

SKIFFIEWORLDS 2025 EVENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT

FINAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2025



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Executive Summary

SkiffieWorlds 2025, held in Stranraer from July 6th to 12th 2025, has established itself as an exemplary international coastal rowing event with significant positive impacts across economic, social, and community dimensions. This independent evaluation demonstrates how the event successfully balanced competitive sport with inclusive community engagement, delivering substantial benefits to participants, spectators, and local businesses.

Event Participation and Economic Impact

The event attracted 3,882 crew members representing 79 teams from around the world, including teams from South Africa, Australia, USA, Canada, Holland, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland. The event was supported by over 200 volunteers and officials, and drew at least 25,000 spectators. This impressive attendance generated a direct economic impact of £3,124,836, which expands to £5,155,979 when including indirect and multiplier effects. The economic benefits were broadly distributed:

- **Participants** spent an average of £386 per person per trip, generating £1,744,836
- **Visitors** contributed approximately £1,380,000 to the local economy
- **Local businesses** reported an average uplift in trade of £8,400
- **Trading businesses** at the event averaged £3,500 in revenue

The event's economic significance extends beyond the immediate period, with 41% of participants expressing interest in future events in Stranraer and 13% of non-watersports participants indicating increased likelihood of trying watersports activities.

Key Success Factors

Several elements contributed to the event's exceptional reception, where over 80% of both participants and visitors rated it as "Excellent":

- **Organisation and Planning:** The seamless operation, clear communication, and professional management were consistently praised, even during weather-related disruptions.
- **Community Engagement:** The strong involvement of local residents, businesses, and volunteers created a welcoming atmosphere that enhanced the experience for international visitors.
- **Venue Selection:** Loch Ryan proved ideal for competitive rowing—offering sheltered waters, ample racing space, proximity to town amenities, and scenic beauty.
- **Technological Innovation:** Live drone footage, GPS tracking, big screens, and professional commentary significantly enhanced the spectator experience.
- **Inclusivity:** The event successfully catered to all ages, abilities, and backgrounds through diverse programming, free activities, and accessible facilities.
- **Festival Atmosphere:** The addition of live music, wellness activities, craft markets, and family entertainment transformed a sporting competition into a comprehensive cultural experience.

Areas for Development

Despite overwhelming positive feedback, several themes relating to opportunities for improvement emerged from the comments, not all of which are actionable:

- **Accommodation Capacity:** The limited local accommodation was stretched beyond capacity, suggesting need for more hotels, hostels, group lodgings, and improved campsite facilities. It is understood that this is currently being addressed through capital projects like the George Hotel bunkhouse.
- **Spectator Experience:** Positioning races closer to shore or adding grandstands would enhance viewing opportunities, complemented by improved camera angles and coverage. Although it is understood that the race lane positions were determined by water depth.
- **Facilities Enhancement:** More diverse and affordable food options, additional water refill stations, improved toilet/shower facilities, and better waste management would improve the experience.
- **Information Flow:** More consistent, multi-channel updates before and during the event would benefit participants and spectators, particularly those less active on social media.
- **Trading Experience:** While most traders reported positive outcomes, better promotion of the market marquee, improved ventilation, and reconsideration of stall fees could enhance this aspect. Although it is understood that the experience of traders in the marquee would have been adversely affected by unusually warm weather.

Long-Term Legacy and Recommendations

SkiffieWorlds 2025 has clearly positioned Stranraer and Loch Ryan as premier destinations for watersports, with significant potential for future development.

The following themes for future development emerged from the comments, not all of which are practically deliverable, and some of which are already underway:

- **Infrastructure Investment:** Develop permanent changing facilities, showers, toilets, and boat launching infrastructure to support year-round watersports activities. Already addressed through the Water Sports Hub build.
- **Accommodation Development:** Encourage expansion of diverse lodging options to accommodate future events without displacing visitors to distant locations. Already happening through the George Hotel development.
- **Event Portfolio Expansion:** Consider hosting additional watersports competitions and community events throughout the year to maintain momentum and economic benefits. Already in progress, for example the Scottish Fin & Foil Championships are now a growing yearly event on Loch Ryan co-hosted by SWSA.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Integrate stronger eco-friendly practices in future events, including improved recycling, sustainable transport options, and energy efficiency.

The overwhelming feedback from all stakeholders confirms that SkiffieWorlds 2025 achieved its aims of hosting a world-class sporting event while delivering substantial community benefits. The combination of Stranraer's natural advantages, strong local engagement, and professional event management created an exceptional experience that serves as a model for similar international sporting festivals.

Stranraer is well-positioned to build on this success and further establish itself as a premier destination for coastal watersports events with international appeal.

For future events, maintaining strong community engagement, continuing to invest in infrastructure and skills, and embracing sustainable growth will be essential to maximising both local benefits and international event excellence.

Introduction

SkiffieWorlds 2025 was held in Stranraer from 6th – 12th July 2025. The event attracted 3,882 crew members representing 79 teams from around the world, including teams from South Africa, Australia, USA, Canada, Holland, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland. The event was supported by over 200 volunteers and officials, and drew at least 25,000 spectators.

This report presents an independent evaluation of the event and is based on a post event survey of a sample of (1) participants (2) visitors (3) trading businesses at the event and (4) local businesses in and around Stranraer.

The Participant Survey

A survey of participants and their supporters was carried out to ascertain the impact of their attendance on the local economy. It also helps demonstrate the ‘success factors’ and ‘lessons learned’ to support the development of future events.

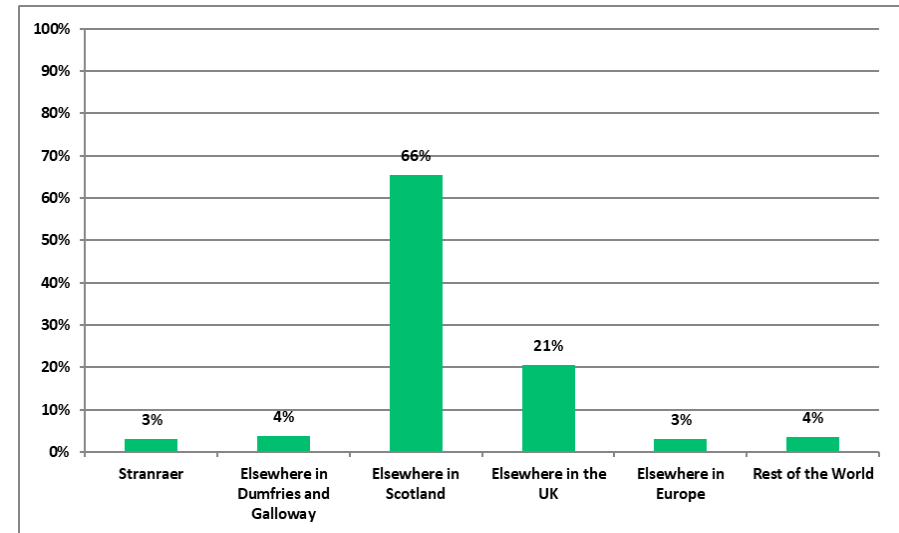
The online survey was conducted after the event and participants were contacted directly by the organisers to gain their feedback on the event.

In total 656 participants completed the online survey. 656 completed surveys from a total estimated population of 3,882 competitors gives a level of accuracy at the 90% confidence level of $\pm 2.9\%$.

It should be noted that this sample represents 17% of the entire population of participants and therefore is not fully representative of all those who participated and supported the event. Successfully achieving 656 quality responses can allow an insight into the views of participants and their supporters however it should be noted that the results are not reflective of the entire population of participants.

The following table shows the origin of responding participants and their supporters. It shows that the majority of the respondents were from ‘Elsewhere in Scotland’ and a sizeable number (almost 30%) were from outside Scotland.

Where do you normally live?

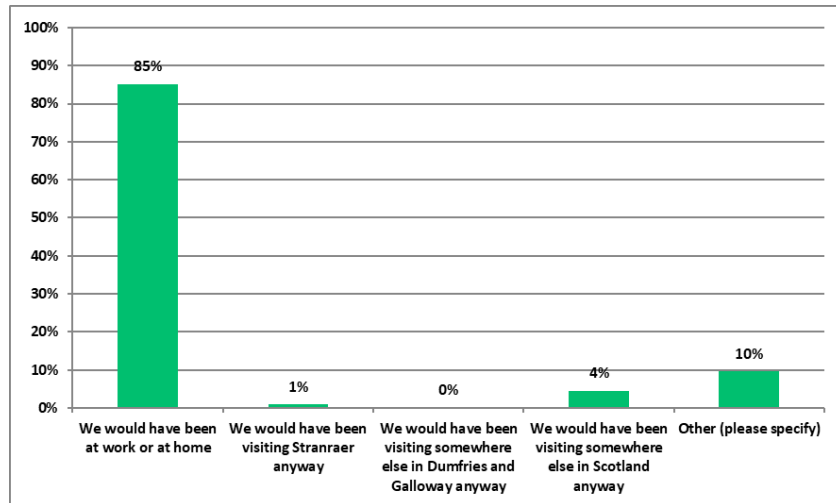


SkiffieWorlds 2025: Event Impact Report

The survey asked how many supporters were travelling with the event participants, and this found there were 0.37 supporters for every one participant. This suggests that the 3,882 participants attracted an additional 1,436 team supporters, or 5,318 participating crew and support members.

The following figure shows that 85% respondents were in the area as a direct result of the event, in other words only 15% of respondents may have been visiting the area anyway.

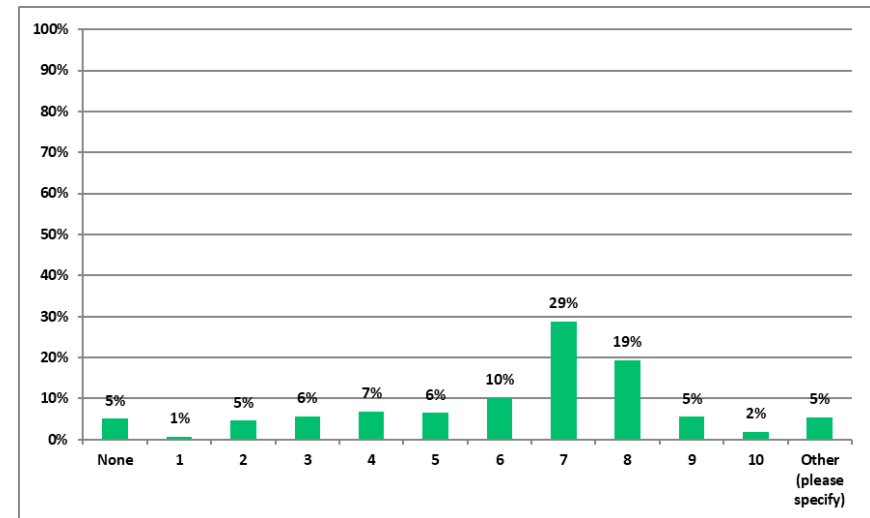
What would you have been doing if you were not participating and/or supporting at SkiffieWorlds 2025?



