

# WELCOME TO THE BANTRY BLUEWAY



## Bantry Bay Port Company DAC

Harbour Office: Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry, Co. Cork, Ireland



# What is a Blueway?

- A Blueway is an innovative, safe and easy to use series of on water based trails. In Ireland the Blueways allows guided and unguided paddling.
- The paddle allows visitors to experience the delights of the Inner Harbour Bantry and the rich and diverse culture and heritage of the local region, it can be broken into many experience levels being Beginner, Intermediate or Experienced and 3 routes accommodate this on the Bantry Blueway.



### ABBEY POINT SLIPWAY TO RAILWAY PIER RETURN

Green Trail - Beginner Trail

Access Point

**1**  
Abbey Slipway

**Distance:** 2 km return  
**Duration:** 1 hour return  
**Description:** Short return trail between Abbey Slipway (1) and Railway Pier (7). Beware of Ferries operating from Bantry Pier.



### ABBEY POINT SLIPWAY TO BANK HOUSE RETURN

Blue Trail - Intermediate Trail

Access Point

**1**  
Abbey Slipway

**Distance:** 6km return  
**Duration:** 2 hour return  
**Description:** Travels west to point (2) where the crossing point is marked by an orange buoy and flag. Beware of winds and tidal flows at the crossing, a wind flag at point (2) will indicate local wind conditions. If suitable cross 600m (15 minutes) to the Blueway flag on Whiddy Island point (3). Be careful of ferries operating between Whiddy Island and Bantry. Follow trail to Bank House on Whiddy Island (4). Return via the same Blue Intermediate Loop to Abbey Slipway.



