



# Suir Local: Carrick-on-Suir

Suir Local was a workshop event organised by the South Tipperary County Council Heritage Office between the Interface Studio and the local community in Carrick-on-Suir. The group was involved in two workshops; 'Write a story,' and 'find a place, map a journey, explore a possibility' as a way of expressing observations of Carrick-on-Suir and the potentials for improvement.

**A summary of the community participation workshop held at Ormande Castle on the 5th July 2011**

*Lucy Tauber , 9th July 2011*

*Suir Local: Carrick-on-Suir*



# comments and observations

historic heritage

river management and navigation

biodiversity on the Suir

sport, leisure and tourism

accessing the River

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# historic heritage

The historic importance of Carrick-on-Suir: its fishing, trade, boat building, navigational and basket making heritage was revealed during the workshop.

Although Ormonde Castle is the only Tudor castle in Ireland, there are a lack of visitors which means its full potential has not been realised. There medieval town wall is significant but Carrick-on-Suir is not yet part of the Irish Walled Town Network and as such is not eligible for funding from the Heritage Council. The wall plays a large part in the identity of Carrick-on-Suir and is another heritage and tourism resource and needs to be developed.

There are concerns about the dereliction and potential loss of historic buildings, monuments and the pathways including the tow path and the historic navigation. There are concerns about access to the wall of the navigation cut.

Carrick-on-Suir is particularly proud of the shallow, flat bottomed boats “cots” which are specific to the town and were built locally for snap-net fishing. This type of fishing was stopped in 2005, and was reintroduced on 1st July of 2011.

There is an historic towing path in Carrick-on-Suir and there are concerns about it eroding and being washed away.



# accessing the River

The proposed Butler Trail is a good existing asset for Carrick-on-Suir. The towpath in general is overgrown which makes the walk from Kilsheelan to Carrick difficult. There is considered to be a lack of public shared green space along the river close to town and the land in the flood plain owned by the council is being under-utilised. There are also land ownership issues which affects traditional access routes adjacent to the River.



# river management and navigation

Concerns were expressed about erosion to the bank and the impact that this would have on the towpath.

There are currently no signs or ways marked on the River so people travelling by boat are unaware of the navigation channel particularly near the Marina. This problem with navigation is mainly caused by the fact that the buoys are not being reliably maintained.

The river has been recently charted by Edmund Connolly.

There has been a substantial decrease in salmon fishing and old fishing rights seem to be under dispute. There is also a problem with flooding and drainage, and the loss of the eels may be an indicator of the need for a review of the river management.

There is objection to the fish counter proposed by Inland Fisheries Ireland as the planning application and materials delivered to the site gave the impression of being large and imposing and that the fish counter as initially proposed would prohibit navigation by boat.

There were many discussions about the tide, the point where the river becomes tidal, as well as the navigation routes.



# biodiversity on the Suir

There is considerable concern for local indigenous wildlife on the Suir, and about non-indigenous coarse fish, such as lurch, bream, perch taking over the waterways, and the protection of the biodiversity of the area.

There has been a substantial decrease in the number of salmon in the River and stocks need to be addressed.

There has been a loss of local biodiversity such as insects, crayfish, freshwater crabs, frogs, grasshopper, otters and eels which is also a concern. Angling is seen as having particular potential that is not being sufficiently exploited.



## **sport, leisure and tourism**

The history of the river could be promoted for tourism, and the tow path between Clonmel and Carrick-on-Suir could play an important role in this.

There are concerns about the number of visitors to Carrick-on-Suir which is low in comparison to its neighbouring towns such as Cahir, Cashel, Waterford and Clonmell.

The general consensus is that people could to be encouraged to experience the river in Carrick-on-Suir more and that this should be an attraction.



# ideas and suggestions for Carrick-on-Suir



- The cut stone wall opposite to the castle on the Waterford side and the towing navigation cut which dates back to the 1760's and gave access into the town for bigger boats should be listed and protected. The wall structure should be turned into a memorial to celebrate the River Suir and Carrick-on-Suir's heritage.
- The height of the wall surrounding the well needs to be replaced with glass, so that people can see inside it without standing on tip toes.
- Some quay walls need repairing as they are currently derelict and overgrown.
- Cracks on the piers of the old bridge need to be repaired.
- A community group needs to be set up to get the Carrick-on-Suir included within the Irish Wall Town Network so that it is eligible for funding by the Heritage Council.
- There needs to be more access introduced through walkways to connect roads with the existing tow path.
- Tow path needs to be protected from erosion and reinstated.
- Tow paths could be developed for walkers and/or cyclists.
- The amenity associated with the navigation is central to the town and could be turned into a public park.
- There needs to be some limited, subtle signage on the tow path.
- The river navigation needs to be maintained and the existing and remaining buoys protected.
- The ownership of the buoys needs to be confirmed and a maintenance plan set up to protect the navigation.
- There needs to be an increase in hotel accommodation to service a tourist community
- Horse-drawn boat trips could help increase tourism.
- Tourists are not aware of the towpath on the North Side. It is part of the hikers walk (East Munster Way) so hikers may be aware however it is not signposted or maintained sufficiently.

- There needs to be improved access and parking for cars and coaches near the Castle.
- Angling competitions could bring tourism and bring an economy to the area.
- There needs to be a maintenance plan to take care of the ecosystem on the River banks- making sure trimming is done outside of bird nesting season (1st March- 31st August) and that chemical sprays are not used- by either the council or local landowners adjacent to the river.
- The spawning grounds, the nurseries, need to be cleaned up properly to support an increase in the numbers of fish. The nurseries are further up the river system. The first of the nurseries systems starts at Coolnamuck, beyond the tidal line.
- Potentially the introduction of a wetlands area would be helpful for reintroducing local biodiversity.
- Reinstating the wetlands would help improve the drainage.
- Indigenous species need protecting and a solution found for the course fish that were introduced to the river.
- Invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan Balsam need to be addressed.

**Please note:**

The preceding information is taken directly from the workshops and may include some inconsistencies or factual errors. The ideas, suggestions and possibilities are quoted directly from the comments made by Participants in the Lay of the Land workshops.

They should not read as the opinion of South Tipperary County Council or of the Interface Studio.

Ideas are listed systematically and are not listed in order of importance, nor do they represent any technical or financial review. It is hoped that the information and ideas are useful in taking forward discussions of the many opportunities of the River Suir and its tributaries.

The Lay of the Land was made possible by the support and funding from South Tipperary County Council as part of the EU INTERREG IVC Waterways Forward Project funded under the European Regional Development Fund and by the time and generosity of local people. The Suir River Café was part funded by the Heritage Council under the County Heritage Plan programme.

We wish also to thank the OPW for allowing us to use Ormonde Castle for the event

with many thanks,

Labhaoise McKenna (for South Tipperary County Council) and Lucy Tauber and Pat Brown (for the Landscape Interface Studio)

July 2011

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