**December’s Tourism Matters: Visitor Figures Success, Survey Request, Awards and Best Wishes for 2025**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Welcome to December’s Tourism Matters and our last for 2024. In this issue we take a look back at some of the year’s highlights:

* Published this week! Latest Economic Impact Study on the Value of Tourism for 2023.
* New attractions opened - Hollywood Bowl and Jump Inc
* Launch of the Thanet Heritage Volunteer Hub Toolkit
* Ramsgate Market returned in June
* Businesses and events celebrated a variety of anniversaries and award nominations
* Thanet District Council celebrated its 50th anniversary
* A new Museums Manager welcomed to the team
* Our ‘Kent’s Creative Isle’ campaign, in partnership with Ramsgate Town Council, successfully raised the profile of galleries, creative workshops and art trails across the isle.

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

Keep up to date with the latest event information and seasonal content on our website www.visitthanet.co.uk

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Cambridge Model Economic Impact Report 2023**

On Tuesday 10 December, the latest Cambridge Model Economic Impact Report was released. The report highlights the volume and value of tourism to the area.

It’s good news. Thanet’s tourism industry demonstrated an impressive recovery in 2023 with the latest figures showing a significant rebound post-pandemic. This underscores the resilience of the sector and its pivotal role in Thanet’s economy.

* Contributes £349 million to the local economy each year
* 4.6 million visitors each year
* 8,257 jobs - up 42% on 2021

To read the full report or view the handy infographic, visit the [Thanet Tourism Business site](https://www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk/business-support/research/cambridge-economic-impact-model-2023/)

**Stronger Together - Connecting Businesses and Communities for Shared Success**

**Tuesday 14 January 2025**

**Margate Caves, 1 Northdown Road, Margate CT9 1FG**

**9.30am to 1.45pm (optional tour afterwards)**

**Lunch will be provided by The Perfect Place to Grow CIC**

Calling all local businesses and voluntary sector organisations. Thanet District Council has partnered with Margate Caves to host a free workshop and networking event for Thanet-based businesses and voluntary sector organisations.

If you’re a local business, or you work for (or have links to) a voluntary sector organisation, this is a perfect opportunity to meet new contacts. You’ll be able to learn more about business planning, social media, and creating a sustainable business.

To book a space and find out more [click here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/stronger-together-connecting-businesses-and-communities-for-shared-succes-tickets-1107739070379) After the event, there will also be a free optional tour of the caves.

If you have any questions or would like more information before you register, you can email Sharon Davies at [sharon.davies@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.davies@thanet.gov.uk)

The event is funded by the UK Government under the [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/services/uk-shared-prosperity-fund)

**Stronger Together - Shaping the future of hospitality in Thanet**

**Monday 27 January 2025**

**10am - 1.30pm**

**Yarrow Hotel, Broadstairs**

We are holding a networking workshop for Thanet hospitality businesses, in partnership with East Kent Colleges Group as part of our UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) programme of activity.

Industry speakers will provide updates on changes affecting businesses nationally, with advice on the support available, plus practical discussion on how the college and our local hospitality industry can work together effectively for mutual benefit. Lunch and tours of the college will follow the session.

Invitations and a link to book your place will be sent early in the New Year.

**Isle Magazine End of an Era**

As some of you may have seen in the media and online Kiki Case and Simon Abra have taken the difficult decision to retire from Isle Magazine.

They say “*It’s been an absolute joy bringing you the best of Thanet over the last 20 years, showcasing all the wonderful individuals and businesses in the area. The magazine has played an important part in the regeneration of Thanet – and that’s been an incredible journey. We are now looking for someone with the same passion to take the reins*.”

To find out more about the sale of the magazine [please click here](https://www.rightbiz.co.uk/buy_business/for_sale/618484_kent.htm) or get in contact with Sam Brooksbank at Starling Corporate on [brooksbank@starlingcorporate.com](mailto:brooksbank@starlingcorporate.com), or 0113 5136552.

The tourism team would like to pass on a big thank you to Kiki, Simon and the whole team (designers, photographers and contributors) for their hard work and dedication to The Isle Magazine publication over the last 20 years, as without you it would not have been the success that it has been.

**Visitor Information Services Seasonal Opening Hours**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House, Margate is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm throughout December, with the exception of the festive period:

**OPEN:** Wednesday 18 - Sunday 22 December, 10am-5pm and Friday 27 - Sunday 29 December, 11am-4pm

**CLOSED**: Monday 23 - Thursday 26 December and Monday 30 December - Wednesday 1 January

**REOPEN:** Wednesday - Sunday from Thursday 2 January 2025, 10am-5pm

**Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre** at The Custom House is open October to March, Monday - Saturday, 11am - 3pm with the exception of the festive period. Closed from 1pm Tuesday 24 December until 11am Friday 3 January.

**National Coastal Tourism Academy Business Survey**

There’s still time to complete the latest National Coastal Tourism Academy (NCTA) Coastal Business Survey for Visitor Economy. The survey focuses on performance over 2024, the impact of the recent budget, future bookings and challenges.

[The survey can be found here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCTA_Thanet). **The deadline for completion is Sunday 15 December.**

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.

The results will be used by NCTA to lobby the government for further support.

**Visit Kent**

**Get a year’s FREE membership with PlusBus and expert support from Good Journey!**

**What does the Good Journey partnership offer?**

Good Journey helps visitor attractions to develop and promote car-free travel, cut carbon emissions and boost visitor footfall. They’re offering a one year subscription, free of charge, to businesses in one of the 18 Kent areas covered (Canterbury, Herne Bay, Sandwich, Ramsgate and Margate).

