**May’s Tourism Matters: Sustainability Offering, Business Barometer and many congratulations**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague,

In this issue we bring you details of how you can become a Visit Kent Sustainability Impact Hero, let you know what is going on over the half term holidays, ask to include your sustainable actions on our website and share a host of congratulations to local businesses.

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 in May and June Tuesday to Sunday plus bank holidays and daily during half term (Monday 27 May - Sunday 2 June) 10am-5pm.

**No plans to introduce a ‘Tourist Tax’**

You may have seen reports in local and national media that Thanet District Council is planning to introduce a ‘Tourist Tax’. This is not the case!

The council’s Tourism Review Working Group was set up in 2023. Their job was to look into any negative effects of tourism and to come up with ideas that might reduce their impact.

One of their suggestions was to introduce a tourist tax.

During the Cabinet meeting on Thursday 25 April, Councillor Rick Everitt made it clear that there has never been any formal proposal to introduce a tax on overnight stays in Thanet. In fact, neither central government nor local councils in England currently have the power to do so.

**Council Tax on Second Homes**

The Levelling-Up & Regeneration Act came into force on 26 October 2023, and allows councils to implement a Council Tax premium of not more than 100% on ‘second homes’ (properties which are unoccupied but furnished).

The council’s Cabinet approved a recommendation to introduce a 100% Council Tax premium on second homes in January 2024. This will be implemented from 1 April 2025.

**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**

**Visit Kent’s Business Barometer**

Visit Kent is actively working to increase the sample of businesses that contribute to their monthly business barometer. Any businesses who don’t currently take part are encouraged to sign-up.

The barometer is a valuable and timely benchmarking tool for tourism organisations. All information that is supplied, is strictly confidential.

To find out more and to sign up, head to the [Visit Kent Business website](http://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/insights-and-resources/business-barometer/)

**Thanet District Council**

**Margate Winter Gardens Updates**

Thanet District Council has launched the second round of marketing to identify a new operator for the Winter Gardens.

The first round took place in November 2023, and one operator submitted a formal Expression of Interest.

In February, Dreamland announced that it would not be accepting £4 million allocated to it through the Margate Town Deal. This funding has been reallocated to the refurbishment of the Winter Gardens and will help the council in its search for a new operator.

[Find out more about the Winter Gardens here](http://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/winter-gardens/)

**Margate TS Eliot Shelter Restoration**

Work has started to restore the Grade II listed ‘TS Eliot’ shelter on Canterbury Road in Margate. The shelter suffered damage through fire and vandalism in 2023. The wooden seating area will be repaired and/or replaced, respecting the shelter’s listed status.

Hoardings have been installed to keep members of the public safe while the works are underway. The project is expected to be completed by September 2024.

Alongside this, Thanet District Council is developing a plan for improvements to all of the council’s coastal shelters.

**Public Toilets**

Work has started to refresh the district's public toilets. Maintenance works have so far focused on public facilities at or near to the main bathing bays, ahead of the summer season.

Work has included deep cleaning, a total plumbing overhaul and the installation of new energy efficient LED lights. Additional work to some toilet buildings including rendering, roofing repairs and windows will be carried out between May and July.

**Feedback wanted on new rules to tackle antisocial behaviour**

Thanet District Council wants local people to give their views on proposed rules to help reduce antisocial behaviour across the district.

The [public consultation](https://yourvoice.thanet.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/alcohol-and-asb-pspo) is open until 5pm on Friday 24 May. [Find out more on the council’s website](http://thanet.gov.uk/feedback-wanted-on-new-rules-to-tackle-antisocial-behaviour-in-thanet/).

**Thanet District Council marks 50 years since formation**

2024 marks a significant milestone for Thanet District Council as it is 50 years since it was inaugurated.

Over the course of 2024/25 the council intends to share stories and photographs that capture some of the milestones for the district. A virtual 50th anniversary exhibition will be uploaded onto the council website with images, a timeline and key information.

Anyone who has photographs of years gone by or who wishes to share their memories of special events, in particular from the 1970s or 80s is invited to email: committee@thanet.gov.uk

**Sustainability**

**Sustainability Offering**

To help in our sustainability promotion for visitors, which is a growing influence of the consumer decision making process, we are asking businesses to let us know which of the following sustainable provisions they provide:

* Organic food
* Fair trade products
* Eco friendly cleaning products
* Renewable Energy
* Rainwater harvesting
* Low consumption lights
* Zero waste approach
* No plastic

Please send details to tourism@thanet.gov.uk with the name of your business and the information will be added to your website record on [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

**Thanet Green Tourism Resources**

On the Visit Thanet Businesses website section is a dedicated [Green Tourism section](https://www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk/green-tourism) with a toolkit devised to assist business, local case studies on what businesses are doing and links to resources for further help

**Visit Kent Impact Heroes**

Acting on sustainability is brave, bold, and urgently necessary, and tourism businesses across Kent are taking steps to embed sustainable tourism into the heart of their growth and operations.

