

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Agenda & Papers- 17th September 2025

Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call

Association Meeting

1. Chair's announcements
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of interest
4. Minutes of last meeting ([attached](#))
5. Matters Arising
6. Register & declarations of interests (verbal)
7. Financial update ([report](#))
8. Shellfish Hygiene Classifications in the Menai Strait ([report](#))
9. Public Profile of the Association (verbal)
10. Welsh Government Activity ([report](#))
11. North West IFCA Activity ([report](#))
12. All Party Parliamentary Group: Shellfish Aquaculture (verbal)
13. Menai Strait East (verbal)
14. Menai Strait West Fishery Order ([report](#))
15. Menai Strait Partnership Forum (verbal)
16. Future Direction for MSFOMA ([report](#))
17. Fishery management issues (verbal)
18. Any Other Business (verbal)
 - a. Correspondence
19. Proposed dates for next meetings:-
 - a. Weds. 17th September 2025 (Virtual Meeting)
 - b. Weds. 10th December 2025 [AGM followed by business meeting] – Marine Centre Wales

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 30th April 2025 Microsoft Teams Video Conference Call

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*
Ioan Thomas†
James Wilson*
Lewis le Vay

Chair
Cyngor Gwynedd
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Bangor University

Observers

Emily Payne
Rowland Sharp
Trevor Jones
Robert Floyd

Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water
Natural Resources Wales
Menai Strait (West) Applicants
Welsh Government – Fisheries Division

Advisors

Jim Andrews*

MSFOMA Secretariat

Notes

** These individuals are also Directors of the Association*

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reflected on the fact that MSFOMA is at a crossroads and that this meeting provided an opportunity to consider its future direction.

2. Apologies

Alex Scorey
Howard Mattocks
Kim Mould*
Nia Jones
Oisín Lowe-Sellers

Natural Resources Wales
Beaumaris Town Council
Myti Mussels Ltd
North Wales Wildlife Trust
Menai Strait Partnership Forum

It was noted that representation was still being sought from the Royal Yachting Association, and the Secretariat would continue to pursue this.

Action: Secretariat

3. Declarations of Interest

The Chair asked participants in the meeting to declare if they have any interest in an agenda item before speaking.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on the 3rd of December 2024 were accepted.

The Secretariat confirmed that all of the actions arising from the previous meeting had been addressed with the exception of responding to the WG consultation on Marine Licence exemptions. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to review the responses to that consultation and to consider whether any action was required.

Action: Secretariat

5. Matters Arising

It was considered that most of the matters arising from the last meeting were addressed on the agenda for the current meeting.

Some items raised at the December meeting that were not formally addressed on the agenda were discussed:-

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

James Wilson reported that there had been no further progress with removal of the sand that had accumulated in the dock and was restricting access.

It was agreed that this issue should be kept under review.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Pacific Oysters

There was a discussion of the Welsh Government policy on approval of Pacific Oyster cultivation.

Rowland Sharp had reported at the last meeting that he had commissioned work within NRW to collate all available information so that the organisation would be able to provide advice that reflected current knowledge. This work was still ongoing.

Rob Floyd confirmed that applications were being dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The First Minister had indicated that there would be no policy determined for Pacific Oysters during the current term, and that a future policy may be determined after May 2026.

It was agreed that this item should be kept on the agenda for future meetings.

Action: Secretariat

6. Register of Interests

The Chair reminded all participants to check their Statement of Interests on the MSFOMA website (https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478) to confirm whether it is accurate.

7. Financial Update

The meeting accepted the report that had been submitted about the Association's finances. It was noted that the Association's financial position was presently better than predicted because of the successful partnership with North Wales Rivers Trust to create and fund participation in the Menai Strait Partnership Forum.

The Secretariat noted that the Association agreed its financial plan in 2022 to cover the period to the end of February 2028. It would be appropriate formulate a new financial plan for discussion and adoption in good time, and to develop a draft proposal during 2025.

Action: Secretariat & Chair

8. Shellfish hygiene

The Chair introduced the report on shellfish hygiene classifications in the Menai Strait, which are critical to the future viability of mussel farming here.

The meeting was informed that the new Sanitary Survey was published in March along with new shellfish hygiene classifications for the revised classification zones. All of the new classification zones had achieved a “Class B” status.

It was noted that 12 months ago progress with revising and publishing the new Sanitary Survey had stalled. It was only after MSFOMA had raised the prospect of a legal challenge with FSA Wales that progress had been made; however it was noted that once FSA Wales had committed to finishing this review, progress had been made very swiftly. The local authority Environmental Health Officers at Cyngor Gwynedd and Ynys Môn County Council had also made a vital contribution to progress.

The meeting agreed that letters of thanks should be sent to FSA Wales, the Chair of FSA (Professor Susan Jebb), and to local authority EHOs to thank them for their support.

Action: Chair, Secretariat

Lewis Le Vay noted that now that these areas had been designated as “Class B” it would take 3 years of sustained better results to attain a “Class A” designation. He noted that the Seafish Shellfish Strategy Working Group (SSWG) had been informed about progress with the introduction of the “pour plate” analytical method, which was likely to give more consistent results. Adoption of this method is optional. It was considered appropriate for MSFOMA to encourage local EHOs to adopt this new method.

Action: Chair, Secretariat

9. Public Profile of the Association

The Chair confirmed that this was currently a lower priority than other issues. The Association’s X/Twitter account was dormant. The Secretariat agreed to check that the MSFOMA website was up to date.

Action: Secretariat

10. Welsh Government Activity

The Secretariat’s report was noted and received. Two aspects of the report were discussed.

- **Consultations**

It was noted that no comments had been submitted to the consultation on exemptions from Marine Licensing requirements was considered. It was agreed that the Secretariat should review the comments that had been made and consider whether any follow-up comments were required.

Action: Secretariat

- **Ministerial Advisory Group for Welsh Fisheries (MAGWF)**

The Chair confirmed that there had been no meetings of the Ministerial Advisory Group for Welsh Fisheries (MAGWF) since November.

- **Funding / Grants**

It was reported that the Marine & Fisheries Funding Group had held a couple of meetings to review and determine grant applications.

A new Coastal Capacity Building Fund of £500k was due to be announced shortly.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate for MSFOMA to continue to work with NWRT to look for opportunities for grand funding of projects related to improving water quality.

- **Personnel Changes**

Rob Floyd reported that an interim leadership team would be in place following Gareth Bevington's departure. Julian Bray would be the temporary Head of Policy and Shelley Vince would be temporary Head of Fisheries Control & Enforcement.

11.NW IFCA Activity

The report on recent activities of the NWIFCA was received and accepted by the meeting.

