

March's Tourism Matters: Key Tourism News and Opportunities

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague,

Signs of spring appear to be in the air with the days lighter for longer, flowers bursting into life and, dare we say, the weather improving.

In this issue we bring you details of workshops to present the results of the 2025 Visitor Survey and how you can use the findings within your business. Register to take part in the 2026 Heritage Open Days festival is now open and we ask if your businesses/organisations have connections for 2027 Year of the Normans.

Tourism and Visitor Services News

Thanet tourism industry event

We are thrilled to invite you to the Thanet Tourism Industry Event on Tuesday 24 March.

Hosted at the stunning Chapel House Estate in Minster, this morning session is designed to bring our local tourism and hospitality businesses together. Whether you run an attraction, a boutique hotel, a café or high street business or offer an experience, this is your opportunity to hear the latest news and developments.

We have a packed agenda focused on practical resources and local growth:

- **B2B website launch:** Be the first to see our brand-new business-to-business website with new resources available.
- **New accessibility ambassador course:** Learn about our latest accessibility training programme, designed to empower your staff and ensure we welcome everyone.
- **Accessibility resources:** Discover new tools and guidance to help you welcome all visitors and ensure your business is inclusive.
- **Industry insights:** Hear from guest speakers on the latest trends and upcoming opportunities for Thanet's tourism sector.
- **Networking and tour:** Connect with fellow business owners over refreshments and enjoy an exclusive tour of the award-winning Chapel House Estate, exploring its beautiful grounds and restored architecture.

Event details

- Date: Tuesday 24 March
- Time: 10am to 1pm
- Location: Chapel House Estate, Thorne Hill, Minster, Ramsgate CT12 5DS
- Included: Refreshments provided and free parking on site.

[Reserve your place](#) - Please RSVP by Tuesday 17 March to secure your place. We look forward to seeing you there and working together to make 2026 our best year yet!

Visitor Survey Workshops

In 2025 we carried out [visitor research](#) to provide an insight into the people visiting Thanet.

In April, we will be running industry workshops, one each in Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. The purpose is to share the key visitor insights from the research and how you can use this data to benefit your business and promotional activities.

These engaging and creative workshops will include a focus relevant to the town they are in. They will be run by Bryony Bishop from [BeeBee Communications](#) and take place on the dates and at the locations below:

- Tuesday 21 April: 2pm to 4.30pm at Droit House, Margate
- Tuesday 28 April: 10.30am to 1pm at Pierremont Hall, Broadstairs
- Wednesday 29 April: 10.30am to 1pm at San Clu Hotel, Ramsgate

Places are limited to 20 at each workshop, so early booking is recommended. Contact tourism@thanet.gov.uk to reserve your place.

Visitors' Maps 2026/27 Soon Available

We will shortly be taking delivery of our Visitors' Map 2026/27. The map is aimed at visitors already in the area to show them, as much as possible, what there is to see and do here. The hope is that they will stay longer, explore more of the area and return for a repeat visit - generating income into the local economy and your business.

We would appreciate you working with us to ensure you have supplies of the map, that they are visible and kept topped up. We can provide holders for them if you wish.

Brightside Publishing will be assisting us with distribution with the aim of you receiving copies before Easter. If you have not received a supply or you require extra copies, please get in touch with the Visitor Information team on 01843 577577 or visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk so that we can arrange for these to be delivered.

Visitor Information Services opening hours

The **Thanet Visitor Information Centre** at Droit House, Margate, is open from 10am to 5pm, Wednesday to Sunday during March and April. It will be open daily during the Easter holidays (Friday 3 April to Sunday 19 April).

Broadstairs Information Kiosk on the promenade will reopen for the 2026 season on Thursday 2 April until Sunday 4 October. The kiosk will be open daily (weather permitting), 10am to 4pm.

Ramsgate Visitor Information at The Custom House, Harbour Parade, is open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 3pm through to the end of March. From April to the end of September the centre will be open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 4pm.

