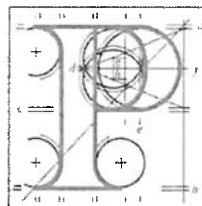


**Our Case Number:** ABP-317809-23



**An  
Bord  
Pleanála**

Karen Minchin  
Taisce Croí Darach  
22 Wills Grove  
Athy  
Co. Kildare  
R14 EF43

**Date:** 11 October 2023

**Re:** Proposed Coolglass windfarm and related works  
In the townlands of Fossy Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill,  
Monamantry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kylenebehy, Co. Laois.

Dear Sir / Madam,

An Bord Pleanála has received your recent submission in relation to the above mentioned proposed development and will take it into consideration in its determination of the matter. Please accept this letter as a receipt for the fee of €50 that you have paid.

The Board will revert to you in due course with regard to the matter.

Please be advised that copies of all submissions / observations received in relation to the application will be made available for public inspection at the offices of the local authority and at the offices of An Bord Pleanála when they have been processed by the Board.

More detailed information in relation to strategic infrastructure development can be viewed on the Board's website: [www.pleanala.ie](http://www.pleanala.ie).

If you have any queries in the meantime, please contact the undersigned officer of the Board or email [sids@pleanala.ie](mailto:sids@pleanala.ie) quoting the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence with the Board.

Yours faithfully,



Evan McGuigan  
Executive Officer  
Direct Line:

PA04

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## Temple of Éiríú Celtic Traditions

Upholding the Ancient Spiritual Traditions of Ireland

[www.templeofeiriu.ie](http://www.templeofeiriu.ie)

Taisce Croí Darach  
22 Wills Grove,  
Athy,  
Co. Kildare,  
R14EF43

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Malborough Street  
Dublin 1

3rd October 2023

Case Reference: **PA11.317809**

Development address; I the townlands of Fossy Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill, Monamanry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kilenabehy, Co. Laois. Proposed Coolglass Windfarm and related works.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I Karen Minchin write in connection with the above listed planning application. As a local resident with knowledge of the location, I wish to strongly object to the proposed development by Statkraft. Listed below are some of my summarised observations and concerns.

### Cultural Heritage. Our Sacred Land.

Within 1km of the proposed site, which has already been **red-zoned** for infrastructure/commercial development by Laois County Council, lies at least 10 prehistoric cultural heritage assets. Monamanry lies a mere 250 metres from the proposed turbine labelled T7 on the Coolglass Statkraft Map.

I have been visiting the ancient megalithic sacred site of Monamanry, or Druids Altar, 'Móin na Manraí' – 'the bog(land) of the enclosure, paddock / bog of the mangers' (LA025-013), but also known locally Monamanary: the Plateau of the Druidesses, or Moe na mBan Rí, 'Living Heartland/Bog Of The Women Kings'.

It has direct alignments with our other ancient indigenous royal seats at the Hill of Allen, Hill of Tara, Bru na Boyne, Newgrange, Uisneach and Knocknarae in Sligo. It is a circular mound 9m to 10m in diameter and 0.75m in maximum height. A kerb of small stones survives around almost all of the circumference but are somewhat concealed in the ground at the west. Two set stones, about 1m inside the kerb in the NE quadrant, indicate an inner kerb and there is a hollow measuring 3.50m in length and 2m in width at the centre of the mound where a slab, aligned NW-SE, 1.2m in length and 0.80m in width, lying slightly elevated above the ground which *may be the roof of a tomb*, (potentially a cairn or like Four Knocks tomb in Meath). The fact that it has a NW-SE alignment means it would have huge archaeological and cultural significance due to its Summer Solstice alignment, and a place of astrological, spiritual, religious and ceremonial importance, much as present day cathedrals are places of prestige and worship.

It is a recognised place of worship for millenia, and named as '*ancient druids' place of worship*' in the Ordnance Survey Parish Namebook dated 1838, with potential *fulacht fiadh* also recorded at this location giving more possible evidence that this is a significant ancient royal site that is rich in local folklore of giants, dragons and of our indigenous ancestors which should be preserved, respected and honoured and left for future generations to behold and enjoy and safeguarded by UNESCO.

In December 2015 Ireland ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Intangible cultural heritage '*refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage*'.

*Article 13: Other measures for safeguarding To ensure the safeguarding, development and promotion of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory, each State Party shall endeavour to: (a) adopt a general policy aimed at promoting the function of the intangible cultural heritage in society, and at integrating the safeguarding of such heritage into planning programmes , and*

*Article 14: Education, awareness-raising and capacity-building Each State Party shall endeavour, by all appropriate means, to: a. iv) non-formal means of transmitting knowledge; (c) promote education for the protection of natural spaces and places of memory whose existence is necessary for expressing the intangible cultural heritage.*

St Mary's church Wolfhill is located approx 1km zone of the proposed site. Schools are also considered as NSRs although that is not stated in the application. Wolfhill National School is also within the 1km zone of the proposed development and has failed to be mentioned in the application.