Trevor Jones reported that he had looked at seed mussels in Morecambe Bay earlier in the week. There had been no sign of mussel spat on South America skear, but a lot further south. Elsewhere he had seen evidence of a lot of predation and scouring of mussel beds. He had been liaising with Anna Plumeridge (NWIFCA Senior Science Officer) and understood that they were due to be carrying out surveys of these and other mussel beds on upcoming low tides. Her perception of stock status was similar to Trevor's.

Trevor did not expect a large fishery in Morecambe Bay this year, but felt that there should be some opportunities for dredging. He anticipated that there would be a need for dialogue to resolve the differing needs and views of the hand gathering and dredge fishery operators.

12.All Party Parliamentary Group: Shellfish Aquaculture

It was reported that this Group had been re-constituted and had met on the 26th of February. Seven MPs had attended this meeting.

The Group Chair is Caroline Voaden MP (South Devon), and the Vice-Chair is James Wild MP (NW Norfolk). Other APPG Members are Jane Kirkham MP (Truro & Falmouth); Torcuil Crichton (Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles)); Séamus Logan MP (Aberdeenshire North & Moray); Angus MacDonald (Inverness, Skye & West Ross-shire), Steve Darling MP (Torbay), Sir Bernard Jenkin MP (Harwich & North Essex), Neil Duncan-Jordan MP (Poole).

The Shellfish Association of Great Britain were supporting this group by providing administrative support to organise meetings and circulate minutes.

13. Menai Strait East Fishery Order

Trevor Jones reported on the efforts that the shellfish industry in the Menai Strait were taking to address the challenges arising from the difficulty post-Brexit of exporting mussels to the main markets in the EU. Myti Mussels are presently investing in purification facilities to enable a quantity of depurated mussels to be produced locally for export.

There is now a single dredger working from Porth Penrhyn with 3 crew. It is fishing daily for local markets and sales in London. Volumes of mussels being harvested were low. The other two dredgers that had been operating in the Strait prior to 1st January 2021 were now working elsewhere.

Trevor indicated that he needed to carry out some dredging activity as part of husbandry operations on his leased area (Area 3). The dredger currently operating in the Strait was unable to carry out this work. He proposed to hire in one or possibly two dredgers from Wexford for this.

The Secretariat advised the meeting that this proposal would not contravene the terms of the lease for the area nor the terms of the Fishery Order. It was agreed that the Association should support this proposal and should write to Welsh Government accordingly.

Action: Secretariat

14. Menai Strait West

The Chair and Secretariat indicated that they had spoken to Welsh Government in March and earlier in April about the prospects for progressing this Fishery Order proposal. It seemed very likely that a repeat of the consultation that was carried out in 2015 would be needed if progress was to be resumed.

The meeting noted that the main interest in this part of the Strait was associated with Pacific Oysters, and that in the absence of a WG policy for Pacific oyster cultivation it was not possible to predict the outcome of a consultation.

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat should hold further meetings with WG and NRW to determine an appropriate course of action.

Action: Chair, Secretariat

15. Menai Strait Partnership Forum

The Chair provided an update on the "Menai Strait Partnership Forum" (MSPF) that had been set up in collaboration with the North Wales Rivers Trust, and using funding from the Welsh Government's Coastal Capacity Fund. The MSPF had organised several meetings and initiated several projects to raise awareness of water quality issues, and was perceived to be successful.

Funding for MSPF from Welsh Government had ended in March. Some additional funding had been provided by the Esmée Fairbairn Trust to enable work to continue, and more support from other sources of funding was being sought.

16. Future Direction for MSFOMA

The Chair and Secretariat set the scene for this report: MSFOMA had successfully driven the process for renewing the Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait in 2022, and had also encouraged the publication of a new Sanitary Survey in 2025. It has in the past sought to pursue the wider development of shellfish farming in the Strait (through the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order); and has been engaged in promoting better awareness of water quality issues in the Strait (through the Menai Strait Partnership Forum).

It was appropriate to consider what MSFOMA should do next. It could either simply administer the Fishery Order in the eastern Strait or it could seek to promote shellfish farming and seek opportunities for expansion. The paper presented to the meeting considered some options.

Lewis Le Vay highlighted the importance of ensuring that any future actions were consistent with MSFOMA's duties and Grantees of the Fishery Order, and also its Articles of Association. For instance, with regard to oyster cultivation in the eastern Strait it may be appropriate for MSFOMA to act on the basis of commercial interest, but perhaps not on its own initiative.

It was agreed that the Secretariat should check for constraints or direction on what might be appropriate future directions arising from the Fishery Order and Articles of Association.

Action: Secretariat

James Wilson indicated that this was an area that needed attention. Mussel output was likely to remain at around 150-200t p.a. unless something significant changed with regard to market access and conditions. Oysters could be a good alternative but the problems with uncertainty over Pacific oyster cultivation were a major obstacle. Food sector initiatives to promote mussel consumption would seem a good course of action. He had looked at Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) for Menai Strait Oysters a few years ago but had considered that the application process was too onerous.

Emily Payne mentioned that the AMP 9 funding includes allowance for natural solutions to improved water quality as well as conventional "concrete" solutions. For instance at Tremeirchion in Denbighshire wetland treatment of effluent will be used to improve effluent quality. An aerated reed bed is due to be used at Treborth. Dŵr Cymru were keen to get involved in co-delivery of projects like this, either with MSFOMA or with its participant organisations.

The meeting considered other options such as cultivating other species and looking at other locations. No obvious alternatives presented themselves.

It was agreed that this issue should be kept under review and discussed at future meetings.

17. Fishery Management Issues

1. Coastal / marine developments

i. Bangor Pier

No updates on work at Bangor Pier have been received since the last meeting.

ii. Sand in the dock

This was discussed at the start of the meeting (see Matters Arising).

2. Environmental / health issues

i. Shellfish hygiene classification

This was discussed earlier in the meeting (see item 8).

ii. *Bonamia*

No update.

iii. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

No update. There is a standing item to keep looking out for slipper limpets.

Action: All

iv. *Norovirus*

No further update.

18. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

No correspondence of any significance had been received that was not covered by discussions of agenda items.

19. Dates for next meetings

Meeting dates were agreed for 2025:-

- a. 17th September 2025 (virtual)
- b. 10th December 2025 [also AGM] (in person, not virtual)

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Contact RYA Cymru to confirm representation to replace Ruth Iliffe.	Secretariat
2.	Sand in Dock - keep under review.	James Wilson & Secretariat
3.	Pacific oysters - keep on the agenda.	Secretariat
4.	Financial plan - develop a new plan to succeed the 2022-28 financial plan.	Secretariat & Chair
5.	Shellfish hygiene - letters of thanks to FSA Wales, FSA Chair, Local EHOs	Chair, Secretariat
6.	Shellfish hygiene - encourage local EHOs to adopt "pour plate" analytical method.	Chair, Secretariat
7.	MSFOMA Website - check it is up to date.	Secretariat
8.	WG Consultation on Marine Licence exemptions - review consultation responses and follow up if necessary.	Chair, Secretariat
9.	APPG - provide update on progress to next meeting.	James Wilson & Secretariat
10.	Menai East liaise with WG about Irish vessels carrying out husbandry work.	Chair, Secretariat.
11.	Menai West - liaise with WG to determine the steps necessary to progress this application.	Chair & Secretariat
12.	Future Direction - check for any constraints / opportunities in the MSFOMA constitution.	Secretariat
13.	<i>Crepidula fornicata</i> - look out for slipper limpets and report sightings of any shells / individuals.	All
14.	Date for next meeting - 17th September 2025	All

Financial Update

Background

As a company limited by guarantee, the Association is required to submit a record of its accounts at the end of each Financial Year. This report provides a brief financial update for the current and past Financial Year.

