**May’s Tourism Matters: Beach Matters, Visitor Ambassadors and Community Sector Forum**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Welcome to May’s Tourism Matters. With bank holidays gone and another on the way, where is the year going?

In this special edition of Tourism Matters, we bring you an update on our beaches and coastal activities. We start by celebrating this year’s prestigious Blue Flag and Seaside Awards - good news Ramsgate Main Sands has it’s Blue Flag back.

There is also information on the Hospitality Skills Passport for businesses who need support to fill vacancies, news on the Visitor Survey we have commissioned and a gentle reminder to encourage new staff to complete the free Visitor Ambassador online training.

Last but not least, all eyes will be on Ramsgate from 16 to 26 May as the town and around 70 Dunkirk Little Ships commemorate the 85th Anniversary of Operation Dynamo. Check out the ‘Your News’ section below for information.

**Beaches and Bays**

**Blue Flag and Seaside Awards**

The winners of the Keep Britain Tidy Awards for 2025 were announced today, Thursday 15 May. We are delighted that Thanet’s beaches have been awarded 6 Blue Flag and combined Seaside Awards plus 6 separate Seaside Awards. To read more about the awards head to the [council’s newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/new-blue-flags-for-margate-and-ramsgate-taking-thanets-total-to-six-and-12-seaside-awards/)

**Blue Flag and combined Seaside Awarded beaches**

* Minnis Bay, Birchington
* St Mildred’s Bay, Westgate
* Margate Main Sands - regained for 2025
* Botany Bay, Broadstairs
* Joss Bay, Broadstairs
* Ramsgate Main Sands - new for 2025

**Seaside Awarded Beaches**

* West Bay, Westgate-on-Sea
* Westbrook Bay, Margate
* Walpole Bay, Margate
* Stone Bay, Broadstairs
* Viking Bay, Broadstairs
* Louisa Bay, Broadstairs

For more information on Thanet’s beaches and bays, visit the [Tourism website](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/beaches-bays)

**Coastal Rangers**

In summer, a team of Coastal Rangers visit each of our beaches on a regular basis. A key part of their job is to check the lifesaving equipment. They also educate beach-users about the Beach and Coast Code of Conduct and explain how they should dispose of their rubbish responsibly. The Coastal Rangers will be based at Margate Main Sands

**Coastal Maintenance**

Biannual coast inspections are nearing completion with over 19 miles of coastline inspected for defects. The team will carry out maintenance to ensure that any defects are repaired ahead of the summer.

**RNLI Cover**

RNLI Lifeguards (Royal National Lifeboat Institute), patrol our beaches and bays throughout the summer season. There will be RNLI lifeguard cover at the following beaches 10am - 6pm

* **Weekends and Bank Holidays Saturday 24th May - Sunday 13th July -** Minnis Bay Birchington, Westbrook Bay Margate, Stone Bay Broadstairs and Ramsgate Main Sands
* **Daily Saturday 24th May - Sunday 7th September -** Margate Main Sands, Botany Bay Broadstairs, Joss Bay Broadstairs and Viking Bay Broadstairs
* **Daily Saturday 19th July - Sunday 7th September** -Minnis Bay Birchington, West Bay and St Mildred’s Bay Westgate, Westbrook Bay Margate, Stone Bay Broadstairs and Ramsgate Main Sands
* **Weekends only Saturday 13th - Sunday 28th September** - Margate Main Sands and Viking Bay Broadstairs

**Coastal Project Delivery**

Thanet District Council is currently working on five Flood and Coast Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) projects. These are 100% funded through grants from the Environment Agency, and are at different stages of completion.

The Broadstairs Flood and Coast Protection scheme is in the construction phase and is 90% complete. The work includes stabilising the existing sea defences at Broadstairs Harbour, with new sea wall and flood gates; upgrading surfaces to improve the flow of floodwater away from at-risk properties; and improving surface water drainage.

Two funding applications have been made for a scheme to replace the sea wall coping blocks at Walpole Bay in Cliftonville and to strengthen Margate Harbour Arm.

A project to examine Thanet's existing coast protection measures will start soon. The study will look at the likely effects of higher sea levels and waves over the next 100 years, due to climate change. The study will look at options for managing coastal erosion and when improvements may be needed.

**Coastal Shelters**

The Nayland Rock Shelter in Marine Terrace has won a Margate Civic Society Town Pride Award. The Grade II listed shelter was officially reopened in January following extensive refurbishment works. The shelter suffered serious damage through fire and vandalism in 2023.

**Updates on Thanet’s Public Toilets**

The public toilets along the coast are now open for the summer. Since the start of 2024, eight toilet blocks have been refurbished with one more to come in 2025.