The figure below shows that most participants and their supporters were staying for between seven and eight nights as part of their trip to SkiffieWorlds 2025. In total, including the 'other' comments, there were estimated to be 4,025 bed nights from the responding participants.

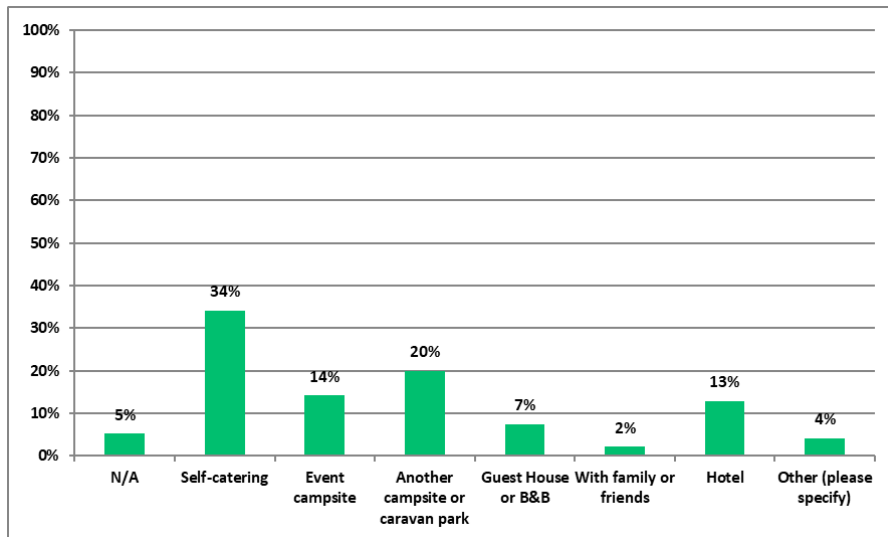
Assuming this was reflective of the entire population of staying participants/supporters (5,052) this suggests the average stay per person was 6.1 nights, which would equate to 30,817 generated bed nights as a result of SkiffieWorlds 2025.

How many nights did your party stay away from home as part of your trip to SkiffieWorlds?



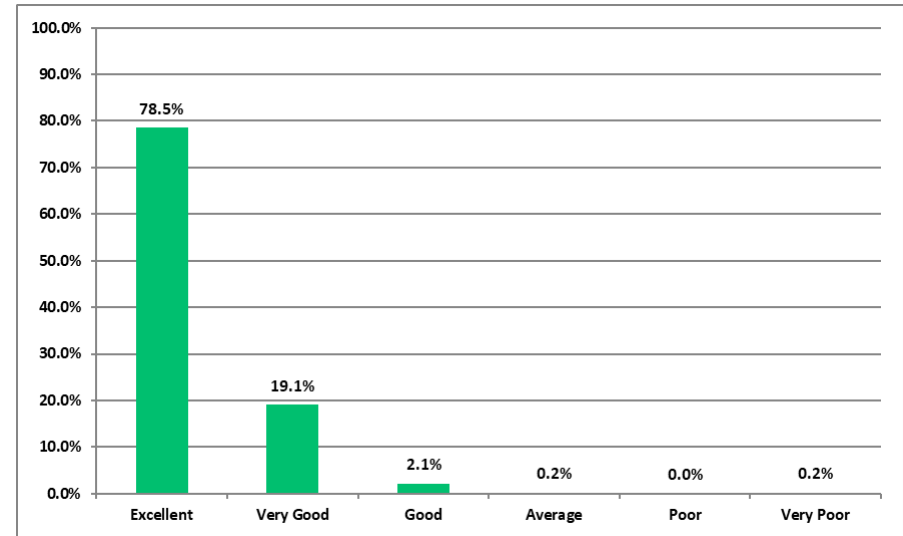
In terms of where participants and their supporters stayed, the following table shows that 34% stayed in self-catering accommodation, 20% in another campsite and 14% in the campsite provided by SkiffieWorlds. The other responses included yachts, motorhomes and mix of accommodation types. It should be noted again that these are reflective of the survey sample and not the actual number of participants staying in each accommodation type.

What type of accommodation did you stay in whilst visiting SkiffieWorlds?



The chart below illustrates that 79% of participants and supporters felt the event was ‘Excellent’ and 19% felt the event was ‘Very Good’.

How would you rate the quality of experience at the event?



The average spend for participants was £386 per person for the entire trip. Assuming an average spend per person of £386, this equates to a total expenditure of £2,052,748. Assuming 85% of this can be directly attributable to the event itself, this results in an economic impact of **£1,744,836**.

41% of respondents noted that they would like to be kept informed of future events organised by Stranraer Water Sports Association.

Respondents were asked what they particularly liked about SkiffieWorlds 2025.

Respondents overwhelmingly praised SkiffieWorlds 2025, highlighting excellent organisation, a friendly community spirit, and a vibrant festival atmosphere. Feedback reflects the event's success in delivering an inclusive, well-managed international coastal rowing competition with diverse activities for attendees, supporters, and local residents.

Central Themes and Key Points

1. Exceptional Organisation and Communication

- **Seamless Operations:** Despite weather-related disruptions, the event was managed smoothly, maintaining clear communication about schedule changes.
- **Efficient Logistics:** Well-planned site layout ensured everything (race area, amenities, entertainment) was in close proximity.
- **Excellent Facilities:** Regularly cleaned toilets, ample parking, easy access to water, spectator areas, and good campsite provisions.

2. Atmosphere and Community Spirit

- **Friendly & Welcoming:** The local Stranraer community, volunteers, and organising team were broadly recognised for their hospitality and helpfulness.
- **Camaraderie:** Strong sense of unity among rowers, clubs, and supporters from around the world.
- **Inclusive & Family Friendly:** Wide range of activities for all ages and non-rowers, from children's entertainment to wellness tents and cultural events.

3. Spectator Experience

- **Big Screens & Technology:** Multiple large screens displayed live drone footage, race trackers (GPS), and commentary, enabling engaging spectating and fostering excitement.
- **Professional Commentary:** Enhanced understanding and enjoyment of races.

4. Venue and Location

- **Amazing Setting:** Loch Ryan and Agnew Park provided a beautiful, compact, and accessible location conducive to both racing and festival activities.
- **Proximity:** Town centre, cafés, shops, and additional attractions were within easy walking distance.

5. Festival Feel and Entertainment

- **Activities for All:** Marquees offered live music, ceilidhs (traditional Scottish dances), yoga, craft fairs, and additional events.
- **Food & Stalls:** Broad selection of food vendors, pubs, and craft stalls received positive remarks.
- **Evening Socialising:** Nightly entertainment, well-being tents, and social events enhanced the communal experience.

6. Inclusivity and International Participation

- **Global Event:** Attendees celebrated the mix of international teams, promoting cultural exchange and friendship.
- **Community Involvement:** Local schools contributed art, and residents participated, making visitors feel part of the community.

7. Competition

- **Fair & High-Standard Racing:** Umpiring and course management were praised for fairness and professionalism.
- **Accessible for All Standards:** Both experienced and novice rowers felt supported and welcomed.

Participants were also asked what they thought could be improved about SkiffieWorlds in future.

The feedback reflects a wide range of experiences and priorities. Many suggestions reflect rapid event growth and increasing expectations, pointing toward opportunities for future hosts to maintain high standards while introducing incremental improvements.

Central Themes and Key Points

1. Event Location & Accommodation

- **Venue Preference:** Many praised Stranraer as an ideal location; some suggested trying new locations with similar qualities occasionally for variety.
- **Accommodation:** Heavy demand for accommodation near the event, suggestions included creating accommodation villages (like in Kortgene, Netherlands) and calls for shuttle buses between campsites and event site.

2. Spectator Experience & Event Layout

- **Proximity and Visibility:** People wanted the race lanes positioned closer to shore; suggestions include grandstands, better viewing points at start/finish lines, and spectator stands, especially near big screens.
- **Drone footage** and big screens were popular, but many wanted even better live coverage, with closer camera angles, higher quality footage, and more synchronised commentary.

3. Facilities & Amenities

- **Food & Beverages:** Requests for healthier choices and more variety, including vegetarian, vegan, and local produce. Increased coffee/tea outlets an **ice cream van**, extended service hours and breakfast options.
- **Water & Sanitation:** More water refill stations, especially near the beach. Improved toilet and shower facilities, and more recycling bins.

4. Event Organisation, Communication & Scheduling

- **Information Flow:** Participants wanted earlier, clearer, and more centralised communication before and during the event (e.g., via websites, WhatsApp

groups, digital noticeboards). Including more detailed, advance information about ceremonies, schedules, and event logistics.

- **Parking & Transport:** Calls for shuttle buses, and improved signage.

5. Racing Format, Classes & Fairness

- **Race Visibility & Formats:** Some advocated for different race formats (e.g., more buoy turns, shorter loops) to make races more engaging for spectators. Suggestions to have **more youth classes** (e.g., U18, U22, U26, and 70+ categories), and better recognition for junior and novice rowers.
- **Fairness & Standardisation:** Calls for tighter enforcement of **equipment standards** (boats/oars) to ensure fair competition. Suggestions for better training for umpires and clearer start procedures. Desire for standardised lane assignments for finals (e.g., fastest times in centre lanes).
- **Points and Scoring Systems:** Several found the points system for club rankings **confusing and lacking transparency**; requests for a simpler, clearer system. Some questioned crew composition rules and suggested stricter or clearer guidelines for club representation.

6. Technical/Operational Suggestions

- **Race Infrastructure:** Calls for improved **turning buoys** (colour, visibility, placement), start/finish line management, pontoons for easier launching, and better signage on the beach. More robust tracking systems and clearer race/crew identification graphics on the big screens.
- **Safety:** Improved training for umpire and safety boats, better communication at race starts, and safety reminders during cox briefings.

7. Environmental Considerations

- **Sustainability:** More recycling facilities, sunscreen stations, and drinking water points. calls for environmentally friendly practices, including efficient shuttle services and minimising waste.

Participants were asked what are the strengths and unique attributes of the Loch Ryan and Stranraer location for water sports and on-water events?

The survey responses highlight Loch Ryan and Stranraer as an **outstanding location** for water sports and on-water events such as SkiffieWorlds.