Heritage Open Days Festival

This year's Heritage Open Days take place from Friday 11 to Sunday 20 September. The theme is '*Everyday Histories - exploring stories of working lives, from learning a craft to establishing routines and cherished rituals*'. This is a great opportunity to promote your attraction to local residents, as well as new and returning visitors. Entry to all participating events and openings must be free of charge during this festival.

The Tourism team works closely with partners to co-ordinate the festival across the whole district. If you are interested in taking part, or finding out more about local arrangements regarding the festival please email Fran on francesca.sayer-doyle@thanet.gov.uk

General Heritage Open Days information can be found at www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Easter Events Page

With the Easter school holidays just a few weeks away, to support you and help your visitors, we've put together a [webpage](#) with events going on across Thanet.

If you have any event planned that is not listed please let us know at visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk. Include the event date, name, location, cost (if relevant), contact details for further information, description and an image if available.

Business Support

FREE - Fully Funded Access Assessments for Thanet Businesses

We're offering local businesses the opportunity for a professional, guided assessment of their venue's accessibility. This is provided by AccessAble, a leading expert in the field, and is part of the Stronger Together project, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

These assessments are worth up to £205. We can provide these fully-funded on a first-come, first-served basis, for a limited time. To express your interest or to find out more, please contact lisa.powell@thanet.gov.uk

Become a Disability Confident Employer with FREE mentoring

Fully-funded, one to one mentoring sessions are available, with Shane Forster from The Education People (worth over £500 per business). Shane will help you to either start your journey to become a Disability Confident Employer or progress beyond your current level.

This free mentoring is your opportunity to unlock new visitor spending and invest in your business's future. To find out more please contact francesca.sayer-doyle@thanet.gov.uk. This opportunity is being funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Keeping Good People and Making Work Easier

A free, practical Lunch & Learn for Thanet employers. Whether you run a café, a care home, or a construction crew, this interactive session focuses on why good staff disengage or leave, and what small, realistic adjustments make the biggest difference. Led by Neurodivergent Friends in Thanet as part of the Thanet Business Support Programme, commissioned by TDC and funded by UK Government. Light buffet lunch included.

Date: Friday 13 March, 11am – 12:30pm

Location: Pierremont Hall, Pierremont Park, Broadstairs CT10 1JX

Free to attend. [Book here](#)

VisitEngland - English Tourism Week 2026

VisitEngland's annual English Tourism Week runs from Friday 13 to Sunday 22 March. The week celebrates the tourism industry, and the theme for 2026 is '**Local Stories, National Growth - Celebrating English Tourism**'.

This is a great time to shout about all the wonderful things that the Isle of Thanet has to offer, not just residents but for our visitors too. To find out more about the event, how you can get involved and to access a toolkit of assets, visit the [website here](#)

Visit Kent/Kent County Council

Partnership programme for 2026–2027

Visit Kent is the voice of Kent's visitor economy, bringing together businesses, destinations and tourism organisations to raise the county's profile, attract more visitors and create opportunities for long-term growth.

Based on feedback from businesses and key stakeholders, the packages aim to deliver clear, measurable value. Starting from just £480 + VAT per annum, the programme is designed to suit businesses of all sizes. From digital marketing support and press and PR activity, to travel trade opportunities and direct access to industry insights, each package offers a tiered route to greater exposure and connection within Kent's thriving visitor economy.

The programme introduces brand new opportunities for partners, including discounted rates on additional promotional activity and access to strategic partnerships brokered directly through the Visit Kent team.

Kicking off on 1 April 2026, each partnership runs for 12 months until 31 March 2027. With a limited number of places available at each level, businesses are encouraged to register their interest early to avoid missing out. To find the right package for your business, please contact Visit Kent on visitkent@kent.gov.uk

Thanet District Council **Pride in Place Impact Fund**

We've received £1.5 million of government funding through the Pride in Place Impact Fund. This is to support immediate and visible improvements across the district by March 2027.

