



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Welsh Government
Consultation – summary of response

Setting the cockle permit fee for the 2026 - 2027 permit period

Summary of response

Date of issue: 23 March 2026

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh

1. Background

[The Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting \(Specified Area\) \(Wales\) Order 2024](#) ('the Order') introduced a new permitting and management regime, under which the Welsh Government is required to charge a fee for cockle permits that reflects the cost of running the fishery.

The consultation proposed the following:

Increase the annual cockle permit fee from £350 to £600 to recover eligible costs. This includes costs incurred and expenditure arising from:

- the management of the cockle beds,
- the scientific surveys and environmental assessments relating to the cockle beds,
- the administration of permit applications,
- analysis of daily catch returns, and any other relevant expenditure.

Costs associated with enforcement of the fishery are not taken into account in determining the permit fee.

2. Consultation period

The consultation commenced on 26 January 2026 and closed on 9 February 2026, and was shared with known stakeholders, including processors and 217 cockle permit holders, by email and via the Welsh Government consultations web page. Respondents were able to respond by email or by providing a written response.

3. Responses

The Welsh Government would like to thank everyone who took the time to submit their views and respond to the consultation; all responses received have been considered.

19 responses were received from individuals who have an interest in the Welsh cockle industry.

Responses were grouped and summarised according to respondents' views on the proposed permit fee increase, as set out below:

- **74%** disagreed with a permit fee increase from £350 to £600.
- **26%** expressed conditional agreement, primarily on the basis that enforcement of the fishery should be improved.

The rationale provided by respondents for disagreement with the proposed permit fee increase included:

- **68%** felt that there should not be an increase due to concerns that the fishery is not currently being enforced effectively.

- **42%** said the proposed increase would create an unaffordable financial burden.
- **16%** said the proposed increase would be excessive and should instead be introduced more gradually over time.
- **16%** said there should not be an increase because of rising cost-of-living pressures.

Other feedback from respondents has been grouped into the following categories and includes:

- 37% were opposed to walk-on gatherers.
- 37% felt that a daily catch limit should not be applied.
- 32% considered that the permit fee increase could lead to an increase in illegal activity within the fishery.
- 26% considered that walk-on gatherers should pay higher fees than vessel owners.
- 21% raised concerns about how the fisheries are being managed.
- 16% would like to see improved access to the fisheries.
- 16% expressed concerns about uncertainty surrounding bed opening periods.
- 16% expressed concern about vessels being overloaded with cockle.

4. Summary

The consultation consisted of a request for comments on the permit fee increase put forward for the 2026/2027 cockle permitting period.

After careful consideration of the consultation responses, the Welsh Government will be making the following change to the cockle permit period 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027:

- **Increase the permit fee from £350 to £600.**

5. Rationale

The decision to increase the permit fee is based on the following factors:

- The increase reflects the costs of managing the fishery, excluding enforcement.
- The increase will ensure that an estimated 71% of associated costs of managing the fishery are recovered. The Welsh Government will cover approximately 29% of the 2026/27 costs.
- A cockle permit provides access to fisheries within the specified area. The revised permit fee is relatively low compared with the potential seasonal income from cockle gathering in the specified area.

Whilst not associated to the increase in the permit fee, the Welsh Government will seek to improve the efficiency of cockle fishery management and its enforcement in 2026/27.

6. Next steps

Welsh Government policy officials have considered all responses and comments which were received. The increase to the permit fee will be applied to the cockle permit period 1 June 2026 to 31 May 2027.

7. Action Required

This document is for information only.

Further information and related documents

Large print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document are available on request.

Contact details

For further information:

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Additional copies

This summary of response and copies of all the consultation documentation are published in electronic form only and can be accessed on the Welsh Government's website.

This document is also available in Welsh.