Recommendations

1. That the Association considers performance within the current FY against the current financial plan (Annex B).
2. That the Association should discuss financial planning for the period after the end of the 2027-28 FY.

1. Financial Plan 2022-2028

- 1.1 The Association agreed a new Financial Plan at its Annual General Meeting in December 2022. This is included at Annex A of this report. This Plan was a response to the difficult economic and administrative environment that shellfish farmers are currently coping with. It minimises the financial burden of the Order on the Association's tenants by limiting MSFOMA operating costs.
- 1.2 The Association is advised that the economic and administrative environment for shellfish farmers is still challenging. It remains appropriate to keep to the 2022 Financial Plan.
- 1.3 The December meeting of the Association considered that it would be appropriate to develop a new Financial Plan to cover the period from the end of the 2027-28 FY. It would appear that, based on current performance, the Association is able to operate adequately as the administrator of the Fishery Order at current levels of income. Unless the Association takes on new responsibilities or inflationary pressures increase expenditure significantly, it would seem appropriate to extend the current plan into the next few financial years.

2. Budgetary performance in current Financial Year

- 2.1 An income and expenditure report for the Association for the MSFOMA 2025-26 Financial Year (starting on 1st March 2025) against the revised Financial Plan is presented in Annex B. This shows both the actual and budgeted values for each item of income and expenditure.
- 2.2 Key points to note are:-
 - a) **Expenditure** has been much lower than expected. This is largely due to no invoices having been received for administration of the Order during the current FY.
 - b) **Income** during this FY has been as expected.
 - c) **Reserve:** the Association's bank balance at the end of August 2025 stood at £26,301.35. This is higher than the target reserve of £10,000. This is due to the

grant income received in the 2024-25 FY which was not part of the original budget, and also the fact that no invoices for administration of the Order have been received yet in this FY.

3. Budget for 2025-26FY

- 3.1 The budgetary performance for the current FY shows that the Chair and Secretariat are managing expenditure and income within the limits set by the Financial Plan, and that the overall intent of the Plan are being met.
- 3.2 At the December AGM it was agreed that the Association should adopt the proposed budget for the 2025-26FY (see Annex A). Lease fees will remain frozen for the time being. The Association is advised that this will result in a likely small deficit in this FY, which is consistent with the Financial Plan.

MSFOMA Secretariat
September 2025

Annex A: Revised MSFOMA Financial Plan for the period 2022-23 to 2027-2028, adopted December 2022.

Item	Financial Year					
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
1. Revised Expenditure - inflated at 3%.						
Administration of the Order*	£12,000.00	£12,360.00	£12,730.80	£13,112.72	£13,506.11	£13,911.29
Enforcement activity*	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Corporate core*	£1,200.00	£1,236.00	£1,273.08	£1,311.27	£1,350.61	£1,391.13
Renewal of Fishery Orders						
Menai East	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Menai West	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Research & monitoring*	£500.00	£515.00	£530.45	£546.36	£562.75	£579.64
Community fund	£500.00	£515.00	£530.45	£546.36	£562.75	£579.64
Total Expenditure	£14,200.00	£14,626.00	£15,064.78	£15,516.72	£15,982.23	£16,461.69
2. Recurring Income - inflated at 0% to maintain value of a £10000 reserve with 3% inflation rate applying to expenditure.						
Leases for lays	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00
Licences	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00	£15,100.00
Operating surplus / deficit	£900.00	£474.00	£35.22	-£416.72	-£882.23	-£1,361.69
3. Reserve						
Predicted Reserve	£ 10,687.17	£11,161.17	£11,196.39	£10,779.67	£9,897.44	£8,535.75
Target Reserve	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00

Annex B: MSFOMA Financial performance for the 2024-25 FY against the updated (December 2022) Financial Plan.

Item	Updated Year Budget	Quarter 1 (1st March - 31st May)		Quarter 2 (1st June - 31st August)		Quarter 3 (1st Sept. - 30th Nov.)		Quarter 4 (1st Dec. - 29th Feb.)		Year to Date (Cumulative)		
	2025-26	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Performance
										Q2	Q2	Q2
1. Expenditure												
Administration of the Order*	£13,112.72	£0.00	£3,278.18	£0.00	£3,278.18	£0.00	£3,278.18	£0.00	£3,278.18	£0.00	£6,556.36	-£ 6,556.36
Enforcement activity	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£ -
Corporate core**										£0.00	£0.00	
Accountancy fees	£1,311.27	£2,100.00	£327.82	£0.00	£327.82	£0.00	£327.82	£0.00	£327.82	£2,100.00	£655.64	£ 1,444.36
Bank charges	£96.00	£24.00	£24.00	£24.00	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	£0.00	£24.00	£48.00	£48.00	£ -
Renewal of Fishery Orders*										£0.00	£0.00	
Menai West	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£ -
Subscriptions	£900.00	£0.00	£225.00		£225.00	£0.00	£225.00	£0.00	£225.00	£0.00	£450.00	
Research & monitoring	£546.36	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£273.18	-£ 273.18
Community fund	£546.36	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£136.59	£0.00	£273.18	-£ 273.18
Total Expenditure	£16,512.72	£2,124.00	£4,128.18	£24.00	£4,128.18	£0.00	£4,128.18	£0.00	£4,128.18	£2,148.00	£8,256.36	-£6,108.36
2. Income												
Leases for lays	£15,100.00	£778.30	£7,550.00	£6,341.50	£0.00	£0.00	£7,550.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7,119.80	£7,550.00	-£430.20
Legal Costs	£0.00		£0.00		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Grant***	£0.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£1,000.00	£0.00	£1,000.00
Total	£15,100.00	£1,778.30	£7,550.00	£6,341.50	£0.00	£0.00	£7,550.00	£0.00	£0.00	£8,119.80	£7,550.00	£569.80
Operating surplus / deficit	-£1,412.72	-£345.70	£3,421.82	£6,317.50	-£4,128.18	£0.00	£3,421.82	£0.00	-£4,128.18	£5,971.80	-£706.36	£6,678.16
Reserve	£10,000.00	£19,983.85	£10,000.00	£26,301.35	£10,000.00		£10,000.00		£10,000.00	£26,301.35	£10,000.00	£16,301.35

Shellfish Hygiene Classifications in The Menai Strait

Background

Water quality, and in particular the abundance of bacteria from effluent inputs, is an important factor determining the viability of shellfish harvesting and cultivation.

