**January’s Tourism Matters: Project Updates, Business Hub and Photography Competition**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Welcome to our first Tourism Matters of 2024. We hope you all had a good Christmas and New Year.

In this issue we bring you a reminder of the useful VisitBritain Business Hub and updates on Thanet District Council Projects. We also have details of the 2024 East Kent Coast photography competition and Taste of Kent Awards.

Keep up to date with the latest event information and seasonal content on our website [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

If you know somebody who would like to read our e-news, please forward it on, or better still let them know they can register to receive the newsletter first hand at [www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters)

**Tourism and Visitor Services News**

**New Year …. And new plans - please keep us informed**

As we start a new year, please do keep us informed of any developments within your business whether it be an anniversary celebration, new offerings for visitors, changes in opening hours/prices, so that we can ensure we have the most up to date for advising visitors and for media enquiries. Please send any information to tourism@thanet.gov.uk

**Visitor Information Services Winter Opening Hours**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House, Margate is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm throughout January and February with daily opening during February half term (Monday 12 to Sunday 18 February).

**Dickens House Museum Job Alert**

The wonderful Dickens House Museum in Broadstairs is looking for someone to lead on the day to day running of the museum on a fixed term contract, annualised hours basis. The museum currently attracts in the region of 8,000 visitors per year and is staffed by a team of enthusiastic volunteers. The museum opens from Easter to the end of October half term, with occasional group visits and events.

Thanet District Council is looking to recruit someone for the role of Dickens House Museum Visitor Manager. They will need to be a motivated and enthusiastic individual with a genuine interest in Dickens and leading a group of friendly volunteers to ensure the smooth running of the Dickens House Museum.

If this sounds like you, take a look at the [job vacancies section](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/job-vacancies/) of the Thanet District Council website to find out more and apply

**VisitBritain/VisitEngland**

**Business Advice Hub**

With a new year underway, it is a good opportunity to review your business operation and prepare for the main season. We know that the winter can be a tough time for businesses, but there is a wealth of help and support available on the [VisitBritain business hub](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice)

Resources on the site include

* [Insights into potential sources of funding](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/find-funding)
* [Employment Law](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/employ-and-manage-staff)
* [Marketing](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/how-market-your-business)
* [PR Skills](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/how-market-your-business/get-your-introduction-pr-toolkit)
* [VisitEngland Quality Scheme](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/get-quality-assessed)
* [Accessible and Inclusive Toolkit for Tourism Businesses](https://visitbritain.org/business-advice/make-your-business-accessible-and-inclusive/visitengland-accessible-and-inclusive)

**Visit Kent**

**Kent Big Weekend 2024**

Kent Big Weekend takes place on **Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 April.** It is a fantastic way to reward and to encourage residents to visit or to rediscover what's on their doorstep.

Residents will be given the opportunity to win tickets to explore attractions that they might not have otherwise visited, instilling a sense of pride in their home county and inspire them to share their enthusiasm with visiting friends and family.

Attractions and businesses are invited to offer complimentary tickets exclusively to Kent residents to use on the Big Weekend only. You can offer as many tickets as you wish and for either or both days of the weekend

To find out more about the event and how to get involved [click here](https://www.visitkent.co.uk/media/101340/kent-big-weekend-faqs.pdf) or look at the [Kent Big Weekend website](https://www.kentbigweekend.co.uk/)

If you would like your business to be included in the Kent Life Magazine feature piece, register your business and submit your ticket entry online, and send an email to enquiries@visitkent.co.uk with the subject line “KBW – Kent Life feature” by **Monday 15 January.**

**Thanet District Council**

**Calling all Margate/Cliftonville Business Owners and Stakeholders**

Following a successful High Streets Task Force workshop in November with an enthusiasm for more regular meetings, plans to establish a structured collaboration group have developed.

Businesses are invited to the next meeting on Tuesday 16 January, 5.30pm at Turner Contemporary. The focal point of the meeting will be to discuss the formation of a 'Town Action Group' aimed at propelling collaborative projects forward.

Eli Thompson, the founder and promoter of the Margate Soul Festival will be sharing his proposal on the development of 'The NewMargate Town Action Group,' drawing from his previous experiences and successes.

Connect with Thanet District Council’s Business Engagement Officer and find out more about the event by joining the 600+ business members on the Thanet Business Support Facebook group [www.facebook.com/groups/thanetbusinesssupport](http://www.facebook.com/groups/thanetbusinesssupport)

**Refurbishing Thanet’s Public Tennis Courts**

Thanet District Council and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) have announced a partnership to refurbish public park tennis courts across Thanet, supported by over £283,000 of investment from the government, LTA Tennis Foundation and the council.