This is a great opportunity to get your business on the path to becoming more sustainable, with access to valuable support and benefits:

* Promote your attraction to the millions of people who don’t own a car
* Increase income – car-free visitors spend around 20% more
* Gain the Good Journey Mark and feature on their listings map
* Cut carbon – 60% of scope 3 emissions are from visitor travel
* Inclusion in Good Journey’s itineraries and journey planners
* Reduce congestion in car parks and access roads
* Promotion in Visit Kent's quarterly seasonal content
* Mentions across Visit Kent's social channels

**Good Journey Plus Bus Partnership**

Thanks to funding from PlusBus, Good Journey is currently offering a free year’s membership to attractions that fall within PlusBus zones.

If your business is in or close to one of 18 areas in Kent covered (including Canterbury, Herne Bay, Sandwich, Ramsgate and Margate), get in touch for your [free membership](https://www.goodjourney.org.uk/plusbus-signup/).

**Thanet District Council**

**Bathing water classifications**

On Wednesday 27 November, Defra published its Bathing Water Report for 2024. Of Thanet’s thirteen designated bathing waters, eight have been classified as ‘Excellent’, up from six in 2023. In addition, four have been classified as ‘Good’.

Water quality at both Margate Main Sands and Ramsgate Main Sands has increased from 'Good' to 'Excellent'. At Viking Bay in Broadstairs, quality has increased from 'Sufficient' to 'Good'. You can read the full list on the [Defra website](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bathing-waters-in-england-compliance-reports/bathing-water-classifications-2024).

**Consultation on Reform of the Bathing Water Regulations 2013**

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is seeking views on proposed reforms and technical amendments to the Bathing Water Regulations 2013. [**The consultation closes at 11:59pm on 23 December**](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reforms-to-the-bathing-water-regulations-2013)

**Free parking in Birchington and Car Park Works**

As part of Thanet District Council's ongoing work to support the local high streets, it is offering free parking at the Alpha Road Car Park in Birchington, every Saturday in December.

Free car parking is provided on Saturdays, all year round, at the following sites

* Mill Lane Car Park, Margate
* Harold Road Car Park, Cliftonville
* St Peter’s Park Road Car Park, Broadstairs
* Cannon Road Car Park, Ramsgate

Thanet District Council has recently published an update on car parks, with news on resurfacing, multi-storey car park cleaning and the Royal Harbour car park lifts. Find out more in the [council's newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/update-on-parking-in-thanet)

**Operator appointed to manage five refurbished tennis courts**

Thanet District Council has appointed the National Tennis Association (NTA) to manage five of the district’s newly refurbished tennis courts.

The courts are now available to book online via the LTA website (https://www.lta.org.uk/play). Sessions cost £3 per 30 minutes and families and regular players can purchase an annual household pass for £40. An hour of free group tennis lessons per week will be held at each court, and are due to start in the spring. Find out more in the council’s Newsroom. (https://www.thanet.gov.uk/refurbished-courts-in-thanet-to-be-operated-by-national-tennis-association/)

**Update on the Margate Winter Gardens**

Work to secure a new operator for the Margate Winter Gardens is ongoing, and the latest update is now available in the [council’s newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/update-on-the-winter-gardens-3).

**Take a fresh look at Ramsgate’s regeneration projects**

In November, Thanet District Council invited local people to find out more about Ramsgate’s Levelling Up Fund projects, through a virtual reality tour and other interactive technologies. If you weren’t able to attend the event, you can watch the video on the council’s website. (https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/ramsgate-virtual-reality-vr-experience/)

**[Sign up to The Wave](https://form.thanet.gov.uk/margate-town-deal-mailing-list/)**

[Did you know that Thanet District Council sends out a monthly resident newsletter, The Wave? It includes updates on key council projects and opportunities to have your say on a wide range of issues. https://www.thanet.gov.uk/newsletter/](https://form.thanet.gov.uk/margate-town-deal-mailing-list/)

**Other News**

2025 marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of the modern railway bringing change to Britain and the UK. The ‘Railway 200’ campaign will celebrate the past, present and future of the rail.

We are gathering together information on the history of the railway in Thanet, any connections e.g. Thomas Crampton, that we can use on the website, in social media and for press enquiries. If you have any information, connections etc please let us know at [tourism@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@thanet.gov.uk)

Find out more about the celebrations, how you can get involved and access a [useful toolkit here](https://railway200.co.uk/)

**Your News**

**Tourism South East Beautiful South Tourism Awards Results**

On Tuesday 10th December the Beautiful South Tourism Awards took place in Brighton.

Congratulations to [number nine Restaurant](https://chapelhouseestate.co.uk/feast-drink/restaurant/) at Chapel House Estate, Minster awarded Silver and [Sea Scrub Sauna](https://www.seascrubsauna.co.uk/), Margate awarded Bronze in the‘New Tourism Business Award’ category.

Congratulations also to Andy Waterman of the [San Clu Hotel, Bar & Brasserie](https://www.sancluhotel.co.uk/) in Ramsgate who was Commended in the ‘Unsung Hero Award’ category.

Well done to you all

**Get involved in Broadstairs Folk Week’s 60th Anniversary Celebrations -** *include logo*

The Broadstairs Folk Week team is inviting everyone to get involved in the celebrations by creating their very own 60th Anniversary festival bunting. This will be displayed at the festival during Folk Week 2025 (8-15 August).

The festival team loves yellow and black, but the bunting can be as colourful as you like. You can produce one flag or a whole series, depicting what it is you love about the festival.

A template for the size and shape of the flags can be [found here](https://broadstairsfolkweek.org.uk/celebrating-60-years/) along with details of where to send them once completed.