Shellfish beds in the UK and EU are classified according to the abundance of bacteria in shellfish samples that are collected and analysed by environmental health officers from local authorities. There are six shellfish sample sites for mussels in the eastern Menai Strait.

Much of this report reproduces information from recent Association meetings, which is provided for reference and context.

The new part of this report comprises an update on the completion of the new “Sanitary Survey” for the Menai Strait and the corresponding shellfish hygiene classifications.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received, along with any verbal updates from participants at this meeting.
2. That the Association should formally thank the Food Standards Agency and local authority Environmental Health Officers for their support in finalising and implementing a new “Sanitary Survey” for the Menai Strait.

1. Introduction and Context

- 1.1 There are 400 shellfish “production areas” in England and Wales, which are each classified in response to the abundance of a bacterium (*Escherichia coli*) in samples of shellfish taken within or near to the production areas. These production areas are designated for cockles, mussels, oysters and clams. *E. coli* is found in animal faeces and is used as an indicator of the likely level of sewage effluent that the shellfish have been exposed to, and hence as a measure of the public health risk of consuming shellfish.
- 1.2 Shellfish production areas may be designated Class A, B or C, according to the abundance of *E.coli* in shellfish flesh. The requirements and limits for each classification are set out in Annex III of EU Regulation (EC) 853/2004 and Articles 53, 54 and 55 of Retained EU Law Regulation (EU) 2019/627. They are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of shellfish classification requirements.¹

Classification	Minimum Number of samples per year	E. coli per 100g of flesh	
		Requirement	Limit
A	10	80% of samples ≤ 230	700
B	8	90% of samples ≤ 4600	46,000
C	8	All $\leq 46,000$	-
Unclassified	-	$\geq 46,000$	-

- 1.3 Class A shellfish can be harvested for direct human consumption without any further treatment. Class B shellfish must be either purified, relayed for a month in a Class A water, or heat treated prior to human consumption. Class C shellfish must be either relayed for 2 months in Class B waters and then purified; or relayed for 2 months in Class A waters; or heat treated prior to human consumption.
- 1.4 For most shellfish beds a single classification (A,B, C or unclassified) applies for 12 months of the year. The FSA can also grant a “seasonal” classification: a higher classification for part of the year when historic results have been good, and a lower classification for the rest of the year (for instance a Seasonal A/B or a Seasonal B/C). The criteria for allocating these seasonal classifications are set out in the current FSA *“Protocol for Classification of Shellfish Production Areas, England and Wales”*²
- 1.5 Prior to the UK’s departure from the EU the main market for shellfish from the Menai Strait was in Europe. Mussels from the Class B shellfish beds were exported directly from the Strait for relaying or purification in Europe.
- 1.6 Since the 1st January 2021 it has no longer been permissible to export Class B shellfish from the UK directly into Europe: they must be purified, relayed or heat treated prior to export. Only Class A shellfish can now be exported direct to EU markets.
- 1.7 The UK has very limited capacity for mussel purification (which also causes high in-transit mortality). Only 9 of the 87 mussel production areas in England and Wales currently have a “Class A” designation.

2. Shellfish classifications in the Menai Strait

- 2.1 The location of shellfish sampling points, the sampling method, and the extent of the “Classification Zones” (CZs) around their “Representative Monitoring Points” (RMPs) are set out in a document produced on behalf of the Food Standards Agency and called a “Sanitary Survey”.
- 2.2 The extent of classification zones and the location of CZs and RMPs that were in place up until March 2025 are shown in Figure 1.

¹ <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/shellfish-classification>

² Food Standards Agency (2023) ‘Protocol for Classification of Shellfish Production Areas, England and Wales’, p. 25. Available at: <https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/Classification%20protocol%20Aug%202023%20-%20FINAL%20for%20PUBLICATION.pdf>.

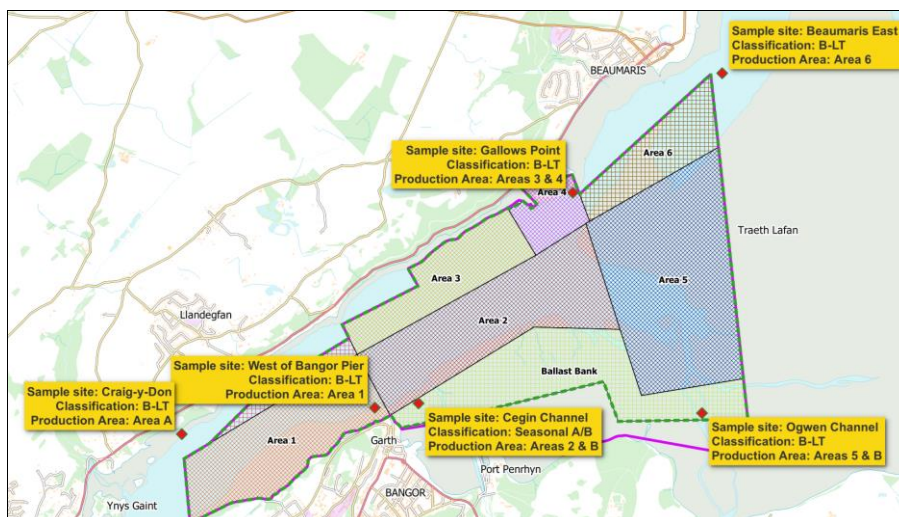


Figure 1: Map of the Eastern Menai Strait showing shellfish sampling locations, classification results, and production areas.

- 2.3 In 2019-2020, three of the six Classification Zones in the Menai Strait had a “Class A” designation. In the following years a succession of poor shellfish hygiene results resulted in the progressive downgrading of all of the shellfish hygiene classifications (see Table 2).
- 2.4 Between January 2021 and December 2023 the shellfish farmers in the Strait were largely dependent on the seasonal A/B classification of production areas 2 & B to sustain their export business to the EU. Updated shellfish classifications were published on 5th December 2023 covering the period from 1st December 2023 – 30th November 2024³, downgrading all zones to “Class B”. This classification was unaltered for 2024-25 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Shellfish classifications for zones in the Eastern Menai Strait for the past 5 years. Green shading indicates a Class A classification, yellow shows Class B. Gradient shading shows when there were within-year changes. Data from FSA website.

