

Welsh Government Fisheries Division

Cockle Permit Conditions

The Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting (Specified Area) (Wales) Order 2024

▪ **Burry Inlet Cockle Fishery - 2026/2027 permitting period**

PLEASE NOTE: This document includes only the permit conditions that pertain to the Burry Inlet cockle fishery, and forms part of the wording of the full Welsh Government Cockle Permit for the 2026/2027 permitting period. The full permit covers the entirety of the Specified Area and comprises this document and all other permit documents issued in respect of the other fisheries within the Specified Area. The full permit wording should be read with a valid email confirmation of permit approval with the permit-holder's unique permit reference number.

Any reference in this document to a 'permit' is to a full Welsh Government Cockle Permit as issued to a permit-holder for the 2026/2027 permitting period.

Welsh Government Cockle Permits are issued under the authority of the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, one of the Welsh Ministers, pursuant to the [Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting \(Specified Area\) \(Wales\) Order 2024](#) ('the Order'). The 'Specified Area' means cockle fisheries designated in the Order, as illustrated on [this](#) map.

The permit applies to a single person for a single permit period from **1 June 2026** to **31 May 2027**. The permit will enable the permit holder to fish for or take cockles from open cockle beds within the Specified Area during the permit period. A permit may not be transferred from one person to another.

All cockle beds are closed until they are assessed and declared open by the Welsh Ministers under articles 5 and 6 of the Order.

No person may fish for or take cockles or knowingly allow or assist another person to fish for or take cockles-

- (a) from a closed cockle bed, or
- (b) from an open cockle bed except and to the extent authorised by a permit,

unless they are a person exempted by article 14 of the Order.

A person who fishes for or takes cockles contrary to the provisions in the Order (including in contravention of a condition of a permit), must re-deposit the cockles on the cockle bed from which they were taken in accordance with instructions from a marine enforcement officer. When re-depositing cockles, the cockles must be spread thinly and evenly.

Part 1

Fixed permit conditions pertaining to all Welsh Government cockle fisheries within the Specified Area:

Requirement to check the status of a cockle bed

1. The permit holder must check the Welsh Government's website (www.gov.wales/cockles) each day to confirm a cockle bed is open before they fish for or take cockles from that cockle bed.

Prohibition on fishing at night

2. The permit holder must not fish for or take cockles or knowingly allow or assist another person to fish for or take cockles from a cockle bed between half an hour after sunset on any day and half an hour before sunrise on the following day.

Restriction on the use of vessels

3. The permit holder must not use a vessel over 10 metres in overall length when measured from bow to stern, when fishing for or taking cockles from a cockle bed.

Daily catch returns

4. The permit holder must submit a daily catch return to the Welsh Ministers within two days of the day on which those cockles were fished for or taken from a cockle bed. A daily catch return must record the date of each catch of cockles, the total live weight of all cockles gathered on that date, and the cockle bed from which the cockles were gathered. This can be done via the online permitting system: <https://www.gov.wales/submit-catch-return>

Gathering and sorting of cockles

5. The permit holder must sort and wash cockles before they are taken from the cockle bed and for these purposes, a cockle is deemed as taken from a cockle bed as soon as it is placed in a container (including bags, sacks, and other similar receptacles).
6. The permit holder must not have in their possession or vessel a net bag while on a cockle bed or use a net bag to gather cockles from a cockle bed. For the purposes of this condition, "net bag" means a flexible handheld device used to fish for or take cockles which has a rigid frame and a wide, open net.

Requirement to carry and produce the permit

7. The permit holder must carry their permit at all times (either in electronic or paper form) while gathering cockles from a cockle bed.

Part 2

Additional permit conditions pertaining to the Burry Inlet cockle fishery.

Opening days

1. Cockles may be fished for and taken from the Burry Inlet fishery only on the following days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

Daily catch limit

2. The permit-holder must not take more than 400kg of cockles from the Burry Inlet fishery in any one day.

Equipment for fishing

3. Cockle sacks up to a size of 25kg (approximately 45cm x 60cm) must be used to remove cockle from the cockle beds.
4. Identification tags for all sacks must be securely attached to the cockle sacks and the tags must clearly display the permit holder's permit number.
5. The use of tamps, or any other instrument used to fluidise the sand, is prohibited.