### ABBEY SLIPWAY TO WHIDDY ISLAND TO ABBEY SLIPWAY - LONG LOOP

Red Trail - Advanced Trail

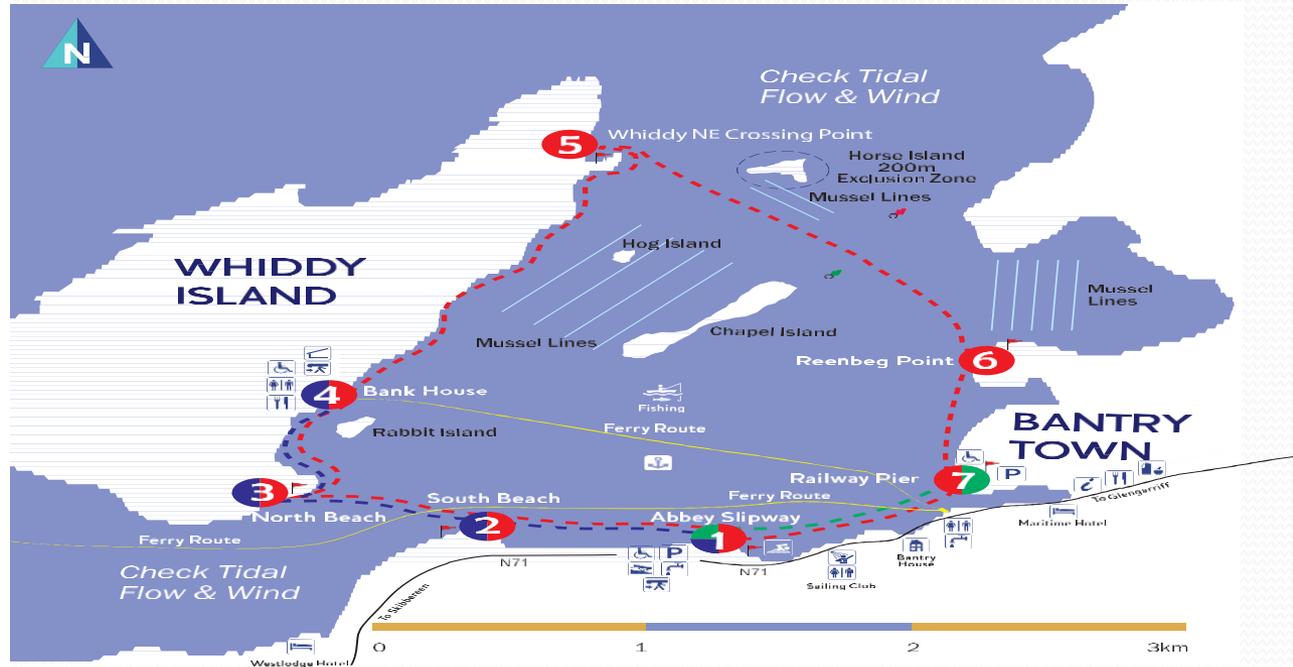
Access Point

**1**  
Abbey Slipway

**Distance:** 9km  
**Duration:** 3 hours  
**Description:** Follow the Blue Trail description to Bank House on Whiddy Island (4) continue north to point (5) where the crossing point is marked by an orange buoy and flag. This is a 2 km long (45 minute) open water crossing which requires experience to successfully complete. Beware of winds and tidal flows at the crossing, a wind flag at point (5) will indicate local wind conditions. Cross between Horse Island and Chapel Island flanked by mussel farm buoys to the green channel marker. From the green channel marker head for the Blueway flag on Reenbeg Point (6). Then cross the small bay south to reach Railway Pier (7) and on to Abbey Slipway (1).

### MAP LEGEND:

-  You are here
-  Cafe/Restaurant
-  Fresh Water
-  Harbour
-  Historical building/ruins
-  Hotel
-  Parking
-  Public House
-  Picnic/Take out points
-  Shop
-  Shower
-  Slipway
-  Toilets
-  Tourist Info
-  Warning



### TRAIL SAFETY INFORMATION

Canoeing & Kayaking is an adventure sport. When you go canoeing follow the five points below to stay safe:

**Planning** - Plan your trip well in advance by consulting with the Blueway website and local providers.

**Experience** - Ensure the Blueway is a suitable match for your group's experience. Water can be dangerous, if you are inexperienced use a local guide and seek formal training.

**Conditions** - Consult the weather forecast and tide tables in advance of your trip and if unguided only go out in favourable conditions, clear days with low wind.

**Equipment** - Always wear an approved buoyancy aid. Ensure your boat has adequate buoyancy. Bring suitable clothing, such as a wetsuit and equipment to deal with an emergency.

**Emergencies** - In the event of capsizing, stay with your craft, be ready and equipped to help one another. Always bring some form of communication with you, ie mobile phone - VHF. Ensure your group has a towing system in place.

### Local Advice for Users

Trail users must check the weather forecast and beware of the wind especially in open water crossings. In the unlikely event of an emergency dial 112 or 999 to contact the emergency services. Use VHF channel 16 to contact the Coast Guard.

### WIND FLAG INDICATOR



Wind flag Sagging: Slack Winds favourable paddling conditions  
Wind flag extended or flapping: High Winds, not favourable paddling condition  
No Flag: Trail CLOSED.

For more information and safety tips, visit [www.bluewaysireland.org](http://www.bluewaysireland.org)

**In the unlikely event of an emergency dial 999 or 112 to contact emergency services. Use VHF channel 16 to contact the coast guard. BE RESPONSIBLE AND STAY SAFE TODAY**

**LEAVE NO TRACE** Take only pictures, leave only ripples. [www.leaveonotraceireland.org](http://www.leaveonotraceireland.org)

**INVASIVE SPECIES** Help stop the spread of invasive species - wash your boat before and after your paddle. [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com)

We welcome feedback about your paddling experience. Please contact us at [info@bluewaysireland.org](mailto:info@bluewaysireland.org)

For further local information please contact either:  
BANTRY BAY PORT COMPANY - [bantrybayport.com](mailto:bantrybayport.com)  
BANTRY TOURIST OFFICE - [003533750229](tel:003533750229)

 200m Exclusion Zone  
**Local Ferry Route**

# Introduction

Bantry Blueway is the first certified and approved Blueway trail in Ireland it was opened to the Public on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 2015, Its ambition is to promote waterborne activities in Bantry Bay for both young and old to take to the water with their kayak or canoe and explore the trail set out on map boards all around the route.

