

Scottish Salmon Watch, 27 January 2022



**[Closing the Net on Diseased Scottish Salmon:
FOI Disclosure Reveals Plans to Dump Whiteshore Cockles in March 2022!](#)**

- **Scottish Government ties noose on illegal landfill site after two decades & millions of fish**
- **Whiteshore owner offered to fly Scottish Ministers out to North Uist dump in private jet!**

A Freedom of Information disclosure [published by the Scottish Government 20 January 2022 via FOI-2021-00254831](#) lifts the lid on more fishy goings on at an illegal dump for disease-ridden salmon at Whiteshore Cockles used by Mowi, The Scottish Salmon Company and Loch Duart in North Uist in the Outer Hebrides.



Read more via [The Ferret: The ‘illegal’ dumping of dead fish in Hebridean beauty spot set to end](#)

“Scottish salmon is dead in the water,” said Don Staniford, Director of Scottish Salmon Watch. “Mowi, The Scottish Salmon Company, Loch Duart and any other salmon farming companies using Whiteshore Cockles must be forced to follow the law and dispose of diseased fish in a legal manner. That millions of unhealthy Scottish salmon have been dumped illegally in North Uist since 2004 illustrates how the ‘Salmafia’ have been given immunity from prosecution. The Scottish Government and the Animal & Plant Health Agency (DEFRA) must enforce waste disposal laws and close the net on cheap and nasty Scottish salmon. Consumers should avoid ‘healthy’ Scottish salmon like the proverbial plague!”

[FOI-2021-00254831](#) includes:

- “I want to get the views of others within the Task and Finish Group and then run this past Scottish Government solicitors, with a view to putting a new burial derogation in place using these conditions,” [wrote the Scottish Government \[name redacted\] in an email dated 17 September 2021](#). “One thing we want to be clear is that if no PPC Permit is granted from SEPA, burial is no longer permissible. We are working towards an alternative solution and if that route fails, fish waste should be going to alternative legal disposal routes.”

- “Burial derogation: We are wanting to move away from an open ended derogation,” [wrote the Scottish Government \[name redacted\] in an email dated 28 October 2021](#). “The new derogation is likely to remain in place until 31 March (at which point it would come to an end), although subject to cancellation by the Scottish Ministers if Whiteshore Cockles fails to adhere to the conditions. On top of the conditions, an additional event that might lead to the cancellation of the derogation could be the refusal of the PPC Permit. Burial is not a long term solution, so failure to get a PPC Permit would mean the aquaculture industry seek alternative disposal routes.”

- The [email from the Scottish Government \[name redacted\] dated 28 October 2021](#) referred to “advice from Scottish Government legal colleagues” and highlighted as one of the new ‘burial waste conditions’ at Whiteshore Cockles:

To end on 31/03/22 – to be debated

-“I have discussed them [a list of conditions for the burial of fish waste at Whiteshore Cockles,” [wrote the Scottish Government’s Disease Prevention Team \(Animal Health & Welfare Division\) in an email dated 17 September 2021](#). “I have discussed them internally within SG [Scottish Government] and we agreed that they seem reasonable and not too onerous to achieve/stick by. I want to get the views of others within the Task and Finish Group and then run this past SG solicitors, with a view to putting in a new burial derogation in place using these conditions.”

Conditions which could be applied to the site:

1. No burial above ground (no bunded pits)
2. Weekly list of morts detailing daily tonnage and origin sites to be emailed to eh@cne-siar.gov.uk
3. No pits left uncovered overnight – records and daily time stamped photographic evidence to be kept.
4. Fish morts to be buried within 4 hours of arriving on site.
5. Skips to be cleaned immediately on emptying.
6. Only routine morts from Uist & Barra
7. Any disposal of event morts have to be pre-notified to CNES & SG with quantities, origin location and disposal plan
8. To end on 31/03/22 (?)
9. The site will be subject to a weekly unannounced weekly inspection.
10. Whiteshores will pay £200+vat for CNES monitoring?

On point 8, the end date of end of March next year would support Whiteshores latest estimate for being operational. One thing we want to be clear is that is no PPC Permit is granted from SEPA, burial is no longer permissible. We are working towards an alternative solution and if that route fails, fish waste should be going to alternative legal disposal routes.