**Freedom of worship in the Catholic Church.** St Mary's church Wolfhill is a Catholic church within 1 km of the proposed site. Burials take place in the graveyard beside it. A windfarm there would have a major impact with noise and visual effect at this most sensitive time and visiting family and loved ones' graves would also be affected.

Many friends in the community go to the church to pray in peace. This development would have an impact on the churchgoers of the community.

Within my practice with the Temple of Éiríú I often bring people for sacred ceremony and worship on Moe nBan Rí, I have brought groups from all over Europe and the US, many who have been in touch with me through <https://www.templeofeiriu.ie/about-6> where some of their experiences have been documented, and have expressed their sheer horror at the thought of our heritage, ecology and water ways to be destroyed, and discounted on land that has already been red zoned by Laois County Councillors who listened to the people of Laois.

Some of the core intentions of the Temple of Éiríú is:

*To reclaim the Ancient lineage of the God and Goddess on the Land for the peoples.*

*To enable the restoration of the Sacred relationship between the people and the Land.*

*To recognise, hold and guard all life as Sacred on the Land.*

The Temple of Éiríú is recognised by the Irish State as a spiritual community. It is the Irish branch of an international collective that honours the old indigenous ways of the Earth and seeks to bring that wisdom forward to help us to navigate in these modern times.

The Dún of Clopook is located approximately 2.5km from the proposed windfarm site. This highly significant Class II Hillfort heritage site isn't even referenced in the application report. A prominent limestone hill rises above the valley and was created during the Tertiary period ( 65-2.8 million years ago) . Also known as Cloch an Phúca or the Stone of the Phúca. As the title suggests the word Dún is associated with a fort. Believed to be built during the transitional period between the Bronze and Iron ages (2000-3000 years ago) The cave located at the Dun is associated with St. Fiacc, abbot and bishop of Sleaty, Co. Laois. who is said to have had a lenten retreat in the cave. In the 1880s a ploughman found remains and artefacts under a cist associated with the bronze age. The significance of this historical site surely should have been referenced in the application, considering its historical impact and potential tourism that the heritage site provides. It also has mythological significance, a well known and referenced story associates the Dun with Two Giants and the folklore of the pond located at the foot of the Dun. The Dun of Clopook is a settlement of vast significance and importance in prehistoric Laois.

Such culturally significant and ancient sites should be considered extremely important to our area and safeguarding its future should be of utmost importance for future generations. As a regular visitor to the royal sites of Uisneach, Tara and Fort Knocks Tomb I have witnessed bus loads of eager primary school children asking questions and learning about their ancestors rich indigenous heritage, history and mythology, the same could be applied to Monamanny and surrounding areas.

Further archeological remains to be found cannot be ruled out as raised by An Bord Pleanála in the pre application meeting. SLR themselves say in the report

**"However, no site visit was carried out as part of this assessment and as such, their presence cannot be entirely ruled out".** No site visit was conducted by SLR.

Given the heritage and archeological significance of the area which includes over eighty archeological sites within the 5km zone of the proposed site and the presence of eight National Architectural sites also within in the 5km zone of the proposed site, as well as dozens more significant archeological areas within the 10km zone of the proposed development. This surely would require a site visit, as per guidelines set out by the Department of Housing, Local government and Heritage 2019. 5.5 wind energy guidelines. So with all SLRs talk of community communication and engagement, no one actually walked this land, or visited any of the sacred sites, churches or graveyards within the 5km radius of these enormous turbines proposed by Statkraft. It is disheartening that so little regard was given on millennias worth of culture and worship on these sacred grounds.

The conservation of sites whether visible or not is mentioned in European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised) \*Valetta, 16.I.1992

*Identification of the heritage and measures for protection Article 2. Each Party undertakes to institute, by means appropriate to the State in question, a legal system for the protection of the archaeological heritage, making provision for:*  
*ii.the creation of archaeological reserves, even where there are no visible remains on the ground or under water, for the preservation of material evidence to be studied by later generations;*

I consider it to be vandalism of the highest order to fail to preserve the integrity of our sacred sites. There is an absolute disregard to the cultural and archaeological heritage impact on this proposed site, as part of the wider surrounding international site. This development by Statkraft would bring about the destruction and desecration of sacred spiritual, and historical cultural lands, similar to such destruction in other jurisdictions that have caused a global outcry. We have already seen in other lands such Canada, New Zealand, Hawai'i, Australia, where governments have had to backtrack on their previous permissive policies regarding the destruction of sacred sites that cost taxpayers billions in compensation and restoration projects. For example, Uluru Rock in the Northern Territories of Australia. The wanton destruction of a cultural and spiritual heritage has been shown to have profound ill health complications on generations of people who would have been culturally and spiritually connected to these sacred lands. No different to the very lands in this application that Statkraft proposes to desecrate.

#### Water Table, concerns for our Sacred Waterways.

The location for the proposed development is in an area not open for consideration by the Laois County Development Plan and deemed unsuitable for wind development due to the sensitive environment. The proposed development sits in a Water Source Protection Zone (see CDP map 10.4).

