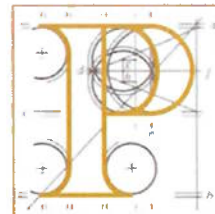


Our Case Number: ABP-318816-24



An
Bord
Pleanála

Catherine and Edel Watkins
Fivealley
Birr
Co. Offaly

Date: 04 March 2024

Re: 10 year planning permission for wind energy development consisting of 8 no. wind turbines and all associated works
located at Cush, Galros West, Boolinarig Big, Eglish, and Ballindown, Co. Offaly.
(www.cushwindfarmplanning.ie)

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.

If you have any queries in the meantime please contact the undersigned officer of the Board. Please quote the above mentioned An Bord Pleanála reference number in any correspondence or telephone contact with the Board.

Yours faithfully,

Ellen Moss
Executive OfficerS
Direct Line: 01-8737285

PA04

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Facs
Láithreán Gréasáin
Ríomhphost

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64 Sráid Maoilbhríde
Baile Átha Cliath 1
D01 V902

64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Fivealley,
Birr
Co. Offaly

27th February 2024

An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902

Re: Objection to Application Reference Number: PA19.318816
[Planning Application for a wind energy development and all associated works at Cush, Galros West, Boolinarig Big, Eglish, and Ballindown, County Offaly.]

A Chara

We are writing in relation to the planning application submitted by Galetech Energy Services for a wind energy development and all associated works at Cush, Galros West, Boolinarig Big, Eglish, and Ballindown, County Offaly. I enclose the required fee of €50.

Given the existing wind farm developments at Stonestown, Kilcamin, Crancreagh and Derrinlough, and with consideration to the character of the receiving environment as well as the open nature of the immediately adjoining lands, and the size and scale of the proposed turbines, we write to strongly oppose this development.

These turbines, in an area already saturated by wind turbines, would be an infliction to the landscape. Against the surrounding countryside and situation of rural communities close to the proposed development, these structures are excessively dominant and visually obtrusive, given the height and spatial extent of the proposed turbines.

The proposed extension of wind energy development would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, would be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

Accordingly, we object in the strongest possible terms to this development for the following reasons:

1. Inadequate consultation with local community

The depth of consultation was wholly inadequate given the scale and impact of the proposed development. There was little attempt to explain the development and its potential affectation to our quality of life. An example of this relates to visual representation of development planned in close proximity to our home. The Applicant produced and communicated disingenuous photo montages which bore little real world value, given absence of scale. With genuine attempt to inform ourselves, and seek more meaningful insight as to visual impact (primarily scale), we were provided with a T-distance table which we were to interpret. An interpretation challenged by proviso by Applicant that distances would not be confirmed until actual planning application submission – with planning application submission never to be communicated to us, rather we were instructed that we would need to check ‘regularly’ the website for notice of same.

2. Significant property devaluation

Home owners’ will have significantly reduced options for selling in the future due to a reduced pool of buyers because of this development i.e. deterred buyers -those who would have otherwise put in an offer but for the proximity to wind turbines.

Distance from a wind development and line of sight are key factors that determine the loss in value of each affected property.

3. Impact to Residents Quality of Life

Residents in close proximity to existing Wind Farms in the Cloghan area have already voiced publicly the negative effect that turbines have had on their mental and physical health¹. Noise has been likened to 'big, thick skipping rope; or a washing machine or dryer' whilst flicker from turbines exacerbating sensory issues for local residents. It is with concern we note that no resolution to concerns of these residents were forthcoming. This creates considerable anxiety that support to us will not be forthcoming should noise or flicker become a threat to our own well-being.

4. Danger to local wildlife, natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

As farmers, as horticulturists and as bee-keepers, the Applicant has done little to assuage fears of the detrimental impact to our native butterfly species and bees. Specifically, we have real concern of the damaging and potentially irreversible impact to the Marsh Fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*, the only Irish butterfly species listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

In conclusion, we robustly oppose the proposed construction of wind turbines in Cush, Galros West, Boolinarig Big, Eglish, and Ballindown townlands for the above reasons.

Mise le meas,

Catherine Watkins & Edel Watkins

¹ <https://www.offalyexpress.ie/news/midland-tribune/1354182/offaly-residents-are-worried-about-wind-farm-s-effect-on-their-health.html>