



## **RAMSGATE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of Visit Ramsgate Working Group**

**Venue:** The Council Chamber, The Custom House, Harbour Parade, Ramsgate

**Date:** Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2026 at 10:05am.

**Present:** Councillors: Huxley (Vice-Chair) and Ovenden.

Also in attendance:

Ms G Dempsey: Visit Ramsgate Project Manager.

Mrs R Smith: Town Centre and Tourism Manager. (Minutes)

Miss K Kelley: Marketing and Communications Officer.

### **APOLOGIES**

Crittenden (Chair), Paula Harbidge (Tourism Manager, Thanet District Council)

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **REVIEW PREVIOUS MINUTES FOR ACTIONS**

The group reviewed outstanding actions from the previous minutes, including TDC licensing for small operators and the Ramsgate History Map.

- No new Ramsgate licence requests had been received, although previous interest in Ramsgate Main Sands and Ellington Park had not progressed. Barriers discussed included licence and administration fees, process requirements and difficulty gathering direct evidence from operators. Mrs R Smith and Ms G Dempsey to prepare a one-page report by the end of September 2026. The report will summarise issues faced by small operators and include anonymous or illustrative case studies where appropriate. The report will support councillors in raising the matter with TDC officers and the relevant Cabinet Member.
- The Ramsgate History Map requires further work before any formal recommendation is made. Key considerations include ownership, maintenance, moderation, accuracy checking and whether an existing platform could offer better value.

### **ACTIVE RAMSGATE WEEK**

- Ms G Dempsey updated the group on Active Ramsgate Week. The event strengthened provider relationships and showed good demand for skateboarding, pickleball and disc golf. Skateboarding at Warre Recreation Ground was particularly successful and led to six further summer holiday sessions with Scorcha Skate School and Ramsgate Skatepark. This will be part funded by Ramsgate Town Council (50/50 split with Ramsgate Skatepark).
- The group viewed promotional video content, including previous footage and new drone footage. Members agreed the video worked well as wider destination content for the Visit Ramsgate website and social media.
- An eight-day programme was considered difficult to manage sustainably. Future planning should move towards a shorter five-day format, likely Wednesday to Sunday, with additional activities supported throughout the year. Feedback should be collected

at events where possible, as online survey response rates were low. Ms G Dempsey confirmed that participants had been contacted through Mailchimp for further feedback on the activity offer.

## **PROJECT UPDATES**

- As this was the first Visit Ramsgate Working Group meeting, Mrs R Smith suggested using the discussion to consider ways of developing and promoting Ramsgate destination experiences, including active, cultural, heritage, walking, wellbeing and harbour-related opportunities. The group then received updates on HAF summer activities, walking routes, visitor content, future heritage activity and the Visit Ramsgate website.
- The HAF (Holidays, Activities and Food) programme was planned for 27th to 30th July 2026 in coordination with the football club. School participation remained limited and provider availability and tide times were affecting scheduling, particularly for Kite Pirates sessions. The group discussed permissions and risk assessment requirements for beach-based activities. Similar activities had previously been delivered successfully, but officers were again experiencing requests for forms, risk assessments and longer lead-in times. If TDC approvals or beach hut access threaten delivery, Ms G Dempsey and Mrs R Smith will alert Councillors Huxley and Crittenden for support.
- Members discussed making walking routes and visitor information clearer through improved noticeboard wording, QR codes and simple itineraries such as “Ramsgate in a Day”, to help day visitors and short-break visitors understand the town’s walking, heritage, shopping, maritime and family-friendly offer.
- The Augustine-Camino route was discussed as a walking, wellbeing and heritage opportunity for Ramsgate. Current access issues include overgrown sections around Minster Marshes and Pluck’s Gutter. Mrs R Smith had attempted to report the issue through KCC’s Public Rights of Way system, and the group agreed the matter should be escalated to Paul Valek at KCC to identify the correct route for resolution.
- The group considered a pilgrimage marker stone near St Augustine’s Church or another suitable location to recognise Ramsgate’s connection with St Augustine and its role as an endpoint on the route.
- Future visitor projects discussed included a heritage harbour event, Ramsgate Gothic, and a heritage stamp/passport trail. Members supported positive, accessible heritage activity reflecting Ramsgate’s Royal Harbour status, Heritage Harbour status, maritime archaeology, Little Ships connections, smuggling and wider coastal history.
- Ramsgate Gothic was discussed as a possible October theme, with links to architecture, smuggling, steampunk, gothic styling and seasonal activity. The Ramsgate Pirate Festival was noted positively, with costumed activity creating visible animation in the town centre, and the organiser is keen to develop a two-day event next June.
- Miss K Kelley suggested a town-wide location stamp or passport trail to encourage visitors to collect physical stamps from attractions and locations across Ramsgate. Members supported the idea in principle as a low-cost visitor engagement project.
- Visit Ramsgate was confirmed as the main visitor-facing website for the town. Visitor information should continue to move away from the Town Council website, which should focus on council business. Miss K Kelley is migrating visitor content to the Visit Ramsgate website, and any change to the Visit Thanet microsite may affect future Visit Ramsgate website functionality and marketing priorities.