RMP	Zone	2019-20	2020-21 [†]	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Beaumaris East	Area 6	A	B	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT
Cegin Channel	Areas 2 & B	B-LT	B→A→B →A/B*	A/B*	A/B*	B-LT	B-LT
Craig-y-Don	Area A	A	B→A→B	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT
Galloway Point	Areas 3 & 4	A	B	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT
Ogwen Channel	Areas 5 & B	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT
West of Bangor Pier	Area 1	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT	B-LT

Notes

† In 2020/21 the FSA state that “Classification is provisional due to insufficient sample results, either in number or period of time covered, or for those returning less than 10 samples in the review year.” All zones were designated “Class B” initially, two sites were upgraded to A, then downgraded to B following a poor result, after which Cegin Channel / Areas 2 & B were designated a seasonal A/B.

* Seasonal Class A” from 1st October to 30th April, and a “Class B” at other times

- 2.5 The downgrading of Areas 2 & B from seasonal A/B to a long term B classification in 2023 has had a significant adverse impact on shellfish farming in the Menai Strait.

³ These are available from the FSA website here: <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/shellfish-classification#revision-log>

2.6 In response to the change in shellfish classifications in 2023, MSFOMA has worked with the shellfish farmers in the Strait and the Food Standards Agency to finalise the revision and updating of the “Sanitary Survey” for the Strait. The revised document was published in March 2025⁴ and includes many changes that have been suggested by MSFOMA, including:-

- a) **Classification Zones:** the boundaries of the CZs have been altered to better match the character of the Menai Strait and the boundaries of the Fishery Order.
- b) **Representative Monitoring Points:** the location and number of RMPs has changed. There are now 8 RMPs rather than 6. Seven of the RMPs have been moved so that they are located within areas that are actually used by mussel farmers.
- c) **Sampling method:** official control samples will now be taken by mussel farmers using dredges when the tide is in rather than by hand when the tide is out.

2.7 These revisions represent very substantial changes. The new RMPs and CZs are shown in Figure 2.

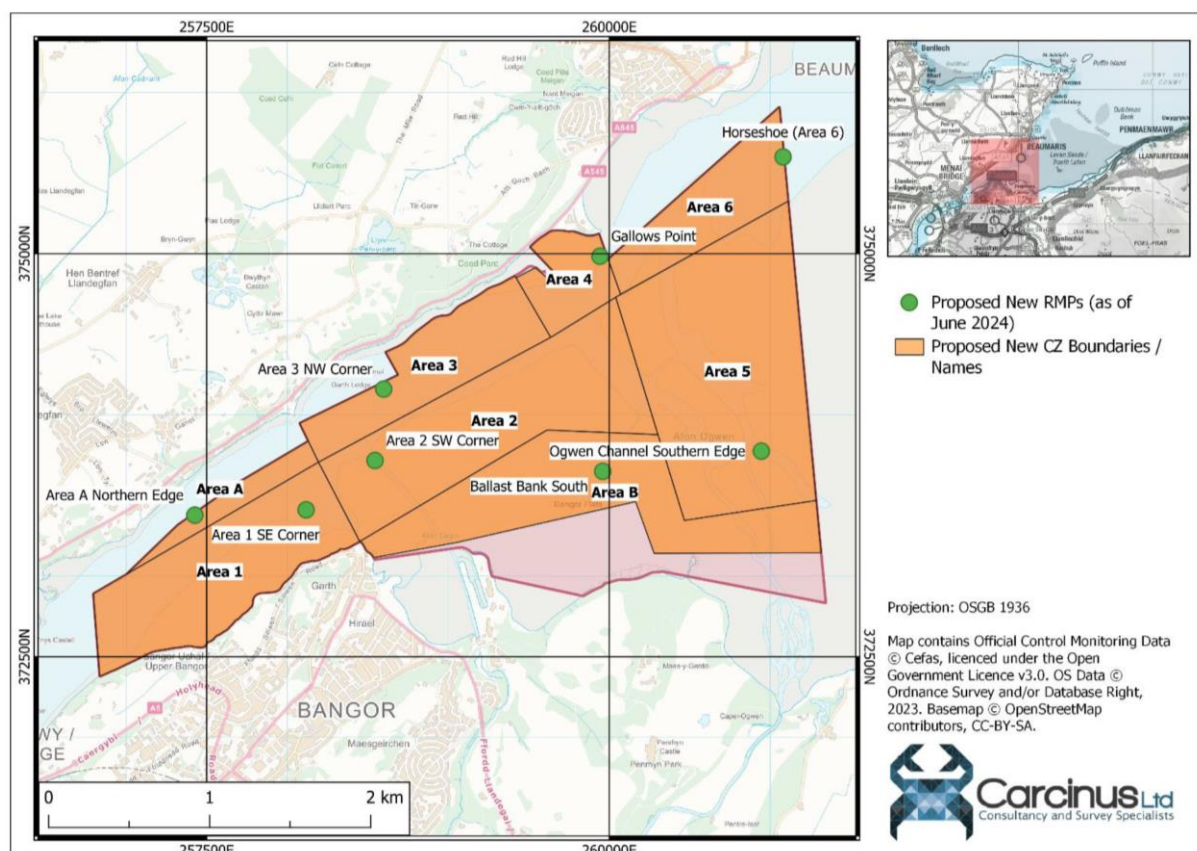


Figure 2: Map of the Eastern Menai Strait showing revised Representative Monitoring Points and Classification Zones.

⁴ This is available here: <https://www.carcinus.co.uk/environmental-services/water-quality-and-sediment-quality/sanitary-survey-reviews-may-2020-present/#>

- 2.8 Unfortunately despite these many changes, and a period of accelerated sampling of the new RMPs to classify the new CZs, there has been no improvement in classification status in the Strait. The time series of results from the old RMPs in 2024-25 and the new RMPs from November 2024-March 2025 are shown in Table 3 & Table 4 respectively. The outcome has been that all of the new CZs have been granted a “Class B” classification, and that the one unchanged CZ (Gallows Point) has retained its “Long Term B” classification.
- 2.9 The results of samples taken after March 2025 are included for all RMPs in Table 4. These results are generally consistent with those gathered prior to March. There is some sign of better shellfish quality in recent months in Area A and Area 6, but it would take a sustained improvement to alter the “Class B” classification awarded for the corresponding CZs.

Table 3: Shellfish sample results for old RMPs in the Eastern Menai Strait during 2024-25. Green shading indicates a result in the "Class A" range, yellow shows Class B, rose shows "Investigation State" results. Figures are numbers of E.coli / 100g of mussel flesh. Grey shading indicates no sample was collected. Data from Cefas website.

RMP	2024												2025		
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
Beaumaris East	230	110		690	780	45	780	490	13000	4900	45	330	130	230	20
Cegin Channel	78	130		690	110	68	130	230	450	690	78	170	130	330	68
Craig-y-Don	1300	170		330	490	40	130	490	2300	780	110	78	330	130	20
Gallows Point	230	130		330	230	110	330	450	2300	780	18	45	230	230	45
Ogwen Channel	230			230	130	170	110	130	3300	490	20	330	170	330	78
West of Bangor Pier	45	170		230	780	130	110	1400	4900	4900	18	130	230	170	

Table 4: Shellfish sample results for revised RMPs in the Eastern Menai Strait during 2024-25. Green shading indicates a result in the "Class A" range, yellow shows Class B. Figures are numbers of E.coli / 100g of mussel flesh. Grey shading indicates no sample was collected. Data from Cefas website.