Minimum Landing Size

6. Gathering must be undertaken by hand or by rake using a fixed mesh sieve. Only cockles which are retained by a gauge having a square opening of **17.5mm** along each side of the square can be taken.

Harvestable surplus

7. Permit holders will be notified of the harvestable surplus once a stock survey and Habitats Regulations Assessment of the fishery have been completed.

Where there is evidence that the harvestable surplus has been fished or taken, the relevant area will be closed by the Welsh Government pursuant to article 7(1)(a) of 'The Cockle Fishing Management and Permitting (Specified Area) (Wales) Order 2024'.

Conditions required by the environmental assessment of the cockle bed

8. Boat-only removal. All cockle harvested within the Burry Inlet fishery must be removed from the area by vessel only*.

*Permit holders who previously held a NRW Burry Inlet cockle licence may access the bed by vehicle if they do not own a suitable vessel. Permit holders making use of this dispensation must provide Welsh Government staff with identifying details of up to a maximum of two vehicles they intend to use to access the cockle beds, prior to commencing cockle gathering. For registered vehicles, this must include the registration number. For unregistered vehicles, the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), make, model, and colour must be provided. Only vehicles reported to Welsh Government staff may be used to access the cockle beds. **The dispensation will discontinue on 30 April 2027.**

9. Gathering is permitted only within the red-highlighted area shown on the map in Annex C.

Advisory notes for the Burry Inlet cockle fishery

1. The Permit does not authorise the use of vehicles on or otherwise grant access to land bordering the Specified Area (except for those as stated in Part 2, condition 8). This authorisation does not provide any defence to prosecution under any other legislation. It has no effect in relation to and will not provide a defence to any other legal provision or requirement, including any provision of the Road Traffic Act 1988 or any other legislation applying to the use of a vehicle.
2. In addition to other statutory provisions, you may be committing a criminal offence if you access or use a vehicle in the area and bordering areas without first obtaining the prior permission of all relevant landowners (and any other relevant bodies) over whose land you intend to travel. You should also note that unless each relevant landowner has carried out all assessments required under any relevant nature conservation or environmental legislation (for example under the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC)) before granting permission to use your vehicle in the specified area, you may still be committing a criminal offence even if you have the landowner's permission.
3. Permit holders should be aware that it is a legal requirement that each batch of cockles must be accompanied by a Registration Document (previously known as movement documents) when moved from the production area, i.e. the shellfish bed, or when first placed on the market. Registration Documents must be completed and include the gatherer's details, the bed from which the shellfish were gathered and the date, before the cockles are transported (in accordance with paragraph 3 of Chapter I: General Requirements for the Placing on the Market of Live Bivalve Molluscs to Section VII (Live Bivalve Molluscs) of Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin). These documents can be obtained from Swansea Council or Carmarthenshire County Council using the following contact details:

Swansea Council: 01792 635600 or email foodandsafety@swansea.gov.uk

Carmarthenshire County Council: 01267 234567 or email PublicProtection@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
4. Gathering cockles can be dangerous and brings with it a significant element of risk to personal safety. It is strongly recommended that you carry out your own health and safety and risk assessments before undertaking this activity. You are responsible for ensuring your own safety and for implementing appropriate control measures. Permit holders should familiarise themselves with, and follow, relevant health and safety guidance issued by competent authorities and other appropriate organisations.

