**December’s Tourism Matters: Festive Opening, Meet in Kent opportunity and Best Wishes for 2023**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Welcome to December’s Tourism Matters and our last for 2022. In this issue we take a look back at some of the achievements this year:

* Launch of Green Tourism Toolkit
* Opening of new attractions - Clip ‘n Climb, Elev8, Margate Leisure Centre
* Opening of new accommodation - Fort Road Hotel and Chapel House Estate
* Cliftonville named number 8 in Time Out’s Coolest Neighbourhoods in the World
* Thanet Visitor Information Service a finalist in the ‘Visitor Information Service of the Year’ category in this year’s Beautiful South Awards,
* Variety of anniversaries celebrated by businesses and events
* Successful season running Dickens House Museum
* Launch of online Visitor Ambassador Training Course

**We would like to wish you all the best for 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 at [www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters)

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Visitor Information Centre & Shop - Christmas opening**

If you are still looking for that perfect present for a loved one, the Thanet Visitor Information Centre shop has plenty of choice. Items include coastal homewares, beauty and eco products, beautiful coastal coffee table books, puzzles and childrens gifts and books. We also have a range of jewellery and gifts. Pop in and have a browse and see the team.

Over the festive period the Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Margate will be operating as follows:

* OPEN: Wednesday 19 - Friday 23 December and Wednesday 28 - Friday 30 December, 10am-5pm
* CLOSED: Saturday 24 (Christmas Eve) - Tuesday 27 December and Sunday 1 - Tuesday 3 January
* OPEN: Saturday 31 December (New Year’s Eve), 10am - 4pm
* OPEN: From Wednesday 4 January 2023, return to winter opening hours, Wednesday to Saturday, 10am-5pm

**Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre** will be closed from Saturday 24 December, reopening on Tuesday 3 January. The centre will then be open weekly from Monday - Saturday, 11am-3pm.

**Attraction Christmas opening**

If your attraction will be open over the festive period, please let us know so that we can include details on our website and advise visitors. Please email us on visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk

**Wedding venues**

We have been working to gather together information on local wedding venues for inclusion on our website [www.visitthanet.co.uk/weddings](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/weddings)

If you are a wedding venue that would like to be included on the page, or you know of a venue for inclusion please send details - name, website link, brief description of what you offer and a landscape image to tourism@thanet.gov.uk

**Heritage Open Days 2023**

Heritage Open Days is back between Friday 8 and Sunday 17 September 2023 with the theme ‘[Creativity Unwrapped](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/organising/creativity-unwrapped)’ - unwrapping the colourful history of creativity and artistic expression, encompassing art, architecture, cinema, crafts, dance, drama, literature, music, oral tradition, visual arts, and more. Who were the designers behind your building, park or garden? Has your town been immortalised in a song, painting or film?

This is a great opportunity to promote your attraction to local residents, as well as new and returning visitors.

There are a number of key deadlines to be aware of if you wish to participate

* Early March – Registration opens
* Mid March – Planning & Inspiration webinar
* June – Event directory goes live
* August – Registration closes
* 8-17 September – THE FESTIVAL!
* Early October – Organiser evaluation deadline

**New Wave open for applications** - applications for the youth engagement project, ‘New Wave’ are now open. If you’re interested in working with young people to create exciting new events, learning alongside other organisers (and getting £1,000 to help make it happen!) then please apply! This year there are up to 14 places available. Find out more and download the [New Wave application pack.](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/organising/new-wave) **Deadline Wednesday 18 January**

To find out more about the scheme and to register your interest please visit the [Heritage Open Days website](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

**Visit Kent Updates**

**Meet in Kent Campaign**

As part of the Interreg EXPERIENCE project, Visit Kent’s new campaign **Meet in Kent** is delivered in partnership with colleagues Pillory Barn. The campaign seeks to showcase your meeting space, attraction, or unique delegate experience to London and Kent-based businesses booking their next corporate or team event.

