**March’s Tourism Matters: Visitors’ Map, Heritage Open Days and Kent’s Big Weekend**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

It’s hard to believe we are a quarter of the way through 2024 already and it will soon be Easter. In this issue we bring you news that our 2024/25 Visitors’ Map will shortly be available with a new system of distribution. Find out how to get involved in the 30th annual Heritage Open Days with a theme of ‘Routes - Networks - Connections’, as well as the Thanet venues participating in Kent’s Big Weekend.

If you know somebody who would like to read our e-news, please forward it on, or better still let them know they can register to receive the newsletter first hand at [www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters)

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Visitor Information Services Opening Hours**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House, Margate is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm throughout March, and **daily throughout April.**

**Broadstairs Information Kiosk** situatedabove the Chandos shelter on Victoria Promenade reopens for the season on **Friday 29 March**. The kiosk is open daily between 10am and 4pm until Sunday 29 September. For more information on the kiosk visit [www.broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk](https://www.broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk/)

**Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre** at The Custom House is open April to September, Monday - Saturday 10am - 4pm and October to March, Monday - Saturday 11am - 3pm.

**2024/25 Visitors’ Map**

Next week we will take delivery of our **FREE Visitors’ Map for the 2024/25 season.** The map shows visitors what there is to see and do in the area, to encourage them to stay longer, explore more of the area and come back for a repeat visit. Returning visitors generate additional income for the local economy and your business.

Please make sure that you have plenty of copies of the map on hand for visitors. We can provide display holders for them if you wish.

In previous years the Visitor Services team has delivered the maps to individual businesses, but with limited resources we have not been able to distribute the maps as widely or as often as we would like. This year, we have teamed up with Brightside Publishing who will be helping us with this year's distribution. Brightside Publishing produces printed magazines which showcase the bright side of Kent’s towns and cities. You may be familiar with the Thanet publications - Margate Mercury, Broadstairs Beacon and Ramsgate Recorder.

Brightside’s distribution team will be delivering the Visitors’ Maps during the last two weeks of March, in preparation for Easter. Please display them for your visitors when you receive your copies.

If you need extra copies,please get in touch with the Visitor information team on 01843 577577 or [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

**REMINDER: The Wonderworks Networking Event**

The [WonderWorks by Hornby Hobbies](https://www.wonderworksmargate.co.uk/) is hosting a networking event for Thanet tourism businesses on Tuesday 19 March at 10am.

Come to meet with other local tourism businesses, make connections and exchange literature whilst you enjoy a hot drink and freshly baked pastries courtesy of The WonderWorks’ on site café.

The Thanet Tourism Team will be in attendance so this is your chance to have a chat with us and collect copies of the 2024/25 Visitors’ Map

If you are not able to attend but would like your literature taken along, please make arrangements to deliver this before the event date to Thanet Visitor Information Centre (Droit House Margate - open Wednesday - Sunday 10am-5pm)

To RSVP, please email [wonderworksmargate@hornby.com](mailto:wonderworksmargate@hornby.com)

**Kent’s Creative Isle campaign**

We are working in partnership with Ramsgate Town Council on a campaign to promote the isle as a great place to visit for a creative break, out of the main summer months.

The campaign, entitled Kent’s Creative Isle, aims to showcase Thanet’s amazing art galleries, creative spaces, experiences and public art trails. It also highlights eating out options, evening entertainment and accommodation to encourage overnight stays.

Campaign activity includes advertising with Inside Kent and a digital package with ‘cene Magazine. There is also national and overseas promotion in partnership with England’s Coast, Visit South East England, Visit Kent and Southeastern, who will be displaying campaign posters in 140 of their poster sites. The campaign has striking new photography and a call for people to find out more by going to [www.visitthanet.co.uk/creativecoast](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/creativecoast).

A new 48-hour ‘pick and mix’ itinerary has been produced to help people visualise what a creative break to the area could look like, and then be inspired to book a stay.