The Swan public water scheme identified by the EPA as being '*vulnerable and without an alternative source*' is fed by the entire area of the proposed Wolfhill cluster. Water is a basic human need and right, we ourselves are made up of 90% water. There is a huge movement all over Ireland to reclaim our sacred wells and

waterways, as seen by the recent outcry of the 'Save the Boyne' River when Dawn Meats proposed to build a 7.2k pipeline and discharge 400,000ltrs a day of slaughterhouse wastewater directly into a *special area of conservation*, or what's now happening in Lough Neagh, where the water has the consistency of mashed potatoes at the southern end of the Lough in the last week.

The water courses and streams which originate throughout the catchment of the proposed windfarm development, ultimately feed the River Nore and River Barrow, which are both noted for its sensitive stocks of freshwater pearl mussels and crayfish. Little has been mentioned in regards to fishing and angling in either main rivers, which provides much tourist employment in the surrounding areas of Timahoe, Stradbally and Athy.

The River Barrow in particular has otter families, and a large Swan population down river, and a Marsh Fritillary, *Euphydryas aurinia*, was reportedly seen in the area of the Swan, and is a species listed in the appendices to the European Union Habitats & Species Directive. The effect of this legislation is to give protection to both the animal and its habitat. It feeds off of Devil's Bit Scabious which grows all over Wolfhill, Monamanny, and the Swan, there is also evidence of Red Squirrels in Wolfhill and Luggacurran, some within 1km of the proposed site.

The Bord needs to have regard in particular to the cumulative effect with regard to *Margaritifera Margaritifera*, dwr ovcmis, which requires protection under Directive 92/43/EEC, on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna. I have huge concerns in regards to the local public water scheme when Statkraft intends on pouring tonnes of concrete into these lands which would irreparably damage the biodiversity.

Will there be blasting done to create the foundations? How is that going to affect noise levels for the communities and the local schoolchildren in Wolfhill school, the ecology and wildlife, less than 1km away from the proposed site?

To create the infrastructure alone to support the movement of these 180m turbines, with large numbers of HGV and LGV, laying of concrete is going to create a huge amount of destruction, and general disruption of native fauna and flora on what has already been described as a vulnerable area.

Laois is well known for its peregrine falcons, but there are also Barn Owls, Ravens, Buzzards and Red Kite in the areas of Wolfhill, Luggacurran and Monamanny. The Bord must consider the locally known established nesting sites of the identified and documented pairs of ringed peregrine falcons, and their yearly chicks located between Slatt, Spink and Dunamaise.

The nesting site in Slatt is only metres from the proposed turbines on the Wolfhill site. The hunting ground of the peregrine falcons nesting at Slatt is directly over the proposed turbine area on Wolfhill and the surrounding area (Birdwatch Ireland/NPWS).

The Bord must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm project in conjunction with the above mentioned projects already granted permission.



I urge in the strongest possible way not to hinder the feeding ground of these protected birds. In accordance with the EU Habitats Directive, these birds must be protected.

According to the guidelines issued by The Bat Conservation Council of Ireland(2012), Wind Turbine/Wind Farm Development a preliminary desktop study should include all details of known bat roosts, bat activity and other records of these animals from within a 10km radius of the proposed wind turbine development. The Bord needs to consider the cumulative effects of Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above mentioned projects on the locally known bat populations and all wildlife in accordance with EU Habitats Directive.

The developer cannot mitigate against the noise of a 180mtr turbine with a setback distance of approximately 700 metres to the nearest homes.

The developer cannot realistically mitigate how the uphill/downhill gradient will treat the noise from turbines of this measure and what effect it will have on the nearest homes, let alone the flicker problem with wind turbines of 180 metres in height, could cause serious health problems for people with sensory issues and epilepsy, with the ripple effect of sleep problems documented in other windfarm instances, and court cases brought against previous windfarm developers such as ABO.

Taking these points into consideration I believe this development is too close to the homes of local people for turbines of this scale. The Bord must consider the cumulative effects of the Coolglass windfarm development in conjunction with the above mentioned projects already granted permission, on the local community and its people.

The community has had no meaningful engagement with the developer Statkraft. There appears to be a purposeful ignoring of the impact on population in relation to physical, ecological, cultural, psychological, and spiritual well being and dismissal of the impact the development might have in relation to public amenities by the proposed development. Glossy brochures delivered through a few letter boxes does not constitute public participation. Referring to family homes in the area as "residential receptors", is absolutely dehumanising for any community.

**No public meetings were held with the community by Statkraft.** Many people I personally spoke to had no idea that this was proposed to An Bord Pleanála, therefore, we were obliged to have our own public meetings in the local halls of The Swan and Timahoe to discuss our concerns regarding the environment and protection of our homes. We are a civilised community of people, all with our concerns of climate change and willing to play our part, and while as a community we invited Statkraft to these meetings, we received no communication.

I respectfully urge that planning permission for this development be refused.

I enclose 50 Euro in respect of this objection.

All correspondence in this matter can be sent to me at:

Karen Minchin

Taisce Croí Darach

22 Wills Grove,

Athy,

Co. Kildare

R14EF43.

Is mise le meas.

Karen Minchin.