

Objection to Planning Application:

Ballinlee Green Energy Wind Farm Development

To:

An Coimisiún Pleanála
Case reference: PAX91.323780

From:

Cathal Mac Gearailt & Noelle Heffernan,
Ballinrea,
Bruff,
Co. Limerick,
V35 NN80.

RE: 10 year planning permission for Ballinlee Wind Farm consisting of 17 wind turbines, a permanent 110kV substation and ancillary development located in Ballincurra, Ballingayroure, Ballinlee North & South, Ballinrea, Ballyreesode, Camas North & South, Carrigeen, Knockuregare, Ballybane and other townlands in County Limerick.

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to make a formal objection to the above referenced Ballinlee Green Energy Wind Farm Development. We would like to express our extreme distress, at the proposed development, first and foremost, due to its significant inappropriate scale and location, which profoundly threatens the health and wellbeing of ourselves, our family and the residents of Bruff, Dromin and Athlacca.

We, along with our two small children, reside in Ballinrea (V35 NN80), in one of the most centrally affected townlands of this proposed development. Our home is located on the L1414 road which links the town of Bruff to the village of Athlacca. Our home would be directly and severely impacted both to the **North of the L1414**, where **5 turbines** are proposed and to the **South of the L1414** where **12 turbines** are proposed to be placed. Our home, would also be subject to the construction of the development's **Substation** which would be built in the townland of Ballingayroure which is located within a close proximity to the rear of our home. In addition to this, the proposed **Site Link Corridor** for this development would be located within walking distance from the road entrance of our house. We would like to illustrate our home's location and that of our closest neighbours, in relation to this development in order to convey its **gross unsuitability** in this residential area.

Image 1:

(Taken from Ballinlee Wind Farm Planning Statement Pg 4)

This image of the proposed Wind Farm site shows clearly where our home, and the homes of multiple neighbours are located in the centre of the full site layout. **(Marked with a blue dot)**

It shows the significant unsuitability of the location of the proposed Development and the inappropriate setback distances from residents on the L1414, who would be affected by Turbines from both the North and the South as mentioned above.

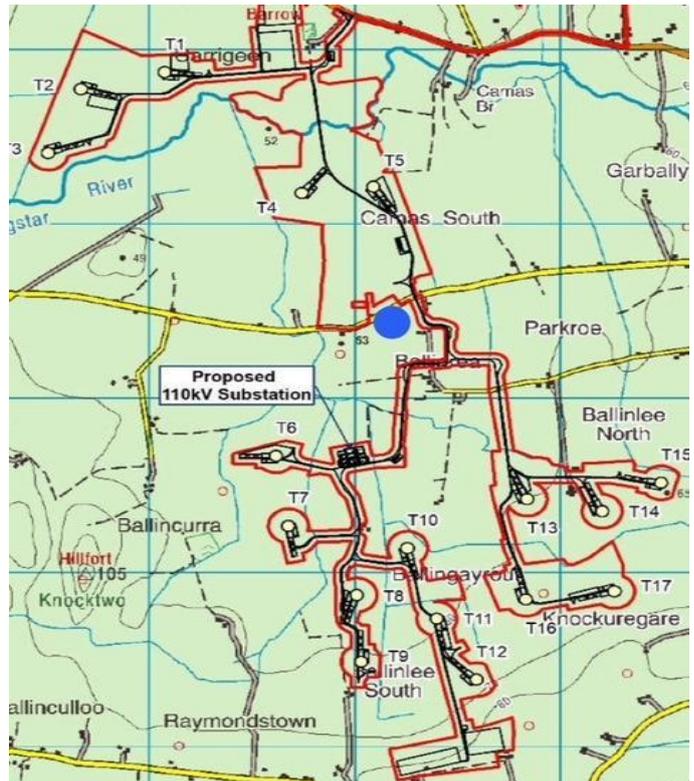


Image 2:

(Taken from Ballinlee Wind Farm Planning Statement Pg 4)

This image gives a closer view of the location of our home **(Marked by the blue dot)** showing our proximity to the proposed substation, site link corridor as well as the three closest proposed turbines. (T4, T5 and T6)

Approximate Setback Distance of Turbines from Our Home:

Under 1km

T5 - 715m

T4 - 825m

T6 - 970m

Under 1.5 km

T13- 1,240m

T7 - 1,297m

T10- 1,332m

Within 2km

Remaining **11 turbines**

Our home would be subject to the adverse effects associated by not just the 6 closest turbines but the collective effect of the whole 17 turbines which are all approx. within 2km in distance away.



