**July’s Tourism Matters: New Quality Assessment Scheme, Award Opportunities and Project Updates**

Dear Tourism Industry Colleague

Where is the year going? We are just days away from the start of the school summer holidays and the main summer season. Fingers crossed that the sun shines and everyone has a busy and successful summer.

In this issue we provide details of the new VisitEngland Quality Assessment Scheme. This has been introduced to futureproof the hospitality industry and is open to businesses in the hospitality, leisure, and tourism sectors. We bring you details of the launch of the Thanet Heritage Volunteer Hub toolkit and how to enter the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Awards.

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, 10am to 5pm, during July and August. From Sunday 1 September the Centre will be open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm.

**Broadstairs Information Kiosk,** situated above the Chandos shelter on Victoria Promenade, is open daily between 10am and 4pm until Sunday 29 September. For more information on the kiosk visit www.broadstairsinfokiosk.co.uk

**Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre** at The Custom House is open April to September, Monday to Saturday, 10am - 4pm. From October to March, opening hours are Monday to Saturday, 11am - 3pm.

**Thanet Heritage Volunteer Hub Toolkit Launch**

On Tuesday 9 July, the Thanet Heritage Volunteers Hub launched its [**‘Toolkit for Effective Volunteer Coordination’**](https://www.heritagevolunteers.co.uk/heritage-toolkit) at Margate Caves.

The toolkit is designed to support and involve volunteers in Thanet’s heritage sector. It is useful for anyone that already has volunteers or is planning to recruit into volunteer roles. The toolkit covers managing, organising, coordinating and developing volunteers, and includes a variety of downloadable templates, fact sheets and forms that can be customised to fit your specific guidelines, practices and policies.

Thanet Heritage Volunteer Hub aims to expand the volunteer base and skills in this important sector, while creating employment opportunities to strengthen the paid workforce. The Hub helps with the recruitment, training and support of volunteers and their organisations across the project's four pilot partners.

The Hub is a two-year pilot project, launched by Margate Caves in partnership with stakeholders. Funding has been provided by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. To find out more visit [heritagevolunteers.co.uk](http://heritagevolunteers.co.uk)

**Launch of ‘Above and Beyond’**

The Creative Isle Community Rail Partnership (CICRP) launched its latest project ‘Above & Beyond’ on Tuesday 9 July. Above and Beyond is a podcast exploring Thanet’s railway and combines staff interviews with recordings of the station environment.

CICRP is a collaboration between Turner Contemporary, Thanet District Council and Southeastern.

The podcast is recorded using binaural audio, a method of recording that reproduces the way humans naturally experience sound. It is designed to be listened to through headphones and is available via the usual podcast channels. [Learn more about the project here](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/cicrp/)

**Visit Britain /VisitEngland**

**New VisitEngland Quality Assessment Scheme**

The AA, the UK’s leading hospitality assessment scheme provider, alongside VisitEngland, the national tourism agency, has announced plans to futureproof the hospitality industry. This will be achieved through a modernisation plan which simplifies current quality standards and introduces a free **Visitor Ready** scheme.

The review was developed over two years. Research indicated that users found the current assessment rating systems and schemes confusing, while support remains for a ratings systems. As a result, the rating scheme has been simplified and now contains three easily understood categories: **Visitor Ready, Quality Assessed, and Quality Star Rated** (three to five stars). The new systems aims to provide enhanced clarity and understanding for both tourism businesses and consumers, fostering a more informed decision-making process.

Businesses can sign up to the new Visitor Ready scheme free of charge. It enables businesses in the UK hospitality, leisure, and tourism sectors to showcase their commitment to operating safely within current industry standards and legislation. It enables businesses to access compliance information more easily, and to understand the key safety and cleanliness requirements that today’s visitor expects.

The Visitor Ready scheme is open to all businesses in the hospitality, tourism and leisure sectors. Businesses can check eligibility at [www.visitorready.com](http://www.visitorready.com), and upload evidence and documentation, confirm key requirements and finish the application in just 20 minutes. [**Read the FAQs**](https://visitorready.com/about-visitor-ready) to check what documents you'll need before you start.

Approved businesses benefit from a secure wallet for key documents, automatic reminders when documents need to be renewed, and a digital badge for their marketing channels.

**What if I have multiple businesses/locations?**Applications must be made for each business separately. If you have multiple businesses and locations, you'll be able to add the additional ones after you have completed your initial registration and application.