- Tougher conditions at Whiteshore Cockles [detailed by Scottish Government/Comhairle nan Eilean Siar](#) include: no burial above ground (no banded pits); weekly list of morts detailing daily tonnage and origin sites; weekly inspections costing £350 plus VAT per month; no pits left uncovered overnight – records and daily time stamped photographic evidence to be kept; fish morts to be buried within 4 hours of arriving on site; skips to be cleaned immediately on emptying; and only routine morts from Uist & Barra (i.e. zero morts accepted from the Isles of Lewis, Harris & Skye – or the mainland)

- “Failure for Whiteshore Cockles to adhere to burial conditions will result in any burial derogation being revoked,” [reported the 1st meeting of the ‘Task and Finish Group’ on 22 July 2021](#). “Other disposal options are available so it should not come as a shock to the aquaculture industry if Whiteshore Cockles is no longer a disposal option.”



- “Burial is not a long term solution, so failure to get a PPC Permit would mean the aquaculture industry seek alternative disposal routes,” [wrote the Scottish Government in October 2021](#). “On top of the conditions, an additional event that might lead to the cancellation of the derogation could be the refusal of the PPC Permit.”

- “We have concerns about the current burial procedures and site capacity to bury fish morts at Whiteshore Cockles,” [wrote the Scottish Government in November 2021](#). “We are trying to prevent large quantities of/any fish morts from out with Barra and Uist being disposed of at Whiteshore Cockles.”

- “The challenge for the Uists/Barra is the current lack of disposal options and the difficulty of transporting the mortality off-island,” [wrote the Scottish Government \[name redacted\] in an email dated 2 November 2021](#). “From the perspective of disease control, the challenge is to offer a biosecure disposal option at a reasonable distance from the source of the mortalities, whilst minimising nuisance. With regard to what defines the farms in the Uists/Barra, I think of them as

being the farms with their operating shore base in the Uists/Barra, regardless of where they are spatially in the sea.”

- As of mid-November 2021, Whiteshore still had not applied to SEPA for a pollution permit with March 2022 given as an expected date to submit the application and December 2022 for SEPA to issue a licence (should it be approved without any problems) with waste processing not operational until March 2023.

- “The options are to extend the derogation to 31/3/23 or until the PPC permit is in place, whichever is the earlier, or they have to find another treatment route in the meantime” [wrote SEPA in November 2021](#).

“Just to update you on the Whiteshore Cockles PPC permit timeline,” [wrote SEPA in an email to the Scottish Government, Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and the Animal and Plant Health Agency on 9 November 2021](#). “We have had discussions with the operator and they have advised they expect to be able to submit a permit application in early 2022 with the timing dependent on some further work they need to undertake to design the emissions control infrastructure.”

“I was down in Uist next week and had a look at the site,” [wrote Comhairle nan Eilean Siar \[name redacted\] in an email dated 3 September 2021](#). “Getting on well with installing the equipment and anticipate it being in place for October. The application to SEPA has still not been submitted because of a query regarding waste water disposal. They are also under financial pressure to have it in operation by March 2022. This seems quite optimistic though if the PPC application is still in limbo.”



- [Owner of Whiteshore Cockles](#) offered a private jet owned by steel magnate John Roe to fly politicians to visit dump [1]: “I will arrange for a jet to collect the party from Edinburgh Airport private facility - fly to Uist in 30 minutes - have a couple of hours here and return you all to

Edinburgh in the afternoon,” [wrote Angus Macdonald on 16 August 2021](#). “We haven’t won the lottery! I have a friend with a private jet who is coming out to Uist during this period (he has a house here) and he is delighted to help us as he knows the importance of our project to the Uist community.”

“In respect of your continued interest and following the visit to our site by yourself and Kate Forbes MSP in the latter part of 2019 we would like to formally invite you and Kate back to Uist to see the completed project,” [wrote Whiteshore Cockles in a letter to the Scottish Government dated 24 September 2021](#). “We would respectfully also extend the invitation to the Cabinet Secretary, Mairi Gougeon and Deputy First Minister, John Swinney, who we believe would both have an interest in seeing first hand our innovative plant, which will help to ensure the long term viability of fish farming in the Western Isles, as well as visiting a unique part of Scotland which I believe they both have an interest in.”



“My suggested itinerary would be,” [wrote Whiteshore Cockles in a letter to the Scottish Government dated 24 September 2021](#). “A date in late autumn to fit in with everyone’s diaries - I appreciate the difficulty this may cause. Collected by private jet from Edinburgh airport mid morning and a flight to Benbecula airport which would take approximately half an hour in a Citation CJ4. Collected from Benbecula by Whiteshore staff and driven to North Uist for a three hour visit. A ‘Uist’ lunch at a facility we have overlooking Vallay Island to which a visit can be arranged if requested. A return flight to Edinburgh which would leave late afternoon. If the party wish to visit any other facility in the Uist during their trip I can easily organise this. The jet is operated by one of my friends, Mr [Redacted] of the Roe Group (They have a depot in Edinburgh) who has a house in Uist and he will coincide the trip with a visit for a few days. [Redacted] is very keen to promote or assist any island person/business and has made his plane available to me before for charity auctions.”

