

December's Tourism Matters: 2025 Highlights, Business Opportunities and Industry Updates

Merry Christmas colleagues and welcome to December's Tourism Matters. We wanted to start on a high note by sharing some of our favourite industry highlights from the past year.

- The 85th anniversary of Operation Dynamo showcased Ramsgate internationally, featuring commemorations with the Dunkirk Little Ships.
- The country celebrated 'Railway 200' and Inspiration, the exhibition train, visited Margate station for two days in July. Tourism panels showcased the Isle's history.
- Chapel House revealed and opened its stunning new Glass Courtyard.
- Powell-Cotton Museum launched three new exhibitions each showcasing the museum's rich and diverse cultural collections.
- Broadstairs Folk Week celebrated its 60th anniversary.
- Westwood Cross celebrated its 20 year anniversary.
- Turner Contemporary marked the 250th anniversary of JMW Turner's birth. The gallery exhibiting Turner's "Waves Breaking on a Lee Shore at Margate" (Study for 'Rockets and Blue Lights') on loan from Tate Britain.
- Power Of Women and Margate Bookie both celebrated their 10th anniversaries.
- The Buoy and Oyster's Head Chef, Craig Edgell, received the 'Best Presentation Award' at the National Chef of the Year competition.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy, healthy and prosperous 2026.

Tourism and Visitor Services News

Visitor Information Services Opening Hours

The **Thanet Visitor Information Centre** at Droit House in Margate is open 10am - 4pm, Wednesday to Sunday throughout December, with the following exceptions during the festive period:

OPEN: Wednesday 17 - Sunday 21 December and Friday 2 - Sunday 4 January 10am-4pm

CLOSED: Monday 22 - Friday 26, Monday 29 December and Thursday 1 January

OPEN: Saturday 27, Sunday 28, Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 December 11am-4pm

RETURN TO NORMAL HOURS: Wednesday - Sunday 10am-4pm from Wednesday 7 January 2026

Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre at The Custom House is open October to March, daily 11am - 3pm with the exception of Christmas and New Year. The centre will close at 12 noon on Wednesday 24 December and reopen on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 January, 11am to 3pm, before returning to normal hours.

New Year Activities

The winter months are busy for the Tourism team. Here are just a few of the things we'll be working on over the coming months:

- **Visitors' Map 2026** - Updating entries and reprinting for Easter distribution.
- **Visit Thanet website** - Updating entries and refreshing content, to ensure the site is as up-to-date as possible and AI ready optimised
- **Visit Thanet Business website** - A refresh and new look, further details to follow in the New Year.

- **Kent's Creative Isle** - campaign activity with Ramsgate Town Council, promoting Thanet in the UK and The Netherlands.
- **Margate Restaurant Week** - Collating information on participants and organising promotion.
- **New Year consumer digital activity** - including an e-newsletter showcasing what there is to see and do off-season.
- **Business support** - catching up with industry colleagues to see how they are doing, their priorities for the year ahead, and if there is any support the team can offer.

Business Support

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund project, 'Stronger Together' is in full swing. Fresh opportunities for the new year include an Accessibility training programme for the [Thanet Visitor Ambassadors](#), which will feature examples of best practice in welcoming customers, from local businesses, with practical advice on how we can ensure everyone feels welcome.

A neurodiversity awareness training session is being planned for the new year, with further details to follow.

There are opportunities for one to one business support to begin or continue your journey in becoming a [Disability Confident Employer](#), fully funded and flexible to suit your circumstances. This is led by Shane Forster, disability and employability professional from [The Education People](#).

Work has begun on creating and collating resources on employing and welcoming people with disabilities. We have recognised a need for information to be in one place, so will be adding resources to the Visit Thanet Business page.

For further information or to express your interest in any of the above, please email francesca.sayer-doyle@thanet.gov.uk

Free First Aid Courses for Small and Micro Businesses

We're pleased to announce that Thanet District Council, with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, is providing free Emergency First Aid at Work courses specifically for small and micro businesses.

The content ensures employees will meet the needs of the Health and Safety (first aid) Regulations 1981 and the guidelines set out by the Health and Safety Executive. The qualification is aimed at over 16's who can undertake the responsibilities associated with being a workplace emergency first aider.

There will be continuous assessment by the trainer, practical assessments to cover CPR, care of an unconscious casualty, wound management and a multiple choice exam.

There are 24 places available on a first come first served basis with a limit of two people per organisation.

Wednesday 18 February, 9am - 4pm at Kent Innovation Centre (Millennium Way Westwood, Broadstairs CT10 2QQ)

Friday 27 February, 9am - 4pm at Thanet Visitor Information Centre (The Droit House, Stone Pier, Margate CT9 1JD)

Thanet District Council

Clock House, Ramsgate Update

In Ramsgate Royal Harbour, work has started to refurbish the Grade II* listed Clock House. It will become a modern visitor centre, focusing on Ramsgate's maritime history. There'll also be a café in a new extension. The work is due to finish in the autumn 2026.

