

Tides & Tales

Maritime Community Project

(Registered Number: 772195)

Annual Report for 2025

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Introduction

This is the Annual Report of the Tides & Tales Maritime Community Project for 2025. It reflects a year of progress, collaboration, and significant achievements in our mission to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the culture and economic potential of our unique maritime community.

Highlights

We had several highlights this year. In January we launched our new website which was funded by the Heritage Council and allowed the project to provide a number of enhancements including a cleaner look to the site, www.tidesandtales.ie. This included improved search engine optimisation (SEO), increased search facilities, categorisation of site content, retail facilities and donations. In March we received funding from the Local Authorities Water Programme (LAWPRO) which allowed us to employ an outside consultant to develop a five-year strategic plan which was launched in December. In November we reached a milestone of 500 blog stories published on our site. Over the summer we were announced as County Finalists (Heritage) in the National Lottery Good Causes Awards.

Our key task is about recovering and preserving the untold stories, and the traditions and skills of our shared past so that it remains vibrant and relevant for future generations. 2025 represented another positive year in that goal.

Strategic Plan

In 2025 we were successful in submitting a funding application to LAWPro through their catchment support fund. From this we received funding of €5000 to complete our first 5 year strategic plan.

The Board had previously identified a local consultant to work with the project, but this person had to withdraw due to illness. The Board were fortunate indeed to secure the services of another local consultant to work with us; Joanne Galvin of MCX Training & Consultancy.

Joanne worked with the team to review the previous action plan, clarify and enhance the Mission and Objectives and set out clear actions to bring the project forward to 2029.



L-R Bernadette Guest HO Waterford City & County Council, Damien McLellan, Walter Foley, Deena Bible, Andrew Doherty, Breda Murphy, Eoghan Hegarty and Mags Morrissey of LAWPro – Photo courtesy of Glynis Currie

In December the plan was launched at Faithlegg National School and a general invite was made via our usual channels including postering. Following the launch the plan was made available on the website.

The Website in 2025

Our new website funded by the Heritage Council was officially launched in January by Bernadette Guest Heritage Officer, Waterford City & County Council. The upgrade enhanced search engine optimisation (SEO), increased search facilities, categorisation of site content, retail facilities and donations.

42 stories were published on the website this year. These included individual pieces of research, collaborations, guest blog posts, significant project milestones, book reviews and links to other relevant work that we were either directly responsible for, or is relevant to, our community.

Reach of the blog

The blog has reached over 50,000 views this year.

Readership of the top stories included “Lime Kilns, Silent Killers” 2,231 and “Millstone Quarries of the Harbour” 1,546. Also in our top 10 stories this year was “Faithlegg House – A history”, “From Oar to Engine - 900 years of the Passage to Ballyhack ferry” and our April Fools post – “Barrow Railway Bridge revived”

Three local interest stories were also included: Almost 700 views on “Stephen Whitty Sails to War” followed closely by “Captain Jim Murphy turns 80” and “Pat Murphy Cheekpoint”

Active users numbered 30,591. We had 1.65 views per active users. Average engagement time per active user was 1m 13s and we had an Event count of 148,878

Top three countries as viewers were Ireland 13,500, USA 4,815 and UK 2,881.

Canada, Australia were in the top 10 countries as were Germany, France and Spain. Canadian viewers spent the most time as an average at 1m 46 seconds- 5 seconds more than Irish readers.



Launching the website in January 2025

Queries we have dealt with this year

Tides & Tales receives a wide variety of queries to our page, social media channels and email. In an effort to manage this as a voluntary body, we have set up a query function on our website and are also seeking a financial contribution to the tasks often requested of us. This year 165 queries were listed as requiring follow up.

Channel	Approx. Count.	Percentage
Email	65	41%
Facebook Messenger	25	16%
Phone	22	14%
Website Contact Form	14	9%
WhatsApp	10	6%
In Person	8	5%
Post (Letters)	2	1%
Other / Mixed	15	9%