RMP	2024					2025											
	Nov	December				January				February	March	Classification 2025	April	May	June	July	August
	27th	4th	12th	19th	30th	7th	15th	22nd	29th	5th	12th		16th	14th	-	23rd	11th
Area A Northern Edge	230	490	450	780	110	2200	490	330	490	93	330	B	490	330		110	110
Area 1 SE Corner	330	230	230	1300	110	1300	330	330	330	130	490	B	330	780		170	330
Area 2 SW Corner	450	490	690	780	110	2300	270	330	1700	170	230	B	1300	490		330	780
Area 3 NW Corner	780	490	220	270	45	780	170	230	330	45	330	B	780	330		330	78
Area B Ogwen Channel S Edge	690	490	2200	780	780	780	780	230	780	330	330	B	1700	1300		690	230
Area 6 Horseshoe	230	230	1300	780	330	1100	330	330	490	330	230	B	780	780		230	45
Area 5 Ballast Bank	780	330	130	780	1100	2300	230	230	330	1300	330	B	1300	490		490	170
Gallows Point*	18	45				230				230	45	B-LT	1300	450		330	45

* Note that the Gallows Point samples prior to March 2025 were taken by hand at low tide, and were taken on different dates to the other RMP samples.

3. Communications with FSA Wales

- 3.1 Over the period April 2024 – March 2025, the mussel farmers in the Strait and MSFOMA have worked very closely with FSA Wales to revise and update the Sanitary Survey.
- 3.2 A letter has been sent from MSFOMA to FSA Wales to thank their officers for working to expedite progress with the revisions to the Sanitary Survey and its implementation.

4. Local Action Group

- 4.1 No meetings of the Local Action Group for the Menai Strait have taken place since the last Association meeting.
- 4.2 It was noted at the last MSFOMA meeting that the Local Action Group members have supported the implementation of the new sampling methodology which allows samples to be taken by dredge from cultivated areas when the tide is in, which is how mussels are gathered commercially.
- 4.3 A letter has been sent by MSFOMA to the Chief Executives of Cyngor Gwynedd and Ynys Môn County Council to thank the local authorities for their support and input into this process.

5. Wider context

- 5.1 On the 19th May 2025 a new “UK-EU Common Understanding” was announced⁵. This represents a reset of the UK-EU relationship which has 3 pillars: security; safety of citizens; growth and trade.
- 5.2 The “growth and trade” part of the UK-EU reset includes negotiating a new “Sanitary and Phytosanitary” (SPS) agreement. This is particularly relevant to the shellfish industry because it includes “...rules applicable to the production, distribution and consumption of agrifood products, the regulation of live animals and pesticides, the rules on organics as well as marketing standards applicable to certain sectors or products.” This includes the export of live bivalve molluscs such as mussels to the EU.
- 5.3 In July 2025 the European Commission submitted a recommendation to the European Council should approve a decision to authorise negotiations between the UK and EU on a SPS agreement⁶. This recommendation does not set out any recommendations specific to bivalves, but it does set out the parameters for negotiation.

⁵ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukey-summit-key-documentation/uk-eu-summit-common-understanding-html>

⁶ European Commission (2025) *Recommendation for a COUNCIL DECISION authorising the opening of negotiations between the European Union and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on a common sanitary and phytosanitary area between the European Union and the United Kingdom in respect of Great Britain and to link the United Kingdom and the Union’s greenhouse emissions trading systems*. COM(2025) 408 Final, p. 12. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:56c7c27f-6221-11f0-bf4e-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (Accessed: 12 September 2025).

- 5.4 The most recent update from the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB), who are closely involved with Defra in this process, suggests that Defra is aiming to have new SPS legislation in place by the end of 2027.
- 5.5 Members will be aware from the events of the past 10 years that political support will be needed to ensure that changes to the UK-EU SPS regulations deliver genuine benefits. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Shellfish Aquaculture that is being supported by SAGB is likely to play a role in the successful outcome to these negotiations.
- 5.6 It would seem appropriate for MSFOMA to also encourage politicians to support the swift and effective implementation of new SPS arrangements. The Chair and Secretariat recommend that letters should be sent to the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs (Huw Irranca-Davies AM), the UK Fisheries Minister (Angela Eagle MP), and the UK Minister for the Constitution and EU Relations (Nick Thomas-Symonds MP) to provide this support and stress the importance of a successful resolution for the shellfish industry in North Wales.

MSFOMA Secretariat
September 2025

Welsh Government Activity

Background

The Welsh Government is responsible for managing inshore fisheries in Wales. This report provides a brief update on some Welsh Government Activities that may be relevant to the work of MSFOMA.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received, along with any verbal updates from the Welsh Government officials invited to the meeting.
2. That the Association considers whether it is appropriate for MSFOMA to respond to the Welsh Government consultation on Marine Licence exemptions.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Welsh Government website provides information about consultations and meetings of various stakeholder groups that are relevant to the Welsh Fishing industry. A brief summary of recent activity is provided below.

2. Meetings of Fisheries Groups

- 2.1 Welsh Government has established several groups to assist with the administration and management of Welsh fisheries. The key groups are:-
 - a) **Inshore Fisheries Groups** - these groups were established to provide stakeholders with a forum for communicating and engaging with Welsh Government. They were disbanded several years ago, and at the same time the membership of the Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group (WMFAG) was broadened and supported by ad-hoc "Task and Finish" groups. The most recent WMFAG meeting resolved to maintain this arrangement and to review its effectiveness in December 2020.
 - b) **Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group (WMFAG)** - this group was established to assist with the formulation of appropriate policies, plans, strategies and laws relating to marine fisheries in Wales. Information about this group is now available from <https://beta.gov.wales/wales-marine-fisheries-advisory-group>. The most recent published WMFAG minutes were for the meeting on 15th September 2020 (published on 10th December 2020 [here](#)), which were reported and discussed previous MSFOMA meetings.
 - c) **Aquaculture Advisory Group** - this Group was established to help Welsh Government meet the targets that it set in the 2013 Wales Marine and Fisheries Strategic Action Plan for aquaculture production of 2,000t of finfish and 16,000t of shellfish by 2020. No meetings of this group have taken place recently. The most recent WMFAG meeting confirmed that the AAG has been "...suspended following poor attendance and dissatisfaction." WMFAG further resolved to remove a reference to the AAG from its own Terms of Reference "...as that sub-group was disbanded."
 - d) **Ministerial Group for Welsh Fisheries (MAGWF)** - this group was created by Welsh Government in 2022. Information about this group is

available from <https://www.gov.wales/ministerial-advisory-group-welsh-fisheries>. An update on recent meetings is provided below.