Central Themes and Key Points

1. Natural Environment

- **Sheltered Waters:** Loch Ryan is a *sea loch* (a coastal body of water partially enclosed by land), offering shelter from most wind directions and ocean swell, which ensures generally calm and safe conditions ideal for rowing and other water sports. The only exception is exposure to strong north or north-west winds on rare occasions.
- **Long Sandy Beach:** The extensive beach frontage allows for simultaneous launching and recovery of a large number of boats and easy setup of team gazebos and tents.
- **Ample Water Space:** Loch Ryan accommodates large racing courses (15 lanes for SkiffieWorlds) without significant tidal constraints or current variation, making for fair competition across all lanes.

2. Infrastructure and Accessibility

- **Proximity to Town:** The waterside is adjacent to Stranraer town, facilitating easy access to shops, accommodation, restaurants, and amenities. Everything is within short walking distance.
- **Ample Parking:** Significant, often free, parking close to the beach and event venues simplifies logistics for participants and spectators.
- **Transport Links:** Well-connected by road, rail (including direct trains), and ferry (especially to Northern Ireland), making travel convenient for domestic and international visitors.
- **Event Facilities:** The presence of **Agnew Park** adjacent to the beach provides ample space for event hubs, festival zones, children's play areas, and rest spaces. Facilities such as toilets, storage, and newly developed watersports hubs further support large events.

3. Community and Atmosphere

- **Welcoming Local Community:** Stranraer residents and businesses enthusiastically support the events, creating a friendly and inclusive atmosphere. Local volunteers, decorations by schoolchildren, and visible community involvement enhance the experience.
- **Safety and Security:** Limited commercial traffic on the loch, secure boat storage areas, and generally traffic-free promenades contribute to a safe environment for competitors and families.
- **Inclusive and Family-Friendly:** Facilities, accessibility, and diverse amenities cater to families, children, and people with mobility constraints, making it a destination suitable for all ages.

4. Additional Attributes

- **Beautiful Scenery:** The scenic beauty of Loch Ryan and its surroundings, including views to Ailsa Craig and proximity to parks, castles, and botanical gardens, offers appeal beyond the sporting events.
- **Space for Growth:** The site can accommodate increasing participant numbers and has capacity for concurrent activities and further development.

Identified Challenges (Minor)

- Occasional exposure to north/north-west winds can disrupt events.
- Some feedback mentioned the need for additional parking, improved disabled access, and more permanent toilet facilities.

Participants were asked what infrastructure and facilities are needed for Loch Ryan and Stranraer to unlock their full potential for water based activity development?

The SkiffieWorlds 2025 survey gathered feedback from rowers and supporters regarding the infrastructure and facilities required to maximise water-based activity development at Loch Ryan and Stranraer. It should be noted that some of these are already being addressed in the Water Sports Hub build:

Central Themes & Key Areas for Development

1. Core Watersport Infrastructure

- **Changing Rooms & Showers:** Strong demand for permanent, clean changing facilities and showers, with some requests for outdoor options.
- **Toilets:** Many noted the need for more and better-maintained public toilets.
- **Boat Access & Launching:** Frequent suggestions for pontoons, jetties, extended/concrete slipways, and floating docks to facilitate boat access at all tide levels and for less physically demanding launches.

2. Support Facilities & Comfort

- **Accommodation:** Overwhelming consensus that local accommodation is insufficient, leading many to stay far from the event. Requests for affordable options: hotels, hostels, camping, glamping, and group lodgings.
- **Parking:** Requests for more accessible parking for cars and boats/trailers.
- **Shelter & Rest Areas:** Calls for protected spaces for competitors and spectators in case of bad weather—grandstands, indoor hubs, or tents.
- **Drinking Water & Hoses:** Requests for easily accessible drinking water taps and hoses for rinsing equipment and feet after water activities.

3. Hospitality and Visitor Experience

- **Food & Drink:** Suggestions for more cafes, restaurants (especially healthy and affordable), year-round food trucks, and bar areas near the waterfront.
- **Shops & Chandlery:** Interest in pop-up or permanent shops selling water sports equipment (chandlers), and convenience items.

4. Transport & Accessibility

- **Public Transport:** Many highlighted poor rail and bus connections, requests for more frequent trains/buses and clearer timetables.
- **Walking and Beach Access:** Improve pedestrian paths and add ramps for wheelchair/boat trolley access, especially to and from beaches and stations.

5. Water Sport Activities & Community

- **Activity Expansion:** Support for offering equipment hire (kayaks, paddleboards, windsurfing), lessons/camps for youth, sailing/rowing clubs, and safety infrastructure (safety boats, life guards).
- **Inclusivity:** Encourage accessible facilities for people with disabilities (beach wheelchairs, inclusive events), and youth engagement.
- **Ongoing Development:** Optimism around the new Watersports Hub; many see it as a major leap forward.

6. Environmental and Town Improvements

- **Water Quality & Beach Cleanliness:** Calls for regular beach cleaning and maintaining safe, clean water conditions.
- **Town Revitalisation:** Broader suggestions include investing in Stranraer's town centre, improving hospitality offerings, tidying unused lands (e.g., the old ferry terminal), and creating inviting spaces for locals and tourists.

7. Events and Spectator Experience

- **Viewing Facilities:** Interest in grandstands, better vantage points, and technology enhancements (large screens, live drone/GPS footage).
- **Event Logistics:** Suggestions for better coordination with local businesses during event weeks, and facilities for race officials and repair/workshops.

Loch Ryan and Stranraer have strong potential as watersports destinations, but require investment in core infrastructure, accommodation, accessibility, and hospitality to fully realise this. Respondents are optimistic, especially with the new Watersports Hub, but emphasise the need for ongoing development and engagement with the local community and businesses.

The Visitor Survey

A visitor survey was carried out to ascertain the impact of SkiffieWorlds 2025 on the local economy. It also helps demonstrate the ‘success factors’ and ‘lessons learned’ to support the development of future events.

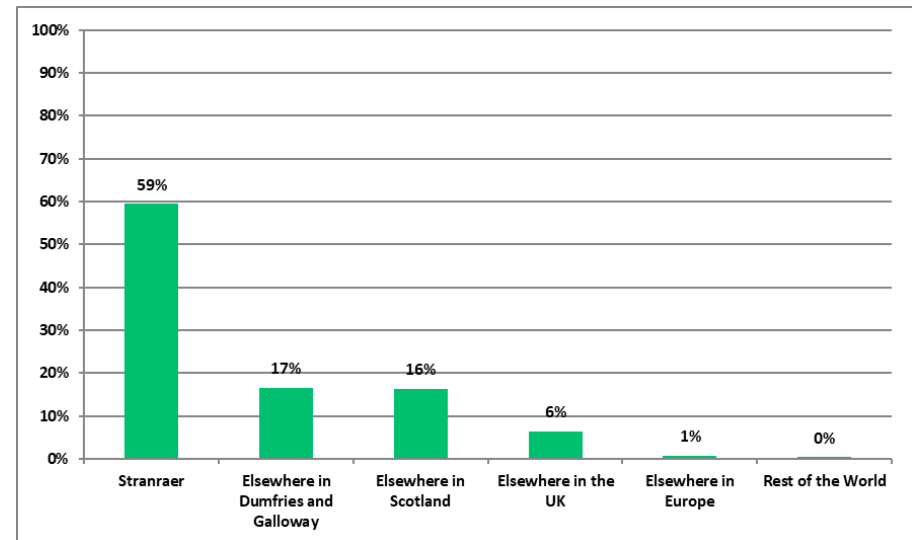
The online visitor survey was conducted during and after the event and attendees were encouraged to conduct the online survey through Facebook and Twitter. Visitors were also interviewed during the event itself. The survey was designed to capture information about the attendees’ demographics, reasons for visiting, spend patterns and perceptions about the festival.

In total 403 attendees completed the online survey. 264 completed surveys from a total estimated population of 25,000 visitors gives a level of accuracy at the 90% confidence level of $\pm 5.0\%$. 264 completed surveys from a total estimated population of at least 25,000 visitors represents around 1% of the entire population of participants and therefore is not fully representative of all those who participated and supported the event.

Successfully achieving 264 quality responses can allow an insight into the views of visitors however it should be noted that the results are not reflective of the entire population of visitors.

The following figure highlights that 59% of the respondents to the survey were from Stranraer, with around 17% from elsewhere in Dumfries and Galloway, 16% from elsewhere in Scotland, 6% from elsewhere in the UK and 1% from outside the UK.

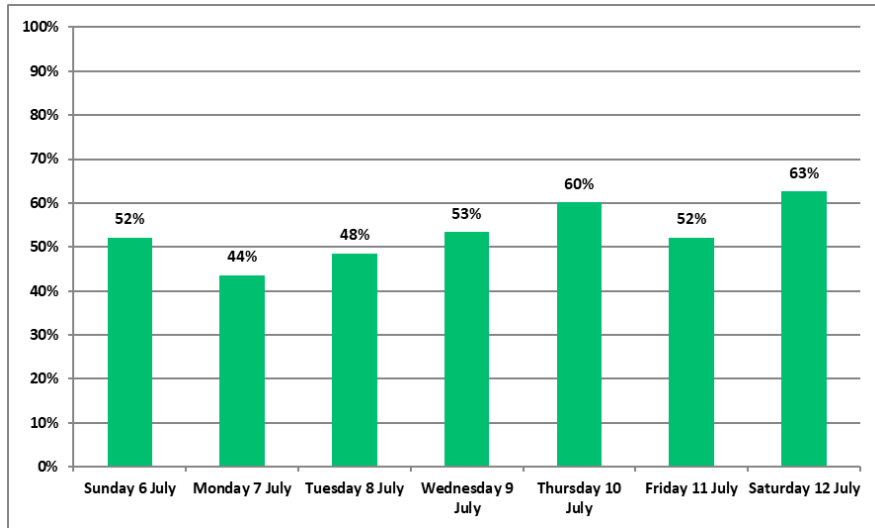
Where do you normally live?



This finding suggests there was a slight focus on local visitors, outlining that the event attracted local people whilst also being successful in drawing people into the region. It is also worth noting that local visitors would be more likely to attend the event, as well as complete the survey, and this may skew the results more towards a local response.

In terms of the days attended, the following figure highlights that all the days were popular, with Thursday and Saturday being particularly popular event days.

What days did you attend SkiffieWorlds?