Overview of query themes

Maritime + Genealogy account for 56% of all contacts

Local history + events contribute another 22%

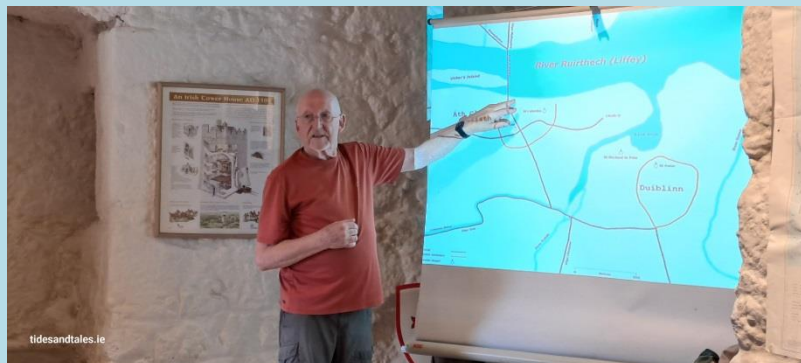
Environment & heritage infrastructure make up the remainder

These can be further broken down as follows;

Theme / Topic	Percentage	Notes
Maritime History & Ships	32%	Vessel identification, shipwrecks, tugs, lighters, schooners, Portlairge, Great Western, Moresby shout, Elvira Camino
Family History / Genealogy	24%	Graves, Powers, Meade's, Faithlegg families, U.S./Canada queries, etc.
Local History & Places	15%	Ballyhack, Duncannon, Geneva Barracks, emigration mural, quays, histories, place names.
Academic/Research Support	8%	SETU students, heritage audits, researchers, navigation queries.
Talks, Lectures & Events	7%	Probus, WAHS, Dunhill, Heritage Week, schools, story-telling.
Media, Publications & Images	7%	News & Star, Munster Express, photo requests, blog permissions, documentary input.
Environmental / Walks	5%	LAWPRO, Camino, walking routes, planning/environment issues
Other Queries	2%	Miscellaneous Campervan etiquette, tourism notes, unusual finds referrals.

Walks/Talks and other related activities

Sixteen walks or talks (and one bus tour!) were facilitated by the project this year reaching an estimated 670 people



Damien McLellan leading a workshop for Heritage Week 2025 at Ballyhack Castle.

These included events for Heritage Week (3), Julian Walton's series of Historical Talks in Dunhill, Probus, Waterford Sports Partnership, Board Failte, Office of Public Works, W C & Co Council, HSE, Explore Carrick on Suir, Booze, Blaas 'n Banter, Waterford Treasures and Waterford Archaeological & Historical Society.

Six events were declined due to inability to find time – alternative speakers/leaders were offered where possible.

The Millstone Quarries of the Harbour article was taken up by the Mills and Millers of Ireland and featured in their quarterly newsletter – Grist to the Mill. This in turn was taken up by International Molinology (IM) Journal - No. 111 December 2025.

Tales of the Estuary, a play based on original work by Breda Murphy and Andrew Doherty was performed to four sold-out shows in Faithlegg and Passage East in the spring. This was restaged in the summer with four more sold-out performances.

We made a submissions to both the Kilkenny Heritage Strategy in May and a submission to Wexford County Council on a new Heritage Plan for the county in August.

Kilkenny County Council published the report on the Blackwater River from our work on the Pill Placename. <https://kilkennyheritage.ie/2025/02/the-blackwater-co-kilkenny-pill-placename-associations/>

An article featuring the project was published in the July edition of the *Marine Times* newspaper followed by a piece by Tom MacSweeney on Tides & Tales in the August edition.

We provided details to Ruby Hegarty of the *Sunday Times* about the history of Cheekpoint Quay.

The project featured in the local newspapers of *Munster Express* and *News & Star* several times this year including for Heritage Week, *Tales of the Estuary*, various maritime related articles and each paper published pieces from the project for their Christmas supplements.

Rural Tourism

The project continued to promote the locality this year both by its website content and social media posts. This was amplified by contributions to two podcasts.

We also participated in the Estuary Cluster of the Rural Tourism Network meetings, hosted a tour of the Estuary area in May and attended similar events/ learning journey's elsewhere in the county which included media coverage both local and national.

We recorded an advert for Visit Waterford on WLR in March. The piece promoted the estuary and the maritime history Waterford and was broadcast over a 6 week period daily on WLR FM.

Updated links page with new information on local tourism offerings and developed an outline of what Tides & Tales could contribute.

River Health

The project has had a long term interest and investment in removing marine litter from the local foreshore. This year we began weighing the material gathered. We also tried to extend this element of our work by linking in with agencies such as Waterford Council, EPA, An Taisce Clean Coasts, Irish Ocean Literacy Network, Local Authorities Water Programme and An Taisce Green Schools.