Progress has been made on planning for new build toilets at Stone Bay and Margate Main Sands. Until these new toilets are built the council will continue to install temporary toilets at Marine Drive. Additionally, temporary toilets are in place at Walpole Bay in Margate; Botany Bay; and at the Bandstand in Victoria Gardens, Broadstairs. Temporary toilets will be installed at Western Undercliff in Ramsgate in July.

**New Beach Business**

Local people were recently invited to apply for licences to run new coastal businesses. We are pleased to welcome ‘HunkyDory Fitness and Lifestyle’ to Stone Bay, Broadstairs. Classes encourage and promote self-reliance, inner and outer strength, mobility in mind and body. All levels and ages are welcome with details available on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/hunkydoryfitness_lifestyle) or by contacting 07447 808583 or hunkydorylifestyle@gmail.com

We will update you on others in future editions

**Call for Volunteer Coastal Wardens**

The Thanet Coast Project is on the look out for new Volunteer Coastal Wardens. The role involves helping to look after a particular bay (of your choice). Coastal Wardens learn about marine and bird life in the NE Kent Marine Protected Area.

There’s an introductory training session on Saturday 24 May, from 1 to 5pm. [Places must be booked in advance, here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfMU0DRcsyBTIgyton83OdesNB3ZIXhBlloiHw0kdF2nc1Tiw/viewform)

**Water Users Policy**

As a coastal district, Thanet District Council has a responsibility to keep people safe on our beaches and coastline. In line with this duty of care, there is a new policy: Water User Group/Barrier Users Policy and Procedures. This was approved by the council’s Cabinet in March.

The new policy sets out rules for the Water Users Group and Barrier Users Group, and covers the safe use of slipways and access to the promenades and foreshore. The full policy is available on the [website](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HPVm9-dyW8s9DcsB6ytnG33LULAuvqZpJ9Z5jz6cO6c/edit?tab=t.0)

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**Need help filling vacancies - Hospitality Skills Passport**

If you attended our recent hospitality event, you may recall hearing about a new initiative designed to support recruitment and offer opportunities to our local community.

We’re excited to share more details about the Hospitality Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP), a pre-employment training scheme developed in partnership with UK Hospitality, the Department for Work & Pensions, and Jobcentre Plus. A new initiative designed to support recruitment and offer opportunities to our local community.

The programme is launching in 26 regions across the UK, including right here in Thanet.

Locally delivered by the East Kent College Group, the programme runs for 15 days and includes:

* Including 10 days of classroom-based or on-site training led by an industry tutor
* 5 days of work experience with an employer who has entry-level or apprenticeship vacancies

The aim is to help jobseekers gain the skills and experience they need to start a career in hospitality while connecting employers with potential new recruits who are job-ready and motivated.

**You’re also invited to an Information Day on Thursday 22nd May, from 10am–2pm at Mill House, Mill Lane Jobcentre in Margate.**

This is a great chance to meet the training providers, learn about the programme content, and find out how your business can get involved. To attend, you’ll need to have a current or anticipated vacancy by mid-June.

To book your place or ask any questions, please contact Sandra Kelly at skelly@ukhospitality.org.uk

Visit the official programme page for more information [www.ukhospitality.org.uk/work/hospitality-swaps/](http://www.ukhospitality.org.uk/work/hospitality-swaps/)

**Visitor Survey 2025**

The Tourism team is working with Acorn Sustainable Tourism Consultants to conduct research during June and August. Researchers will be in Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate throughout June and August, completing surveys with visitors to the area. Researchers will carry ID and a letter from Thanet District Council’s Tourism team, outlining the work they are undertaking.

Acorn will also carry out secondary research and a social listening exercise to ensure the survey is as robust as possible. The results of this Visitor Survey, will be broken down for each of the three towns. The findings will help to shape a new five-year Destination Management Framework and future promotional activities, including the support offered to the local tourism industry by the Tourism team.

**Have you got new staff? Please encourage them to become a Visitor Ambassador**

Whether you're greeting guests at a hotel, serving a table, driving taxis, or sharing a local tip on where to get the best fish and chips, you have the power to shape someone’s experience of Thanet. That’s why **FREE online Visitor Ambassador training** is available for you and your team.

This flexible, interactive programme is designed for anyone in a visitor-facing role, from taxi drivers and attraction staff to hospitality workers, estate agents, and volunteers. With bite-sized modules, engaging videos, and fun quizzes, the training can be completed at an appropriate pace, anytime, anywhere.

Participants will gain:

* Inside knowledge of Thanet’s unique attractions and stories
* The confidence to offer recommendations that make a visitor’s day
* A certificate, official Ambassador badge, and access to exclusive updates

Help us put Thanet on the map as a destination that delivers unforgettable experiences and a warm welcome. [Become a Visitor Ambassador today](https://thanetvisitorambassador.co.uk/)

**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 to date for 2025, the impact of the National Insurance and Minimum Wage changes, future bookings and challenges.