The following tennis courts will be renovated: Spencer Square and Montefiore Games Centre in Ramsgate; Memorial Recreation Ground, Broadstairs; Hartsdown Park and Westbrook Games Centre, Margate; and St Mildred’s Games Centre in Westgate-on-Sea.

Work is starting in January and will be completed by the end of April, weather permitting. The courts will be closed to the public during this time. While the work is taking place, the council will look for an experienced operator to lease and manage the courts.

Once renovated, members of the public will be able to book the tennis courts online via the LTA website [www.lta.org.uk/play](http://www.lta.org.uk/play) , subject to a booking fee. Read more in the [Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/council-partners-with-lta-to-champion-investment-in-thanets-tennis-courts/).

**Next steps for Northdown House in Margate**

Northdown House, Margate is a Grade II listed Georgian house built c. 1850. It sits in the grounds of Northdown Park and is owned by Thanet District Council. The council is now testing the market for prospective tenants.

Northdown House must be used for leisure and educational purposes. It has the potential to provide the ideal location for a range of events, which could include wedding receptions and other celebrations, meetings, workshops and day conferences.

Potential operators interested in finding out more about Northdown House should contact the appointed agents, Sibley Pares, to arrange a viewing. Read more in the [Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/council-to-explore-next-steps-for-northdown-house-in-margate/).

**Update on the Ramsgate Clock House**

Thanet District Council submitted a £2.5m bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to extend the Clock House building in Ramsgate. The funding was to provide additional exhibition space, partially fund the restoration of the building and deliver heritage development and activities.

National Lottery Heritage Fund confirmed that this funding bid was unsuccessful on Thursday 14 December. While this is a setback, the council will be researching other funding opportunities and will review how the project can be delivered within the existing Levelling Up Fund allocation (£3.36million). Read more in the [Newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/national-lottery-heritage-fund-bid-for-ramsgate-clock-house-unsuccessful/).

**Open Space and Beach Fitness Class Registration**

Thanet District Council is looking for new Instructors for their Spring Coastal Wellbeing Activity Programme which will be running for 6 weeks starting in April funded by Margate Town Deal.

Please sign up using our [Pilot Shared Use of Open Space Registration form](https://form.thanet.gov.uk/coastal-wellbeing-activity-registration-form/#gf_184)

You will need to upload your qualifications, Insurance and Risk Assessment for the activity that you teach.

If you have any questions regarding the project or upcoming Coastal Wellbeing Classes please contact Natasha Brown (Coastal Wellbeing Co-ordinator) natasha.brown@thanet.gov.uk

**Car Parking in Thanet**

Please watch out for an email later this month, with a link to a survey, asking for your views on parking in the district.

**2024 East Kent Coast Photography competition**

The Thanet Coast Project and Bird Wise East Kent have teamed up for their third annual photographic competition. Winning entries will be shown in local exhibitions throughout the summer of 2024. The competition is open to adults, with two categories for younger photographers.

Adult categories:

* Daring Dozen
* Good Coastal Conduct
* Coastal Wildlife
* Coastal Landscape
* Human Impact on the Environment
* Savvy Sea Dogs

Participants can submit up to two images in any of the six categories.

Young photographers can submit up to two images in the same categories as above.

* Under 11 years
* Ages 12-18 years

The deadline for all entries is Sunday 18 February. For full details of the categories, terms and conditions and how to submit, visit the [Thanet Coast Project website](https://www.thanetcoast.org.uk/projects-and-issues/east-kent-coast-photographic-competition)

**Other News**

**Taste of Kent Awards 2024**

Nominations open on Friday 12 January for the Taste of Kent Awards 2024, which celebrate the best of Kent’s food and drink. The closing date for entries is Monday 26 February.

Open to any food and drink business located in Kent, the awards have been running for nearly twenty years, making them the longest running and most prestigious food and drink awards in the South East.

The award categories have been refined into three key areas – product /taste, hospitality and retail and business. Award categories include Kent Savoury Bakery Product of the Year, Kent Cheese of the Year, Kent Beer of the Year and the Kent Sustainable Food and Drink Award.

To find out more about the awards, categories and how to nominate, head to the [Taste of Kent website](https://tasteofkentawards.co.uk/)