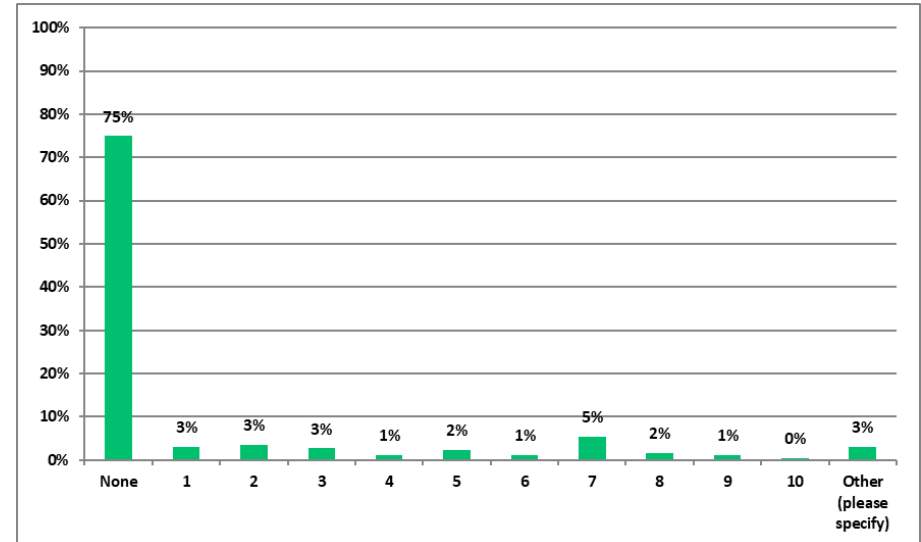


The following graph shows that although many visitors were not staying overnight as part of their trip, there was a large number of generated bed nights as a result of SkiffieWorlds 2025.

In total, including the 'other' comments, there were estimated to be 286 bed nights from the responding visitors.

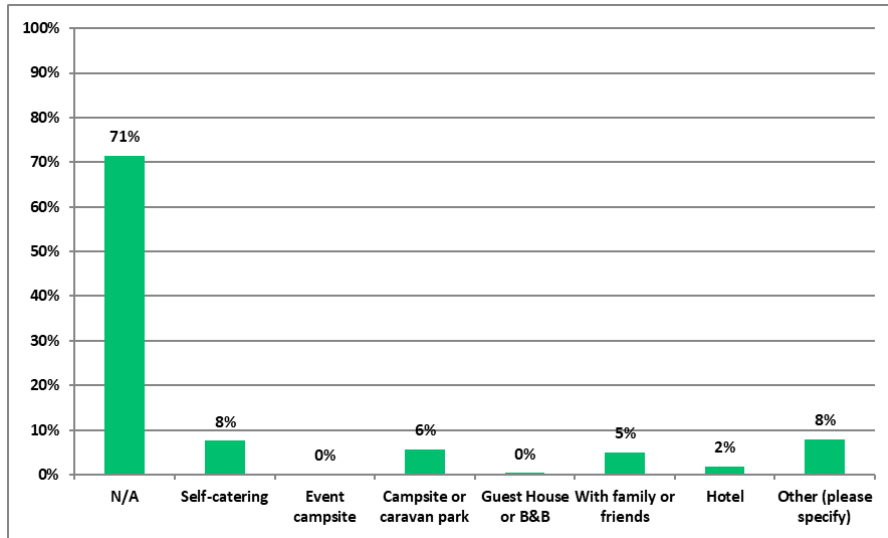
Assuming this was reflective of the entire population of staying visitors (6,250), and an average stay per person was 1.0 nights, this equates to around 6,250 generated bed nights by visitors as a result of SkiffieWorlds 2025.

How many nights did your party stay away from home as part of your trip to SkiffieWorlds?



The figure below shows that self-catering and other campsites were popular accommodation choices for staying visitors.

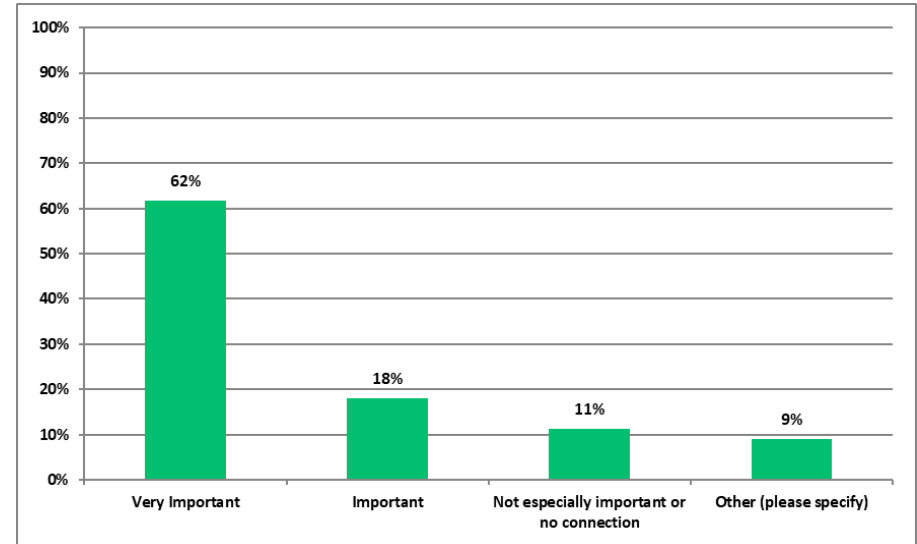
What type of accommodation did you stay in whilst visiting SkiffieWorlds?



In terms of 'other' this included short term rentals, on boats and in second homes.

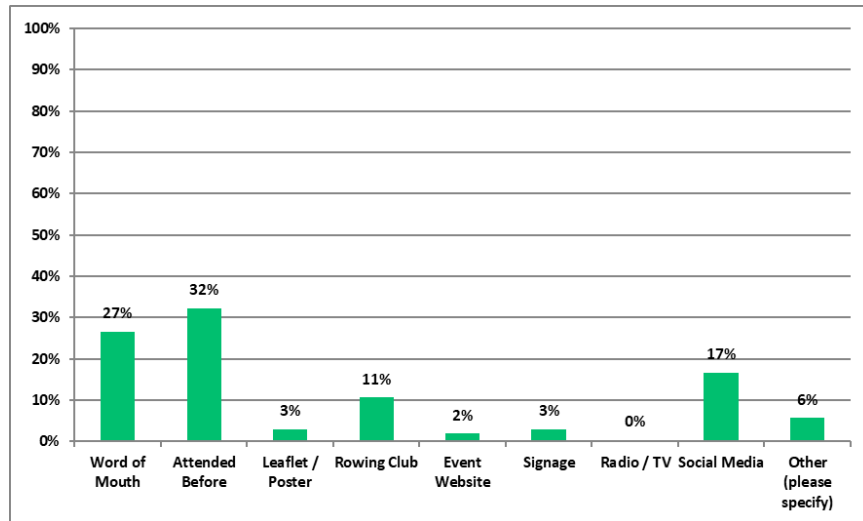
Overall, 80% of respondents stated that the event was either 'Very Important' or 'Important' in their reason for visiting Stranraer.

How important was the opportunity to visit SkiffieWorlds in your decision to visit the Stranraer area?



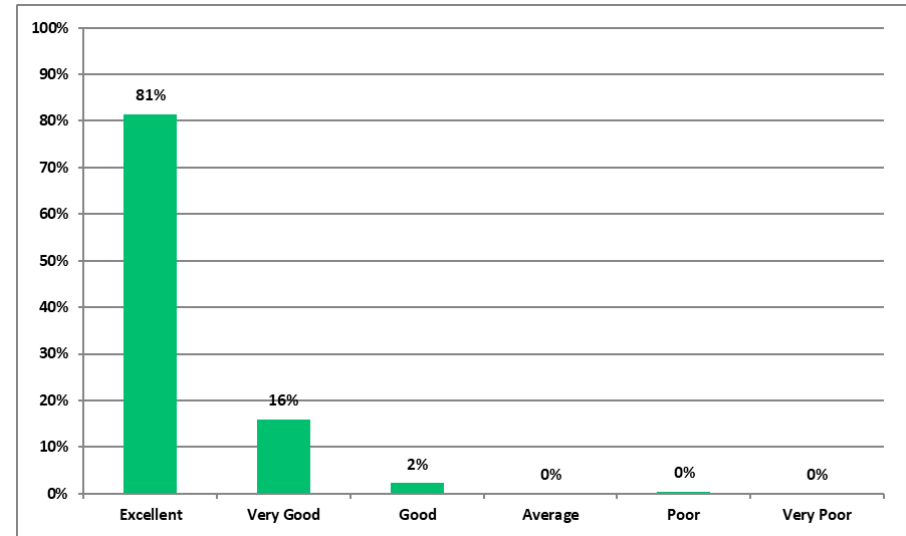
'Attended Before', 'Word of Mouth', 'Social Media' and 'Rowing Club' were the most popular marketing sources amongst visitors attending SkiffieWorlds 2025. Other sources tended to be through local news, Stranraer Water Sports Association and as a result of friends and family participating in the event.

How did you hear about the event?



81% of visitors rated the event as 'Excellent', with 16% rating the event as 'Very Good'.

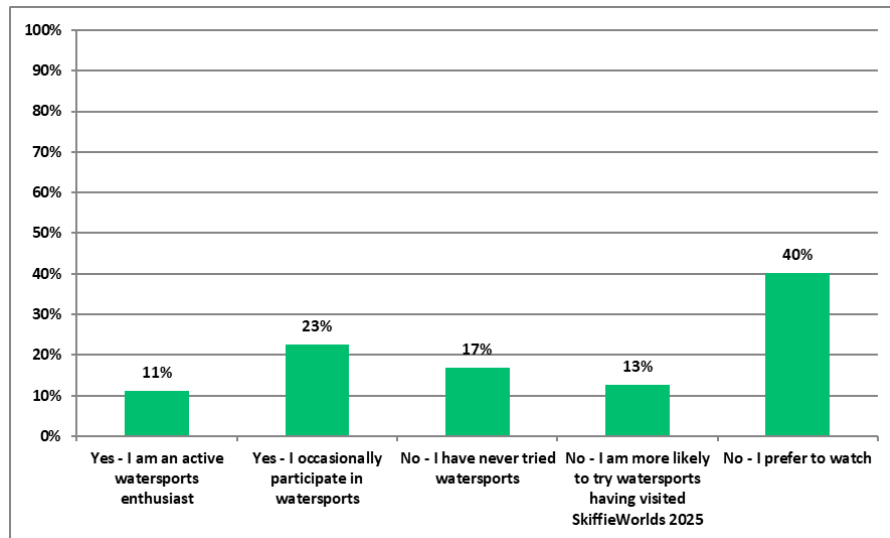
How would you rate the quality of experience at the event?