## **RAMSGATE HISTORY MAP**

- The group discussed the proposed Ramsgate History Map. The project has been developed by individuals linked with Friends of Spencer Square, including Dominic Murphy and Ian Shacklock, with Andy King involved in the web build. The estimated development cost is approximately £4,500 to £5,000.

- Members discussed whether the project should be progressed as a bespoke website or through an existing interactive map, heritage app or aggregated platform. Key issues include ownership, moderation, accuracy checking, ongoing maintenance and value for money. There may be future links with the museum redevelopment and wider interpretation of Ramsgate's history.
- Ms G Dempsey to research comparable platforms, including costs and annual maintenance fees, before the project is considered further.

#### **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:**

1. **Mrs R Smith and Ms G Dempsey to prepare a one-page report summarising barriers faced by small beach and open-space operators, including cost, bureaucracy and brief anonymous or illustrative operator examples, by the end of September 2026.**
2. **Following completion of the licensing report, Councillors Huxley and Crittenden to raise the concerns with Andreea Plant and Councillor Ruth Duckworth.**
3. **Ms G Dempsey to research existing interactive map, heritage app or aggregated platform technology in reference to the Ramsgate History Map, including costs, examples and annual maintenance requirements.**
4. **Councillor Ovenden to provide further updates on the museum redevelopment, stakeholder engagement and opportunities to include wider Ramsgate stories.**
5. **Ms G Dempsey to continue organising HAF summer activities, including provider availability, tide constraints, risk assessments and TDC permissions, and to escalate any delivery issues to councillors if required.**
6. **Mrs R Smith to liaise with Andrew Kelly regarding the Augustine Camino route and opportunities for Ramsgate.**
7. **Mrs R Smith to pursue resolution of fallen trees, overgrowth and access issues affecting the Augustine Camino / Public Rights of Way route, including contacting Paul Valek at KCC.**
8. **Mrs R Smith to investigate the possibility of a pilgrimage marker stone near St Augustine's Church or another appropriate location.**
9. **Miss K Kelley to research the stamp/passport trail concept, including possible participating venues, how similar schemes operate and indicative costs for bespoke stamps.**
10. **Mrs R Smith and the working group to develop the Ramsgate Gothic idea further, including possible October timing and links to architecture, smuggling, gothic culture and seasonal activity.**
11. **Mrs R Smith and relevant partners to continue exploring a future harbour heritage event or festival concept, ensuring it is positive, accessible and broader than war commemoration alone.**
12. **Ms G Dempsey, Miss K Kelley and the working group to review existing trails and visitor content, including noticeboard wording, QR code links and "Ramsgate in a Day" style itineraries.**
13. **Miss K Kelley and Mrs R Smith to continue separating visitor information from the Town Council website and directing users to Visit Ramsgate as the main visitor platform.**
14. **Councillor Huxley and Mrs R Smith to check the position on the Visit Thanet microsite and any implications for Visit Ramsgate promotion or website functionality.**

#### **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Visit Ramsgate Working Group is scheduled for **Thursday 14th January 2027 from 10am to 12 noon.**

The Chair closed the meeting at 11:40am.