

Supporting information

Marine Licence Application for a Shellfish Site.

Loch na Droma Buidhe, Loch Sunart

March 2023

Fassfern Mussels Ltd

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Figure 1 Map showing the location of the proposed site in Loch Sunart.



Site location

The location of the proposed development is on the south shore of Loch na Droma Buidhe, at the mouth of Loch Sunart as it opens up into the Sound of Mull.

Site equipment

The centre of the proposed equipment is 56°39.234'N, 5°55.773'W (NM 59243 58252 / 56.65390, -5.92955).

The proposal is to install five 230m longlines. These will consist of 32mm head-rope, with floatation in the form of Gem 300lt longline floats. The moorings will consist of 40mm rope with 2 x 6000kg concrete blocks or 500kg anchors with 27m of 32mm chain. The moorings will measure approximately 100m to the west end of the longlines and up to 80m to the east end. The longlines will be installed 25m apart. The total area of seabed within the moorings is 410m x 100m (approximately 41,000m²). Figures 2a and 2b show the proposed longline and mooring construction and layout.

One boat mooring will be installed at 56°39.155'N, 5°55.655'W (NM 59355 58099 / 56.65259, -5.92758). Figure 2a shows longline and mooring structure. Figure 2b show the longline and mooring layout. Figure 2c shows the boat mooring structure.

Figure 2a Diagram of longline and mooring structure

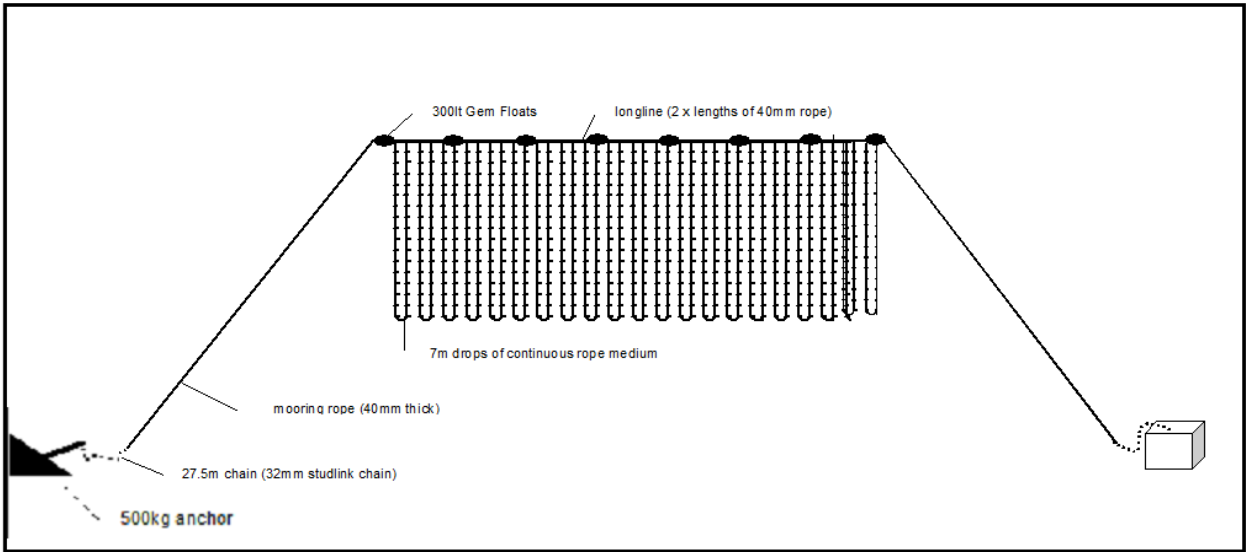
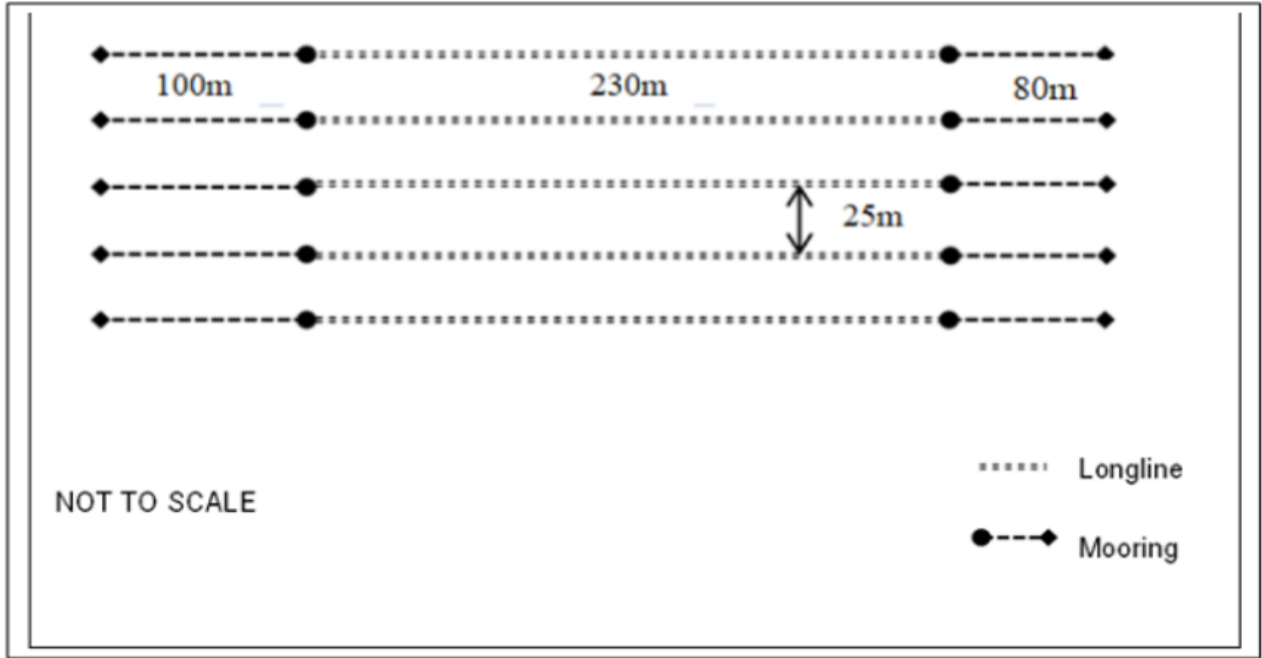


