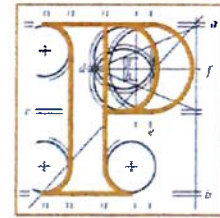


**Our Case Number:** ABP-317809-23

**Planning Authority Reference Number:**



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

Siobhan Connolly  
Kensfeild lodge  
Luggacurren  
Portlaoise  
Co. Laois  
R32DK16

**Date:** 09 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

|                           |                |  |
|---------------------------|----------------|--|
| <b>Tel</b>                | <b>Tel</b>     | (01) 858 8100  |
| <b>Glaó Áitiúil</b>       | <b>LoCall</b>  | 1890 275 175   |
| <b>Facs</b>               | <b>Fax</b>     | (01) 872 2684  |
| <b>Láithreán Gréasáin</b> | <b>Website</b> | <a href="http://www.pleanala.ie">www.pleanala.ie</a>   |
| <b>Ríomhphost</b>         | <b>Email</b>   | <a href="mailto:bord@pleanala.ie">bord@pleanala.ie</a> |

|                      |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 64 Sráid Maoilbhríde | 64 Marlborough Street |
| Baile Átha Cliath 1  | Dublin 1              |
| D01 V902             | D01 V902              |

Kensfield Lodge  
Luggacurren  
Portlaoise  
Co Laoise  
R32DK16

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Malborough Street  
Dublin 1

1<sup>st</sup> October 2023

|                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| <b>AN BORD PLEANÁLA</b> |            |
| LDG-                    | 067011-23  |
| ABP-                    |            |
| 04 OCT 2023             |            |
| Fee: € 50               | Type: Cash |
| Time:                   | By: Hand   |

**Case Reference: PA11.317809**

***Development address; I the townlands of Fossy Upper, Aghoney, Gorreelagh, Knocklead, Scotland, Brennanshill, Monamantry, Coolglass, Crissard and Kilenabehy, Co. Laois.***

***Proposed Coolglass Windfarm and related works***

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

### **Health Concerns**

With the closest turbine proposed within 1700 metres from my home, I have concerns for the effects of noise, light pollution, and shadow flicker on the physical and mental health of myself and my family. Sleep disturbances have been documented in other windfarm instances.

This proposal is concerning given the height of the turbines, and the potential impact of the larger size of the turbine blades. Current guidelines regarding setback distances and noise limits do not account for these larger turbines.

The developer cannot mitigate against the noise of a 180mtr turbine with a setback distance of approximately 700mtrs 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. This development is too close to the homes of local people for turbines of this scale.

### **Unreasonable Interference:**

Light pollution emitted from the turbines will impact the evening skyline, and greatly disturb our current enjoyment of the night sky.

The roads in this area are unsuitable for the transport of these massive structures. I have concerns for the considerable dust and general disturbance of the construction phase of this development.

The Bord must consider that all the advantages of living in a remote rural zone are threatened by this development. Large industrial moving structures visible from my home, as well as light pollution shadow flicker and noise disturbances, present the risk of unreasonable interference, disturbance and annoyance to my rights as a homeowner.

### **Impact to Business:**

I run my business Laois Therapy from the above address since 2015. Laois Therapy is a wellness clinic offering professional Psychotherapy services, CranioSacral Therapy and wellness workshops to individuals and groups.

I work with a vulnerable population with a range of mental health issues. As a craniosacral therapist I work with babies and children with a range of issues including but not limited to developmental issues, Sensory processing issues, Neurodivergence, Sleep difficulties, and Birth Trauma.

It is documented that wind turbines can negatively affect people with sensory issues and neurodivergance. My concern is that the proximity of the turbines to my home and business may cause discomfort to my service users and may impact client attendance and future income.

I also run occasional workshops and retreat days from my home. I offer mental health support and personal development courses for small to medium groups. The scenic location, peaceful surroundings are central to the success of this business model.

The proposed windfarm development will alter the aesthetic of the landscape reducing the suitability of this location for wellness retreats. The potential of noise and vibration and the associated health risks will reduce my business potential, due to the nature of my business and the client demographic that I work with.

