

Our Case Number: ABP-318816-24



An  
Bord  
Pleanála

Patrick and Padraic 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](http://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](http://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  
Administrative Assistant  
Direct Line: 01-8737285

PA04

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Fivealley,  
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Co. Offaly

27th February 2024

An Bord Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
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**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 to submit an objection in relation to the planning application submitted by Galetch Energy Services for a wind energy development and all associated works at Cush, Galros West, Boolinarig Big, Eglish, and Ballindown, County Offaly. We have paid the required fee of €50.

Our objections to development is primary due to the following reasons:

1. Does not adhere to Governments' 2019 Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines
2. Oversaturation of developments in locality
3. Insufficient consultation with local residents
4. Positioning of noise levels (decibel levels) that cannot be substantiated
5. Inadequate compensation for property devaluation
6. Absence of law regulating the operation of wind turbines

*1. Does not adhere to Governments' 2019 Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines*

The 2019 Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines<sup>1</sup> positions a mandatory minimum distance of 500 metres between a wind turbine and the nearest residential property *and four times the tip height, whichever is greater*. Within the proposal seeking planning permission, these guidelines have not been consistently adhered to.

*2. Oversaturation of developments in locality*

Derrinlough, Cloghan/Stonestown and Meenwaun Wind Farms are all in near proximity, and taken as a whole, represent significant commitment by the local area to renewable energy efforts. If the Cush Wind Farm was to go ahead, this will represent a complete over-saturation of intrusive structures which would be to the detriment of biodiversity and citizen well-being. There is little available evidence studying the impact of such large (and multi-actor) developments on small rural communities.

*3. Insufficient consultation with local residents*

Local residents (those within 2km) were not adequately consulted with respect to the proposed development. Email correspondence can attest to questions which I posed which went unanswered, a lack of meaningful intent to allay my concerns and poor communication which put burden back to the me. As example:

- no communication as to when application would be submitted, I was asked to monitor the Cush Wind Farm website to see any update as to application submission.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9d0f66-draft-revised-wind-energy-development-guidelines-december-2019/>

- no communication as why the scale of operation changed late in timeline (there was originally 11 turbines planned but only at time the planning application released was it visible that the development would be scaled back to 8 turbines). Despite enquiry we received no reason as to why this change happened.

#### *4. Positioning of noise levels (decibel levels) that cannot be substantiated*

The Applicant asserts that a max. 45 decibel level would be adhered to in this Development. However this appears to be disingenuous given that (as communicated by Gaeltech in January 2023 meeting) they will be operating a 'new' generation of turbine (turbines that generate 6-8 megawatt) for which decibel level output is not ascertained. This, alongside absence of any commitment by the Operators to monitor the decibel levels to houses in close proximity (within 2km), and act on remedying any instance of decibel levels exceeding 45 decibels is objectionable.

#### *5. Inadequate compensation for property devaluation*

It is unacceptable that the turbines are being placed within our community without any real attention to the impact to houses with the 2 km radius.

Whilst the Near-Neighbour Scheme allows █████ contribution to electricity annually for houses within 1KM, this doesn't meaningfully make good the overall devaluation of property. This was put to Gaeltech who refused to have dialogue on the matter.

#### *6. Absence of law regulating the operation of wind turbines*

Legislation is extremely limited with 'guidelines' largely framing operations. These guidelines create no comfort for society as they are interpretable and adhered to, at the whim of Wind Farm Developers.

In conclusion, for all the above reasons we strongly object to the proposed construction of wind turbines in Cush, Galros West, Boolinarig Big, Eglis, and Ballindown townlands.

We believe further consideration needs to be given and meaningful response to residents provided for, including provisions that create confidence with local residents.

If decision to proceed with development goes ahead, guidelines proposed for locals in the immediate (2km) radius should include:

- Mechanisms to monitor in real-time decibel levels to houses within 2km. Information recorded has to be shared with the residents and operators/owners of the wind farm. These mechanisms should be placed at a suitable (agreed) distance to protect resident privacy. A meeting should be organised with residents to agree what measures will take place to protect well-being. A meeting of this type is badly required given the absence of meaningful consultation by Gaeltech at outset. Further to this an allowance of compensation, should be provided for. This should not come from the Near Neighbour Scheme (and if it does, the Near Neighbour Scheme must be increased to make appropriate provision). If noise level becomes such issue, appropriate compensation should be provided (at pre-development market rates). This should be signed into contract, obligating all owners/operators to adhere to these commitments.
- Indexing to inflation of monetary contributions to Near-Neighbour Scheme was never explained and remains unclear to local residents.
- Means to commit Developers to share financial gains of 'flipping'/turning over projects to new investors.

We appeal to the Board to consider this proposal in the overall context of Wind Farm development in Co. Offaly and the wider Midlands biosphere, and refuse it outright.

Mise le meas,

Patrick Watkins and Padraic Watkins