Figure 2b Longline and mooring layout – not to scale



The longlines are positioned approximately 25m apart and the overall area of the moorings is approximately 410 x 100m.

Figure 2c - Diagram of boat mooring structure

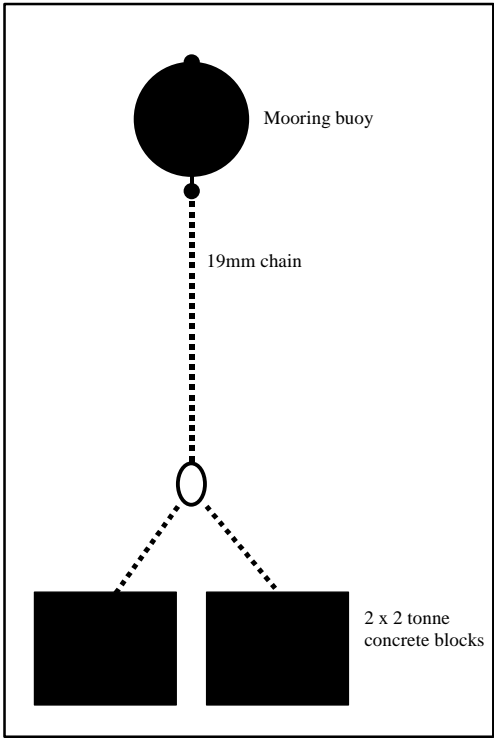
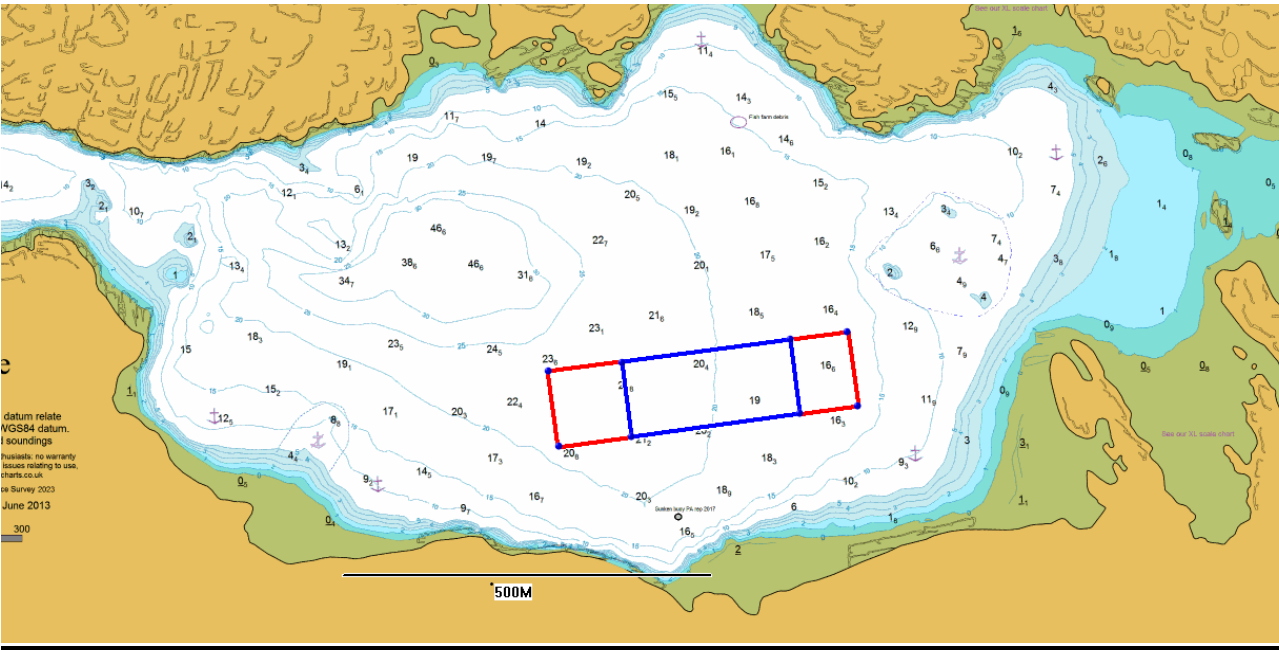