- Fishy funding: did Whiteshore Cockles bury £604,000 of public money from Highlands & Islands Enterprise (along with the millions of diseased salmon)?

“The team I work with have been briefing Ministers, dealing with correspondence from Whiteshore WCL and handling FOI’s about the business for several years now and we recently established a task and finish group with wide representation to push the long running WCL ‘fish dryer’ project to completion,” [wrote the Scottish Government to Highlands & Islands Enterprise on 30 September 2021](#). “In recent correspondence from the Managing Director of WCL to Murdoch McLeod, Deputy Director Financial Services and Location Director for the Outer Hebrides in the Scottish Government, it is stated WCL received support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). In the letter, WCL state they received grant funding to assist with the purchase of equipment. We have asked WCL about funding for their project and been informed it is private funding, perhaps this is a new development? I would be very grateful if someone could provide me with further information about the grant funding that WCL are referring to.”

“For background information,” [wrote the Scottish Government to Highlands & Islands Enterprise on 1 October 2021](#). “The Scottish Government banned the burial of fish waste in 2016. However, Whiteshore Cockles Ltd (WCL), in North Uist were granted a temporary derogation by SG to bury fish waste at their site until the fish dryer was operational. The derogation also allowed the company to begin construction on a permanent solution for fish mortalities in the Western Isles; Whiteshores claimed continued burial of fish waste at their site was necessary to fund the fish dryer; On engaging with Whiteshores, they said the fish waste dryer project is self funded; Securing this funding was one of the reasons for the delay in building the fish waste dryer; Burial of fish waste cannot go on indefinitely; Scottish Ministers need to have a clear picture of what is happening with the fish waste dryer project.”

“We have provided two grants to Whiteshore Cockles Ltd as detailed below,” [replied Highlands & Islands Enterprise to the Scottish Government on 1 October 2021](#). “Fish waste drying project – for the establishment of a facility to process salmon morts November 2016 £404k Eligible costs – plant & equipment, construction of yard and building to house the machinery Fish waste processing expansion – expansion of site to include ensiling facilities holding morts under controlled temperature and pressure Feb 2021 £200k Eligible costs – construction, steel fabrication and installation.”


On 14 December 2021, Scottish Salmon Watch filed a FOI request with Highlands & Islands Enterprise asking for documents relating to Whiteshore Cockles.

“Whilst processing your request, Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) has recognised that is also requires to be processed request in accordance with The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations Act 2004,” replied HIE in an email dated 12 January 2022. “Like FOISA, we are required to respond to your EIRs request within 20 working days unless we notify you in advance that we require to extend the timescale for a further 20 working days. Noting the above as the volume and complexity of the information requested makes it impractical to provide it within the original time period we now inform you that through EIR legislation we will be extending the potential response period to 40 working days, this means that

we will adhere to respond to you by 14 February 2021, we expect though that in practice we will be able to provide much of the information in advance of this date.”

Read a summary of the FOI disclosure by the Scottish Government (8 December 2021) compiled by Scottish Salmon Watch [online here](#)

Download all the documents [published by the Scottish Government 20 January 2022 via FOI-2021-00254831](#)



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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PUBLICATION - FOI/EIR RELEASE

Information regarding Whiteshore Cockles since July 2021: EIR release


Published: **20 Jan 2022**

Directorate: [Agriculture and Rural Economy Directorate](#)


Part of: [Marine and fisheries](#), [Public sector](#)

Information request and response under the
Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004


FOI reference: FOI/202100254831
Date received: 12 Nov 2021
Date responded: 8 Dec 2021




FOI202100254831 - Information released
72 page PDF
1.2 MB



FOI202100254831 - Annex 2
2 page PDF
121.5 kB



FOI202100254831 - Annex 1
2 page PDF
30.4 kB



FOI202100254831 - Annex 3
2 page PDF
1.1 MB

Media Backgrounder: Two Decades of Illegal Dumping of Diseased Scottish Salmon

Following an investigation by [Bruce Sandison of The Salmon Farm Protest Group back in 2005](#) and [a legal complaint filed by retired lawyer Ewan Kennedy to the European Commission in 2013](#), the illegal dumping of diseased farmed salmon in an open landfill site close to EU protected beaches in North Uist will hopefully cease at the end of March 2022.



Scottish Salmon Watch [wrote to Scottish Ministers in May 2021 and July 2021](#) urging that the illegal dumping of diseased farmed salmon at Whiteshore Cockles be stopped.