On average, visitors spent £69 per person as a result of visiting SkiffieWorlds 2025 over their entire trip. Grossing this up to the entire population suggests the event generated £1,725,000 for the economy. On the basis that the event acted as a catalyst for 80% of the visitors then it can be claimed the event generated around **£1,380,000** for the local area.

Visitors were asked if they had participated in watersports activities over the past five years, with 11% noting they were active enthusiasts and had 23% occasionally participated in watersports. Of those who had not participated in watersports, 13% noted they were more likely to participate as a result of visiting SkiffieWorlds 2025.

Have you tried watersports activities over the last five years?



When asked ‘**What would encourage you to revisit the area to participate in watersports activities?**’ from the SkiffieWorlds 2025 Visitor Survey. Key themes, recurring suggestions, and notable barriers are highlighted.

Key Themes and Suggestions

1. Variety and Availability of Watersports

- Strong interest in a wider range of activities: rowing, sailing, windsurfing, paddleboarding, kayaking, canoeing, wild swimming, kite surfing, etc.
- Requests for more frequent **events, competitions, regattas, and taster sessions** (including “Ladies only” or beginners’ sessions).

2. Facilities and Accessibility

- Desire for **improved facilities**: new water sports centre, better changing areas, equipment hire, more accommodation options (especially self-catering), parking, and accessible amenities for disabled and larger people.
- Calls for more sheltered waters, maintained beaches, and easier water access (e.g., pontoons).

3. Affordability and Inclusivity

- Repeated concerns about the cost of participation—affordable activities, equipment hire, group rates, and cheaper ferry crossings from Northern Ireland.
- Requests for family-friendly and accessible opportunities for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels.
- Need for **initiatives aimed at beginners, non-swimmers, over-60s, women-only sessions, and people with disabilities**.

4. Information, Promotion, and Community Engagement

- Increased advertising and clear information about events, activities, and opportunities to get involved—especially via social media.
- Calls for guidance for newcomers and more word-of-mouth outreach by local hospitality providers.

5. Local and Personal Circumstances

- Many respondents already live locally or visit regularly, so are already encouraged or consider the question not applicable.
- Barriers include personal health, age, non-interest, not being swimmers, or living too far away.

6. Atmosphere and Environment

- Appreciation of the area’s natural beauty, hospitality, friendly community, and the positive atmosphere at past events.
- Weather frequently cited, both as a positive and as a barrier (poor weather having cancelled previous activities).

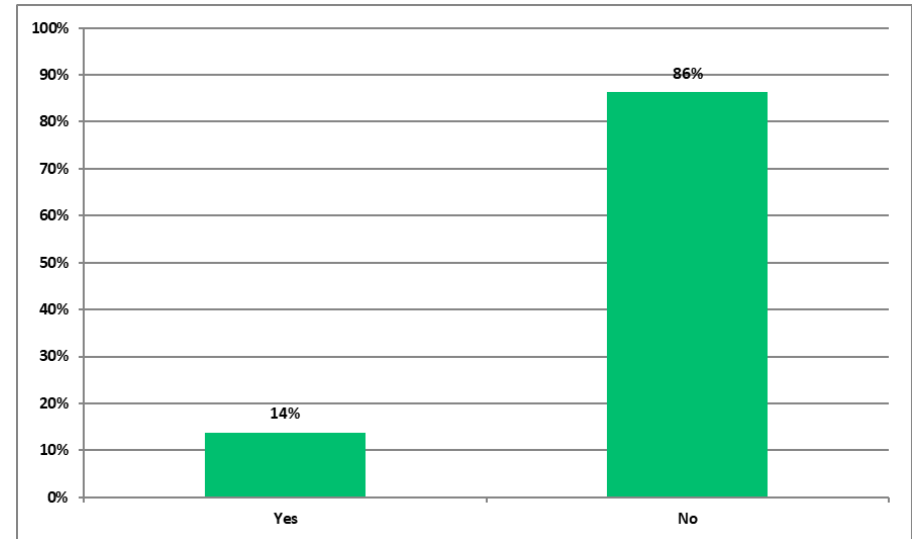
Main Encouragements and Barriers

Encouragements	Barriers/Concerns
Greater event variety/frequency	Cost/affordability
Improved/more accessible facilities	Personal health/age
Family/group/children’s activities	Can’t swim/not interested
More advertising/information	Weather unpredictability
Equipment hire and taster sessions	Non-local/not feasible to travel

Potential return participation in watersports is strongly influenced by the diversity and accessibility of activities, affordability, quality of facilities, inclusive opportunities, and better promotion. Local residents are generally already engaged, while some visitors face barriers such as age, health, or lack of non-participant options. Enhanced community atmosphere and infrastructure, alongside targeted outreach and inclusivity measures, would boost future involvement.

Only 14% of visitors noted that they had participated in the bookable Wellbeing events hosted in tipi.

Did you participate in any of the bookable Wellbeing events hosted in tipi?



The SkiffieWorlds 2025 event included a significant focus on health and wellbeing, which was highlighted in a visitor survey. The responses reflect broad engagement, varied experiences, and a generally positive attitude toward the wellbeing initiatives, although some attendees did not participate or were unaware of the offerings.

Key Themes and Findings

1. Positive Reception and Variety

- **Inclusive and Varied Activities:** Many attendees appreciated the wide selection of health and wellbeing activities, describing them as inclusive and catering to all ages and backgrounds.
- **Opportunity to Try New Things:** The event offered unique opportunities to experiment with activities (e.g., sound baths, meditation, yoga, drumming, arts and crafts, sauna, kite making) that were sometimes not readily available elsewhere.
- **Accessibility:** Activities were generally accessible to both competitors and spectators, with several people noting the value of drop-in and free sessions.

2. Benefits Highlighted

- **Physical and Mental Wellbeing:** Attendees valued the combination of physical exercise (notably rowing) with opportunities for relaxation and mental health activities. The event promoted exercise, relaxation, social interaction, and mindfulness.
- **Community and Atmosphere:** Many remarked on the friendly, welcoming environment and sense of community fostered through these programs.
- **Family-Friendly:** Several responses appreciated the family orientation, with activities suitable for children and adults alike.
- **Outside and Nature:** Outdoor settings and access to fresh air were praised for contributing to mental wellness.

3. Areas for Improvement

- **Awareness and Participation Gaps:** Some attendees were unaware of the wellbeing programs, couldn't attend due to conflicting schedules, or found booking processes difficult.
- **Suggestions:** More information beforehand, improved booking systems (such as online options), activities at varied times, and better placement of facilities like the sauna.

4. Critical and Neutral Responses

- **Not for Everyone:** A minority reported indifference or lack of interest in H&W activities, while others felt the wellbeing focus didn't impact their event experience.
- **Participation Barriers:** Reasons for non-participation included work, other commitments, or not being aware of available options.

Summary Table of Main Points

Theme	Highlights
Variety	Activities for all ages; options included mindfulness, outdoor exercise, creative arts
Accessibility	Free, drop-in, and inclusive sessions for both rowers and spectators
Community & Atmosphere	Friendly, welcoming environment; encouragement of social interaction
Benefits	Physical fitness, mental relaxation, opportunities for new experiences
Improvement Areas	Better promotion needed, easier booking, wider availability
Challenges Identified	Lack of awareness, scheduling conflicts, interest variability

The health and wellbeing focus at SkiffieWorlds 2025 was widely perceived as a beneficial and innovative addition. It provided diverse, inclusive opportunities that promoted both physical and mental health, strengthened community ties, and offered unique experiences. However, increasing awareness, simplifying access, and accommodating various schedules could further enhance participation and positive impact in future editions.

The SkiffieWorlds 2025 event in Stranraer was widely celebrated by visitors for its vibrant atmosphere, excellent organisation, inclusivity, and significant positive impact on both the local community and visitors from around the world. The feedback reflects overwhelming appreciation for the event’s variety, accessibility, and communal spirit, highlighting it as a showcase event for the town and the sport of skiff rowing.

Key Themes & Highlights

1. Atmosphere & Community Spirit

- **Repeated Praise:** “Atmosphere” was cited most frequently as the standout feature—described as vibrant, welcoming, friendly, and fostering a strong sense of community.
- **Inclusivity:** The event attracted all ages and backgrounds, effectively uniting locals, visiting teams, and international guests.
- **Local Pride:** The event generated excitement in Stranraer, bringing the town to life and instilling a sense of pride among residents.

2. Organisation & Facilities

- **Well-Run Event:** Visitors consistently complimented the professionalism, planning, and execution, from volunteer efforts to event layout and logistics.
- **Facilities:** Excellent provision of clean toilets, plentiful seating, easy site navigation, and thoughtful event layout (including big screens and shelters).
- **Campsite Accommodations:** The pop-up campsites were praised for being well-managed, with hot showers and clean facilities—though some suggested additional washing-up facilities could help.

3. Variety of Activities

- **For All Ages:** Extensive entertainment, sports competitions (particularly skiff rowing), live music, craft stalls, children’s activities, and wellness workshops (e.g., sound baths, meditation).
- **Free and Accessible:** Many events and activities were free, ensuring everyone could participate regardless of income.
- **Innovation:** The use of **big screens**, drone footage, and GPS tracking made

watching races engaging and accessible to all spectators.

4. Impact on the Town

- **Economic & Social Boost:** The influx of visitors was noted as beneficial for local businesses and the area’s profile.
- **Community Collaboration:** Numerous mentions of cohesiveness between residents, visitors, volunteers, and local businesses.

5. Entertainment, Food, and Facilities

- **Entertainment:** High-quality live music, quiz nights, and arts led to positive social experiences.
- **Food Vendors:** Wide selection of food and drink outlets received strong approval, though some found certain items expensive.
- **Craft and Artisan Stalls:** Local arts, crafts, and artisan market areas were particularly well-liked.

6. Areas for Improvement (Less Frequently Cited)

- **Sound issues:** Some felt the audio for certain ceremonies or bands could be improved.
- **Opening Ceremony:** A few visitors hoped for a more elaborate or engaging opening event.
- **Weather Influence:** While turnout and enjoyment were boosted by good weather, some noted the need for more shade.

