**April’s Tourism Matters: Award Opportunities, Have Your Say and Congratulations**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

The weather may not know what season it is, but there are definitely signs of spring around. We hope that everyone had a successful Easter period.

In this issue we bring you details of the public consultation around the change of council wards in Thanet, information on how to enter the Beautiful South Tourism Awards and congratulate attractions marking anniversaries.

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**

**Visitor Information Services Opening Hours**

The Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House, Margate is open daily throughout April 10am-5pm. In May, the Centre is open Tuesday to Sunday plus bank holidays and daily during half term (Monday 27 May - Sunday 2 June).

**How has the Easter holidays been for business?**

As we near the end of the Easter school holidays and the first main holiday period of the year, we are interested to hear from you how business has been

* What has Easter business been like?
* How does this Easter compare to previous years?
* Any issues that you would like to make us aware of?
* Any positive feedback?

Please let us know at tourism@thanet.gov.uk

**Visitor Map 2024/25**

We have taken delivery of our Visitors’ Map 2024/25. 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 in the hope 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 really 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.

Through distribution by Brightside Publishing and ourselves, we hope that you have received copies of the new map. If not 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 copies to be received.

**Kent’s Creative Isle Campaign**

Our Kent’s Creative Isle Campaign, in partnership with Ramsgate Town Council, has been performing well.

The campaign aims to raise the profile of Thanet as a great place to visit, out of the main summer season, for a creative break. Elements promoted throughout the campaign include galleries, creative workshops and experiences, art trails, and food and drink. New website pages were created, which can be viewed [here](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/see-and-do/arts-and-culture/kents-creative-isle/)

Key results from the campaign so far include:

* The creative competition page being the third most visited page on the website for March
* Cene magazine (paid for digital activity) was the fourth top referral for March
* 7919 entries into the competition to win a creative break to the area
* Two press visit requests

We would like to thank everyone who supported the campaign and helped to promote it through their channels.

**Ramsgate’s new Raven Trail**

Have you seen the new, brightly coloured [raven statues](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/attractions/ramsgate-raven-trail-118023/) throughout Ramsgate ? There are eight of them and they are part of a public art trail designed by youth organisations in Ramsgate.

They are one of the highlights of the Ramsgate High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme. Thanet District Council was awarded funding to deliver a Cultural Programme to encourage people to rediscover Ramsgate’s High Street.

The Ravens are featured in a new leaflet which helps people to navigate their way from the train station into the town. Ravens are also featured on new monoliths and fingerposts throughout the town.

Another new trail for Ramsgate, as part of the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme, is a free audio guide of [Ramsgate’s High Street](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/attractions/ramsgate-high-street-highlights-audio-tour-120944/), which introduces listeners to several historical figures. The guide has been produced by Walkie-Talkie Audio and is free to download to smartphones via the Useeum app.

**Networking Event Feedback**

Thank you to everyone who attended the recent Tourism networking/literature exchange at The WonderWorks, Margate and a big thank you to the team there for hosting. It was a great opportunity to meet with the industry and many good conversations were had between businesses on how they can work together.

Following feedback on how useful it was we will look at hosting a similar event post summer and ask if there is anyone willing to host. Please get in touch at tourism@thanet.gov.uk if interested.

**Beautiful South Tourism Awards - Now Open for Entries**

The Beautiful South Tourism Awards are now accepting entries from tourism and hospitality businesses from across the south east of England.

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

**The deadline for entries is Sunday 23 June**. Find out more and enter [via the website](https://www.beautifulsouthawards.co.uk/)

Winning businesses will progress to the national [VisitEngland awards](https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/visitengland-awards-excellence), in the same category.

**Visit Kent**

**Kent Annual Business Survey**

Visit Kent is gathering feedback from Kent businesses, as part of their sustainability activity and [Sustainability Tourism Action Plan](https://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/media/88847/sustainable-tourism-action-plan-low-res.pdf) monitoring programme

This is your opportunity to tell Visit Kent about your journey towards sustainability, and what you are doing around climate, nature and community. Responses will help to inform Visit Kent’s future sustainability activities, including business support and guidance.

