

**Submission from Claire Loader and Keith Mangan, Beaghbeg, Caherlistrane, Co Galway, H91TDK2**

We wish to make an observation in respect of the proposed RWE Shancloon Windfarm, case number 323699.

We would firstly like to express our concern that we were not consulted in anyway about this proposal. We live with two young children just under 3km from the Caherlistrane section of the planned windfarm and, despite such a short distance and the impact the development may have on us, only found out through word of mouth that planning had been submitted.

We have deep concerns at the scale of this development in our community and the lack of up-to-date guidelines used in its planning. The 2006 Wind Energy Guidelines are nearly 20 years old and do not account for the size of the turbines and scale of the proposed windfarm.

In this respect, we object for several reasons as follows:

Noise and Infrasound – My husband's family has been living here for generations, and we have lived in the area for over 10 years, renting first before buying a home last year and chose to raise our children here for the peace it allows them. The current application by RWE does not confirm that the proposed turbines could meet the noise requirements of the 2024 draft guidelines and relies on guidelines from 2006 when most turbines were 50m, not 180m as proposed by RWE. We are aware from testimonies of those living near turbines and of two recent court cases in Wexford in May and June of this year, at Ballyduff and Gibbet Hill windfarms respectively, of the severe noise impact imposed on residents by turbines. We are concerned at not only the audible noise from the blades and construction of the windfarm, but the infrasound that can disrupt sleep, concentration and overall wellbeing. Noise and disturbance from windfarms are known to cause adverse effects with depression, anxiety, tinnitus. I sufferer from anxiety and depression, while my husband suffers from tinnitus and we are concerned these will be exacerbated.

Environmental Impacts – The proposed windfarm breaches the EU Birds and Habitats Directive. The area planned for the windfarm contains a huge population of birds, including several red list conservation birds, such as the hen harrier, meadow pipit, curlew, lapwing, snipe and kestrel. There are also many other birds protected under the EU Birds Directive and the National Wildlife Act of 1976, including the buzzard and the whooper swan, as well as the red listed Marsh Fritillary butterfly, and the rare lesser horseshoe bat. Windfarms are known to kill thousands of birds and bats each year, especially birds of prey who look down while flying. We have often seen kestrels and buzzards at our own home and have admired them on walks in the bog.

Our community is surrounded by turloughs, which are EU listed as a priority habitat of community concern due to their unique nature and conservation importance. Many

birds move between these and would be extremely vulnerable to collision, including the whooper swan and Greenland white fronted goose, both on decline in the west of Ireland. These birds likely not only feed and roost in the turloughs but also feed on the bog.

We are also concerned about the bogland itself. The proposal states that 101,174m<sup>3</sup> of peat and 91,027m<sup>3</sup> of spoil are to be extracted and replaced with 217,541m<sup>3</sup> of quarried stone. Active raised bog is an EU Annexed Habitat which acts as vital carbon sinks. 8m of peat takes 8,000 years to form. Disturbing them through excavation, piling and drainage can release stored carbon and cause irreversible environmental harm. Disturbing bog land and putting in kilometres of roads, along with huge turbines will dry out the bog and remove the chance of any future restoration work.

Water - The scale of the turbines and their construction also pose a threat to underground waterflows, and the proposal has the potential of water displacement, contamination and flooding. We live in a karst limestone landscape, and each turbine includes 16 piles drilled up to 17m deep, filled with steel and 800m<sup>3</sup> of concrete, with another 800m<sup>3</sup> of concrete for the base, posing a big risk of pollution into our drinking water and severe damage to underground aquifers.

We are also concerned about subsidence, with several of the turbines positioned close to the Togher river, posing not only risk of contamination to our drinking water, but also landslides, as in the case of Derrybrien Windfarm in 2003.

Construction Impacts – We also object to the noise, dust, heavy traffic and disruption that the construction of the turbines, roads and substation will bring. It is estimated that 60,000 trips of heavy-duty vehicles will be needed during the construction of each turbine. Construction could take years, meaning prolonged periods of heavy construction traffic on our roads, many of which would not sustain them. We also often visit the bog recreationally for cycling and walking and a place to enjoy nature and this will be severely impacted.

Industrialisation of Our Community The proposed windfarm will radically alter the scenery and serenity of our community, with turbines dominating the area. Turbines are equivalent to high-rise buildings and totally out of character with our landscape, contrary to good and sustainable planning.

We chose to live in the countryside for the beauty and peace it offered. Caherlistrane is a thriving community put at risk with an industrial windfarm making the area less desirable to live and bring up families, or for our own children to live here in the future.

Lastly, we also have deep concerns for our friends, family and neighbours whose homes are situated even closer to the proposed windfarm. We are concerned for their health due to noise and shadow flicker, for the devaluation of their homes and the destruction of the community.