Visitor Feedback: At a Glance

Aspect	Number of Mentions	Sample Phrases
Atmosphere & Community	100+	“Brilliant atmosphere”, “Community spirit”, “Buzz”
Organisation & Safety	80+	“Well organised”, “Smooth running”, “Friendly staff”
Range of Activities & Entertainment	70+	“Lots to do”, “Variety for all ages”, “Entertainment”
Big Screens & Race Coverage	60+	“Screens made it accessible”, “Drama of the races”
Inclusivity & Accessibility	50+	“Family friendly”, “Free events”, “Wheelchair access”
Food, Drink, and Craft Stalls	40+	“Good food selection”, “Lovely market stalls”
Impact on Town	30+	“Pride in Stranraer”, “Town came alive”, “Visitors”
Campsite Facilities	20+	“Hot showers”, “Clean toilets”, “Good atmosphere”

Summary Table: Features & Their Reception

Feature	Positive Reception (%)	Notes
Atmosphere & Community Spirit	95%	Central highlight of the event
Organisation / Logistics	90%	Few complaints, strong volunteer presence
Activities & Inclusivity	90%	Free, diverse, engaging for all ages
Race Coverage (Tech: Screens/Drone)	85%	Widely lauded, made races accessible
Facilities (Toilets, Accessibility)	80%	Clean, easy to find—minor improvement areas
Food & Drink Vendor Variety	75%	Mostly positive, some pricing concerns
Accommodation & Campsite	75%	Hot showers a standout, some minor asks

SkiffieWorlds 2025 was embraced as a model community event: inclusive, well-organised, and lively, successfully boosting local pride and drawing visitors from around the world. The diversity of activities, high-quality facilities, and friendly atmosphere were especially valued, while minor logistical and audio improvements were suggested for future events. The festival’s innovative use of technology and community engagement sets a strong precedent for similar gatherings in the future.

For organisers and stakeholders, the feedback suggests maintaining the current organisational standards, enhancing communication and accessibility, expanding shade or weather protection options, and continuing to leverage technology to enhance the spectator experience.

Economic Impact Assessment

The average spend for participants was £386 per person for their entire trip. Assuming an average spend per person of £386, this equates to a total expenditure of £2,052,748. Assuming 85% of this can be directly attributable to the event itself, this results in an economic impact of **£1,744,836**.

On average, visitors spent £69 per person as a result of visiting SkiffieWorlds 2025 for their entire trip. Grossing this up to the entire population suggests the event generated £1,725,000 for the economy. On the basis that the event acted as a catalyst for 80% of the visitors then it can be claimed the event generated around **£1,380,000** for the local area.

Overall, SkiffieWorlds 2025 generated a direct economic impact of around £3,124,836.

The expenditure on staging the event will also have had two types of wider impact on the economy:

- Supplier effect: an increase in sales in a business will require it to purchase more supplies than it would have otherwise. A proportion of this 'knock-on' effect will benefit suppliers in the local economy; and
- Income effect: an increase in sales in a business will usually lead to either an increase in employment or an increase in incomes for those already employed. A proportion of these increased incomes will be re-spent in the local economy.

There are several multipliers which can be used, including the Scottish Tourism Multiplier Study (STMS) which provides standard supplier and income multipliers for the tourism sector. This estimates that the combined supplier and income multiplier for a rural location is 1.65 at the local level. This suggests that the **additional economic impact of participant, supporter and visitor spend as a result of SkiffieWorlds 2025 was around £5,155,979.**

Traders' Survey

Businesses that traded at SkiffieWorlds 2025 were also encouraged to provide feedback on the event. The following (21) businesses provided feedback.

- KB & Co Designs
- The Co Co Company
- Five Kingdoms Brewery
- Bee Creative by Charlene
- The Inventor's Gin Co Ltd.
- Tin Van Pizza
- Unique sweets and savouries
- Tikka Box
- Billow & Breeze
- Melt Me Real Good
- Jane Fraser Studio
- Homemade by AH
- everythingCHILLI
- Ninefold Rum Distillery
- Triskele Artisan Jewellery
- The Portpatrick Fragrance Company
- Solway Silver
- Food to go
- Toots & Co
- Flutterby Gift Boutique

The following methods of hearing about the event were provided:

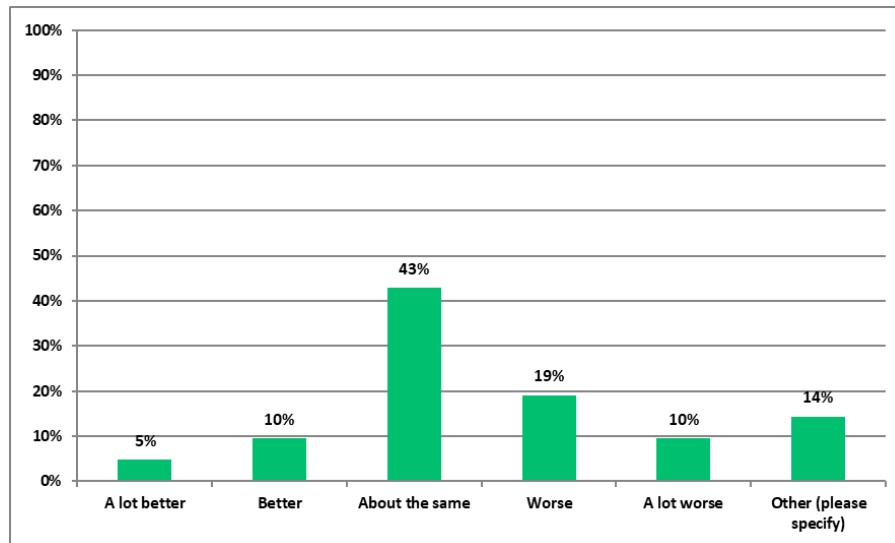
- Facebook
- I traded at the 2019 event
- Local club then through Wendy
- Through Dreams to themes in Stranraer
- Stranraer Millennium Centre
- It was mentioned to us in person while at another event in the area. I emailed and applied through the website at the beginning of the year.
- Email
- Facebook
- Via Wendi Cuffe
- Through other traders
- I traded at the previous event and was hoping to trade again. I heard through social media.
- I traded at the previous event and was hoping to trade again. I heard through social media.
- Online
- From another vendor who had traded there the last time it was held in Stranraer
- Via word of mouth/other traders
- Facebook and word of mouth from Wendi Cuffe who did a presentation to Stranraer Rotary club
- event advertised and looked on website
- I attended the previous Skiffie Worlds at Stranraer.
- From a friend at the market I go to
- Through a friend
- Traded previously in 2019

Nine of the traders (43%) noted that the event had a 'Very Positive' economic impact on their trading position and ten traders (48%) claimed the impact to be 'Positive'.

The level of financial impact ranged between £700 and £20,000, with an average financial impact of £3,500. The figure below highlights that 15% of the traders noted that this level of financial impact was better than that achieved at comparable events over the last two years.

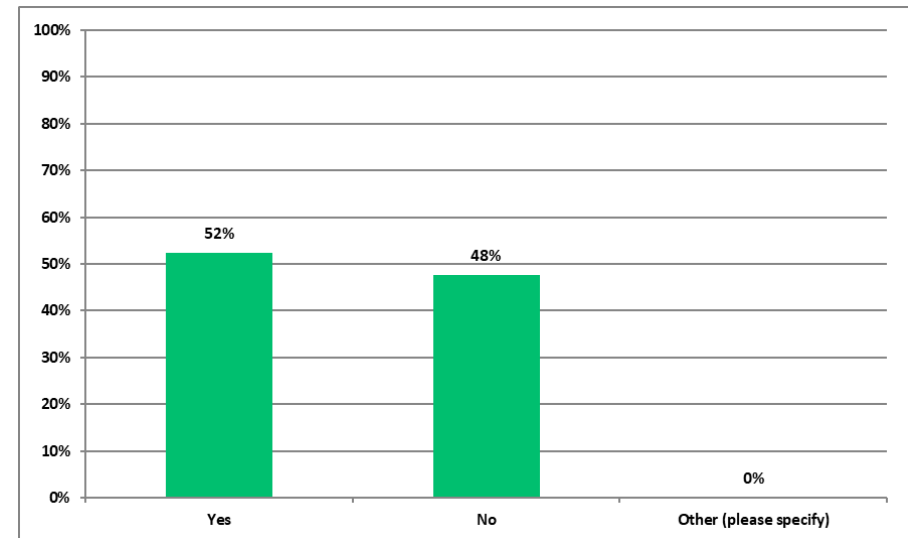
These financial figures cannot be added economic impact value as these will have been generated by participants and visitor spend, which is already calculated in the impact assessment and include multiplier effects.

Is this better or worse than comparable events that you have attended in recent times (last 2 years)?



Around half of the responding traders noted that through participating in SkiffieWorlds 2025 it has encouraged them to think about ways to develop their business.

Has participating in SkiffieWorlds 2025 encouraged you to think about new ways to develop or promote your business, product or service?



Examples included:

- Develop ways of selling the chocolates in warm conditions.
- Allows us to further develop how we set up and operate for outside events
- Think about potential customers coming - adapt product range to perhaps suit them better. Eg - expecting a lot of foreign visitors, many of whom might have flown in - they would be less likely to buy a full size glass bottle, but might take a couple of miniatures instead.
- We have realised that some local events are viable. Usually, we travel further afield to bigger events. It was great to be able to do an event in the D & G region. We would consider pursuing more events involving aquatic sports.

- Given me a bigger platform
- Opportunity to show items
- Previously I made event specific pendants. I didn't do that this time as sales are down across the board due to current economic climate. I wasn't confident they would sell. With hindsight, I think they would have, especially to the ladies who won silver, who were looking for a silver keepsake of the event.
- People seeing you from everywhere
- I applied to do pizza but there was already a trader booked in. I adapted my services to provide a healthy option which was popular, and it was great value. However, cheese prices have risen and it was a small profit margin on all sales. I adapted to include toasties to encourage more sales which also was received well. It helped promote the name and what we do. Also that we can adapt.
- I was surrounded by other stall holders who all helped each other with ideas for the future and further events

Six of the businesses (29%) noted that they had run special marketing, promotions or incentive around the period of SkiffieWorlds 2025. Examples of special marketing included:

- special beer for the event
- We offered incentive for buying multiple products
- Deals on bakes
- Bundle deal on products
- We made Skiffie bead bracelets from handmade glass beads on leather cord.
- created a candle for the event as a limited edition and various offers on each day

When asked 'How would you change SkiffieWorlds to encourage you to continue to trade at future events in Stranraer', the following responses were provided:

- Make the application process clearer. The initial form was just described as an 'expression of interest'. Weeks later we were then asked for insurance documents (without knowing for sure whether we had a stall), and then weeks after that we got confirmation as to whether we were successful or not.
- It would be a lot clearer (and I suspect less work for the organisers) if the initial form was described as a straight 'application form' with the submission of insurance/other documents as part of it. It would save the step of contacting everyone to ask if they're still interested and to send the documentation after the application."
- Fans or some sort of air circulation for the market marquee would have been good on the hot days however the volunteers did their best to sort this on the day.
- maybe work out options for if it rained, it could have been a problem with mud/grass
- I would lower the price for a stall at it, £350 is far too much for it. This would allow other small businesses to attend as I know a lot of people couldn't afford that amount and I wouldn't say it's worth it.
- The market marquee would need to be advertised more, I saw posts about the food traders outside and nothing about us. We were getting people on the Friday saying they didn't know we were there.
- The heat was brutal especially Friday and Saturday, there needs to be something in place for this. We had nothing, one of the other traders husbands was handing out ice lollies to us all but it would have been nice to have been offered even a cold bottle of water by the organisers/volunteers.
- I would have the market marquee open from the Sunday night and from 10am everyday as there were people getting turned away before 11am.
- Less days for trading - maybe Thursday to Saturday instead? More careful selection of types of products on offer. Example - towards the end of the week, there were 5 alcohol producers in 1 aisle, 3 of them having gin(s) for sampling & sale. Too many choices for customers, and dilutes each brand.
- Encourage a yearly festival or encourage other championships (ie.. sailing, sea kayaking etc). A yearly festival could offer and encourage young people to try different watersports.

