

Tourism Matters - Coronavirus and Tourism update 14th May

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Welcome to this week's Tourism Matters, which again is pretty full and brings you news on the changes to the lockdown restrictions announced by the Prime Minister last Sunday and how we are managing this locally.

There is also information on the extension of the furlough scheme and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS), which opened for applications on 13th May.

The guidance for the discretionary fund for small businesses, including bed and breakfasts, has just been published by the Government. It is being reviewed by Thanet District Council and as soon as further information is available it will be [included here](#) along with details of how to apply. We will also include information in next week's Tourism Matters.

If you know somebody who would like to read our e-news, please forward it on, or let them know they can register to receive it themselves on www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters

Thanet District Council News

On Sunday (10th May) the Government outlined some changes to the restrictions in place around lockdown.

This means that members of the public can now exercise outside as often as they wish. People can also sit and rest outside and can drive to outdoor publicly accessible open spaces irrespective of distance.

Leader of Thanet District Council, Cllr Rick Everitt said:

"The change in Government guidance means that more people are likely to be out enjoying Thanet's parks, open spaces and beaches.

"Whilst the Government has said that people can visit open spaces, it is important that everyone continues to act responsibly. To help stop the spread of COVID-19, we must all follow the national guidance by staying two metres away from those not in their household.

"We also need residents and visitors using these public places to be aware that there will not be the usual access to amenities. We have been looking at how we can re-open public toilets and ensure public safety. Our toilets are currently closed but the government guidance issued yesterday is helpful and will inform our plans to open some of these facilities from next weekend (23/24 May).

"We will continue to review the Government guidance as this evolves and ensure that people are kept informed. As part of this, signage will be displayed in key locations around our coast.

"I'd like to thank the majority of people who are acting in a considerate and responsible way and would urge everyone to ensure that this continues."

Government News

UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy

Following the Prime Minister's announcement on Sunday, the Government published a [recovery roadmap](#). The document outlines a reopening timetable, with 4th July being the earliest date for the hospitality sector, including accommodation and attraction establishments, to start opening their premises to customers.

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme extended until October

The Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, announced on 12th May that the [Job Retention Scheme would be extended until October](#). Until the end of July there will be no changes; however, from August to October there will be more flexibility to enable people to return to work part-time. More specific details around the changes will be made available by the end of May.

On 11th May, a [revised version of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme step-by-step guidance](#) was published on how to apply for support.

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) opened for applications on 13th May

The scheme will allow those who are self-employed to claim a taxable grant of 80% of their average monthly trading profits, paid out in a single instalment covering three months, and capped at £7,500 altogether. This is a temporary scheme, but it may be extended. [Check if you are eligible to claim](#).

To make a claim you will need:

- Self-Assessment UTR (unique taxpayer reference)
- National Insurance number
- Government Gateway user ID and password
- Bank account number and sort code that you want the Government to pay the grant into (only provide bank account details where a BACS payment can be accepted)

When claiming, you will have to confirm to HMRC that your business has been adversely affected by coronavirus.

Guidance for employers

New [guidance for employers](#) has been made available for businesses. This includes guidance for restaurants offering takeaway or delivery services and shops, and aims to help get businesses back up and running and workplaces operating safely.

Industry bodies have been contributing to industry-specific guidance, which is awaiting sign off and will be available over the coming weeks.

HMRC Business Webinars

HMRC are continuing to run business webinars on the following topics:

- [Coronavirus COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay Rebate Scheme](#)
- [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – How to make a claim](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – Self-Employment Income Support Scheme \(SEISS\)](#)

Other Government updates

New [guidance on safer travel](#) for passengers has been published by the Department for Transport; this includes specific sections for each type of transport.

[Revaluation of business rates](#) will no longer take place in 2021, to help reduce uncertainty for firms affected by impacts of COVID-19.

VisitBritain/VisitEngland

On behalf of the tourism industry, Visit Britain/VisitEngland have sent a paper to the Cabinet Office detailing how the Government can help the tourism industry recover from COVID-19. You can read the proposals put forward [here](#).

New industry standard in development in response to COVID-19

We mentioned last week that VisitBritain/VisitEngland are working on a common industry standard quality mark that would provide a 'ring of confidence' for tourism businesses, attractions and destinations, as well as reassurance to visitors that businesses have clear processes in place as restrictions are lifted.

Their current information is [here](#) and we will ensure you are kept up to date on any new developments.

Advice for tourism and event businesses affected by COVID-19

VisitBritain/VisitEngland has information on support available to small businesses on their [Business Advice Hub](#).

Visit Kent

Business Resilience Webinars

Please see below the remaining free Business Resilience webinars. Just click on the links to register.

- Wednesday 20th May 10am to 12pm - [Creating Virtual Content](#) - delivered by Sleeping Giant Media
- Tuesday 26th May 2pm to 4pm - [Communicating in a Crisis](#) - delivered by Pillory Barn
- Monday 1st June 2pm to 4pm - [Maximising Opportunities Across Google Solutions](#) - delivered by Sleeping Giant Media

For those of you who missed the 'Learning to Adapt and Diversify Your Product' webinar held on Monday 11th May, you can download the webinar [here](#) and the presentation [here](#).

Tourism News

Changes to the lockdown restrictions and phased recovery plans being announced has got us thinking. Have you been contemplating the way forward for your business? Do you have any questions that we can help with, or find out answers for you?

At the moment, more than ever, communication is key. So if you have ideas and suggestions you would like to share or questions you would like answered, please let us know by email to tourism@thanet.gov.uk

We will share these and our answers via these weekly updates as they could spark more ideas or opportunities for partnership working, or answer questions that other industry colleagues would like answers to as well.