Scottish Ministers [adopted a tougher policy](#) after Mairi Gougeon took over as Rural Economy Cabinet Secretary from Fergus Ewing in May 2021. In July 2021, a [‘Task & Finish Group’](#) relating to ‘The Burial of Fish Waste and Installation of Fish Waste Dryer System at Whiteshore Cockles Ltd, North Uist’ was convened with the Scottish Government engaging with solicitors on the “legality of rolling derogation” [detailed an email disclosed by the Scottish Government to Scottish Salmon Watch on 8 December 2021](#).

“I’ve also attached a video of the large pit that was taken last week,” [wrote Comhairle nan Eilean Siar \[name redacted\] in an email dated 3 September 2021](#). “[Redacted] is forwarding you copy of the latest complaint we received from one of the local residents.”

Scottish Salmon Watch’s [FOI request dated 12 November 2021](#) was prompted by anonymous tip-offs in late October 2021 and repeated complaints from locals living near Whiteshore Cockles:

Oct 29, 2021, 11:17 AM

Hi I am wondering if you could tell me if this is legal I would like to stay anonymous as fear come back
Are a salmon company allowed to take mass mortality's from 1 site and transport them by sea to another region of Scotland then give them to someone to bury in the western isles

Another whistleblower (who phoned Scottish Salmon Watch in October 2021) claimed that lorry drivers were engaged in a cash-for-dead salmon scam which earned significant money on the black market and oiled the wheels of the illegal trade in diseased salmon dumped at Whiteshore Cockles - the witness claimed that bins full of diseased salmon were being dumped illegally for £50 each (with the cash going to lorry drivers).

Scottish Salmon Watch received an email (from a trusted local source which wishes to remain anonymous) on 29 October 2021:

“The stench here is the absolute utter worst it’s ever been. It’s going way over to Sollas with many folk complaining (quietly to each other). Countless tubs being seen daily by many. Heard from a fish farm worker that 100 tubs came from the Mainland? The derogation was only ever for Western Isles.”

Another email to Scottish Salmon Watch dated 20 September 2021 reported:

“This morning we have already seen around 60 tonnes on 3 different lorries ran by three different hauliers heading for the pits (the smell was horrific and we were in passing vehicle). It looks like they are getting every lorry they can to help transport the morts. Apparently according to someone we know in fish farm there is a race on to harvest on farms everywhere as too much dead /dying. Oh my goodness I’m just stopped at petrol station near the pits and another lorry with 40 tubs has just gone past....! Yesterday I was only out on the road briefly and saw 30T go by. They are coming from north and south heading to the pits, not sure which farms are harvesting. Another story we have heard but no evidence for this is that fish from Skye will be coming here too.”

Another email to Scottish Salmon Watch dated 8 September 2021 reported:

“I heard last weekend (second hand via a fish farm worker) that Whiteshore Cockles are planning on taking morts from the Isle of Skye. Apparently there is a rush to harvest everywhere due to high levels of lice etc. The conditions in the attached state that any disposed at the site should be from Western Isles.”

In September 2018, [the BBC's 'One Show'](#) exposed the illegal dumping of diseased farmed salmon from farms in Loch Roag on the Isle of Lewis which were transported by ferry to Whiteshore Cocksles in North Uist.



Scottish Salmon Watch [reported in March 2021](#) that Whiteshore Cocksles was named 27 times as the waste disposal route for farmed salmon mortalities from salmon farms in the Outer Hebrides including the Isle of Lewis and Isle of Harris (data sourced from 'Case Information' as [published by the Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate](#) for salmon farm inspections between September 2019 and December 2020).

The Times [reported in May 2021](#):

THE  TIMES Today's sections ▾ Past six days Explore ▾ Times Radio Log in

Islanders raise a stink over vast salmon graveyard

Marc Horne

Thursday May 27 2021, 12:01am, The Times



Islanders have complained about the stench from salmon being buried in sand dunes on a beach in North Uist.

This article is the subject of a legal complaint from Angus MacDonald and Whiteshore Cocksles.

Watch a [video report from Whiteshore Cockles in May 2021](#):




The Times [reported in July 2021](#):

THE TIMES Today's sections Past six days Explore Times Radio Log in

Fish graveyard 'severely hampers' life for islanders, officials claim

Marc Horne

Thursday July 01 2021, 12:01am, The Times



Islanders on North Uist have complained about the stench from salmon being buried in sand dunes

The dumping of rotting fish in uncovered pits has "severely hampered" quality of life at an island beauty spot, environmental officials have claimed.