- Better signage. No signs on tent to say it was the market. A lot of locals said they didn't know there was a market and just stayed at entertainment tent. "I would put the market to 4 days (Wednesday-Saturday) as many of us had a few days that we didn't make much money.
 - More Tannoy announcements about who is in the market hall- maybe a shout out of offers etc
 - But we loved our experience and would like to come back"
 - I find the fees to trade pretty expensive. Would love to see more coffee vendors too.
 - Drop the stall price, I found it quite expensive to attend for the turnover I achieved at the end & didn't make much profit after I had covered my costs,
 - I'm honestly not sure. I came with high hopes, having heard great things about previous years, but sadly left very discouraged. My sales were so low that I couldn't even pay myself for the time I spent trading.
 - The biggest issue for me (and others I spoke to) was the lack of footfall in the food and craft marquee. It just didn't draw the crowds you'd expect from such a major international event. Vendors who had a great experience six years ago were visibly disappointed this time round. Something clearly didn't click this year, and I don't know if that was down to local promotion, marquee placement, or other factors.
 - I know that the food traders who were in place on Sunday evening said that there were lots of people about, so maybe trading then would have been useful. One customer had made a special trip on Sunday pm for the event and had been disappointed to see the marquee closed, so perhaps clearer info on opening times was needed.
 - The pricing structure was also difficult to justify. Paying £250 for the Monday-Wednesday slot felt disproportionate, especially when the full six-day package was only £350. I had prior commitments later in the week but honestly, based on how things were going I might have thrown in the towel on Wednesday evening anyway.
 - Having the merchandise stall inside the marquee didn't seem to help bring people in who were interested in the stalls. It just made the space feel cramped. From what I understand, there were even more spectators and competitors than in 2019, which makes the low footfall even more puzzling. I do wonder if the cancellation of racing on Monday and the intense rescheduling on Tuesday and Wednesday drew people away from the marquee.
 - I'm sure it was a successful and enjoyable event from a visitor's perspective, but from a trading point of view, it just didn't work this time. I really hope other traders did better later in the week, but for me it was a tough and financially unviable experience."
 - The trade marquee felt detached from the main event, footfall was very low. Perhaps because of the weather but better signposting maybe, or have a trading area much closer to where the teams are based.
 - Fans in the marquee, it got very hot.
 - Reduce the overall cost - for this area the amount was high and a sports event will not bring in the same footfall as we were told to expect.
 - Wouldn't change it. Successful as it is.
 - I would not I think they all did a great job
 - Restrict and reduce the number of food options as there were a lot of options. As a rule of thumb for every 1000 people there should be no more than 2 food traders as only 20% of those 1000 people will purchase food at the event. So although footfall is high the number spending on food is only 20%. Its a difficult balance as you need traders to pay for the event but the traders also need to cover all costs too. More sponsorship may be needed to cover those costs. It was a great event and the team had put in hours sorting and organising for months on end
 - Social media of the stalls and stands as well as what's happening the water
 - Trading time 6 o'clock felt a bit long everyday maybe a varied trade time Monday - Wednesday 10-4 then Thursday- Saturday 11-6"
- When asked 'What was the best thing about trading at SkiffieWorlds 2025?', the following responses were provided.
- Meeting people and new traders from all over the world.
 - The atmosphere of the event, the crowds that it attracted the free entertainment for visitors and locals. No ticket price to enter the event.
 - busy, great atmosphere, well organised, weather, atmosphere and no trouble
 - I loved seeing everyone enjoying themselves and meeting different people from all over.
 - Meeting all the different people from all over the world

- The people! All our customers were lovely. the locals were so enthusiastic to have us there, and there were so many visitors to the area who were appreciative of the area.
- Being able to serve international clients
- variety of folk
- Meeting people. Excellent event.
- "Well organised
- Meeting fabulous new customers
- Everyone was very welcoming and happy to chat"
- Meeting all the wonderful people who travelled far and wide to attend the event.
- Meeting all the wonderful people who travelled far and wide to attend the event.
- Good atmosphere & good stallholders to chat to
- Ease of loading/unloading, quality of flooring & marquee, quality of hot food available, proximity of visitor gathering/seating area, nice staff, nice customers. A customer making me aware of a potential retail outlet to contact about a trade order.
- The rowing event looked great, and there was definitely a good atmosphere around it. The traders were all friendly despite challenging trading for many of them.
- Good facilities, spacious in trading marquee, nice variety of traders
- fellow traders, well organised and all team were friendly and supportive.
- All aspects of it were well organised. Great atmosphere. Something for everyone. Great community spirit/ethos.
- The people were lovely and the organisers was great to speak to
- Very well run event. Volunteers were helpful and very dedicated. A great event for the town.
- Atmosphere- from those attending, volunteering and trading all kept spirits high

Local Business Feedback

A short survey of other local businesses was undertaken, this was completed by 22 local firms, but it provided some further feedback from the business community which backs up the considerable uplift in local economic activity reported through the participants' and visitors' surveys. The following businesses completed the survey:

- Driftwood @ Loch Ryan Shire
- Shell's Creations
- Gabrielle Reynolds
- Lowland Private Hire
- Beach House
- Sky Cottage
- Lochans lodge
- Papa Rabs Ltd
- Portpatrick Farm Holidays
- Aird Donald Caravan Park
- Greenloch Caravan site
- Harbour Lights
- Central Cafe
- Eco Gen Contractors Ltd
- Sands of Luce Holiday Park
- Stranraer Fresh Meats Ltd
- Henrys Bay House Restaurant
- Beach Cottage holiday let.
- Wbs signs
- The Pub
- Auchtralure Eggs

It is known that other local businesses benefited as a result of SkiffieWorlds, such as anecdotal information provided by local restaurants, hotels and shops, however, only a selection of businesses completed the business survey.

All the businesses were aware of SkiffieWorlds 2025, and the following sources were quoted:

- Social media ... know the organiser
- Word of mouth and organisers looking for sponsorship
- I heard from local shop owners
- Live locally so I have been aware of the Skiffies for some time now.
- I engaged early as a way to promote my business and I sponsored it.
- Stranraer Water-sports Association
- Through the chief umpire contacting us to book the accommodation again (he stayed in 2019 also during SkiffieWorlds).
- Facebook
- I was asked to sponsor, local chat
- Local news/Facebook page
- They contacted us upon announcement to have our bookings available.
- Range of routes
- Part of SCRC
- Various
- Local advertising
- When Stranraer successfully won the bid about 18 months prior to the event
- Media
- Facebook, local word of mouth
- Attended the last one. Lots of publicity about this year's event. We also have a skiff in Portpatrick.
- Work with team
- We were approached to sponsor this great event
- Local press and facebook/customers

12 (52%) of the responding businesses witnessed an uplift in trade levels as a result of SkiffieWorlds 2025, ranging from £300 to £20,000 and an average impact of £8,400. Five firms noted that they witnessed a small decrease, ranging from £1,500 to £4,000, with one firm quoting '25% decrease on revenue, although the warm weather affects our business as no beer garden.'

These financial figures cannot be added economic impact value as these will have been generated by participants and visitor spend, which is already calculated in the impact assessment and include multiplier effects.

Ten firms noted that the town's hosting of the SkiffieWorlds encouraged them to think about new ways to develop or promote your business, product or service, with feedback including:

- Brought people down to the much and now have returning clients
- I made Skiffies boats out of driftwood that I sourced from local beaches
- Promote a Watersports and beach side house
- We will now further promote the water sport element of our town and the positive impact that SkiffieWorlds has had.
- It hasn't this time, we will need to review how we support or engage with Skiffie if they return
- We are always looking to promote sports and interests which can be enjoyed locally. It is evident if a visitor enjoys the area for their sport or interest they will return. These interests are often community based and very social so the visitor count grows organically. If it be fishing, kite surfing, sailing, foiling, skiffs, cycling these communities are very valuable and will visit in the shoulder season not just the peak summer months. This supports year round employment which helps makes tourism businesses more resilient to seasonal demand.
- Brought more visitors to the area.
- Expand

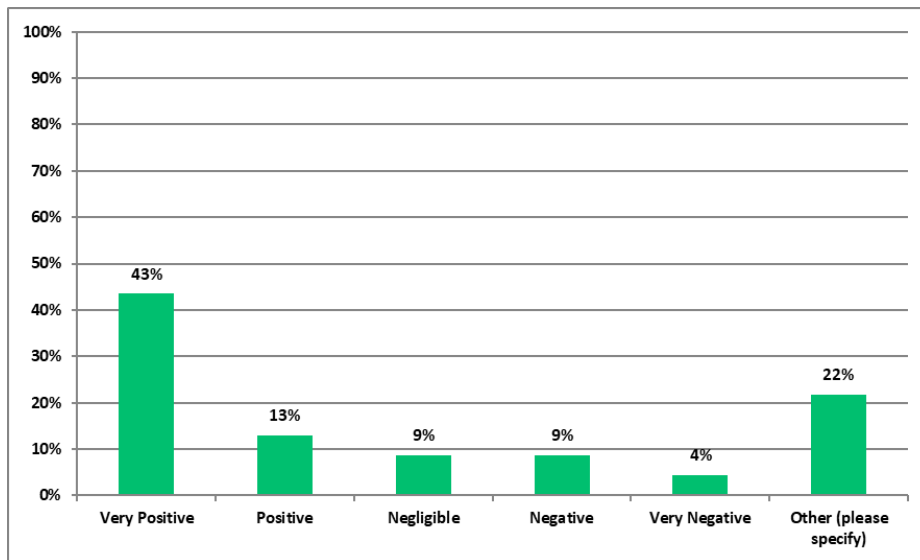
Six of the firms ran special events as a result of SkiffieWorlds, such as:

- Extended our opening hours
- Facebook
- Shared social media posts etc
- Tours, ten different types, to encourage visitors to explore the local region, including D&G and Ayrshire
- Through yourselves - offering accommodation

- We supplied 2 x solar panels and battery storage areas to assist powering the event.