5. Welsh Government will close the fishery to avoid an adverse effect on the integrity of a relevant protected site, or to assess the risk of adverse effect on the integrity of a relevant protected site (as defined by under Article 2 of the 2024 order).
6. Opening and closure declarations will be sent to all permit holders via email and will be published on the Welsh Government website and, whenever practicable, declarations will be placed in clearly visible locations on or near the cockle bed.
7. Unaccompanied bags of cockles should not be left on the cockle bed after gathering has concluded as they may be seen as abandoned. Any abandoned cockles will be returned to the cockle bed.
8. Permit holders are advised to hold liability insurance for any vessel used to gather cockles.
9. The area of water covering the Burry Inlet cockle fishery is defined as Category C. A vessel involved in any manner with regard to the transportation of personnel, equipment or cargo for cockling in the area will be operating commercially. As such any vessel operating for commercial purposes, must comply with relevant United Kingdom Merchant Shipping Legislation. The applicable statutory guidance and requirements can be found on the MCA website here: [Marine Guidance Note 469 Amendment 1](#).
10. Permit holders should act responsibly and respectfully while on or near the cockle beds. Anti-social behaviour, such as abusive language, intimidation, littering or any other disruptive conduct, is not acceptable.
11. It is your responsibility to be aware of the current classification of the gathering area. If sample results fail to meet the requirements for a Class C classification, the Food Standards Agency and relevant Local Authorities will prohibit cockle gathering in the affected area until the classification requirements are met.

You can view the current classification here: [Classification zone maps - Cefas \(Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science\)](#)
12. Permit holders should take care when negotiating the “training wall” running through the estuary.
13. All participants in the fisheries, whether fishermen, merchants or regulatory staff, should thoroughly wash all external clothing and clean footwear and all equipment / implements used in the fishery and allow time to dry. This includes cockle and mussel bags if they are to be reused in another fishery. All sediment and organic matter should be removed.
14. Vehicles used in any shellfish fisheries (cockles and mussels) should be power washed to remove all sediment and organic matter prior to their use on other fisheries. Particular emphasis should be placed on any areas that have come into contact with shellfish or intertidal sediments, for instance via loaded cockle or mussel bags, footwear, or external clothing. Vehicles returning to the Burry Inlet from outside areas should be power washed prior to entering to prevent introduction of new / additional pathogens and invasive non-native species.
15. Permit holders are advised to use a vessel that is suitable and appropriately equipped for the conditions, in order to ensure their safety.

Safety warnings

Unexploded Ordnance

The Burry Inlet has been used in the past for ordnance testing. All activities carried out under this permit are undertaken entirely at the permit holder's own risk.

We strongly advise that all individuals who wish to operate in this area (whether pursuant to this authorisation or otherwise) to act with caution and carry out their own risk assessment prior to any gathering or other activity taking place in this vicinity. Should any unexploded ordnance be found please contact the local police on 101 and QinetiQ on 0800 0921345.

Further advice on unexploded ordnance can be found at:

[QinetiQ - Unidentified Objects and Unexploded Ordnance](#)

A person who contravenes the conditions of a permit is guilty of an offence under section 190 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. A person found guilty of an offence under that section is liable on summary conviction to a fine. In addition, the court may order the forfeiture of any fishing gear used in the offence and any sea fisheries resources in respect of which the offence was committed, or the payment of a sum of money representing the value of that fishing gear or resources.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Alexander', is positioned above the printed name.

Signed by Mark Alexander

Deputy Director – Fisheries

Date: 25 September 2026

Annex A**Burry Inlet area**

The area is defined as:

- (i) on the West, from the seaward end of Pembrey Pier to the most northerly point of Whiteford Point, which lies between High Water Mark or Ordinary Tides on the northern and southern shores of the estuary respectively;
- (ii) on the east, from the seaward side of that part of the Loughor Railway Bridge which is situated between High Water Mark or Ordinary Tides on the north-western and south-eastern shores respectively and a line drawn from the south-eastern end of that part of the railway bridge due south until it again meets High Water Mark of Ordinary Tides;
- (iii) on the north and south, from the High-Water Mark of Ordinary Tides on the northern and southern shores of the estuary respectively between the western and eastern boundaries.

In this section, a group of six or eight figures identifying or associated with any point represents the map co-ordinates of that point on the grid of the national reference system used by the Ordnance Survey on its maps and plans.

All latitude and longitude co-ordinates given are in degrees, minutes and decimal fractions of a minute and are co-ordinates of the World Geodetic System 1984.

Burry Inlet

Defined as:

A straight line from position:

A) SN 4670 0074; 51° 41'.07 North, 04° 13'.14 West.