In May *The Times* revealed that [hundreds of thousands of salmon](#) that had died in fish farms were being buried in coastal land on North Uist, in the Outer Hebrides. The Scottish government is now set to take enforcement action against the firm, Whiteshore Cockles, that owns and operates the site.

The Times [reported in September 2021](#):

THE TIMES Today's sections Past six days Explore Times Radio Log in

Tougher curbs for island salmon graveyard in Outer Hebrides

Marc Horne

Monday September 06 2021, 12:01am, The Times



Officials said that fish waste was being dumped in open sand pits on North Uist
CORN SMITH

A company is set to be stripped of the right to bury rotting fish at an island beauty spot after environmental officers found evidence of waste seeping from open pits.

Scottish Salmon Watch [reported in July 2021](#):



Don Staniford

@TheGAAIA



“Surely the aquaculture sector must be concerned about damage from media coverage, do we have any levers we can use to alter their choice of disposal route?” asked [@scotgov](#) in March tinyurl.com/7xcp94ur [@MairiMcAllan](#) [@ScottishEPA](#) [@LochDuartSalmon](#) [@salmon_scottish](#) [@scotgp](#)



12:51 PM · Jul 1, 2021



 **Don Staniford**
@TheGAAIA



Ewan Kennedy in today's Times: "It's extremely concerning to learn that massive quantities of diseased fish, many dead from viruses, are still being dumped in open landfill" [@thetimes](#) [@thetimescot](#) [@ewangkennedy](#) [@_KateForbes](#) [@GreenerScotland](#) [@cne_siar](#)



Islanders raise a stink over vast salmon graveyard

This article is the subject of a legal complaint from Angus MacDonald and Whiteshore Cockles. Hundreds of thousands of diseased salmon from fis...
[thetimes.co.uk](https://www.thetimes.co.uk)

6:44 AM · May 27, 2021



 **Don Staniford**
@TheGAAIA



"Fish morts from all over the Western Isles and even the mainland going to the site" [@scotgov](#) "Whiteshore are taking advantage of derogation by extending their scope or range to bring in more income...it should not be a cheap disposal route" tinyurl.com/7xcp94ur [@ScottishEPA](#)



2:46 PM · Jul 2, 2021



Here's [photos of Whiteshore Cockles published by Compassion in World Farming in March 2021](#):



Here's photos taken by [Corin Smith of Inside Scottish Salmon Feedlots](#) of Whiteshore Cockles in 2018 (which prompted the [BBC One Show's investigation](#)):





Rules: The salmon are from farms

By Joe Hutchison

ISLANDERS are being plagued by the stench of dead salmon dumped beneath sand dunes.

Campaigners are concerned about the large number of unprocessed fish being buried on a beach in North Uist by Whiteshore Cockles.

The firm was given permission to dispose of dead fish in the dunes near Kyles Paible in 2016 until a planned processing plant was completed.

Normally salmon farms must dispose of dead fish via incineration, composting or by turning them into biogas.

But five years on, the company's planned processing plant, which will produce fish oil and fishmeal, has not been completed.

Don Staniford, director of campaign group Scottish Salmon Watch, released a video of the site earlier this month. He said: "This is the sordid side of Scot-

'A risk of smells dispersing widely'

ish salmon, the disease-ridden nature of salmon farming that the industry doesn't want you to see.

'Shoppers and tourists alike will be shocked to see mass graves of disease-ridden Scottish salmon lying near EU-protected sites.'

Environmentalist Ewan Kennedy said: 'It's extremely concerning to learn that massive quantities of diseased fish, many dead from viruses, are still being dumped in open landfill.'

The EU had previously flagged concerns of unprocessed fish going to landfill sites and urged the UK to follow environmental legislation.

Whiteshore Cockles has admitted that the process is causing problems for local residents.

In correspondence with Western Isles Council, the company said: 'The current system of burying the fish waste has one major drawback. The fish are all

kept outside while the burial area is being prepared, and if there is a south-west wind then odours can be prevalent within the local community.

'The pits are covered with several layers of seaweed to allow for the natural regeneration of the ground.'

The company added: 'But again, till the waste has settled, there is always the risk of smells dispersing widely.'

The firm's owner, Angus Macdonald, said he had purchased

an industrial drying system to resolve the problem.

He told the BBC, 'I'm not going to continue burial for much longer because I have a new state-of-the-art unit coming in.'

The firm previously said it had spent years 'designing and constructing a unique drying system plant' and that engineers would 'connect the final pipework to make it operational' when Covid restrictions are eased. Whiteshore Cockles also

said it was researching ways to turn excess fishmeal into products for the local crofting and fishing community.

A spokesman for Western Isles Council said: 'We are aware of the concerns around the facility.'

