**February’s Tourism Matters: English Tourism Week, Employment and Recruitment Training and Electronic Travel Authorisation**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

We're hoping this issue of Tourism Matters will brighten what is looking to be yet another grey day. Read on for updates on the team's recent activities at home and abroad, plus check out the opportunities for free training, workshops and networking.

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Visitor Information Services Seasonal Opening Hours**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House, Margate is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm throughout February and March. During February half term (Monday 17 - Sunday 23 February) the Information Centre will be open every day.

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

**Broadstairs Information Kiosk** will reopen for the season on Friday 4 April. It will be open daily 10am - 4pm until Sunday 5 October. Find out more about the kiosk at [www.broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk](https://www.broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk/) The kiosk is on the lookout for volunteers, so if you’re interested, please email [info@broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk](mailto:info@broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk)

**Stronger Together – Shaping the Future of Hospitality in Thanet**

On Monday 27 January over 70 hospitality businesses attended an event at The Yarrow Hotel in Broadstairs. The event focused on the future of hospitality in Thanet.

With insightful talks from UK Hospitality, Visit Kent, East Kent Colleges Group and The Perfect Place to Grow, attendees explored the challenges of recruitment and how the industry can work together to build a skilled and passionate workforce.

From interactive workshops tackling industry barriers to tours of the catering and hospitality training facilities at East Kent College, the event was a hub of learning, networking, and collaboration.

Lucy McLeod, Deputy Chief Executive Officer at East Kent College Group said *"The East Kent Colleges Group was delighted to work with Thanet District Council on this event and was hugely grateful for their work in gathering so many of the Thanet hospitality sector in one place. Galvanising such important stakeholders will be hugely beneficial to our students and will make a real difference to their preparation for employment and ultimately their destinations. We look forward to further opportunities to work collaboratively."*

This is just the beginning! Plans are already in motion for future events to keep the momentum going. Please contact [tourism@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@thanet.gov.uk) if you would like to receive updates or get involved.

**Tourism Team out and about!**

As a destination, we subscribe to the England's Coast partnership. This year, we joined their Dutch campaign as part of our Kent's Creative Isle activity, which included a presence at the Vakantiebeurs event in Utrecht, The Netherlands. To generate engagement, we featured a competition highlighting Ramsgate, which led to England's Coast inviting us to join their stand.

Tourism Manager, Paula Harbidge attended for three days—one focused on travel trade and press, and the following two were consumer days. The Dutch market has shown growth for England in recent years, with increasing numbers locally. While awareness of our area is lower compared to regions like the Southwest, many Dutch visitors arrive in Dover, which provided a great opportunity to talk about Thanet.

**Excursions Group Travel Show**

On Saturday 1 February we attended 'Excursions' at Wembley showcasing Thanet’s group travel offering alongside other Kent attractions at Tourism South East’s annual show. This long-standing exhibition is an opportunity for group travel organisers, coach and tour operators to connect with destinations and attractions showcasing their group travel products, to get inspiration for days out and holidays.

**VisitBritain/VisitEngland**

**Launch of Electronic Travel Authorisation for non-Europeans**

From Wednesday 8 January, eligible non-Europeans visiting the UK are now required to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) for permission to travel to the UK. Gulf Cooperation Council visitors already need an ETA to travel to and transit through the UK.

Eligible Europeans can apply for an ETA from Wednesday 5 March and will need one to visit the UK from Wednesday 2 April.

An ETA costs £10 and permits multiple journeys to the UK for stays of up to six months at a time over two years or until the holder’s passport expires – whichever is sooner. For more information on who can apply and details of how to apply, [visit Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta)

**English Tourism Week 2025**

VisitEngland’s annual celebration of the English tourism sector, 'English Tourism Week’, runs from Friday 14 to Sunday 23 March. This year’s theme is ‘***Supporting people and places to drive growth’,*** showcasing the importance of tourism to local communities and economies***.***

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. If you post on social media, include the hashtag #EnglishTourismWeek25 and tag @VisitEnglandBiz.

**Visit Kent**

**Inclusive Employment and Recruitment Training**

Visit Kent has partnered with [Diversiti UK](https://diversiti.uk/), a multiple award-winning diversity and inclusion training provider, to deliver two free online workshops focused on inclusive employment and recruitment.

The sessions are designed specifically for businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector. They will provide guidance on fostering inclusive recruitment practices and supporting a diverse workforce.

Part 1 - Wednesday 5 March, 2pm-4pm

Part 2 - Wednesday 19 March, 2pm-4pm

Both interactive workshops will provide practical insights to help businesses create inclusive workplaces. You don’t need to attend both, though it is recommended to gain a full overview of the training.

You’ll learn about:

* Avoiding bias and discrimination in recruitment
* Understanding Disability Confident Accreditation
* Writing inclusive job adverts, descriptions, and person specifications
* Ensuring accessible recruitment processes
* Legal frameworks and employer responsibilities
* Sector-specific case studies and real-life examples
* The financial and operational benefits of inclusivity

To sign up to the sessions and find out more, [click here](https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/inclusive-employment-recruitment-training-4029103)

**Kent & Medway Growth Hub Accelerate Programme**

[The Kent and Medway Growth Hub](https://www.kentandmedwaygrowthhub.org.uk/) has created a programme to support Kent businesses.

