and members of the public. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

**Future High Street Fund - Highways Improvement Scheme**

Thank you to all those who were involved in the consultation on the Future High Street Funds Ramsgate highways improvement scheme proposals.

Over 200 people gott involved in the process, either through the online survey, attending our drop-in sessions, or alternatively emailing their comments in.

Over 81% of people who took part in the consultation agreed or strongly agreed with the proposed scheme, with over 75% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the scheme will enhance the environment, create a more inviting character for the harbour area, and reduce speed limits.

There were a number of key messages that came forward as part of the consultation, which Thanet District Council will investigate further. These suggestions include:

* The extension of the 20 mph zone
* The position of the crossing point at Madeira Walk
* Further discussions in relation to the bus laybys.

Other comments were outside the remit of this scheme, however they are of use for the various other activities that are taking place in Ramsgate over the coming years.

Full details of the consultation results can be found in the report presented to the [Joint Transport Board on Tuesday 14th December 2021](https://democracy.thanet.gov.uk/documents/s74818/JTB%20FHSF%20Infrastructure%20improvements.pdf)

**VisitBritain/VisitEngland**

**We're Good to Go to Continue**

The ‘We’re Good To Go’ industry standard that reassures customers that your business is following the latest Government COVID secure guidance, will continue until the end of March 2022.

Participating businesses can now download their 2022 We're Good To Go certificate to display on site and show you have taken the required action to welcome your visitors in line with Government and public health guidelines.

To access your certificate, log in and follow the ‘[Certificate and Logos](https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/user/login)’ tab in the header.

**New design guide for sustainable tourism accommodation**

The National Forest Company has published a design guide for sustainable accommodation.

The guide supports tourism accommodation providers in transitioning to net zero, establishing local supply chains, working with local communities and providing for nature. [You can view the guide here](https://www.nationalforest.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/0047%20NFC%20Sustainable%20accommodation%20guide%20v7%20WEB%20ABE25FINAL.pdf)

**Visit Kent**

**AccessAble’s Access Guides**

As part of the Interreg EXPERIENCE project, Visit Kent has partnered with [AccessAble](https://www.accessable.co.uk/) – the UK’s largest provider of access information – to create a landmark programme of inclusive visitor support. This programme will be the first of its kind delivered across the UK and will provide practical support to our businesses as well as direct engagement with disabled visitors.

This programme aims to deliver against three key areas of accessibility

* **Information** – What you can find out about a space before you use it.
* **Welcome** – How a disabled person is supported on arrival
* **Space** – How space can be adapted to welcome more people.

The aim of this type of approach is to ensure that disabled people and their carers can participate and contribute as a part of society, rather than feel apart from society.

**AccessAble’s Access Guides** have been used by over 3 million people in the last 12 months. Tourism and hospitality businesses across Thanet and Kent, who have their own venue, will have the opportunity to work with AccessAble to create a unique venue Access Guide

The Access Guides are based on a surveyor’s assessment and are a factual, objective resource that simply states what can be expected on arrival. Each business will have an initial access guide created, followed by two review sessions in the following two years.

To find out if your business is eligible to have the initial access guide created for free, **head to the** [**Visit Kent Business website**](https://visitkentbusiness.co.uk/get-involved/accessible-kent/accessable-guides/)

The deadline to sign up for an Access Guide is **Friday 28th January**

If you have any questions about what category your organisation fits into or you would like more details on the access guides, then please contact Visit Kent on enquiries@visitkent.co.uk

There is also a free E-learning platform launching this month with further information and details to follow and available on the [Visit Kent Business website](https://visitkentbusiness.co.uk/get-involved/accessible-kent/accessable-guides/)

**Other News**

**Stagecoach Introduces ‘Flexi’ Ticket**

With more people working ‘Hybrid’, Stagecoach have introduced a new flexible travel scheme that allows users to purchase ‘Flexi’ ticket bundles enabling them to choose which days to use them.

The scheme will benefit part-time workers or those who work from home and commute to the workplace less often than they did before the pandemic.

* Flexi5 – 5 DayRiders for the price of 4 (20% off). You choose when to use your ticket within 12 months.
* Flexi10 – 10 DayRiders for the price of 7 (30% off). You choose when to use your ticket within 12 months.

Tickets can be used any time up to one year after purchase and can be bought on the Stagecoach Bus app. Further information is on the [Stagecoach website](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/south-east/new-flexible-bus-tickets)

**Her Majesty the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee**

2022 marks the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty becoming Queen and in recognition of this celebrations are being planned throughout the UK and Commonwealth, including an extended bank holiday weekend from Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June.

Opportunities available to mark the occasion include

* Street Parties and ‘The Big Jubilee Lunch’
* The Big Jubilee Lunch Thursday 2nd to Sunday 5th June
* Beacon lighting
* The Queen’s Green Canopy

The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have launched a [Platinum Jubilee website](https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/) which includes useful related resources. The website includes an interactive map, for people and organisations to contribute to and others to search for information on activities taking place near to them.

Please have a look at the [website](https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/) and submit events and activities to be included on the map

**Kent Community Foundation Grants to celebrate Queen’s Platinum Jubilee**

This year marks the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and applications are now open for grants of up to £10,000 to voluntary organisations for creative and cultural activities to celebrate the occasion.

To find out more about this opportunity - criteria, how to apply and deadlines please visit the [Kent Community Foundation website](https://kentcf.org.uk/funding/jubilee-fund)

**Join Heritage Lab board of Non-Executive Directors**

Heritage Lab, based in Ramsgate, is expanding their Board of Directors. The CIC wants to grow their board to be in a better position to help oversee their existing projects and plan for the next 3-5 years

* Restore Ramsgate's lost and disused heritage spaces and buildings
* Create spaces to support startups and entrepreneurs in the creative sector
* Provide high quality community space
* Improve wellbeing and restore public pride

If you are interested in finding out more about the role contact hello@heritagelab.org.uk with applications open until the **end of February**

**Heritage Open Days 2022**

The theme for the 2022 Heritage Open Days has been announced ‘Astounding Inventions’. The festival running between 9th - 18th September will celebrate all the wonders and blunders related to English inventions.

To keep up to date on the festival visit [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk) and sign up to their newsletters