3. Ministerial Group for Welsh Fisheries (MAGWF)

- 3.1 MAGWF does not seem to have had a meeting since 7th November 2024, which the Chair attended and updated the December Association meeting about. A verbal update on any activity of this group will be provided at the meeting.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 There are no consultations currently open on the Welsh Government website that seem to have direct relevance to MSFOMA or to shellfish farming in the Strait.

5. Welsh Government Officials

- 5.1 The Chair and Secretariat have had some informal discussions with WG officials about the process for progressing the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order; Welsh Government policy concerning Pacific oysters; and about organising a visit by the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs to the Menai Strait. No other matters of significance have been discussed.

MSFOMA Secretariat
September 2025

North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority Activity

Background

The North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NWIFCA) are responsible for managing sea fisheries including mussel fisheries in the coastal waters lying between the Dee and the Solway Firth. This area includes the UK's largest seed mussel resource, which is vital to the ongoing success of the Menai Strait mussel fishery. This report provides a brief update on NWIFCA activities that could have an impact on the Menai Strait mussel fishery.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received.
2. That the Association should note the NWIFCA response to our request to keep the need for a Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan on their agenda.

1. IFCA Meetings

- 1.1 Since the last meeting of the Association the NW-IFCA has held one quarterly meetings, on the 26th of June. The next quarterly meeting is scheduled for the 25th of September. Meetings of the Technical, Science and Byelaws (TSB) Sub-Committee took place on the 29th of May and 5th of August. The next TSB meeting is scheduled for the 4th of November.
- 1.2 The TSB meeting on 5th August received a recommendation from officers that there were ephemeral seed mussel beds at Black Scar and Perch Scar on the western side of the Wyre Channel that were suitable for either dredging or hand gathering, subject to expressions of interest from industry and a favourable Habitats Regulations Assessment.

2. Changes to Byelaws

- 2.1 There are no proposals to alter any NWIFCA byelaws that may impact the mussel industry at its next meeting.

3. Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan

- 3.1 It has been noted that in recent years the NWIFCA have had difficulties opening seed mussel beds for dredging because of the absence of a clear policy framework that would guide IFCA officers and also frame the expectations of interested parties. The Chair has previously written to the NWIFCA to encourage progress with a Mussel Management Plan for all or part of the NWIFCA District.
- 3.2 There is no evidence of progress with a Mussel Management Plan yet, but it was reported to the TSB meeting in August that progress is being made with a Cockle Fisheries Management Plan for the NWIFCA District. It can be hoped that if this plan is implemented successfully, NWIFCA will have the capacity and appetite to produce a similar Management Plan for mussels.
- 3.3 The Chair and Secretariat will keep this issue under review.

MSFOMA Secretariat
September 2025

Menai Strait West Fishery Order Application

Background

In 2012 the Association resolved to work with shellfish farmers from the western Menai Strait to renew the Menai Strait West Fishery Order, which lapsed in 2008. An application for renewal of this Fishery was submitted to Welsh Government in 2013. The renewal of the Order is essential to secure the future development of shellfish farming in this area.

A public consultation on the proposal to renew the Menai Strait West Fishery Order was carried out by the Association in October-November 2015. A significant number of objections were submitted. The Association worked with local stakeholders to address these concerns, and good progress was being made until late 2019 when WG officials indicated that concerns about cultivation of Pacific Oysters had arisen. Since that date the Association has been working with the shellfish farmers in the western Menai Strait and scientists from Bangor University to try to address these concerns.

Over the past two years this area of work has been halted because of the issues associated with Pacific oysters, and in particular the absence of a clear policy on this matter.

This report repeats a review of the information relating to this issue presented to the last meeting so that the Association, largely for information with regard to the following agenda item about the Association's future direction and strategy.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received
2. That the Association should determine how it wishes to proceed with this application.

1. Context

- 1.1 The Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order was established in 1978 for a period of 30 years. This Fishery Order provided the basis for the development of some oyster and mussel farming activity in the western Strait. The Order lapsed in 2008, preventing the further development of these businesses. An application for renewal of the Order was submitted to Welsh Government by MSFOMA in 2013.
- 1.2 After a series of discussions with Welsh Government officials, a draft Fishery Order was published for consultation in 2015. This consultation generated many objections from the local community. The Association worked closely with the objectors during the period 2015-17 to allay and address their concerns. In July 2017 the Chair of the Association wrote to the Cabinet Secretary to ask her to determine the application for the Fishery Order.
- 1.3 At the March 2019 meeting of the Association, it was reported that the Minister for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths AM had made a commitment to complete the process for making a new Menai West Fishery Order by August 2019.

- 1.4 At the Association meeting in September 2019 WG officials indicated that they were working with lawyers to determine the conditions that would be associated with the Fishery Order. It was anticipated that this would meet the December 2019 deadline proposed by the Minister.
- 1.5 In November 2019 WG officials provided some informal feedback from their legal advisors concerning a condition that could be included in the Order, requiring that Ministerial consent was given for leases before they were issued. This proposal was discussed at the following MSFOMA meeting and considered to be consistent with the approach set out in the 2015 Draft Order.
- 1.6 At the December 2019 Association meeting some concerns were raised by WG officials about the mitigation approach for Pacific oysters. Subsequently this has become the key obstacle to progress for the Order.

2. Pacific Oysters

- 2.1 Welsh Government has been working since 2019 to determine an appropriate approach to managing and mitigating the risk of Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) from cultivation areas in Wales becoming established in the wild as “feral” oysters.
- 2.2 During the period since 2019 the issue of Pacific oysters has been reviewed by WG Science, who produced a “Pacific Oyster Review” in 2020; and the Marine Centre Wales who worked with MSFOMA to produce a report entitled “*Current status of the Pacific oyster, Crassostrea (Magallana) gigas, in the Menai Strait, spawning potential and potential mitigation using triploid oysters*”. The Welsh Minister was sent a copy of that report in June 2022 and the Chair presented it to the WG Ministerial Advisory Group on Fisheries in Wales (MAGWF) at its meeting in November 2022.
- 2.3 There has been no discernible progress with this issue over the past three years. NRW have indicated that they are maintaining an up-to-date review of current literature that will enable them to respond with authority consultations on a case-by-case basis. There is no evidence of a policy on Pacific Oysters emerging at a Welsh or UK level other than to determine applications case-by-case.

3. Next steps

- 3.1 The Chair and Secretariat have held informal meetings with WG officials to discuss the prospects for progressing the Menai West Fishery Order. WG officials have advised that MSFOMA would be expected to repeat the consultation exercise that was conducted in 2015 if it wanted to progress the Fishery Order application. This would have financial costs for the Association.
- 3.2 Based on experience gained during the process of renewing the Order in the eastern Strait it is likely that a new Order would not be in place until at least two years after this date.
- 3.3

MSFOMA Secretariat
September 2025

Future Direction & Strategy for the Association

Background

The Association was established in April 2010 with the single purpose of acting as the Grantee for the Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait, taking over this role from the old North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee.

