

What's your name?

Dr Emma Barrowcliffe

Tell us about yourself, your family, and where you live

We live locally in Ramsgate and our son who is eight attends a local Ramsgate school. My partner (Mark) and I relocated here from Yorkshire, although I miss the folks up north, after enjoying endless sunshine here in Ramsgate we haven't looked back. Whilst working at the campsite I also completed a PhD in Forensic Psychology at the University of Kent.

What's your business/where do you work?

Nethercourt Touring Park is a small family run campsite only a mile from Ramsgate town centre, beach and the only royal harbour in the country. Originally our grounds formed part of the gardens for the grand Nethercourt House. Nethercourt House was utilised as a hospital during WWI and it is believed that the campsite is situated above tunnels used in the war.

How did you get started?

The campsite has been in my family for approximately 20 years and Mark and I took over around 14 years ago. I have had a variety of jobs predominantly centred around the wellbeing of others such as working in mental health and working with young people with additional needs. Running a campsite was a huge change for both of us but is very rewarding.

What do you love about your job?

I'm not sure there is enough space to tell you about all the great aspects of working at Nethercourt Touring Park. Running a campsite is such a varied job. I love the fact that each day is different and there is no such thing as a typical day in the 'office'. We predominantly work outdoors amongst the wildlife such as the Green Indian Parakeets, squirrels, birds, butterflies and the naughty fox who steal shoes, I am in the fresh air everyday and the Ramsgate sunshine is amazing! We are so lucky that Thanet has its own micro climate. I get to meet people from all over the UK and the world which is fantastic. We have made some great friends both locally and we have regular campers/friends who visit us from all over the world such as Australia, France, Germany, The Netherlands, and campers who regularly drive down from Carlisle, it is like having an huge extended family.

What is the most important thing you do?

It has been said that I am a chatterbox and I love to talk so I really enjoy meeting people, making them feel welcome and showcasing the local area. Many of our guests are first time visitors to Thanet and are not aware of what the area has to offer and its hidden secret gems. Therefore a lot of my time is spent welcoming people, ensuring I am up to date with local events and that we have plenty of tourist information on display.

How do you feel about being shortlisted for Thanet Tourism Superstar?

WOW!!! I was really surprised and very proud to find out that I had been shortlisted. I am very grateful to everyone who took the time to vote for me and hopefully by promoting the local area we can continue to put Thanet on the map as a superb visitor destination.

What makes you proud of Thanet?

Thanet has so much to offer!!! I could go on all day about all of the different attractions in the area and visitors are sure to find something which takes their fancy. Being a parent what I think is great about Thanet are the variety of free events. It can get particularly expensive entertaining children during the school holidays but both locals and visitors can enjoy many events for free. For example, there are plenty of Summer fetes and parades, Ramsgate has Lark in the Park, various events in Ellington Park, and Broadstairs has some great food festivals, and free firework events during the Summer months. Our visitors are certainly impressed by Thanet's 15 sandy beaches and bays (with 7 of them having blue flag status) and many have learnt to surf at one of the many surf schools in the area. The Viking Cycle Trail is a great way to explore Thanet on foot or by bicycle and the walk from Ramsgate to Margate was recently voted as one of the top 100 walks in the UK. For music lovers Thanet has plenty of music festivals from the Folk Festival in Broadstairs to the Contra Pop Festival held on Ramsgate beach. In terms of history we have some really great museums such as the Spitfire and Hurricane Museum, the RAF museum, Dickens House, Pugin's House, Shell Grotto and St. Augustine's Church. For art lovers Margate has the Turner Contemporary art gallery, and both Ramsgate and Margate have lots of smaller independent galleries with some great pieces. Ramsgate War Tunnels are definitely worth a visit and Ramsgate Costumed Walks are brilliant and help to bring Thanet's history to life by 'meeting' some of the famous people who have lived here or visited Thanet (e.g., King George IV, Princess Victoria, Elizabeth Fry, and Vincent Van Gogh). I love the fact that Thanet has something for everyone both for the young and young at heart to enjoy such as the

Micro Museum in Ramsgate, Dreamland and adventure golf. When visitors have finished their lazy day on the beach or visiting the attractions who can resist sitting outside one of the great brassieres alongside Ramsgate harbour and watching the boats bobbing about on the water, or watching the twinkling Christmas lights in December.

Thanet also has great transportation links which make it easy for people to get around the main towns with the Loop Bus running every 7-9 minutes and the Open Top Bus provides great coastal views. Ramsgate town centre is approximately a mile away from the campsite and can be reached via a leisurely and beautiful walk along the esplanade. Thanet itself has so much to offer but is also well placed for other great locations. For example, Nethercourt Touring Park is approximately a quarter of a mile away from Ramsgate train station where it takes around 20 minutes to get to Canterbury or an hour and 15 minutes to the centre of London. Thanet has so much to offer and I am proud to both live here and promote the area in the UK, to our European neighbours, and as far afield as Australia. In short, Thanet has great weather, a variety of attractions for the young and young at heart and overall there is something for everyone here in Thanet.

Give an example of how you have made a real difference to a customer's experience promoting Thanet as a destination to come back to.

I love to make a difference to people's lives and as always this year has been an eventful year. I can't specifically comment as to how I may have made a specific difference to a camper's experience, but I know that many of our campers have had an impact on me. The majority of our campers come back year after year and sometimes multiple times in a year so I guess we must be doing something right :-). We also try to make a difference to the lives of others, we offer a book exchange to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support and Water Aid and this year we also wanted to make a difference to local people and so we collected shower products and food for the local homeless shelters. Many people who arrive in Thanet do so thinking it will just be a one night stop off but actually when they delve into the tourist information they find that Thanet has so much to offer and there is something for everyone.