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete and **closes at midnight on Sunday 14 April.** [Click here for the survey](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/interview/cc8c7927-175c-41db-9554-047d5067cd01)

**Thanet District Council**

**Have your say on a new political map for Thanet District Council**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is drawing up a new pattern of wards for Thanet, and is inviting residents to give their views.

Thanet is currently divided into 21 wards. Each ward has either one, two or three Ward Councillors, who are elected by local residents to Thanet District Council to represent the views of the people who live in their area.

The Local Government Boundary Commission decides how wards are set out, across England. The Commission aims to review the boundaries in an area every 10 years, and it’s Thanet’s turn this year. In fact, our ward boundaries haven’t changed for 20 years so this review is long overdue.

The aim of the review is to make sure, as near as possible, councillors all represent the same number of electors. The Commission also wants to be sure that its proposals reflect established community ties and identities.

Have your say by Monday 27 May at [www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/thanet](https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/thanet?fbclid=IwAR2fbZQj3c-IuQZi9YJZq3Zhlv2PsrFNhyXaErCVKmPMvIgxvP4lYQMBx-0)

**Swimming Pool Funding**

Thanet District Council has been awarded £674,740 of funding in phase two of the government’s Swimming Pool Support Fund.

The new funding will be used to install solar panels on the roof of Ramsgate Leisure Centre and to install variable speed filter pumps which control the flow of water.

Together, the rooftop solar panels and variable speed filtration system will reduce the annual electricity bill at Ramsgate Leisure Centre by more than half. Read more in the [council’s newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/government-funding-makes-a-splash-at-ramsgate-leisure-centre/)

**Water fountain installed at Margate Main Sands**

A new water drinking fountain has been installed at Margate Main Sands, in a joint initiative from Thanet District Council and Rise Up Clean Up.

The fountain will aim to help to reduce single-use plastics by encouraging people to refill their water bottles, rather than buying disposable water bottles.

There are plans for fountains to be installed at Broadstairs and Ramsgate and there are other existing Refill stations located across Thanet, including at the Visitor Information Centre at Droit House in Margate.

**Water User Group membership renewal**

Membership of the Water User Group is compulsory for anyone wanting to launch watercraft from any of the launching facilities in Thanet.

Applications to join the Water User Group for 2024-25, or to renew existing memberships, should be submitted via an online form on the [council’s website](http://thanet.gov.uk/water-users/).

The barrier locks will be changed from Monday 8 April 2024, to allow members time to apply for, and collect, their new barrier keys.

**Ramsgate Market update**

Plans to get the Ramsgate Market up and running are ongoing. Thanet District Council is currently working with the operator on the final details ahead of its return. The exact opening date is to be confirmed.

Keep an eye out for stories in the [council newsroom](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/newsroom/) and on social media for confirmation of the launch date.

**Your News**

Congratulations to the [**Tom Thumb Theatre**](https://www.tomthumbtheatre.co.uk) that celebrates 40 years since opening on Wednesday 17 April.

Congratulations to the [**Powell-Cotton Museum, Birchington**](https://powell-cottonmuseum.org/)for being awarded a grant of £1.1 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport MEND fund, which is administered by Arts Council England. The funding will be used to replace the roof and for maintenance within the museum. This investment will ensure the preservation and upkeep of the museum's historical artefacts for future generations to enjoy.

Today (Thursday 11 April) sees the launch of the [**Pearly Cow Oyster Bar**](https://pearlycow.co.uk/pearly-cow-margate/pearly-cow-oyster-bar-margate) at No 42 GuestHouse, Margate. The bar will be serving beautifully presented fresh oysters and offer expansive sea views.

**Muddy Stilettos Awards - support our local businesses by voting for them**

Congratulations to the local businesses that have been announced as finalists in the Muddy Stilettos Awards

* Favourite Bar in Kent - The Sundeck, Margate
* Favourite Boutique Stay in Kent - Margate Suites at Buoy and Oyster
* Favourite Event Venue in Kent - Chapel House Estate, Ramsgate
* Favourite Hair Salon in Kent - Little Hair House (Broadstairs) and Mia (Margate)

Public voting is opening until 1pm Thursday 18 April, with the regional winners announced on Thursday 2 May and National winners on Thursday 11 July. Voting and more information is available on the [Muddy Stilettos Award website](https://kent.muddystilettos.co.uk/awards/) good luck to you all.