The trail which itself meanders by the mussel farms in inner Bantry Harbour, It will view the existing mari-culture enterprise and portray the unique seasonal work done by the local mussel farmers while applying their continuous rope systems in the production of mussels.

# WHY?

- Bantry Bay Port Company have always been extremely safety concise for all waterborne activities users within Bantry Bay.
- It had been observed on numerous occasions that lone kayakers would launch from one of its slipways and would have never have informed anyone of their intentions or leave anyone know of where they were going or a return time, in essence these kayakers when on the water were totally unaccounted for in Bantry Bay.
- We had been looking for options for a number of years to allow for a safe mapped route within the confines of Bantry Inner Harbour to allow Kayakers to safely explore the beauty and historical nature of Bantry Bay.

# Starting Objectives

- To Create a **Safe** mapped route within the confines of the sheltered area know as Bantry Inner Harbour.
- To allow all pleasure craft to **safely** experience the beauty and historical nature of Bantry Bay.
- To promote tourism within the region.
- To create employment as a direct result of implementation of a kayaking route.

# Preparation

- In 2014 the Bantry Bay Port Company approached the Irish Sports Council and the National Trails Office for advise on how to move this envisaged project to a stage where a Bantry Blueway could be implemented.
- A similar project in a section of the River Shannon(Ireland largest River) had been piloted in 2013 and had received great acclaim from water users, this was an inland waterway and would have been considered a smooth river inland waterway.
- **July 2014:**Specifically Trained Personnel from the Irish Sports Council arrived in Bantry on a site tour to envisage how Bantry Inner Harbour being a coastal route could be modified to account for the different environmental aspects of a coastal route rather than an inland river waterway system, they were very confident and they believed that due to the specific geological nature of Bantry Inner Harbour which has a considerable land mass all around its extremities protecting it from the harsh Atlantic wind and swells, they envisaged that this might be a possibility.
- A bespoke but specific document for Bantry Inner Harbour was prepared by Canoeing Ireland on behalf of the Irish Sports Council and the National Trails Office, the port had to follow a generic design of maps and written guidelines from the Irish Sports Council.

# A Guide to Planning and Developing Small Vessel Water Trails in Ireland



**national trails office**  
An Irish Sports Council Initiative

Developed by Waterways Ireland and the Irish Sports Council / National Trails Office in conjunction with Irish Leisure Consultants (ILC)



**Waterways Ireland**  
Uiscebhéal Éireann Waterways Airlann

# The Irish Sports Council and National Trails Office Blueways/Water Trail Registration Application.

The Water Trail Registration Application Consisted Briefly of the Following Questionnaire:

**The Development group being Bantry Bay Port company have reviewed guide the lines:**

1. The National trails Office have specific guideline for developing a small water trail in Ireland.
2. To follow the Irish Water Trails Standards Guidelines.
3. To consult with all relevant stakeholders who may be directly affected by the implementation of such a water trail, this included the National Parks and Wildlife Services and the Inland Fisheries and adjacent Land Owners.
4. All environmental assessments or impact studies to be undertaken.
5. All Access/Egress locations to be clearly defined.
6. All Map boards and signage locations to be defined.
7. Website information regarding the Bantry Blueway Trail to be defined and advertised.
9. A **maintenance log** and management plan to be implemented to maintain the proposed infrastructure going forward and submitted to the National trails office for approval on a yearly basis.

# Bantry Bay Port Company

The Bantry Bay Port Company is a very small company primary tasked to oversee the waterborne management of the jurisdiction known as Bantry Bay this includes:

- Landlord for private entities offering a variety of services.
- Regulator of economic activity and operations.
- Regulator of marine safety, security, and environmental control.
- Planning for future operations and capital investments.
- Operator of nautical services and facilities.
- Marketer and promoter of port services and economic development.
- Provider of ancillary activities.