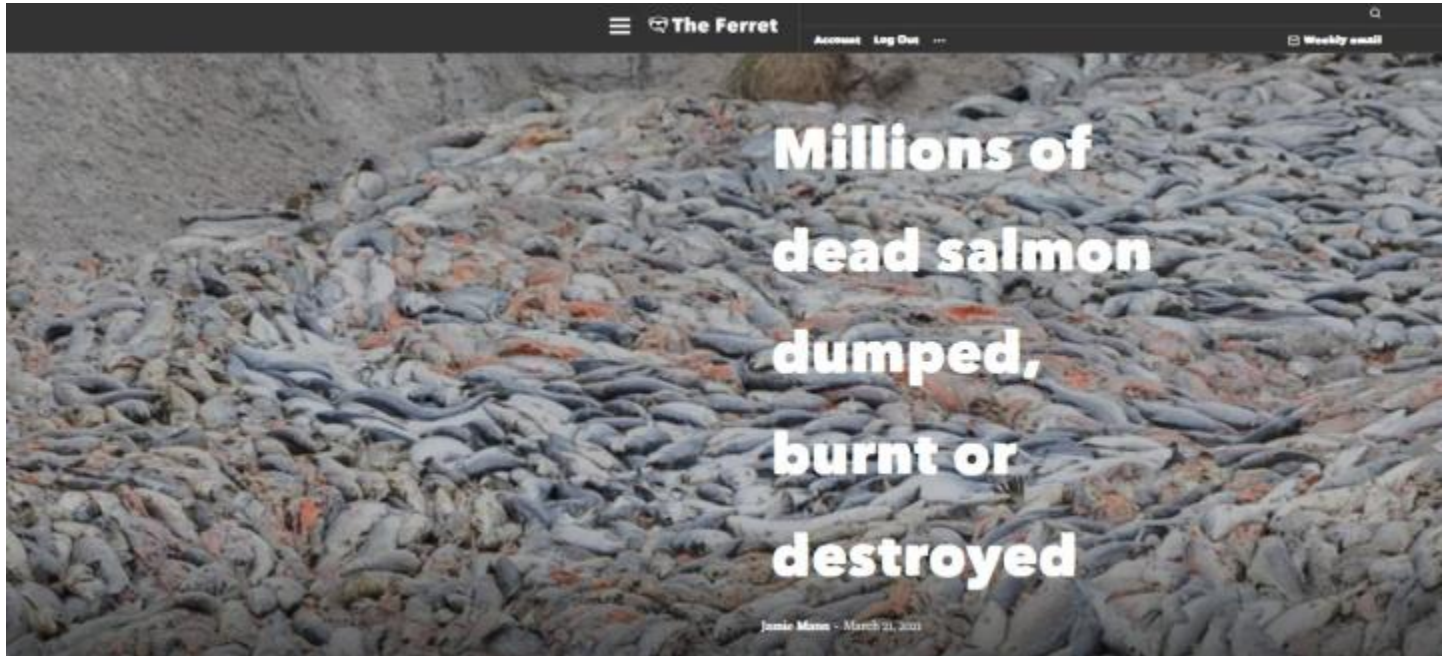
A spokesman for the Scottish Environment Protection Agency confirmed that Whiteshore would require a pollution prevention permit to operate the new facility, saying: 'We are currently awaiting an application.'

Dumped into the dunes... thousands of rotten, disease ridden salmon



Creating a stink: Dead salmon from fish farms discarded on the beach in North Uist

The Ferret [reported in March 2021](#):



The Ferret [reported in April 2019](#):



Rob Edwards [reported in The Sunday Herald in April 2016:](#)

Complaint over dead fish dumping forces rule change

from **Sunday Herald**, 10 April 2016

A local complaint to the European Commission over the poor regulation of the disposal of dead fish from salmon farms has forced the Scottish Government to rewrite the rules.

For years the caged salmon industry has been allowed to dump diseased fish in landfill sites because of a loophole in public health law. But ministers have now had to close the loophole and oblige fish farm companies to dispose of dead fish in safer ways.

From the start of 2016 salmon farms must abide by the rules introduced in the wake of the outbreak of mad cow disease (BSE) in the 1980s. The farms have to incinerate, sterilise or compost their wastes, and not just tip them into landfill sites.

The £700 million fish farming industry **has long had major problems** with many millions of salmon mortalities annually, either caused by disease, excess medication or other causes. According to figures from the **Scottish Environment Protection Agency (Sepa)**, over the last three years some 38,800 tonnes of dead fish have been recorded at fish farms across Scotland.

