

18th June 2021: Chamber Members Only

1. The Pandemic

Our Chamber Coronavirus reports rely on the cases per 100,000 people published daily by Kent County Council and weekly by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Our latest report shows that England (75.0) is outperformed by Kent (29.7). The most encouraging data is from East Kent where Thanet (6.3) is now leading the way and Swale, Folkestone & Hythe and Dover are all posting below 22 cases. Chamber members will draw their own conclusions as to effect of relatively older and double-vaccinated citizens living in our coastal towns, but there is no doubt that Thanet's rise from being 11th out of 12 at the end of April to leading the pack today is a heartening sign for businesses and families in Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Birchington.

It is also worthy of note that although Portugal has fallen down the list in continental Europe, the infections rates in most of the countries across the channel have improved markedly: Cyprus has improved from 610.6 to 48.9 cases and France from 326.3 to 81.0. A telephone call to the Chamber from Lyon yesterday indicated that the figures for France will halve again which will be welcome news for our ferry companies and any tourism business hoping to find customers from across the water before the end of the holiday season. For ease of reference, the reports for 30th April and 18th June 2021 are both attached.

2. The Open

Your Chamber speaks to the organisers of The Open Championship every week. After the Prime Minister's announcement of 14th June 2021, which was promulgated to Chamber members that same evening, the R&A issued a prompt statement which is reproduced here.

"Following this evening's announcement by the Prime Minister to delay the move to Step 4 in the UK Government's roadmap, we would like to reassure fans that we will shortly be able to confirm our arrangements for The 149th Open being held at Royal St George's from 11-18 July. We are in active discussions with the UK Government and public health authorities regarding capacity levels for the Championship and hope to provide a definitive update for all ticket holders and hospitality guests in the next few days. We would like to thank all fans for their patience and support."

The previous 148 editions of The Open have been managed successfully and we expect the 149th at Royal St, George's in Sandwich from 11th to 18th July 2021 to be successful again. The question at issue is how many spectators and ticket holders with money to spend in East Kent will be allowed entry. On that point we are waiting for the government to pronounce. Experts in quantum mechanics will be familiar with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and its complementary variables which mean that the closer you get to the position of particle in one measure, the further away you get with another. These days it sometimes feels as if Werner Heisenberg must be alive and well and planning our events in East Kent this summer. But fear not, your chamber will keep you informed of some certainties and will be free to discuss any uncertainties with you on any day of the week.

3. Football

Not every Chamber member is obsessed with football. However, with the UEFA European Football Championship in full flight and England due to play Scotland this evening, it is perhaps hard to escape our most popular national sport. Please then spare a thought for a text received from one football enthusiast who contacted the chamber a few days ago with the following lament. "I can't believe it. My wife has left me. She says I am completely besotted with football and can think of nothing else. She claims I view the whole of life through a veil of football and my every waking thought revolves around the game. I don't know how she could have reached such a wrong conclusion, especially after we have been married for seven seasons and two world cups".

David Foley
Chief Executive

Information

Thanet & East Kent and Dover District Chambers of Commerce provide professional business support to the East Kent coastal business community.

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