Also part of the campaign is a competition to win a two-night creative break to Ramsgate for two people. This has been made possible with support from the San Clu Hotel, the Granville Theatre, Turner Rowe Art Centre and Gallery, Turner Contemporary and Southeastern.

The campaign launched on Monday 4 March and will run for six weeks.

**National Coastal Tourism Academy Business Survey**We would encourage as many businesses as possible to complete the latest National Coastal Tourism Academy (NCTA) Coastal Business Survey for Visitor Economy. The survey focuses on performance during 2023, future bookings and challenges.

[The survey can be found here](https://uk.surveymonkey.com/r/NCTA_Thanet). **The deadline for completion is Thursday 28 March.**

Any information you provide is strictly confidential. If enough businesses take part, we receive a general report for Thanet (no individual business information is shown). This information helps us to understand how Thanet compares nationally. NCTA uses the survey results to update members and to identify any support needed.

**Dickens House Museum reopens for 2024**

Broadstairs' [Dickens House Museum](http://www.dickensmuseumbroadstairs.com) is gearing up to reopen for the 2024 season on Good Friday (Friday 29 March). The museum will be open from Wednesday to Sunday and on bank holidays 1pm - 4.30pm (last entry at 4pm).

Work is underway to make the museum ready to reopen and welcome visitors once again.

We would like to give a warm welcome to Sarah Candlish-Wakefield who has recently been appointed as Dickens House Museum Visitor Manager.

If you are interested in volunteering at the Museum, please contact the museum on [dickenshouse@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:dickenshouse@thanet.gov.uk) for more information.

**Heritage Open Days 2024**

This year’s Heritage Open Days takes place Friday 6 - Sunday 15 September, with FREE entry to participating venues. This year the theme is ‘Routes - Networks - Connections’ - celebrating what connects us all and how people and ideas have moved around and come together. This includes trade routes to name origins, the history of our buildings to the traditions of our towns, and so much more!

This is a great opportunity to promote your attraction to local residents, as well as new and returning visitors in this the 30th year of the festival.

Please note the following deadlines if you would like to participate

* Registration is now open
* April/May - Press release to be issued
* Monday 3 June - Event directory launches
* Thursday 8 August – Event registration closes
* Friday 6 - Sunday 15 September – THE FESTIVAL!
* Early October – Organiser evaluation deadline

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

**Easter Events Page**

We have a dedicated website page with details of events taking place during the Easter half-term for you to share with your visitors and guests [www.visitthanet.co.uk/easter](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/easter)

If you know of any events that we have not included, please let us know at [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

**VisitBritain /VisitEngland**

**English Tourism Week 2024**

Tomorrow (Friday 15 March) VisitEngland launches its annual celebration of the English tourism sector 'English Tourism Week’, which runs until Sunday 24 March. This year’s theme is ***‘Supporting tourism, the heart of our communities’***, highlighting the visitor economy’s social, cultural and economic impact.

English Tourism Week is an opportunity to show support for tourism and champion the sector’s amazing people and places. It provides the opportunity to highlight the huge contribution tourism makes to the UK economy, to stakeholders, the industry, government, media and more.

Take a look at the [VisitEngland website](https://www.visitbritain.org/working-us/english-tourism-week) to see how you can get involved including using the hashtag #EnglishTourismWeek24 and tag @VisitEnglandBiz in your social posts.

**Visit Kent**

**Kent’s Big Weekend Ticket Ballot**

This year’s Kent Big Weekend takes place on **Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April**. The public ticket ballot opens on Friday 15 March and runs until Monday 1 April.

Find out which Thanet venues are taking part at [www.visitthanet.co.uk/kentbigweekend](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/kentbigweekend) or for the full list of participating venues, head to the [Kent Big Weekend website](https://www.kentbigweekend.co.uk/)

**Kent Annual Business Survey**

Visit Kent is gathering feedback from Kent businesses, as part of their sustainability activity and Sustainability Tourism Action Plan [monitoring programme](https://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/media/88847/sustainable-tourism-action-plan-low-res.pdf).