Thence in a straight line to position:

B) SS 4670 9903; 51° 40'.124 North, 04° 13'.09 West

Thence in a straight line to position:

C) SS 4421 9903; 51° 40'.10° North, 04° 15'.25 West

Thence in a straight line to position:

D) SS 4280 9423; 51° 37'.49° North, 04° 16'.34 West

Thence following the boundary lines to position:

E) SS 4670 9593; 51° 38'.47° North, 04° 13'.01 West

Thence following the boundary lines to position:

F) SS 4924 9444; 51° 37'.71° North, 04° 10'.77 West

Thence following the boundary lines to position:

G) SS 5360 9593; 51° 38'.58° North, 04° 07'.03 West

Thence in a straight line to position:

H) SS 5379 9773; 51° 39'.56° North, 04° 06'.91 West

Thence in a straight line to position:

I) SS 5219 9587; 51° 41'.07° North, 04° 13'.14 West

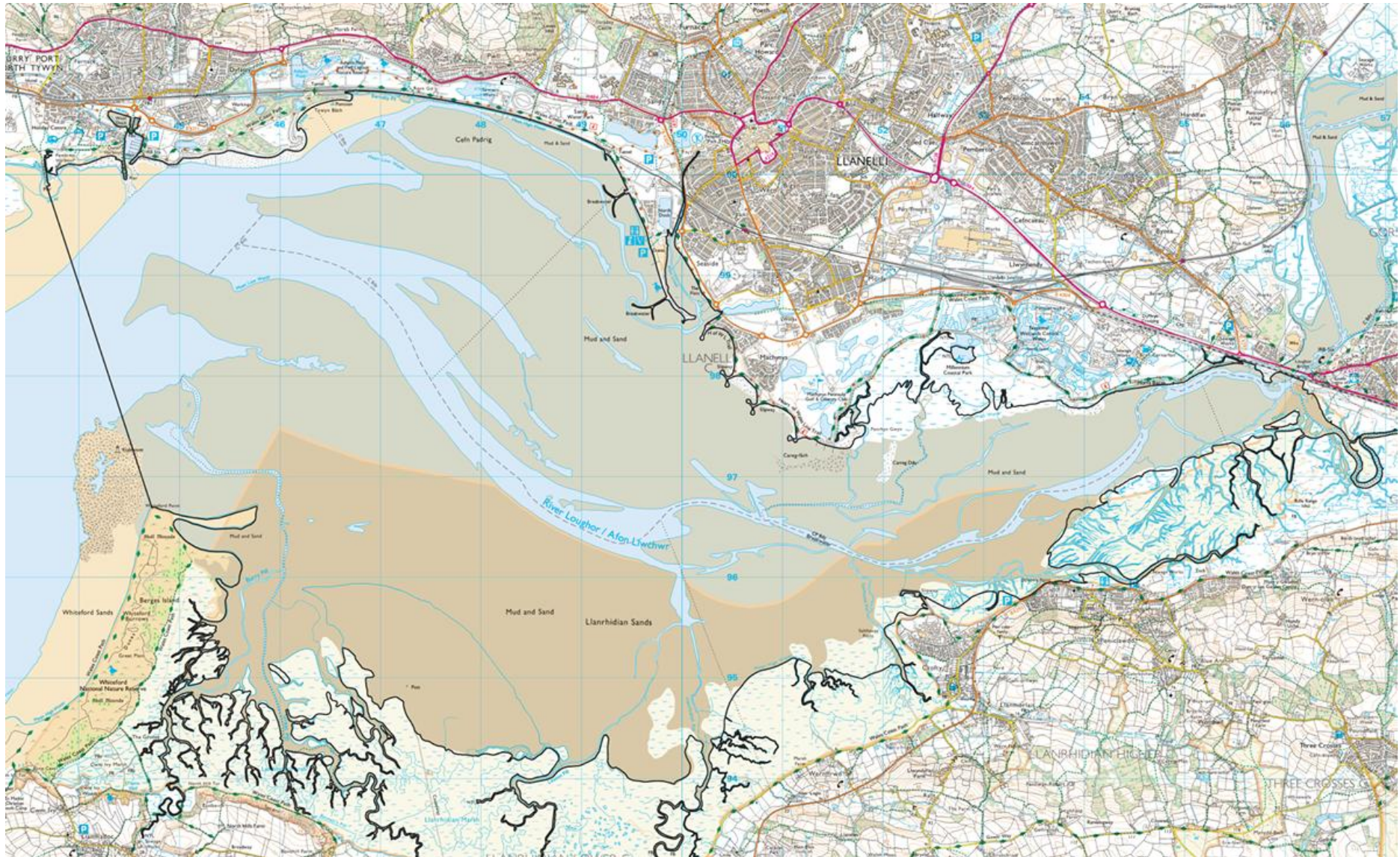
Thence in a straight line to position:

J) SS 4928 9638; 51° 38'.76° North, 04° 10'.79 West

Thence in a straight line to position:

K) SS 4933 9958; 51° 40'.48° North, 04° 10'.83 West

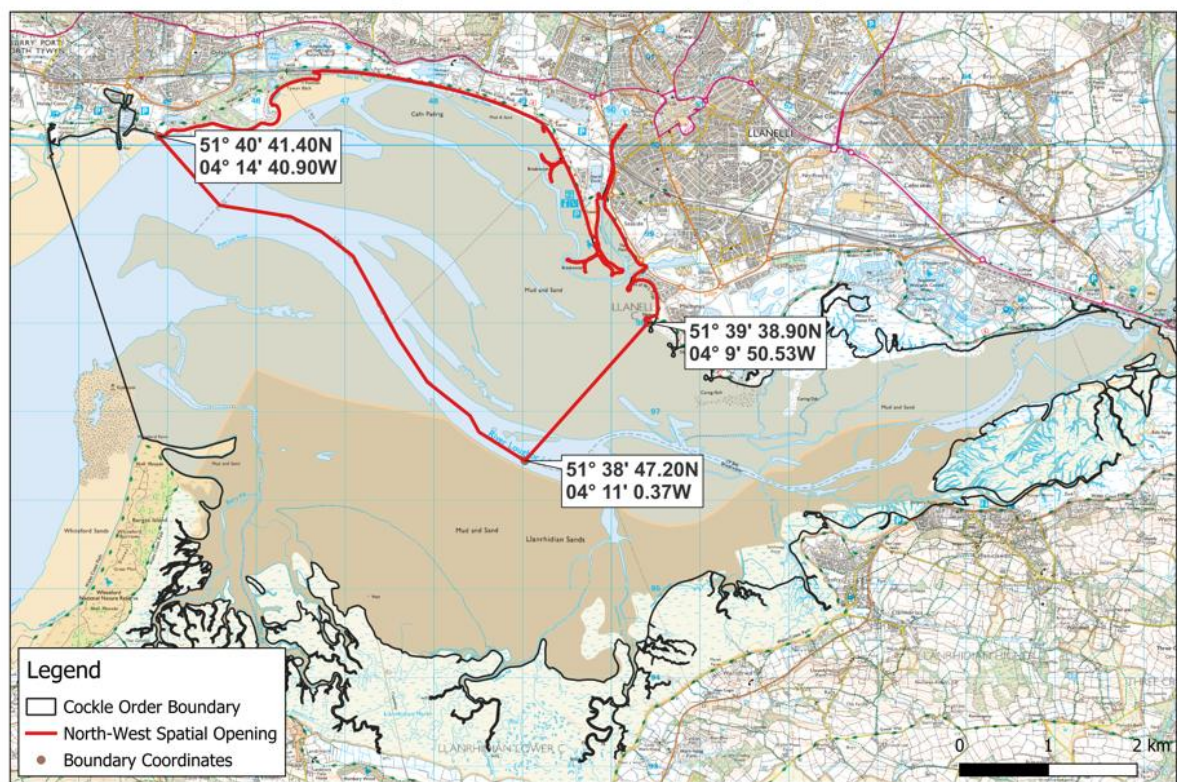
A map of this area can be found below.



Map of Burry Inlet showing access route from Crofty.



Burry Inlet North-West Winter Opening



Document version history

Version	Date published	Changes
1.0	27 April 2026	N/A - Original version
1.1	1 July 2026	Minimum Landing Size increase from 11mm to 17.5mm
1.2	1 October 2026	Area restrictions and an increase to the Daily Catch Limit