### **Heritage**

The Heritage Report lodged to the application is incomplete and insufficient No site visit was conducted by SLR. There are over 80 listed archaeological sites including 8 national Architectural sites within the 5km zone of the proposed development. The heritage report

lodge by the developer in the application is does not mention several significant Archaeological remains and monuments that are of local and national importance.

The Druids Altar (LA025-013), a stone circle in the townland of Monamanry is a national heritage site that is not considered in the planning application. This site is deemed an important cultural and historical landmark by the local community. And is known locally as the "Plateau of the Druidesses" This stone circle was named as an "ancient Druids place of worship" in the Ordinance survey parish name book dated 1838. This Proposed development poses a direct threat to the preservation and conservation of this site as the development seeks to open an access road 250 meters from the site. The turbine number T7 is proposed to be situated less than 1000 m from this site.

The Druids Altar site holds significant spiritual significance for a section of the community. It is an active place of indigenous ceremony and worship and has been for thousands of years. Groups and individuals visiting from Ireland and abroad come here to mark the equinox and season changes. I personally regard this site as a sacred place, and I visit the Druids altar regularly for my own spiritual practice and I often bring groups here for ceremony and meditation.

This proposed development poses a threat to the spiritual and cultural heritage that many value at this sacred site. This proposed windfarm conflicts with the ratification of 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.*

The Dun of Clopook (LA00803) situated in the townland of Clopook is a Hillfort, with a rich history dating back to the bronze age. It is recorded that cave on this site was used as an Early Christian hermitage and is locally associated with St. Fiac of the monastery of Sleaty (LA032-018001-). Those visiting the Dun of Clopook are offered extensive views of Fossy Mountain and the valley below. The proposed windfarm would result in significant detrimental visual and aesthetic impact for this site.

The village of Luggacurren is of significant local and national history as the site of the "Luggacurren Evictions" (1887). And the land wars (1922). The historical architecture and buildings of the village are remnants of Lord Landsdowns' estate and offer a unique window into the communities past. The location and height of the proposed turbines will result in a very dominant visual impact on the village, undermining the historical aesthetics and affect visual

preservation of the area. I have concerns that there is no recognition by the developers of the possible negative impact of the history and archaeology of this area.

### **Environmental issues**

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 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 fresh water pearl mussels and crayfish. The Bord needs to have regard in particular to the cumulative effect with regard to Margaritifera Margaritifera, dwrovcmsis, which requires protection under Directive 92/43/EEC, on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna.

### **Protected species and Biodiversity**

There are populations of Red squirrels, Irish stoats and Pine martins, in Gaulstown and Gorreelagh woods, which is a proposed location for a turbine. Felling of these woods and construction of this windfarm will have a detrimental impact on these protected species and thriving habitat.

This area has a thriving population of Peregrine falcons, Barn owls, Buzzards, Kestrels and Woodcock. Woodcock are frequently spotted in Gorreelagh wood. There is a nesting site of barn owls located at Fernyhill. 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 meters 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.

### **Community Engagement**

The board 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. Glossy brochures delivered through letter boxes does not constitute public participation. No public meetings were held with the community. 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. (Article 7 Aarhus Convention) We are a civilised community of people, all with our concerns of climate change and willing to play our part.

### **Grid Integration issues:**

The proposed windfarm development serves no function if it cannot be connected to the national grid. Connection to the national grid is fundamental to the entire project and the cumulative effect of both must be assessed according to the EIA Directive. The Bord needs to regard this proposal as premature in the absence of a grid connection application.

### **Misleading Planning Application:**

The locations of these two clusters of turbines are on two different sites - one on Fossy Mountain and the other on the townlands of Wolfhill, presented by the developer as one site is disingenuous and misleading.

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:

Address: Kensfield Lodge, Luggacurren, Portlaoise, R32DK16

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Yours sincerely

Siobhan Connolly

Siobhan Connolly