We've unveiled a list of preferred projects and local people are invited to share their thoughts on these.

You can find out more about the projects and give your feedback on [Your Voice Thanet](#). The survey's open until 5pm on Sunday 29 March.

Sand levelling

Preparation for the summer season has started! The sand bunds which have protected our beaches from the winter waves are now being flattened so our beaches are golden, level, and ready for summer strolls.

We'll be moving across the district with bulldozers and excavators, so please make sure to give the teams plenty of space while they work. There's a provisional timetable in the [Newsroom](#), though Mother Nature and the tides might have the final say!

Coastal licences

We're offering seasonal licences for businesses to operate on some of our beautiful beaches. These licences run from Wednesday 1 April to Wednesday 30 September and are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Whether you're an established vendor or have a fresh startup idea, we've reviewed our fees with a new sliding scale based on the activity and location.

Submit your Expression of Interest by Friday 13 March. Visit the Licensed Activities [webpage](#) for the application form and full details.

Fake Instagram account

The Instagram account @thanetdistrictcouncil is a fake account, impersonating the official Thanet District Council account.

The fake account has been reported to Instagram/Meta. Additional reports by members of the public can help to strengthen our cause.

The account is not affiliated with, or managed by, Thanet District Council. For verified news and official updates, please follow our official channels:

- Instagram: [@officialthanetcouncil](#)
- Facebook: [Thanet District Council](#)
- LinkedIn: [Thanet District Council](#)
- Official Website: thanet.gov.uk

Efforts to secure verification for the official account are ongoing, although there is currently a waiting list for this.

Other News

2027 Year of the Normans

2027 is the 1000th anniversary of the birth of William the Conqueror, and the Normandy region is leading a European-wide cultural programme of Year of the Normans. European year of the Normans 2027: programme and information - [Normandy Tourism, France](#)

Visit Kent will be sitting on the national working group for Kent to ensure relevant partners and products are woven into the wider story and secure exposure.

We are working to provide information to Visit Kent on any sites or stories in Thanet that are connected with either William the Conqueror, the Norman conquest or empire. It could be Norman architecture, Norman burial sites, heritage products/attractions or simply an interesting story or historical fact!

If you're planning/preparing to celebrate and mark the anniversary with special events in 2027, please do let us know at tourism@thanet.gov.uk so we can provide this into Visit Kent's and our own activity.

100 Best Local Restaurants 2026

Nominations are now open for Good Food Guide's '100 Best Local Restaurants 2026', in partnership with Square. Do you have a favourite venue providing great food and service, – a place that's warm and welcoming the minute you walk through the door?

Last year [Mori Mori](#) Margate and [Fifteen Square Meters](#) Broadstairs made the list. Nominations can be [made here](#) and are open until 11.59pm on Thursday 16 April.

Your News

Kent and Medway Food and Drink Awards Finalists

Congratulations to [Cliftonville Farmers' Market](#), announced as a finalist in 'Farmers' Market of the Year' category, and Marc Campos of [Marc Pierre's Kitchen](#), Ramsgate, in the Hospitality Hero category of the Kent and Medway Food and Drink Awards 2026. The winners will be announced on Thursday 23 April. Good luck to you both.

2026 Museums + Heritage Awards

Congratulations to [Turner Contemporary](#) who has been shortlisted in the Museums + Heritage Awards category 'Learning Programme of the Year' for 'An Apple a Day'. The

winners of all categories will be revealed at the Museums + Heritage Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 13 May

Big Give's Arts for Impact

ARK Cliftonville has been selected to take part in Big Give's 'Arts for Impact' fundraising campaign (Tuesday 17 March to Tuesday 24 March), aiming to raise £15,000 to support its work with Cliftonville's communities. With the money raised, ARK will be able to keep its doors open, run regular activities, develop a public programme and invest in the team.

This is a nationwide campaign, where every donation made during the week will be doubled through match funding, increasing the impact and opportunities offered to local people. To find out more about ARK's campaign [click here](#)