

# Courtmacsherry Community Shop Co-operative Society Ltd.



Est. 2016

“By the community, for the community”

# Introduction & Background

For centuries, Courtmacsherry has had a **rich tradition** in commerce. However, our last remaining convenience shop closed in August 2015.



This left a deep void in the community. The village and hinterland has a population of over 600 people that doubles in the summer months and the nearest shop was 5 Km away.

This was not an acceptable scenario for us, so to help combat the **decline in services** in our community and also to combat the even bigger problem of **rural isolation**, our Community Shop was born.

# Public Consultation & Survey

A public meeting was organised and the community came together in September 2015 with the intention of assessing the feasibility of starting a community owned and operated shop.



Taking advice from groups such as the WC DP and the Plunkett Foundation and ICOS, a **survey of all residential homes** within approx. 2 Km of Courtmacsherry village was undertaken. This led to a positive decision to start a **Community Shop Cooperative**.

# Funding

The start up of the Shop was initially funded by the sale of shares to the community totalling €34K and further supported by €9.4K Grant Aid from FLAG.



We have 274 share-holders, mostly local and semi locals but also quite a few from around the Globe who were inspired by our project and wanted to be a part of it.



St. Patrick's Day Sea Parade



The Strand Races

# Operations

**Shop wholly staffed by a panel of 30 volunteers**

- **Convenience Store** – Grocery Best Buys and Must Haves + Parcel Pick up.
- **Local Produce** – Selling locally produce artisan foods.
- **Arts & Crafts** – Selling locally produced items from our many talented artists.
- **Tourist Office** - main point of contact for what's on in Courtmacsherry Bay Area
- **Exhibition Room** – (in progress), For Various local exhibitions and Permanent home for exhibitions such as the *Lusitania Centenary Commemoration Story*.
- **Book Store**– Customised room where we sell 2<sup>nd</sup> hand books for €1 or €2.



# Supporting Local Business

The Shop has become the central hub of the village. It provides a much needed service to sustain the growing market of coastal hill walking, marine life enthusiasts, water sports, Sea Angling and general day trippers.

Since the establishment of the shop, local businesses such as Hotel, Bars, Restaurants, B&B's, Self Catering Accommodation, Marine activity providers have all seen a growth in their numbers.

We have also seen new Marine Adventure businesses, Bars and Restaurants open or re-open over the last 2 years.



# Supporting Local Projects / Events

The share-holders agreed that any profits from the shop would be put back into the Community. We now support local projects and events such as:

- Sea Food Festival
- National School Play ground
- Macra Na Feirme
- Máire Ní Síthigh – Autumn School
- Foróige Youth Club
- The Strand Races
- Lusitania Model Project
- Courtmacsherry Rowing Club
- Special Olympics Clonakilty
- Tidy Towns Committee
- St. Patrick's Day Land & Sea Parade
- Barryroe Agri Show
- Annual Harbour Festival
- Development Association
- Courtmacsherry Sailing Club
- Seven Heads Tourism
- Wild Atlantic Way Marathon Walk
- Courtmacsherry RNLI
- Barryroe Senior Citizens

May Bank Holiday Weekend 2015

RNLI

COURTMACSHERRY  
HARBOUR

100 YEARS  
COMMEMORATING

RMS LUSITANIA

1915



Lifeboats



R.M.S. "LUSITANIA."  
Sunk by German Submarine off  
Old Head of Kinsale,  
7th May 1915.



Many exhibitions, historical walks and events held over the weekend and below a photo of the 1915 Lifeboat.





The re-enactment of the Courtmacsherry Lifeboat call to the RMS Lusitania



Courtmacsherry RNLI: The keepers of her final resting place.

The old Courtmacsherry RNLI Station at Barry's Point.



## LUSITANIA COMMEMORATION PROJECT

- This project utilises **maritime history and heritage** to develop a tourism product with a focus on coastal themes of historical significance. We allied with local heritage groups to create the community non-profit development of the Courtmacsherry Lifeboat Lusitania Centenary Committee, the aim of which is to commemorate the **tragic sinking of the Lusitania in a dignified manner to remember all those lost, recall the gallant efforts that were made in the attempts to save life and drive local and visitor awareness of the West Cork connections to the events of 1915 while increasing maritime tourism potential and raising the historic maritime profile of the local area.**
- The commemoration was held on the **May Bank holiday weekend 2015** with the centerpiece being a Lusitania Exhibition in Courtmacsherry Lifeboat Station and other local venues.
- To coincide with the exhibition, the lifeboat crew **re-enacted the call to service** and rowed out to the site of the disaster in the restored pulling and sailing Ryder lifeboat from circa 1902.
- **FLAG contributed over €1,800 to the events.**
- The Lusitania centenary events (despite poor weather conditions) created maximum attendances at all the events staged. It is estimated that over **6000 people visited the area** from May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 15<sup>th</sup> which is 10x of what our normal visitor numbers would be for that period of time.
- **All beds were sold out** within a 10Km radius for the May weekend.
- **Sustainability** - The Lusitania story continues to be told by a pop up exhibition that we put on from time to time in the **Community Shop** which is also sponsoring the manufacture of a large model of the Lusitania.
- In the future, we hope to have funding for a dedicated **Lusitania monument** in a key public area recently purchased by the Cork County Council.