We participated in the Tidy Towns litter pick 16th Feb and brought up 8 bags of rubbish with a total of 43 KG from the foreshore. We also participated in National Spring Clean day with local Tidy Towns – 5 bags of rubbish removed from local foreshore weighing 30kg of waste. At the end of the summer 46 kg of waste was collected and left at Cross Roads for collection.

In October we carried out a marine litter workshop with 5th Class of Faithlegg NS, supervised by their teacher and classroom assistant. This event focused on environmental awareness raising and identifying where litter comes from. 42kg of litter was collected and we had a follow up session with Ella Ryan of Waterford Council on Nov 25th to discuss their achievement and consider how to prevent such waste getting into the environment. We had interest from Ballyhack NS to do likewise and will look at ways of extending this in 2026.

We promoted a new Citizen Science project starting at Dunhill. The project will focus on Water Conservation, with a component of Citizen Science in Water Quality Monitoring, a strong educational aspect on Water Issues and what actions we can take in our daily lives. They later setup a Citizen Scientists group to lead the project further and we continued to promote the action and provided an input on our own work to the group in September at Dunhill.

We completed a survey for the Irish Ocean Literacy Network – seeking submissions on local activism and how this could be strengthened and supported

Radio/TV/Podcast

We featured in two podcasts this year -

1. Digging into Waterford. Clare Busher-O'Sullivan, Manager, Visit Waterford – asked us to participate in a podcast series to celebrate Waterford's History

2. Waterford 1111 podcast conducted by Tom MacSweeney to celebrate the Port of Waterford

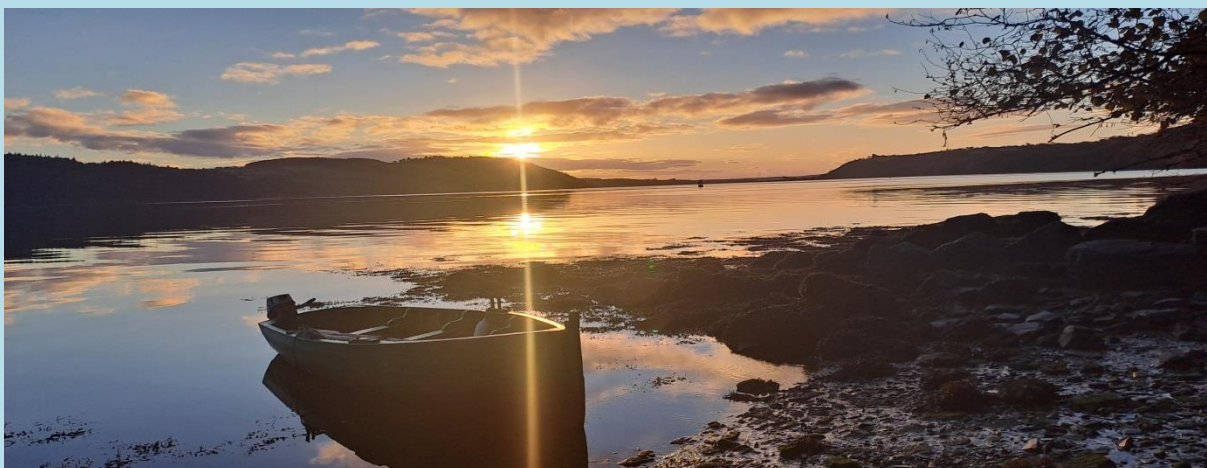
Responded to requests for information from Cormorant Films/TG4 co production called Cois Siúire, TG4 query on Blueshirts at Passage East and TG4 seeking info on Gaultier area and a farming dispute.

Social Media

The project has 6,428 Facebook followers, 325 YouTube Subscribers (up from 140 in 2024) and 275 videos uploaded. We also use Blue Sky, currently with 292 followers. In 2024 we set up a new Mail Chimp subscriber email system. This currently stands at 267 subscribers +47 on last year. The project also runs a national Facebook site – Ireland's Maritime Heritage providing a space for the wider sharing of nationwide maritime focused information and appealing to a wider readership. This site currently has 2,700+ subscribers and includes many of our national institutions as members. These include National Monuments Service, Commissioners of Irish Lights, National Maritime Museum of Ireland, INFOMAR, National Museum of Ireland and numerous local and regional groups.

Conclusion

We look forward to continuing our work into 2026 and especially establishing the project, until now dependent on enthusiastic but voluntary effort, on a more permanent and sustainable basis.



Tides & Tales Maritime Community Project CLG 2025