Image 3:

This image is taken from google maps using satellite view. It gives a clearer view of the area shown in image1 and 2. The blue dot shows our homes location on the **L1414 in Ballinrea at eircode address V35 NN80**. We have marked the approximate location of Turbines 4, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 13 with yellow dots, the proposed Substation with a red rectangle and site link corridor with a purple line. We have indicated the location of the remaining 19 homes which are placed on this approx 700m stretch of the L1414 with turquoise dots. (4 homes on Balinlee Road, also indicated in turquoise, which will be affected by this central location)

As mentioned, we would be surrounded by 17 turbines to the North and to the South, the proposed **substation** would be approx **600m** behind my home and the **site link corridor** would be approx just over **200 m** from our front gate. All residences shown would be subject to the harshest of effects caused by noise and shadow flicker, which we will address later in this application. Aswell as this, we would suffer profoundly from excavation acitivity, road disturbances, road safety issues, house devaluation, disturbance to internet and phone service, which will be addressed later in this application.

It must be noted that image 3 only accounts for a portion of the households directly affected, out of a total of approx +400 households which would be within 2km of the development, as well as the wider community of Bruff, Athlaca and Dromin.

To add some context please refer to **Image 4** which indicates our home's close proximity to the the town of Bruff a significant population centre.

Image 3:

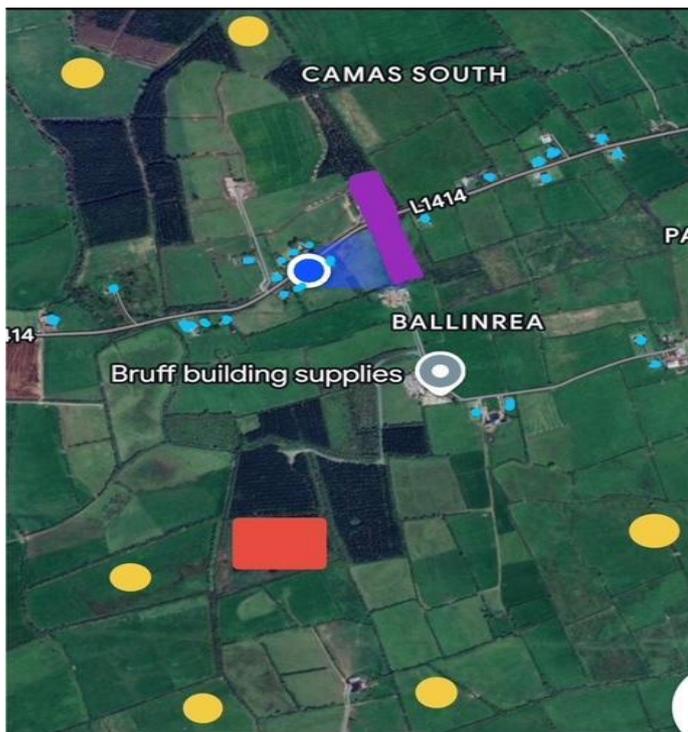
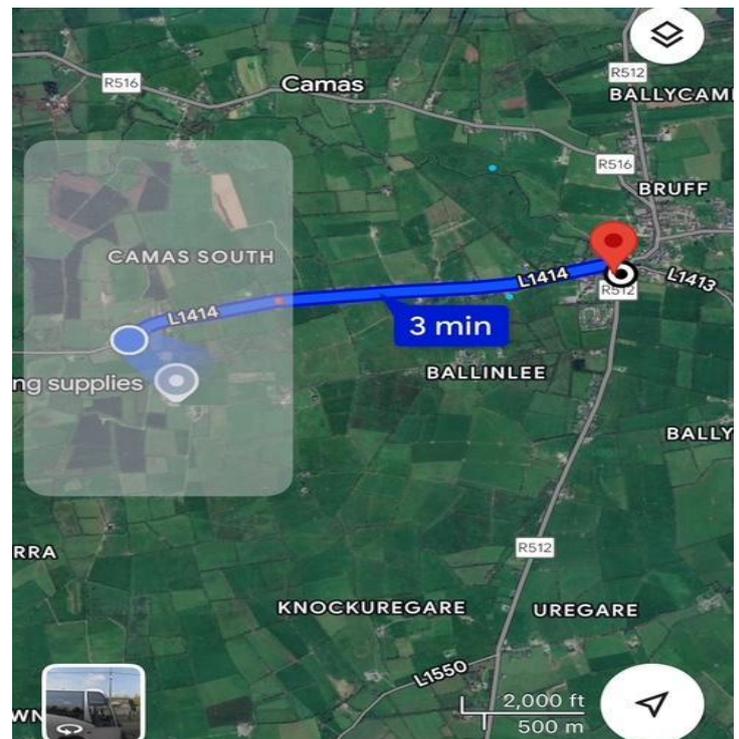


Image 4:



1. Noise Disturbance:

International Health bodies including the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** have highlighted concerns about the impacts of wind turbine noise in particular low frequency noise and infrasound, on human health. The WHO recommends noise significantly lower than what Irish windfarms produce and a setback of anything less than 10 x Tip height would be a serious risk to Public health. Hence in line with these recommendations, 160m turbines should be setback at a minimum 1.36km. The proposed setback distances of the closest 6 turbines, as well as the remaining 11 turbines (which are within 2km from our home), would put the health and wellbeing of my family and I at enormous risk.