Meet in Kent is available to business event suppliers, including venues (such as hotels and attractions with meeting spaces), as well as dedicated purpose-built conference and meeting venues. Experiences or attractions, including foragers, golf courses, cookery schools and other activity providers, can also participate.

To find out more about the campaign, [read the campaign document](https://www.visitkent.co.uk/media/79709/meet-in-kent-get-involved.pdf) or if you would like to get involved and create your own listing on the Meet in Kent website, or if you have any questions, get in touch with Visit Kent on enquiries@visitkent.co.uk

**Thanet District Council**

**Launch of the Thanet Coastal Stakeholder Group**

Thanet has 19 miles of stunning coastline and we rely on the support of many different individuals, groups and organisations to help us maintain and manage such an extensive stretch of coast.

The Thanet Coastal Stakeholder Group is being set up to provide a forum for local organisations and partner agencies to share information on their initiatives and activities, with a focus on the Thanet coast.

If you would like to register an interest in joining, either individually or to represent a group, please [complete the online form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfIOqMeY8vFnpYwxAc_HPxZcFCyT-9dxHpT9yDZWpCtzvD_vw/viewform) by Friday 16 December. The first meeting will be held in January 2023 and invitations will be sent out by email. Online meetings will be held quarterly.

**Update on the Winter Gardens**

Do you have questions about the Winter Gardens? What the plans are or perhaps what the future looks like? Or do you want to know when things are going to happen? We’ve published a [timeline](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/campaigns/margate-town-deal/?question=19611-1&tab=3) to our website so that everyone can see what’s due to happen between now and June 2023 when we want to be able to recommend a prospective commercial partner and/or operator to Cabinet.

We’re also appointing consultants who will carry out community and stakeholder engagement as part of an evening and night time economy review. We’ll highlight that opportunity too.

We’d like the local community to share the questions they have with us via our online engagement platform, [Your Voice Thanet](https://yourvoice.thanet.gov.uk/en-GB/). This is a chance to sign up and get involved. [This phase of the project is open until Sunday 8 January 2023.](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/council-engages-with-public-to-update-faq-for-margate-winter-gardens/)

**Defra announces bathing water classifications**

Thanet has thirteen designated bathing waters and we are very pleased that eight of them have been classified as ‘Excellent’ and five classified as ‘Good’ by Defra in their Bathing Water Report for 2022.

Bathing water quality at Viking Bay has improved from Sufficient to Good, meaning that all of the district’s bays are now classified as either ‘Excellent’ or ‘Good’. [Read more in our Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/defra-announces-bathing-water-classifications-for-thanets-beaches/)

**Consultation on proposed PSPO in Margate**

The council is planning to introduce a PSPO on Athelstan and Ethelbert Roads in Margate, with the aim of reducing the amount of litter and other anti-social behaviour that occurs in the area.

You can find out more about the proposed changes on our [website](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/thanet-multi-agency-task-force/). People who live, work or let properties in the area are invited to give us their views in a public consultation, open until Friday 9 December 2022.

**Maintaining our public toilets**

Thanet District Council will be closing each of the public toilets for a short period over the winter, to carry out some essential refurbishment, deep cleaning and routine maintenance. Signs will be displayed on the facilities ahead of each temporary closure.

**Other News**

**Create Growth Programme Grants - Create South East**

As part of the new Create Growth Programme, *Create South East*, a new funding opportunity has been launched for businesses in the creative industries in the South East.

Businesses have up until Wednesday 8 February 2023 to apply for £10-30k each for innovation projects. [To find out more click here](http://www.wearecreative.uk/create-growth-programmes/south-east-create-growth-programme/)

**Your News**

Congratulations to [**The Bus Cafe**](http://www.thebuscafe.co.uk/)Margate named ‘Cafe of the Year’ for South England in the Prestige Awards, that celebrates small and medium-sized enterprises consisting of localised businesses.

Congratulations to[**The Yarrow Hotel**](https://www.yarrowhotel.co.uk/)**, Broadstairs** **,** shortlisted for a national Association of Colleges (AoC) Beacon award, that celebrate the best and most innovative practice among UK further education (FE) colleges