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

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.

**Visitor Information Services Opening Hours**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House is open throughout May, Tuesday to Sunday plus bank holidays 10am to 5pm and daily during half term (Monday 26 to Friday 30 May). After this it reverts back to Tuesday to Sunday.

**Broadstairs Information Kiosk** on the promenade is open daily, 10am to 4pm until Sunday 5 October.

**Ramsgate Visitor Information** at The Custom House, Harbour Parade, is open until September, Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm and Sunday, 10am to 2pm.

**Your business listed for FREE on England’s Coast!**

With warmer weather and travellers actively planning their escapes, now is the perfect time to make sure your business is listed **FREE** on [England’s Coast website](https://englandscoast.com/en), the online browse-and-book platform where viewers book directly with businesses.

More than 2,300 businesses are listed, so if you operate a hotel, B&B, campsite, pub,

restaurant, watersports attraction, transportation or any other visitor-facing business near the

coast, you can list it for [free here](https://englandscoast.com/en/business-listing-hub/register)

England’s Coast works in partnership with local destinations to boost UK and international visitors. They offer free competitions in their consumer newsletters, promote England’s Coast on social media, at travel events, to the media and much more. Get in touch here for more information and don’t forget to [list your business](https://englandscoast.com/en/business-listing-hub/register)!

**Reminder of Beautiful South Tourism Awards**

Entries for the 2025 Tourism South East ‘Beautiful South Awards’ close at midnight on Sunday 18 May. The awards are a fantastic opportunity for tourism and hospitality businesses in the South East to gain recognition for their achievements.

Categories include pubs, cafés and restaurants, accommodation, wedding and business venues, attractions, events and experiences. There are also awards for unsung heroes, dog-friendly venues and new tourism businesses.

For further information, the full list of categories and how to enter, head to [www.beautifulsouthawards.co.uk](http://www.beautifulsouthawards.co.uk)

**Half Term Events**

We have a dedicated webpage for events taking place during half term [www.visitthanet.co.uk/mayht](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/mayht)

This is a great resource for you to share with your visitors and guests, whether in your newsletter, booking confirmation or social media posts.

If you know of any events that we have not included, please let us know by emailing visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk

**Visit Kent**

**Tourism Talent Hub**

Visit Kent has launched its Tourism Talent Hub, a dynamic new platform designed to showcase the vibrant career opportunities within the tourism and hospitality sector.

The Tourism Talent Hub serves as a central resource, featuring job vacancies, success stories, and essential information aimed at attracting and nurturing talent in Kent's tourism and hospitality industry. Whether you're a job seeker eager to embark on a rewarding career, an employer seeking skilled professionals, or simply curious about the diverse roles our industry offers, this hub is your go-to destination. ​

This activity is funded through Kent County Council's Helping Hands Scheme as part of the Tourism & Hospitality Skills Boost project. [View the website here](https://www.tourismtalent.co.uk/)

**Thanet District Council**

**New Margate plastic recycling bin**

On Thursday 8 May, a new dedicated recycling bin for plastics was installed by Margate Clock Tower. Funded by environmental charity, Greenseas Trust and the Garfield Weston Foundation, it’s hoped the bin will encourage people to recycle their unwanted plastic, reducing litter and protecting marine life from plastic pollution. Read more about it in the [council’s newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/new-bin-installed-to-help-tackle-plastic-pollution-in-margate)

**Community and Voluntary Sector Forum for Thanet**

Following feedback from the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, Thanet District Council is setting up a forum to allow voluntary and community organisations to network and share information with each other and the council.

To make sure the forum’s agenda aligns with the community’s needs, the council would like to hear your thoughts on what you’d like it to offer and include.

Please complete the [survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/F9BDSCS) - it should take no longer than five minutes to complete.

**Your News**

**85th Anniversary of Operation Dynamo - Friday 16 to Monday 26 May**

Ramsgate Town Council, Royal Temple Yacht Club, Ramsgate Tunnels and the Ramsgate Heritage Harbours Group are coordinating a range of events and activities around the Harbour and town to commemorate the 85th Anniversary of Operation Dynamo.

More than 70 Dunkirk Little Ships will berth in the Royal Harbour, departing for Dunkirk on Wednesday 21 May (approx 6am to 8am), returning on 26 May (approx 3pm to 6pm). Both sailings are weather dependent. Find out more at [www.visitthanet.co.uk/operationdynamo](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/operationdynamo), which includes a link to the full list of events. Copies of the programme can be collected from Margate and Ramsgate Visitor Information Centres.

There is already media interest and the events are likely to attract lots of visitors to the town, so this could be a great business opportunity for you.

Check @VisitRamsgate on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/VisitRamsgate) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/visitramsgate/) for information