# Cost restrictions on Bantry Port Company for the Implementation of the Bantry Blueway

- In November 2014 all the relevant paperwork had been approved by the Irish Sports Council and the National Trails Office, all the access/egress points on all the proposed routes which are owned by the Bantry Port Company, all Public Liability Insurances had been arranged by the National trails office also, the project was ready to move forward, **However** the Port Company had no funding for such a project and the project had to be postponed until a funding source was found.
- The BIM Flag project was then introduced to the Port Company as a possible funding source for such a project as the Bantry Blueway fell into many of the BIM Flag funding themes, the Port applied for funding and was approved accordingly on the 13<sup>th</sup> of May 2015, **this project would not have been possible without BIM Flag funding.**

# Moving Ahead With the Project

- Work commenced on the manufacture of the 7 information signs needed on late May 2015.
- The Irish Sports Council compliant design for signage, map information and wind strength flags was undertaken on the Bantry Blueway Route in Late May 2015.
- Site clearance on remote sites on Whiddy Island started on June 2015 and completed late July 2015.
- Design and Signage completed late July 2015.
- Installation of 7 signs and flags in late July 2015.
- Bantry Blueway opened to the public on August 10<sup>th</sup> 2015.

# Benefits of the Bantry Blueway Locally since August 2015

Since the Bantry Blueway has been Introduced in 2015 many specific kayakers have visited Bantry and have commented positively on the clear and concise guide line instructions on the Bantry Blueway signage and maps, These Kayakers stay in local hotels and other accommodation and provide valuable spend during their stay.

Since the Bantry Blueway Inception in 2015 a local businessman has started a boat and kayaking hire company business over the Spring/Summer months and has 2 full time employees for this duration on a yearly basis, his business would not have been possible without the existence of the Bantry Blueway, his business is growing each year and his customers are creating bed nights and local spend in Bantry and to the local economy.

Many local schools use the Bantry Blueway on school tours with the assistance from local kayak hire companies, this provides young children to explore the beauty and natural environment whilst keeping fit and exercised.

Team building corporate events regularly take place on the Bantry Blueway routes with local hotels and restaurants benefiting from this.

# School Children on a Day Tour





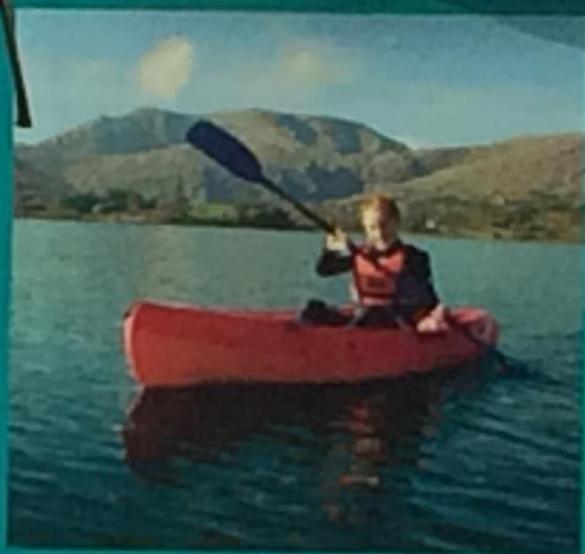






# Corporate team building event on the Bantry Blueway

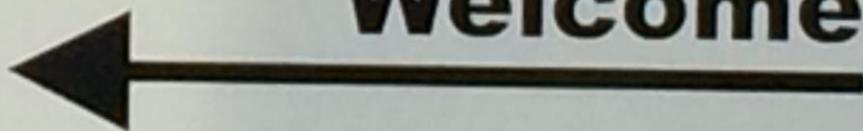




  
**WEST CORK SAILING &  
POWERBOATING CENTRE**  
experts on the water

# **Kayak with the Seals**

**Welcome**



**[www.westcorksailing.com](http://www.westcorksailing.com)**



A satellite map showing a coastal region with a red boundary. The map includes a large body of water in the center, surrounded by green land with some agricultural fields. A red line outlines a specific area, possibly a park or reserve. There are several labels and markers on the map.

**Widdy Island Crossing Point**

**Strip adn Crossing Point**

**TRAIL HEAD BANTRY**

# Signs