Visit Kent has developed [26 Impact Heroes' inspiring stories](https://www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk/impact-heroes/). Visit the site to see how businesses are reaping the benefits of sustainability through attracting more visitors, saving money and connecting with staff.

If your business has a story, process, or initiative that might help other tourism businesses to be more sustainable, [sign up to be a Kent Impact Hero here](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe7UqdIF0FfZ4qNBwJJehMuJzfD3F5vJxXO4mqsxkNMc4E9WA/viewform)

**Revised plans for Ramsgate’s Green Campus revealed**

Thanet District Council has shared updated plans for Ramsgate’s Green Campus. The Green Campus will create spaces for training, enterprise and light industry along Military Road. You can see the plans on the council’s [website](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/green-campus/).

**Cabinet approves plans for six areas of mini-woodland across Thanet**

Plans to create six areas of mini-woodland across the district have been approved. The council has identified areas of its land that could be used for the project, subject to external funding being secured, in the following locations:

* Dane Valley Road, Margate (1.2 hectares)
* Garlinge Recreation Ground, Margate (0.5 hectares)
* Memorial Recreation Ground, Broadstairs (0.4 hectares)
* Northdown Park, Margate (0.8 hectares)
* St Peter’s Recreation Ground, Broadstairs (0.6 hectares)
* Tivoli Park, Margate (0.5 hectares)

**Your News**

Congratulations to [**St Peter’s Village Tour**](http://www.villagetour.co.uk), marking its 30th anniversary. Tours are now underway for the 2024 season, so join a guided costumed walk to discover historic St Peter’s.

Happy 10th Birthday to **Broadstairs Town Shed**, a place for over 50s to meet, learn new skills, work on DIY and woodwork projects for the community or just share a cuppa.

Happy 60th Birthday to [**Bugsy’s Bowling**](https://www.bugsys.co.uk) Margate. The centre offers 12 bowling lanes, pool tables, bar diner and pro shop.

This year, Ramsgate marks 10 years of its pioneering outdoor pursuits project, [**Active Ramsgate**](https://www.visitramsgate.co.uk/activeramsgate/) with a week long celebration (Sunday 26 May to Sunday 2 June) giving the chance to try out some of the amazing range of activities on offer, with special discounts and trial sessions throughout.

Congratulations to [**Ramsgate Tunnels**](https://www.ramsgatetunnels.org/) that marks 10 years since their reopening to the public in June with a series of events throughout the year. This unique civilian wartime tunnel complex, includes a Victorian railway tunnel.

It is a double congratulations to [**No42 Guesthouse Margate**](https://www.guesthousehotels.co.uk/no-42-margate/) that has been nominated in the [Conde Nast Traveller 2024 Readers Choice Awards](https://www.cntraveller.com/article/vote-readers-choice-awards) hotel category and the ‘Best Boutique Spa’ category in the [Good Spa Guide Awards](https://goodspaguide.co.uk/awards/good-spa-guide-awards-2024).

**Muddy Stilettos Awards**

**Congratulations** to the Thanet businesses that won the following Muddy Stilettos Awards

* Favourite Bar in Kent - The Sundeck, Margate
* Favourite Event Venue in Kent - Chapel House Estate, Ramsgate
* Favourite Hair Salon in Kent - Little Hair House, Broadstairs

These businesses now go forward to the national finals to be judged the ‘Best of the Best’ in each category. Winners will be announced on Thursday 11 July. Good luck to you all.

**Ramsgate Festival of Sound Sonic Trail - Open Call for Artists**

This year's Ramsgate Festival of Sound takes place Thursday 22 - Sunday 25 August, with the Sonic Trail, a highlight.

The theme ‘Synchronicity’ inspired by its Greek meaning, ‘Together in Time’ and local artists are being invited to create a new and original work for the festival

The winning submissions will be displayed at suitable locations throughout Ramsgate during the festival. To find out more about the criteria and how to enter, head to the [Ramsgate Festival of Sound website](https://rfos-sonictrail-opencall.tiiny.site/)

**Submissions to be made by 5pm Sunday 12 May.**