

Media Release: 13 May 2025 : Record-breaking entry for Stranraer SkiffieWorlds 2025

- 79 clubs register to compete in World Championship of St Ayles class of coastal rowing
- Stranraer SkiffieWorlds will be the largest ever gathering of St Ayles skiffs, with 79 hand-built boats and an expected 2000+ rowers taking part
- International regatta with six days of racing expected to draw thousands of spectators to Stranraer in July

Stranraer is preparing to host the largest gathering of St Ayles coastal rowing boats in history this summer, as a record-breaking 79 rowing clubs registering to compete in SkiffieWorlds 2025.

Taking place from 6-12 July more than 2,000 rowers are expected to compete as the triennial world championship event returns to Stranraer following its highly successful debut in the town in 2019. The record number of entries underscores Stranraer's growing reputation as a world-class water sports destination.

Wendi Cuffe, Trustee of Stranraer Water Sports Association (SWSA), said:

"We are thrilled with the interest in SkiffieWorlds 2025. To be hosting the largest ever gathering of St Ayles skiffs is testament to both the growing popularity of coastal rowing worldwide and Stranraer's growing reputation as an exceptional venue for water sports events.

"Teams from across four continents will be arriving in our town this July, with rowers travelling from as far as Australia, USA, Canada, and South Africa, alongside several teams from the Netherlands and a strong contingent from across the UK and Ireland.

"The response has exceeded all our expectations and reinforces Stranraer's position as a premier destination for major water sports events. We look forward to welcoming competitors and spectators alike to what promises to be an extraordinary celebration of coastal rowing."

The St Ayles skiff is a four-oared rowing boat with a cox, designed to be built by the communities that race them.

Topher Dawson of Scottish Coastal Rowing, commented:

"The St Ayles skiff movement began in Scotland 15 years ago with the aim of reconnecting communities with their coastal heritage through boat building and rowing. To see it grow into a global phenomenon with the largest ever gathering taking place in Stranraer is remarkable.

"What makes Stranraer such a perfect venue is the combination of Loch Ryan's sheltered waters and the town's exceptional hospitality. The long beach is a perfect place for the colourful club gazebos and launching skiffs, and the quiet traffic free promenade backed by Agnew Park allows easy access to the town. Skiff rowers were delighted in 2019 by the warm welcome from Stranraer residents.

"After the outstanding success of SkiffieWorlds 2019, rowers from around the world have been eager to return. The record number of entries for 2025 speaks volumes about Stranraer's standing within the international coastal rowing community."

The championship will be a spectator-friendly event with excellent viewing opportunities along the waterfront. Big screens displaying live drone footage and professional commentary will enhance the experience for visitors, allowing them to follow the action throughout the six days of racing. Beyond the competitive rowing, SkiffieWorlds 2025 will feature a shoreside festival in scenic Agnew Park. The festival will include live music, family activities, an artisan market, theatre performances, a wellbeing hub, nature-based activities and circus workshops. The full festival programme will be published in June.

Councillor Maureen Johnstone, Chair of the Education, Skills and Community Wellbeing Committee, said:

"The record-breaking entry for SkiffieWorlds 2025 is excellent news for Stranraer and the wider region. When the championship was last held here in 2019, it generated between £3.5 million and £4 million for the local economy. With even more participants this time, we anticipate an even greater economic impact. This event showcases the best of what Dumfries and Galloway has to offer on the international stage. The Council is proud to support this community-led initiative that brings such significant benefits to our area."

Jane Morrison-Ross, Chief Executive of South of Scotland Enterprise, added:

"The transformation of Stranraer into a world-class water sports destination represents community-led regeneration in action. SkiffieWorlds 2025 is set to be a landmark event that puts Stranraer firmly on the global map.

"South of Scotland Enterprise is delighted to support this important event and the ongoing development of waterfront facilities, including the new Water Sports Hub currently under construction. These investments will have a lasting impact on Stranraer's economy, creating opportunities for visitors and residents alike long after the championship concludes."

SkiffieWorlds 2025 is hosted by Stranraer Water Sports Association on behalf of St Ayles Skiff International. It is supported by funding from Dumfries and Galloway Council, EventScotland, South of Scotland Enterprise, Kilgallioch Community Fund and The Galloway Association of Glasgow. The headline sponsor of the event is EcoGen.

While construction of the new £6.7m Water Sports Hub will be ongoing during the event, SWSA has worked closely with contractors to ensure minimal disruption to both the championship and regular activities.

For more information about SkiffieWorlds 2025 visit www.skiffieworlds2025.co.uk