Between August 2011 and June 2012 82,663 salmon deaths from disease were recorded at Ardmaddy fish farm in Seil Sound, Argyll. When the local environmental group, **Save Seil Sound**, asked what had happened to the resulting 257 tonnes of dead fish, **no-one seemed to know**.

In 2013 the group **lodged a formal complaint** with the European Commission, which eventually **responded last month**. The response revealed that UK and Scottish authorities had changed the rules in order to avoid breaching European law, and incurring a fine.

"The issue was always about public health rather than fish farming," said the secretary of Save Seil Sound, former lawyer Ewan Kennedy. He discovered that virtually the whole for the west coast of Scotland had been exempted from the BSE rules.

"The consequences of a total lack of policing could range from untreated toxic waste ending up exposed in landfill sites to the risk that a farm operator might process the dead salmon into fishmeal and feed it back into the system," he said. "Four years on, the European Commission has agreed with us."

Sepa pointed out that the disposal of dead fish was regulated by other authorities. "Sepa does provide advice and guidance to these bodies and in some instances Sepa authorises facilities to accept fish waste for disposal," said Sepa's fish farm specialist, Douglas Sinclair.

"Sepa is aware of the change to the disposal routes for fish farm mortalities and welcomes the fact that such waste will not be routinely disposed of into landfill without prior treatment."

The fish farming industry stressed that there had always been regulations covering the disposal of dead salmon. "These have been updated to allow recycling and other environmentally friendly methods such as anaerobic digestion, in-vessel composting in addition to rendering plants," said Scott Landsburgh, chief executive of **Scottish Salmon Producers' Organisation**.

"The industry has found these changes helpful. The animal health division at Scottish Government is the responsible authority for this matter. A report on disposal routes has been commissioned by Marine Scotland and Zero Waste Scotland and will be published on the Marine Scotland website."

The Scottish Government pointed out that animal byproducts had to be disposed of in a safe and sustainable way. "To comply with European legislation, the Scottish Government introduced the **Animal By-Products (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2015** to change how fish mortalities and other aquaculture waste can be disposed of in the areas categorised as remote," said a government statement.

"From 1st January 2016, fish farms located in remote areas can no longer dispose of their waste in a landfill site and will now need to ensure that it is being disposed of in accordance with legislation, such as sending it for incineration, pressure sterilisation, or using it in composting or anaerobic digestion."



The Sunday Times [reported back in July 2005](#) when [Bruce Sandison \(aka ‘Old Trout’ in Private Eye first blew the whistle](#) and [suggested government agencies were guilty of a cover-up](#):



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of The Sunday Times website with options like 'Today's sections', 'Past six days', 'Explore', 'Times Radio', and 'Times+'. The main headline is 'Fears raised by salmon dump'. The author is listed as Marc Horne, and the article is dated Sunday July 17 2005, 1.00am. The article text describes a salmon dump on a beach in North Uist, mentioning that over 100,000 fish and waste were buried. It also notes that residents and campaigners are concerned about public health and are calling for tougher regulations. The article mentions an outbreak of infectious pancreatic necrosis and infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) at a fish farm run by Marine Harvest. A quote from Susan Rothwell describes the smell as 'indescribable' and mentions flies and seagulls near the dump.

The illegal dumping of diseased Scottish salmon was prompted by a mass mortality in 2004 with Marine Harvest (renamed Mowi in 2019) [hit by a suspected case of Infectious Salmon Anaemia \(ISA\)](#). Scottish Salmon Watch [revealed earlier this month](#) (10 January 2022) that Marine Harvest has hit by a positive case of ISA in Loch Greshornish in 2014 with Scottish Sea Farms testing positive for ISA in Loch Spelve in May 2021 and Landcatch’s Ormsary Hatchery in Argyll testing positive for ISA in November 2021.

Scottish Salmon Watch [reported in December 2021](#) how the Western Isles had been ranked the worst salmon farming region in the world!

Earlier this month, the Scottish Government [published damning mortality and disease information](#) including over 200,000 dead salmon at The Scottish Salmon Company’s Taranaish salmon farm in Loch Roag on the Isle of Lewis. Whiteshore Cockles is the site of disposal for salmon farms on both Lewis and Harris even though the original derogation back in 2016 permitted disposal at Whiteshore Cockles only from salmon farms in the Uists and Barra – not from farms on Harris and Lewis let alone from the Isle of Skye and the mainland.