Pride in Place Ramsgate 10 year Vision and Plan

Following extensive consultation with the people of Ramsgate, the Ramsgate Neighbourhood Board has drafted a proposal for the future of the town. The Ramsgate Vision and Regeneration Plan sets out how the government's Pride in Place funding, totalling £20million, will be spent over the next ten years.

The document was approved by Cabinet on Thursday 27 November, and has now been submitted to the government. Learn more about the plan on the [council website](#)

Share your views on the new Residential Parking Policy

Thanet District Council would like to hear how you feel about the new draft Residential Parking Policy. It outlines how the council proposes to manage on-street parking in the places where people live. It will help the council make sure that decisions are fair, based on evidence and support our community's needs.

You can read the draft policy and share your thoughts on [Your Voice Thanet](#) , the council's public engagement platform. before the deadline of **Monday 12 January**.

Christmas Service Changes

The council's dedicated waste and recycling crews work hard all year round to collect your household waste.

This Christmas, collections will not take place on Christmas Day (Thursday 25 December), Boxing Day (Friday 26 December) and New Year's Day (Thursday 1 January).

If your usual waste or recycling collection falls on one of these days, you will have an alternative collection. If this affects your property, your crew will leave a printed hanger on your bin, with details of your rearranged collections.

Details on all planned changes to council services over the festive season are on the [website](#)

Sign up for council news

Did you know if you are a resident and want to find out what the council is up to, you can sign up to the council's monthly e-newsletter, for news and updates from across the district? You can subscribe to [The Wave here](#) to receive future issues.

Other News

Northdown Road Margate Gas Network Upgrade

SGN will be carrying out essential gas network upgrades in the Cliftonville area to ensure a continued safe and reliable supply of gas is delivered to homes and businesses.

I&G Contracting will start work on the following roads in the week commencing Monday 5 January 2026. For safety the following roads will be closed.

- **Northdown Road** – Closed from Monday 5 January to approximately Friday 13 March. A rolling road closure will move along as sections are completed. Side roads joining Northdown Road may also be closed .

- **Wilderness Hill** – Closed from Monday 2 February for approximately two to three weeks.

Diversions will be in place for motorists and access will be maintained for residents and businesses within the works area. Pedestrian access will not be affected. Cyclists will need to dismount and walk through the closure points.

Southeastern Customer and Community Improvement Fund (CCIF) now open

Southeastern's CCIF supports the wellbeing of customers and communities served by the Southeastern rail network. It focuses on initiatives that drive positive change and foster community development.

Applications are invited for funding to deliver projects in the 2026/27 Financial Year. They must be completed by Wednesday 31 March 2027. Projects should benefit communities served by one or more of Southeastern's stations.

Full details of the fund, entry requirements and how to apply can be [found here](#)

Your News

Award Success

Congratulations to [Chapel House Estate](#), announced as the Gold Winner in the Beautiful South Tourism Awards 2025 'Wedding Venue of the Year' category on Tuesday 9 December.

Thank you to Café G

Following the recent news that Café G in Margate is closing at the end of the year, we would like to pass on our thanks and appreciation to owner Daniel Goldman for his support and assistance over the last 21 years. [Read more about Daniel's decision here.](#)

Earlier this week it was announced that Angela's (next door to Café G) will take on the Café G building and close Dory's on the seafront. [Read more here.](#)

Image is of Daniel, one of the first Visitor Ambassadors, back in the summer celebrating the Visitor Ambassadors 15th Anniversary.

New Director for Broadstairs Food Festival

Welcome to Katherine Wyatt, who has been announced as the next Director of Broadstairs Food Festival.

Currently Head of Enterprises at Kent College Canterbury, Katherine has led a portfolio of events and commercial ventures, and has co-founded two award-winning hospitality businesses; created and managed sponsorship packages, built loyal communities, and has worked closely with traders and suppliers, giving her a strong network and first-hand understanding of the food and drink industry.

Jo Scott, the [current Director](#) will step back from the role at the end of the 2026 Easter Festival, following 14 years in the role and a board member since it started in 2009.

Discovery Planet CIC receives The King's Award for Voluntary Service

[Discovery Planet CIC](#), based in Ramsgate, has been honoured with The King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) for 2025. This esteemed accolade is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK, equivalent to an MBE.

The organisation, co-founded in 2014 by Xanthe Pitt, Nikki Hildesley, and Dr Vicky Mason, has been recognised for its decade long commitment to providing accessible, creative, and free educational STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths) experiences to the Thanet community.

Discovery Planet CIC has attracted over 26,000 visits from local people and schoolchildren, demonstrating the real-life applications of learning across essential topics including clean energy, genetics, and micro-meteorites.

Rewd Padel Club to open at Westwood Cross

Thanet's first ever padel club is due to open at Westwood Cross. It will offer state-of-the-art padel courts, a coastal-inspired café bar, and curated wellness facilities - all designed to bring world-class sport, community connection, and lifestyle experiences to the area.

Padel is a fusion of tennis and squash, known for being social and easy to learn, and suitable for players of all ages and abilities. Find out more here www.rewdpadel.co.uk