**Upgrading to the Visitor Ready Digital Package**You can upgrade to a higher tier at the start or end of the application process. Approved businesses will appear on [www.ratedtrips.com](http://www.ratedtrips.com) within a few days. Businesses that have been quality assessed by The AA and VisitEngland do not need to upgrade – your Visitor Ready badge will be added to your current RatedTrips.com page.

To learn more about the Visitor Ready Scheme, visit [www.visitorready.com](http://www.visitorready.com). You can find out more about the revision of the [assessment schemes here](http://www.ratedtrips.com/modernisation)

**Thanet District Council**

**Summer lifeguard support**

There will be lifeguards on duty daily, at Thanet’s main bathing beaches, as we hit peak summer.

From Saturday 13 July through to Sunday 1 September, they will be on duty at the following locations:

Minnis Bay, West Bay, St Mildred’s Bay, Westbrook Bay, Margate Main Sands, Botany Bay, Joss Bay, Stone Bay, Viking Bay and Ramsgate Main Sands.

Beach users are advised to follow instructions, swim between the flags and take care in the water.

**Coastal Improvement Works Planned**

Thanet District Council has started work to replace the timber railing on Broadstairs Harbour Arm. The work is due to be completed by the end of the summer.

Broadstairs’ Harbour Car Park will be closed from Wednesday 17 July to Saturday 20 July. This is so it can be resurfaced. Alternative parking can be found on Albion Street.

**Graffiti Removal**

Work has begun to remove graffiti along Thanet’s coastal promenades. It forms part of a wider graffiti removal project that is underway for the district. It reflects the council’s ongoing commitment to creating a welcoming environment for residents and visitors. [You can report graffiti via the council website](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/graffiti/).

**East Kent Coast Photography Exhibition**

The Thanet Coast Project and Bird Wise East Kent teamed up for their third annual photography competition. The winning images will feature in an exhibition celebrating the coastal environment and wildlife.

Photographs will be on display at: The Crab Museum in Margate, Wednesday 10 to Friday 12 July and Thanet Visitor Information Centre Margate Saturday 17 to Thursday 29 August.

**The Margate Teenage Market**

Thanet’s first ever Teenage Market took place at The Centre in Margate on Saturday 6 July. A total of thirteen stallholders and performers took part, all aged between 10 and 19 years.

A Festive Market is planned for Saturday 30 November, with details to be published.

You can find out more on the Teenage Market website: theteenagemarket.co.uk/locations/margate/

**Other News**

**Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Awards**

Nominations are open for the Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce Annual Business Awards 2024, which showcase the amazing achievements of a range of businesses and talented individuals.

Award categories include Business of the Year, Entrepreneur of the Year, Excellence in Customer Service and Most Promising New Business.

The awards are open to Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce members, as well as non-members. The closing date for entries is Friday 4 October.

To find out more about the categories and how to enter, head to the [Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce website](https://info.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/awards-2024).

**Get involved in Love Parks Week**

Love Parks is a week-long celebration (Friday 26 July - Sunday 4 August) highlighting the vital role green spaces play in boosting the health and wellbeing of residents and communities.

Explore Kent is keen to promote Kent’s wonderful parks with social media content during the week, highlighting their facilities, events and scenery. Explore Kent is asking for video content, photos or quotes, which could include someone talking about the best parts of the park, a short video tour, a chat about upcoming events at the park or accessibility for example.

The deadline for submissions is Friday 19 July. Please email your suggestions to explorekent@kent.gov.uk . To find out more about ‘Love Parks’, visit the [Keep Britain Tidy website](https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/love-parks-2024).

**Your News**

It's a big happy 50th anniversary to [**Hartsdown Swimming Pool**](https://yourleisure.uk.com/hartsdown-leisure-centre-margate-thanet/)**,** which opened back on 20 July 1974. The pool was Thanet’s first indoor swimming facility and is hosting a family fun day on Saturday 20 July to mark the occasion.

Congratulations to the [**Powell-Cotton Museum, Quex House and Gardens**](https://powell-cottonmuseum.org/) which has been shortlisted for 'Best Education Workshops' in the School Travel Organiser Awards.

Please show your support for the museum by casting your free vote via the [School Travel Awards website](https://www.schooltravelorganiser.com/school-travel-awards). Voting is open until Wednesday 31 July with the winners announced on Friday 29 November.