There are free workshops for Kent-based SMEs and entrepreneurs, designed to help boost and empower businesses. The workshops will support with developing engaging social media to funding. The programme is funded by the UK Government and managed by [Kent County Council](https://www.kent.gov.uk/) in partnership with [Smarter Society](https://smartersociety.org/) Find out about the programme of [events here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/kent-and-medway-growth-hub-104497631631)

**Thanet District Council**

**Update on public toilet refurbishment programme**

On Thursday 30 January, Cabinet gave the go ahead for plans to spend £400,000 on refurbishing 16 public toilets across the district. This is the third phase of the project, and depends on councillors approving the final council budget for 2025/26. This work is in addition to the new fully accessible toilets planned for Margate Main Sands, and Stone Bay in Broadstairs. There’s more information in the [council’s Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/cabinet-gives-the-go-ahead-for-next-phase-of-public-toilet-refurbishments/).

**Nayland Rock Shelter - refurbished and open!**

The Grade II listed Nayland Rock Shelter on Canterbury Road, Margate, has been fully refurbished. The hoardings are down and the shelter looks stunning, with one of the best sea views in Thanet. You can see the shelter in its full glory in a [short film](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tbHYDT2A1Wo) Find out more about the shelter and the project to restore it in the [council’s Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/council-reopens-historic-margate-shelter-following-extensive-refurbishment/)

**Update on graffiti removal**

Illegal graffiti can leave a negative impression on visitors. The council’s graffiti removal team works hard to clean up reported graffiti, and they turned their attention to Ramsgate’s Royal Esplanade at the end of last year. Find out more about the team’s work and how to report graffiti in the [council’s Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/graffiti-removal-spruces-up-the-royal-esplanade-in-ramsgate/)

**Update on the Tudor House**

The Grade II\* listed Tudor House in Margate needs ongoing maintenance and repairs. A specialist contractor is needed, due to the nature of the building. Estimates are being sought for the work, which includes repairing the external staircase and a side wall. The repairs are expected to start in the spring, when weather conditions are more suitable for the specialist materials involved.

**The Wave newsletter**

Do you receive The Wave newsletter? It’s our monthly residents’ e-newsletter, packed with updates on projects, news and things to do across the district. It really is the best way to stay up to date with what’s going on in Thanet. The next edition will be emailed at the start of March. [Sign up here](http://thanet.gov.uk/newsletter), and we’ll send it straight to your inbox.

**Other News**

**Federation of Small Businesses Workshop**

**Wednesday 19 February 4.30pm-5.45pm Health, wellbeing and personal development for small business**

Short presentations on wellbeing for people and businesses, as well as the opportunity to introduce your organisation. For further information and to book [click here](https://www.fsb.org.uk/event-calendar/health-wellbeing-and-personal-development-for-small-businesses19feb25.html?utm_campaign=1919804_Events%20Email%20-%20Account%20Holders%20-%20JAN17&utm_medium=email&utm_source=National%20Federation%20of%20Self%20Employed%20%26%20Small%20Businesses%20Limited&dm_i=6TOT,155BW,452RK3,5B5L4,1)

**Your News**

**The Arts Network – A Night for Creatives**

[The Granville Theatre](https://www.thegranvilletheatre.com) in Ramsgate is hosting an Arts Networking event on Friday 21 March, from 6.30pm.

The event is open to all creatives working in theatre, film, music, visual arts, marketing or technical production. This is your opportunity to connect, collaborate, and explore. Attendees can:

* Step onto the stage and explore backstage and tech areas
* Meet the Granville Theatre’s technical, programming and marketing teams
* Network with local creatives and industry professionals

[Click here to book your place](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfuyGAPhTYpxjob6sQR17H3qVSlVWRVEik7GDS3V-pwZvL5kw/viewform)

**The Perfect Place to Grow Networking opportunity - Tuesday 25 February**

Rational CookLive and [The Perfect Place to Grow](https://www.theperfectplacetogrow.org/) are holding a free networking event for Kent-based food and drink businesses.

The event is on Tuesday 25 February, between 11am and 2pm at the Perfect Place to Grow café and training kitchen.

The Rational CookLive team will provide a free buffet, showcasing how their combi ovens and bratt pans grill, roast, fry, stew and bake.

The Perfect Place to Grow is a social enterprise and training kitchen designed to help young people in Thanet into full-time employment, in front or back of house roles. They are always looking for chefs or businesses to share expertise with trainees, host training sessions or welcome a young person in their business.

To find out more about the networking event, book a place, or discuss opportunities to share your expertise contact [ani@perfectplacetogrow.org](mailto:ani@perfectplacetogrow.org). You can also check out [their website](https://www.theperfectplacetogrow.org/) and [social media](https://www.instagram.com/the_perfect_place_to_grow_cic) for more information

**Call-Out for your Operation Dynamo Stories**

Ramsgate Tunnels is putting together an exhibition to mark the 85th anniversary of Operation Dynamo this year and would love to hear from people who may have stories to share of this time.

They are looking for stories from families whose relatives either came into Ramsgate from the beaches of Dunkirk, or those who were in Ramsgate and spoke about what the town was like during this time. Also, they are looking for Ramsgate evacuee stories.

If you have a story to share, please contact Lynn at Ramsgate Tunnels on [lynn@ramsgatetunnels.org](mailto:lynn@ramsgatetunnels.org)