This is your opportunity to tell Visit Kent about your journey towards sustainability, and what you are doing around climate, nature and community. Responses will help to inform Visit Kent’s future sustainability activities, including business support and guidance.

The survey should only take around 10 minutes and closes at 5pm on Tuesday 2 April. [Click here for the survey](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/cc8c7927-175c-41db-9554-047d5067cd01)

**Thanet District Council**

**New business opportunities in Ramsgate and Margate**

Thanet District Council is looking for a leaseholder for eight coastal shelters on Ramsgate's East Cliff promenade. This is an exciting opportunity for someone with an entrepreneurial eye to launch a business in a surprising new location.

The lease for all eight shelters will be £8,000 each year, for up to 10 years. The first two years will be offered rent free, to help with refurbishment and fit-out.

There is also an opportunity to take on a 20 square foot office space at Fullers Yard in Margate at a cost of £3,500 per annum.

If you, or someone you know might be interested in either of these opportunities, please email [propertyandassetmanagement@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:propertyandassetmanagement@thanet.gov.uk) for further information.

**Opportunity to lease the Northdown Park Pavilion**

Thanet District Council is offering a lease for the Northdown Park Pavilion in Margate. The building is available to be leased for up to 10 years, at a cost of £7,000 per year, on a full repairing and insurance basis. There’s a six month rent-free period included in the terms, to allow for refurbishment and fit-out.

Use of the Pavilion is restricted to sports and recreational activities. There is potential for a food and beverage outlet within the existing building, and a covered seating area could be installed, all subject to planning consent. [Find out more in on the council’s website](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/paving-the-future-for-northdown-park-pavilion/)

**Funding reallocation**

At the Cabinet meeting on Thursday 14 March, Councillors will consider proposed changes to the funding allocations for the Margate Town Deal. This includes a proposal to reallocate £500,000 from the Oval Bandstand and Lawns project to other Coastal Wellbeing interventions.

The recommendation is for £325,000 to be reallocated to the Walpole Bay Pavillion project and that £175,000 is allocated to the Skatepark project, in Cliftonville.

The Cabinet report also proposes that the £4 million government funding previously allocated to Destination Dreamland should be used for the Margate Winter Gardens. [Find out more on the council’s website](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/cabinet-to-consider-funding-reallocations-for-margate-town-deal/).

**New Board for regeneration projects**

A new Partnership Board has been set up to oversee Thanet’s three major regeneration programmes; the Future High Street Fund, Town Deal and Levelling Up Fund. The Board met for the first time on Friday 1 March.

The Board will oversee the three schemes, but the council’s Cabinet will still be responsible for making decisions. [Find out more on the council’s website](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/new-partnership-board-set-up-to-oversee-regeneration-programmes-in-thanet/)

**Coastal Wellbeing Activities 2024**

Following the success of the 2023 Coastal Wellbeing Activities, the council is planning a new programme of activities for 2024 for Cliftonville residents of all ages and abilities.

Cliftonville residents are invited to vote for the activities that they would like to see, on [Your Voice Thanet](https://yourvoice.thanet.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/coastal-wellbeing). Votes are being collected until Saturday 30 March.

**Seawall repairs at Minnis Bay**

Work has been taking place to repair the sea wall and promenade at Minnis Bay. This was required due to storm damage sustained over the winter. The work has been funded by a grant from the Environment Agency.

**Your News**

Congratulations to [**The Micro Museum, Ramsgate**](http://www.themicromuseum.org)which celebrates its 10th anniversary at Easter. The museum is dedicated to the history and experience of vintage home computing and games.

Welcome to Sarah Corn who has been appointed the new CEO of the [**Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens**](https://powell-cottonmuseum.org/) starting at the end of April. Sarah was previously the Director of the Old Operating Theatre in London and brings 20 years of experience in the museums sector.

Congratulations to the team at the **Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens** who have been shortlisted for ‘Team of the Year’ in the [Museum and Heritage Awards](https://awards.museumsandheritage.com/)