Over the past 15 years the Association has managed the Fishery Order in the eastern Strait effectively and efficiently, and has also progressed several other projects to address challenges faced by the shellfish farming industry, notably an application for a new Fishery Order in the western Menai Strait; the renewal of the Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait; and expediting the revision of the Sanitary Survey for the Menai Strait.

The Association has also participated in various scientific projects addressing issues such as water quality and the cultivation of Pacific oysters; and it is encouraging community-led environmental projects through the Menai Strait Partnership Forum that the Association founded in collaboration with North Wales Rivers Trust.

Further challenges lie ahead for the shellfish farmers in the Strait and for the Association itself. The purpose of this paper is to encourage discussion of these challenges and to consider how the Association can continue to nurture shellfish farming in the Strait.

The recommendations and report set out below were presented at the April meeting of the Association. At the last meeting there was little time left to consider the future direction for the Association, and it is appropriate to keep this matter under review.

Recommendations

1. That the report is received.
2. That the Association discuss and consider options for determining the future direction and strategy of the Association.

1. Context & ideas

- 1.1 The challenges faced by shellfish farmers in 2025 are very different to the challenges that they faced in 2010, or indeed in 2020. The single biggest change in the past 15 years occurred on 1st January 2021 when the UK left the EU and subsequently when the seasonal A/B classification was lost. At that moment the Menai Strait lost the access to EU export markets that were critical for the success of high volume mussel production in the Strait.
- 1.2 The past few years have been a period of adjustment for the Menai Strait shellfish farmers. They have trimmed their costs: there is now just one mussel dredger in Port Penrhyn instead of three. They are also developing shoreside facilities for depurating mussels so that they can be sold directly to UK and domestic markets.

- 1.3 It is appropriate to consider the future direction and strategy for the Association in this context.

2. Constraints

- 2.1 When this issue was first discussed by the Association in April 2025 it was recognised that MSFOMA must operate within the constraints set out in the Menai Strait (East) Mussel and Oyster Fishery Order 2022 and its own Articles of Association. The Secretariat has examined the relevant documents and key points are:-

- a) **The Menai Strait (East) Fishery Order 2022**⁷ - this Order specifies that MSFOMA may issue leases and licences, but may not do this without previously consulting the Minister. The Order contains various other administrative duties, but no duty to develop the fishery nor constraints to prevent this.
- b) **Articles of Association**⁸ - Article 3 defines the “Objects of the Company” which include, inter alia, these sub-Articles:-

“(1) To protect, preserve and improve the shellfisheries of the Fishery Areas.

(2) To apply for and implement the powers granted by the Fishery Orders and the Shellfish Act”

Article 3(5) describes a very broad ranges of actions that the Association can take to further these objectives, which include organising cooperation, entering into partnerships, and a very open-ended clause allowing the Association

“3(5) (h) To carry on any other activity which may seem to the Company of being capable of being conveniently carried on in connection with any activity which the Company is authorised to carry on or may seem to the Company calculated directly or indirectly to benefit the Company or to enhance the value of or render profitable any of the Company’s properties or rights, in each case for the purpose of furthering the objects of the Company”

- 2.2 It is clear from these documents that there is nothing in the Fishery Order to prevent MSFOMA from seeking new opportunities to promote shellfish farming in the Menai Strait. This is one of the Objects of the Association and MSFOMA has a very free hand to pursue these objects by legitimate means.

3. Options

- 3.1 There seem to be several avenues that the Association could pursue, with the aim of providing better conditions and alternative options for shellfish farmers in the Strait. These may include:-
- a) **Environmental improvement** - the Association’s composition and constitution positions it very well for encouraging water quality

⁷ Full text here: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/wsi/2022/213/pdfs/wsi_20220213_mi.pdf

⁸ Full text here: https://www.msfoma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Articles-of-association-December-2019-FINAL_Web-merged.pdf

improvements that should result in better shellfish hygiene classifications; however it should be noted that this is a medium to long term prospect. Options here would include:-

- i. **Direct engagement with Dŵr Cymru & Natural Resources Wales** – both organisations are already MSFOMA participants, and all share a goal of better environmental quality, so this is an obvious option. This would seem to fit well with the recent Dŵr Cymru call for “*less concrete, more nature*” to drive river improvements at an event they organised with Wildlife Trusts Wales and Afonydd Cymru⁹. This commitment appears to be lined to an investment of £2.5 billion of the next 5 years for nature-based water cleansing.
 - ii. **Promoting further research** – Bangor University have done a lot of work to look at water quality and sources of pollution in the Strait in recent years, and further research could help to guide and inform investment decisions by Dŵr Cymru. MSFOMA could work with the University, NRW and Dŵr Cymru to promote such research.
 - iii. **Community engagement / lobbying** – activities such as helping to set up and sustain the Menai Strait Partnership Forum would help to raise awareness and support for the investment needed to improve water quality.
- b) **Diversification** – the success of the eastern Strait has been built on large volume mussel production. There are opportunities for diversification in the Strait, which could include:-
- i. **Switching to oysters** – the Menai Strait (East) Mussel and Oyster Fishery Order 2022 allows for the possibility of cultivating oysters as well as or instead of mussels in the Strait. This would be a new departure and holds challenges of its own, but it could provide an alternative revenue for shellfish farmers.
 - ii. **Reinstating Menai West** – the Fishery Order in the western Menai Strait lapsed in 2008, and efforts to reinstate it have run into the sand. This area does, however, have a track record of mussel and oyster production that could be reinstated. Again, this would be a significant challenge, and the fact that no progress has been made with this initiative for 10 years has to be taken into account.
 - iii. **New areas** – if water quality issues mean that the eastern Strait is no longer viable as a cultivation area, it may be appropriate to work with Welsh Government, scientists and shellfish farmers to identify and trial alternative farming locations with better water quality.
- c) **Marketing** – food from some areas has a cachet and identity that promotes demand and this demand benefits producers. Oyster farmers in south Wales have recently registered “*Pembrokeshire Rock Oysters*” as a protected food name with protected geographical indication¹⁰. Doing a similar thing for “Menai Strait Mussels” would seem to be a relatively accessible short-term

⁹ Information here: <https://corporate.dwrcymru.com/en/news-media/2025/welsh-water-call-for-less-concrete-more-nature>

¹⁰ Read all about it here: <https://www.gov.uk/protected-food-drink-names/pembrokeshire-rock-oysters>

option that would support industry initiatives such as onshore mussel depuration.

- 3.2 There are undoubtedly countless other and alternative options, and it would be good to consider these and how the Association may proceed.

MSFOMA Secretariat
September 2025