Figure 3 Proposed Location



Key: Equipment boundary / Mooring / Seabed area

Surface / Longline Area

Proposed Production Cycle

- It is proposed to use this site for catching spat. Near to the open sea, the salinity at this site is higher which would aid the collection of higher quality spat than our existing site at Liddesdale. The equipment will be installed as soon as possible to catch the last of the summer spat. Future spat collection will be carried out at the site by deploying spat catching rope in the spring / early summer in time to catch the spat settlement which occurs naturally in the loch. The seed mussels will then be grown on at this site until January/ February the following year when it will then be moved to the existing sites in Loch Sunart for on-growing to harvest size. The benefits of utilising this site in this way are:
 - the site being nearer the open sea with higher salinity will provide a supply of good quality seed.
 - As a result, this site will only ever have a maximum biomass of approximately 60 tonnes, which will be achieved by November. This biomass will be held until the following January, thus a 9 month cycle, reducing any potential impact on the seabed.

Impacts on Commercial Fishing

In a previous planning application for a spat collection site at Auliston Point we became aware of the importance of the Auliston Point location for local fishing interests. As a result we withdrew that application. During the discussions that we had with the Mull Fishermen's Association it was suggested that the now proposed site in Loch na Droma Buidhe would be a more suitable site for a shellfish farm. For the planning application associated with this Marine Licence application we have discussed this further with the local Loch Sunart fishermen and have been advised that this location would be most suitable with regards to reducing the potential impact on fishing in this area. By locating the site in the south east of Loch na Droma Buidhe, this leaves the deeper water in the middle of the loch available for creel fishing

Navigational Issues for other loch users

Preliminary enquiries have been made to the Northern Lighthouse Board and no issues regarding navigation have been raised. Marking requirements will be given as a result of this application process.

Anchorage

Loch na Droma Buidhe is a popular location utilised by visiting yachts. In preparation for the planning application related to this Marine Licence application, WHAM (West Highland Anchorages and Moorings) Clyde Cruising Club and Royal Highland Yacht Club have been contacted regarding this proposal. In response to the feedback we received we have adapted our initial proposal by:

- reducing the number of longlines we are applying for from 6 to 5.
- reducing the space between the longlines from 30m to 25m,
- moving the longlines 50m to the north
- moving the longlines 70m to the west.

As a result we are proposing to reduce the overall area we would occupy by one third. By keeping the site in the slightly deeper water this leaves the favoured anchorages in the west and the north east of the loch available for anchoring yachts and leisure craft. As the equipment will be located a minimum of 150 m from shore (at chart datum) and the moorings in a minimum depth of 15m (also at chart datum) it will also be possible to anchor to the east of the longlines. At the same time the longlines have not moved further to the north leaving the deeper water in the middle of the loch available for creel fishermen. There are several other areas in and around loch Sunart which can provide safe anchorage for yachts. These include to the north and east of Oronsay and to the east of Carna. In addition there are several other areas where shelter could be sought in the event of rough weather such as Tobermory Bay, Glenmore Bay and further anchorages within loch Sunart as the inner loch is accessed.