

# Doc Martin actor Martin Clunes calls Port Quin seaweed farm plans 'nothing short of criminal'

There are a few days left for people to make their objections known



Doc Martin actor Martin Clunes has called plans to erect two seaweed farms in Port Quin Bay 'nothing short of criminal' (Image: Main picture by Doon Williams / Ian Gavan / Getty Images)

Actor Martin Clunes has called plans to erect a gigantic seaweed farm off the coast of Cornwall "nothing short of criminal". The actor, famous for his lead role in the hit [ITV](#)

series [Doc Martin](#) which was filmed in Port Isaac, called the project by Biome Algae and Camel Fish Limited for two seaweed farms as big as 140 football pitches, "a hideous plan".

Clunes, who rented a property at Tregardock near Port Isaac for years while filming the Doc Martin show, has added his voice to the mounting opposition to the scheme. He said: "It's a hideous plan, in a beautiful and special area. It was waved through without consultation or proper assessment of its environmental impact. It's nothing short of criminal."

Totnes-based Biomes Algae and local fishing firm Camel Fish Ltd are proposing to install two 50-hectare industrial seaweed farms in Port Quin Bay, between Polzeath and [Port Isaac](#), on the north coast of [Cornwall](#), something which has angered the local community. It follows a plan being submitted for a [larger seaweed farm off the south coast at Gerrans Bay](#) which was [withdrawn after local uproar](#).

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In its applications, filed with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in July last year (a month before [the Gerrans Bay applications were submitted](#) for the south coast), Biome Algae said: "Seaweed has many benefits for the marine environment such as habitat restoration and increased marine life. It is expected that the farm will have a

positive economic effect within the region, providing local employment, training and support local businesses as we source our materials and equipment from them."

Local residents and businesses have mounted a campaign against the proposal filed with the MMO. The community fears that the seaweed farms and associated buoys complete with navigation lights will not only be a blot on the landscape in an area of outstanding natural beauty but will have an impact fragile ecosystems, wildlife as well as on tourism as the area is very popular with visitors.

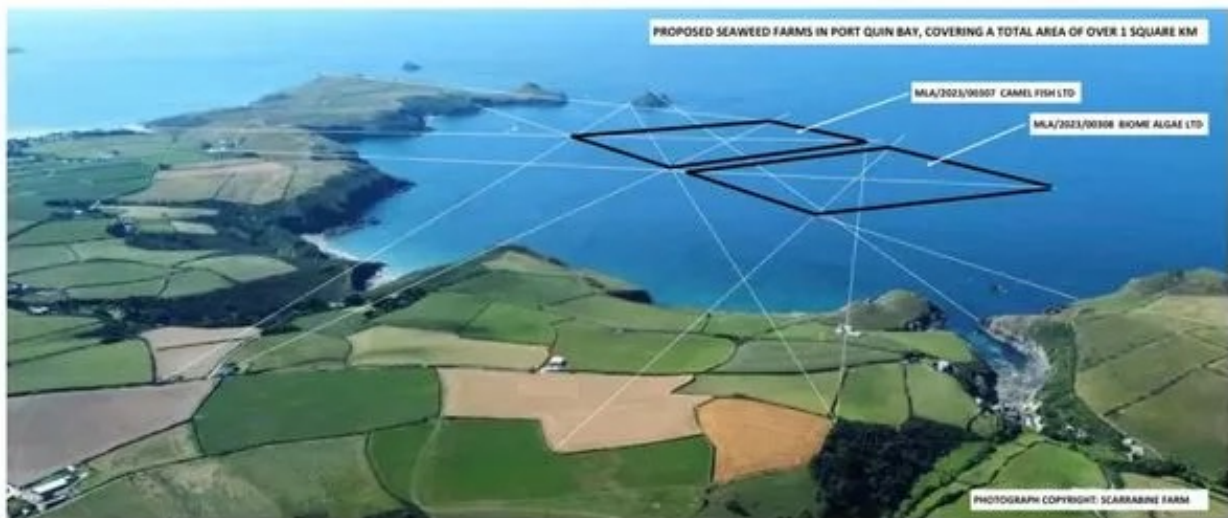
Local campaigner Barnaby Kay said the local area is a breeding ground for dozens of species of birds, seals and fish while local fishermen sustainably fish in these waters. He said protected harbour porpoises, common dolphins, basking sharks, sunfish and whales are seen regularly throughout the year in what locals call "dolphin alley".

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Port Quin Bay is also home to the only breeding group of Puffins in Cornwall. He added: "There is numerous marine wildlife, and it is a wonderful recreational resource for tourists and the local community."

Not only are local residents opposed to the scheme for what they say is the potential impact the seaweed farms could have on local wildlife but they are also angry at what they say has been a lack of public consultation from the two companies behind the scheme.

Mr Kay said: "We call on the applicants for a wider discussion about the lack of transparency in the planning process and the impact of aquaculture on our marine environment, on visitors and on the livelihoods of those who live year round in coastal communities. Our tourism and local jobs depend on coastal gems like Port Quin and they should not be lightly sacrificed for cash, however greenwashed it may appear.



The proposed seaweed farm from Biome Algae and Camel Fish Ltd in Port Quin Bay near Port Isaac (Image: Scarrabine Farm)

"I am one voice in a rapidly growing community, fighting to stop the installation of two 50 hectare industrial seaweed farms in Port Quin Bay, on the north Cornwall coast, the stunning backdrop to the world famous Doc Martin series starring Martin Clunes. At stake is 100.8 hectares of pristine inshore water, in an area of outstanding national beauty, including a fragile marine ecosystem and with breeding grounds for dozens of species of birds, seals and fish."

The main objectors people have about the plans are the lack of community consultation, the size and scale, potential harm to marine life. They also wonder about the benefits of the farms.

Richard Robinson, a leading campaigner against a similar seaweed farm by Biome Algae at Gerrans Bay off the Roseland peninsula, which has now been pulled out, believes the planning process with the MMO needs a serious overhaul and is not transparent or fit for purpose enough.

He added: "On a personal level, having lived through the Gerrans Bay fiasco, the work the Save Port Quin team have submitted is nothing short of incredible. It's compelling, detailed and unequivocal in its outcome, namely that Port Quin is neither suitable, sustainable or sensible for a 50-year licence for a 100 hectare commercial seaweed farm just a few hundred meters from the shoreline."

Anyone who wants to find out more or appeal against the applications can by:

- Email an objection for MLA/2023/00307 (Camel Fish Ltd) to [marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk)
- Email an objection for MLA/2023/00308 (Biome Algae) to [marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk](mailto:marine.consents@marinemanagement.org.uk)
- You can also try to use the MMO website: [marinelicensing.marinemanagement.org.uk](http://marinelicensing.marinemanagement.org.uk) for public representation, and please add the case references above

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In a statement, Dr Angela Mead, from Biome Algae, said: "The applications for Port Quin have been submitted by Biome (seaweed farmers) and Camel Fish. Both

applications have been progressing through the formal channels in place and will continue to do so. As responsible operators we have and will provide Regulatory Bodies with a range of reports that assess plans in relation to the environment.

"Both Biome and Camel Fish's intentions are not to harm the marine environment. We will add positively to the local economy, provide career opportunities and support [education](#). It has been demonstrated that sustainable seaweed farming helps restore our marine environments.

"The seaweed itself has great potential to address a number of pressing planetary issues such as replacing oil-based plastics, food security and net zero. Lighting on the farms will be the minimum required for navigational safety."

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