“After nearly two decades of campaigning, the imminent closure of Whiteshore Cockles for the burial of diseased farmed salmon is to be welcomed,” said Don Staniford, Director of Scottish Salmon Watch. “Dumping millions of diseased salmon near EU protected beaches in North Uist is wholly unacceptable from a tourist perspective not to mention illegal. The Whiteshore Cockles mort mountain is blights the Western Isles which was [recently ranked as the worst salmon farming region in the world](#). Companies such as Mowi, Loch Duart and The Scottish

Salmon Company must now tackle their high mortality and lice infestation rates or face crippling bills for the legal disposal of diseased farmed salmon. In view of the decade of delay in installing a fish dryer, Scottish Ministers must now ask some very serious questions concerning Whiteshore Cockles and public funding via Highlands & Islands Enterprise. How much money has Whiteshore Cockles made via the illegal dumping of diseased farmed salmon?"

Read more via:

[The Ferret: The 'illegal' dumping of dead fish in Hebridean beauty spot set to end](#)

[The Times: "Tougher curbs for island salmon graveyard in Outer Hebrides"](#)

[FOI disclosure on Whiteshore Cockles by the Scottish Government in August 2021](#)

[Exposed: 'Legal' Salmon Dump in North Uist Caught Importing Diseased Fish From the Mainland \(& they've still not applied to SEPA for a pollution permit\)!](#)

[Taking the Fish - Illegal Salmon Dump Caught Taking Diseased Fish from the Mainland Despite 'Derogation'!](#)

[Scottish Government 'exploring strategies' for mort burial site](#)

[P&J: "Lives of Western Isles residents 'severely hampered by rotting fish dump'"](#)

[The Times: "Fish graveyard 'severely hampers' life for islanders, officials claim"](#)

[FOI Lifts Lid on the Stench of Scottish Salmon: Government Legal Department Target Illegal Dumping of Diseased Salmon](#)

[Appeal to Scottish Information Commissioner re. FOI refusal by Western Isles Council on Whiteshore Cockles](#)

[Letter to Scottish Ministers on Illegal Dumping of Diseased Scottish Salmon in North Uist](#)

[Daily Mail: "Dumped into the dunes....thousands of rotten, disease ridden salmon"](#)

[Independent: "Scottish islanders raise a stink over vast salmon graveyard"](#)

[Video Exposes Mass Graves of Millions of Diseased Scottish Salmon](#)

[The Times: "Islanders raise a stink over vast salmon graveyard"](#)

[Sunday National: "The Millions of Dead Salmon Dumped, Burnt or Destroyed"](#)

[Revealed: Burned, Buried & Ensiled Scottish Salmon](#)

[Media Backgrounder: Mort Disposal of Scottish Farmed Salmon - Ewan Kennedy - The €10 Million Mort Man](#)

[European Commission complaint over dead fish dumping forces rule change](#)

[Where have all the dead fish gone?](#)

[Fears raised by salmon dump](#)

[Diseased fish dumping continues](#)

Contact:

Don Staniford: 07771 541826 (salmonfarmingkills@gmail.com)

Notes to Editors:

[1] Read more about the Roe Group via: <http://www.theroegroup.com/> and <http://www.theroegroup.com/about-group-2>

Note that a John Roe – a director of the Roe Group and other steel companies – applied in 2012 to build a house in Askernish in South Uist: https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/media/3373/copy-of-copy_of_foi_tcp2008.xlsx

1_Reference	2_Development	3_Description	4a_Applicant	b_Applicant Address	5a_Agent Name	5b_Agent Address	5c_Agent Email	5d_Agent Phone
12/00651/PPD	House, Askernish, Isle Of South Uist	Erect house	Mr John Roe	C/o North West Steel Ltd, Fengate, Peterborough, PE1 5BQ	Mr Ralph Thompson	Aird Ruaraidh, Daliburgh, South Uist, HS8 5SS	rthomp4521@btinternet.com	01878 700684

Companies House [report for Roe Bros & Co. Ltd:](#)

Mr John Patrick William Roe ACTIVE

Correspondence address

1 Fenlake Business Centre, Fengate, Peterborough, PE1 5BQ

Notified on
6 April 2016

Date of birth
March 1958

Nationality
British

Nature of control

Ownership of shares – 75% or more

Ownership of voting rights - 75% or more

Right to appoint and remove directors

Country of residence

England

More on John Roe via <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/officers/PwwjDTm4vkkxkveMILYBanmkxxc/appointments>

Mr John Roe of Brancaster in Norfolk came 2nd in a golf competition at Askernish in 2017: <https://www.facebook.com/AskernishGC/posts/at-the-weekend-we-welcomed-visitors-from-around-the-globe-as-we-hosted-our-life-/1562617213780007/>

The engagement of John Roe's daughter was announced in Peerage News and the Daily Telegraph in October 2021: <https://peeragenews.blogspot.com/2021/10/oliverroe-engagement.html>