
[Draft] Fw: Proposed Periwinkle Ban Northern Ireland 2026

To: "Butler, Robbie" <robbie.butler@mli.niassembly.gov.uk>
Subject: Proposed Periwinkle Ban Northern Ireland 2026

Good Morning Mr Butler,

We are writing on behalf of Ardglass Shellfish Suppliers Ltd to express our serious concerns regarding the proposed Shellfish Gathering (Conservation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) and the damaging consequences this would have for our business and the wider local communities within Northern Ireland.

A four-month closure would have a severe economic impact. Closing an industry for one third of the year is not sustainable.

While it has been suggested that there would be no negative effect relating to export markets, this overlooks the reality of supply chains. If we are unable to supply our customers, they will source product elsewhere particularly from the Republic of Ireland as they don't have any restrictions.

Once those relationships are established, there is no guarantee customers will return, potentially causing long-term and irreversible damage to our business.

Ardglass Shellfish Suppliers Ltd supports numerous families across the Ards Peninsula who rely directly on us for their income. Any prolonged interruption to supply places these livelihoods at serious risk and would have knock-on effects throughout the local economy.

In addition the science behind AFBI's research is inconclusive as anyone that's know the industry can tell you there're other variables such as when bad weather is forecast Periwinkles bury themselves in mud/sand for days after and also algae it grows in late spring which Periwinkles don't like so they move away from those feeding grounds before returning in late summer.

The common Periwinkle in their very name self regulate themselves and can be hidden one day and on the next appear visibly in abundance..

Like many families in Northern Ireland I along with my Father and Grandfather collectively have gathered Periwinkles for over 70 years and don't agree there's any reduction in numbers.

Just as Farmers work their fields Winkle pickers must follow up the ground regularly or the stones and seaweed will become buried in the sand and the small wildlife like little crabs and other marine life couldn't survive and the periwinkles wouldn't have the same rich feeding grounds.

If the circumstances allow it we strongly ask you to stop the motion to ban the gathering of Periwinkles for 1/3 of the year as the knowledge of this industry is not known enough to people outside of it and that's not to mention the negative impact of driving many self employed working people on to benefits when we already have a growing unemployment crisis in Northern Ireland.

Best Regards
Paul Millar (Director)
(Ardglass Shellfish Suppliers Ltd)