Sleep Disturbance, adverse cardiovascular effects, anxiety, stress and headaches have been all documented among individuals living in close proximity to turbines, even where levels meet technical limits.

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) protects the right to respect for private and family life and the home. Environmental interference, including noise, is recognised by the ECHR as a violation where it prevents ordinary enjoyment of life -*Fägerskiöld v Sweden* [2008] **ECHR 37664/04**.

My husband is a shift worker, who works night shifts every week. Sleep disturbance from the noise of surrounding turbines, as well as shadow flicker during the day would drastically impact his health and wellbeing. We have two small children currently 22 months and 4 years old. This proposed development would put their physical and mental well-being at risk as well as hinder their ability to enjoy their home, as well as to learn and socialise within a school setting and within the local community.

2. Shadow Flicker and Visual Impact:

Shadow flicker from rotating blades cast moving shadows results in intense and repetitive flashing inside homes. Due to our close proximity to the turbines as outlined above we are at a certain risk of daily flicker exposure. Once again, this raises concerns under **Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights** in reference to the right to respect for private and family life. It will have clear detrimental effects on our quality of life.

The visual impact of these turbines would be profound to us, once again, when considering our location. We currently enjoy scenic, peaceful views from our home which would be destroyed by towering industrial sized machines both to the front and back of our house.

3. Property Devaluation:

Our property is our primary financial asset and the future inheritance of our children. We would not only experience difficulty in achieving a sale but research consistently shows that residential properties within 2 to 3 km of wind farms experience **Reduced sales prices**. Studies indicate up to **25 % reduction** depending on proximity and visibility. Taking into account the proximity (715m from nearest turbine) and the visibility there would be from our home, as outlined in images 1,2 and 3 we would expect to experience **catastrophic devaluation** of our property.

The EIAR contains no assessment of property devaluation which violates the **EIA Directive** requirements to assess all significant effects. This shows a complete disregard for everyone in our community, ignoring the devastating financial harm it could cause to all affected residents.

4. Impact of Construction and Impact on Road Safety:

Due to our central location to this proposed development, we would suffer due to the negative effects which would arise during the construction phase. We would be subject to noise disturbance which would lead to increased stress and sleep disruption. Our respiratory health would be put at great risk by resulting poor air quality caused by dust created during excavation activity.

Additionally, construction traffic and the movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on the L1414, and surrounding rural roads, as well as across the proposed site link corridor would pose severe safety risks to our family as well as the community as a whole. We both travel this road daily to attend and return from work, to take our children to childcare and Bruff playschool and general errands to the town of Bruff. Runners, walkers and cyclists can be observed regularly on the L1414, to avail of a rural road that boasts scenic views and tranquil quietness. This development threatens to rob us and our neighbours of the safety, security and tranquillity for which we all chose to live on this road which we call home. It threatens to turn our community into a construction site for years to come and is unacceptable.

Additionally for work I travel to Patrickswell daily using the **R516** and onto the **N20**. Both of these roads will also be profoundly affected by the construction traffic of this development. I am extremely concerned about commute times I would face as well as road safety issues posed by the increased presence of HGVs.

5. Emotional Distress

Since learning of this proposed development we as a family are already feeling the emotional distress that comes with the anticipation and worry of an impending threat to our health and well-being as well as the uncertain future it could bring. We are faced with unimaginable considerations like having to relocate our lives and move from our home and community.

Our home is 3 minutes drive from the town of Bruff, most notably from Scoil Dean Cussen, where we wish to send our children to school. The closest turbine is 1.6 km from the school. We are highly concerned, as are other parents, that our children will suffer the adverse health effects associated with turbine noise and infrasound. If this development goes ahead we would be forced to send our children to an alternative school which would cause immeasurable emotional stress to our children, breaking ties with their friends from playschool and the locality.

Conclusion and Personal Note:

We would like to state that we fully support green energy and recognise the need for increased renewable energy in Ireland. However, it is critical that this is done in an **Ethical, Adequately Regulated and Safe way** that protects the health and well-being of **ALL** Irish citizens. We are opposed to this development due to its highly inappropriate scale and residential location.

Hence, we respectfully request An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse this application. we make this request not as a number or a dot on a map. we make it as a mother and father on behalf of our family, our neighbours, every family that occupy the +400 directly affected homes, our local school, businesses, clubs, wider community and our precious wildlife, which face the threat of this proposed inadequately planned development.

We chose our home specifically for its quiet and rural setting with unspoiled views. We aim to give our children the rural life we ourselves enjoyed growing up. All we ask is for the respect, human consideration, and for all legal obligations to be met, so we can enjoy our home in safety and security into the future.

Kindest Regards

Noelle Heffernan and Cathal Mac Gearailt
(Ballinrea V35 NN80)