Ten (43%) firms reported that SkiffieWorlds had a 'Very Positive' economic impact on their trading position, with seven saying it was 'Positive' and five saying it was 'Negligible'.

Overall, did SkiffieWorlds 2025 have a positive or negative economic impact on your trading position?



Every business noted that SkiffieWorlds 2025 was a good thing for the local area, with the following reasons provided:

- The town was buzzing and it was fantastic for the local economy ... hotels .. cafes .. pubs ... retail shops
- Puts Stranraer on the map and is create for locals, gives a sense of pride and something to look forward to. Overall, a great thing for the town but

unfortunately very poor for the pubs apart from a few that are involved doing the bar and businesses from afar selling alcohol

- Lots of lovely people having a great time. A real showcase for what Stranraer has to offer as a water sports location.
- An absolutely brilliant event, extremely well organised and co-ordinated. A brilliant team of volunteers with a can do approach. Most of all free entry meant that it was fully accessible for locals and visitors with something for all. The most enjoyable and inclusive event I've attended outside of Edinburgh.
- Well organised event which attracted considerable local interest and gave us a glimpse of what can be done
- Great to see the loch being used for water sports. Promoted Stranraer on an international scale.
- It brought in lots of visitors and must have had a lot of economic impact on local businesses, especially catering businesses.
- More people aware of Stranraer on the map and what can be offered as a short break destination.
- Showcasing the beauty of our area and other tourist attractions - great for the community too - we absolutely loved looking after teams here and seeing them competing.
- Quite a number of Guests we had were Clubs and teams. A number of them expressed an interest in returning to the area as tourists.
- It highlights and promotes the entire area.
- It was showing off Stranraer as a holiday destination for water sports.
- Good for tourism, hotels etc but being during summer holidays when retail trade is already slightly down with locals being on holiday, the double dunt is locals eating and drinking at Skiffie worlds rather than getting their weekend meals from a butchers shop.
- It was a well run event, locals and visitors together enjoyed events, it evoked a wonderful atmosphere in Stranraer. I loved the colour of it all.
- Brought more visitors to the area. Stranraer embraced the event. Everyone who supported this event had a fabulous time. So, so positive for this area.
- Increase trade and use of local businesses
- Future tourists to our wonderful town
- It brought a lot of visitors to area. I feel that local people embraced the event very well and we all felt very positive about our town

The best things about SkiffieWorlds 2025 were noted as:

- The atmosphere
- The vibe
- There was a really positive feeling to the whole event."
- To showcase the area and the Loch. A very competitive but friendly sporting competition.
- Everything !!
- Everything!! The friendliness of everyone involved. Super organisation! The entertainment. Fabulous weather too.
- Lots of visitors to area
- Seeing new people enjoying Stranraer
- The event itself was fantastic and the general buzz about the town.
- Brought life to the town.
- The weather and the excellent organisation.
- Everyone in the town was buzzing with all the tourism
- The community. The local community were clearly very proud to show off their town and loch to an international crowd.
- The great atmosphere in the town of friendship and warmth.
- The support from locals. Big screen, able to see races clearly. Food stalls, drink stalls. Every one so friendly and welcoming. Volunteers amazing.
- Staff
- How our wee town came together and hosted such a large event
- It wasn't just a sporting event - feel the organisers went above and beyond with lots of other activities and entertainment to make sure there was something for everyone

In terms of ideas for future events, the following was provided:

- No change required ... it was very well organised
- Involve just local businesses, try not to centralize everything to Agnew park.
- I've a feeling this one might grow and become even bigger and better
- Better promotion and social media presence.
- Not sure how it could be improved
- Host it every three years!
- Not sure
- Reduce the events to allow people to visit use local facilities, for instance don't have a quiz at 6, I had 6 tables in before 5:45 and my restaurant was empty at 6 had the quiz been at 8 people would have eaten locally then herded down for the quiz or music.
- Nothing - I thought it was brilliant - well done to you all!
- Ensure all existing tourism providers were booked before introducing extra or additional ad hoc accommodation.
- More of them!
- Nothing it was very well executed
- Grow the water sports image of Stranraer. Hold other regional or national events to further build on Stranraer being a leading water sport destination. These should perhaps be considered to take place over the shoulder season as to boost tourism and hospitality businesses during quieter times.
- Outreach to schools and other sport clubs. Stranraer was noticeably lacking younger rowers. Perhaps the rowing club needs to better integrate with younger communities to ensure there is an uptake of the sport locally."
- Change dates to avoid summer holidays, having worked in hotels and accommodation it's already a busy time for the hospitality industry. To bolster the hospitality industry it would be better on the peripheries of the summer holidays. This would also reduce the (double dunt) of locals being on summer holidays and then locals at skiffies reducing trade in retail.
- I would worry about it getting too big and losing its 'heart'. It provided a fun week for all without too much expense. I felt it didn't receive as much coverage as deserved by local tv or tourism marketing groups.
- Bring more events to this area. Any water-sports but especially wind powered.
- Just hope that there could be more events similar to this

Conclusions

SkiffieWorlds 2025, held in Stranraer from July 6th to 12th 2025, has established itself as an exemplary international coastal rowing event with significant positive impacts across economic, social, and community dimensions. This independent evaluation demonstrates how the event successfully balanced competitive sport with inclusive community engagement, delivering substantial benefits to participants, spectators, and local businesses.

Event Participation and Economic Impact

The event attracted 3,882 crew members representing 79 teams from around the world, including teams from South Africa, Australia, USA, Canada, Holland, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland. The event was supported by over 200 volunteers and officials, and drew at least 25,000 spectators. This impressive attendance generated a direct economic impact of £3,124,836, which expands to £5,155,979 when including indirect and multiplier effects. The economic benefits were broadly distributed:

- **Participants** spent an average of £386 per person per trip, generating £1,744,836
- **Visitors** contributed approximately £1,380,000 to the local economy
- **Local businesses** reported an average uplift in trade of £8,400
- **Trading businesses** at the event averaged £3,500 in revenue

The event's economic significance extends beyond the immediate period, with 41% of participants expressing interest in future events in Stranraer and 13% of non-watersports participants indicating increased likelihood of trying watersports activities.

Key Success Factors

Several elements contributed to the event's exceptional reception, where over 80% of both participants and visitors rated it as "Excellent":

- **Organisation and Planning:** The seamless operation, clear communication, and professional management were consistently praised, even during weather-related disruptions.
- **Community Engagement:** The strong involvement of local residents, businesses, and volunteers created a welcoming atmosphere that enhanced the experience for international visitors.
- **Venue Selection:** Loch Ryan proved ideal for competitive rowing—offering sheltered waters, ample racing space, proximity to town amenities, and scenic beauty.
- **Technological Innovation:** Live drone footage, GPS tracking, big screens, and professional commentary significantly enhanced the spectator experience.
- **Inclusivity:** The event successfully catered to all ages, abilities, and backgrounds through diverse programming, free activities, and accessible facilities.
- **Festival Atmosphere:** The addition of live music, wellness activities, craft markets, and family entertainment transformed a sporting competition into a comprehensive cultural experience.

Areas for Development

Despite overwhelming positive feedback, several themes relating to opportunities for improvement emerged from the comments, not all of which are actionable:

- **Accommodation Capacity:** The limited local accommodation was stretched beyond capacity, suggesting need for more hotels, hostels, group lodgings, and improved campsite facilities. It is understood that this is currently being addressed through capital projects like the George Hotel bunkhouse.
- **Spectator Experience:** Positioning races closer to shore or adding grandstands would enhance viewing opportunities, complemented by improved camera angles and coverage. Although it is understood that the race lane positions were determined by water depth.
- **Facilities Enhancement:** More diverse and affordable food options, additional water refill stations, improved toilet/shower facilities, and better waste management would improve the experience.
- **Information Flow:** More consistent, multi-channel updates before and during the event would benefit participants and spectators, particularly those less active on social media.
- **Trading Experience:** While most traders reported positive outcomes, better promotion of the market marquee, improved ventilation, and reconsideration of stall fees could enhance this aspect. Although it is understood that the experience of traders in the marquee would have been adversely affected by unusually warm weather.

Long-Term Legacy and Recommendations

SkiffieWorlds 2025 has clearly positioned Stranraer and Loch Ryan as premier destinations for watersports, with significant potential for future development.

The following themes for future development emerged from the comments, not all of which are practically deliverable, and some of which are already underway:

- **Infrastructure Investment:** Develop permanent changing facilities, showers, toilets, and boat launching infrastructure to support year-round watersports activities. Already addressed through the Water Sports Hub build.
- **Accommodation Development:** Encourage expansion of diverse lodging options to accommodate future events without displacing visitors to distant locations. Already happening through the George Hotel development.
- **Event Portfolio Expansion:** Consider hosting additional watersports competitions and community events throughout the year to maintain momentum and economic benefits. Already in progress, for example the Scottish Fin & Foil Championships are now a growing yearly event on Loch Ryan co-hosted by SWSA.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Integrate stronger eco-friendly practices in future events, including improved recycling, sustainable transport options, and energy efficiency.

The overwhelming feedback from all stakeholders confirms that SkiffieWorlds 2025 achieved its aims of hosting a world-class sporting event while delivering substantial community benefits. The combination of Stranraer's natural advantages, strong local engagement, and professional event management created an exceptional experience that serves as a model for similar international sporting festivals.

Stranraer is well-positioned to build on this success and further establish itself as a premier destination for coastal watersports events with international appeal.

For future events, maintaining strong community engagement, continuing to invest in infrastructure and skills, and embracing sustainable growth will be essential to maximising both local benefits and international event excellence.

STRANRAER SKIFFIE WORLDS

6-12 JULY 2025

Direct enquiries regarding this report should be submitted to:

Mark Kummerer, Director

MKA Economics Ltd

Scion House | Stirling University Innovation Park | Stirling | FK9 4NF
Tel: 01786 388 803

Speyside Business Centre | Fochabers | Moray | IV32 7DJ
Tel: 01343 642 664

Email: mark@mka-economics.co.uk

Website: www.mka-economics.co.uk

