

Submission/Objection to An Coimisiún Pleanála

Case Reference PAX91. 323780 – Proposed Ballinlee Wind Farm

Josephine Clifford

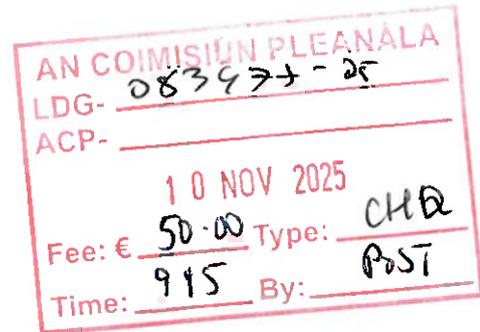
Crean,

Bruff.

Co Limerick.

V35NW10

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1. Introduction and Personal Context

I have lived in rural Ireland all my life and have a deep love of our countryside and its natural beauty. When my husband and I, built our low-rise bungalow, over 40 years ago, we did so with care and consideration for the natural environment. We chose a bungalow so it would fit sensitively into the landscape and never be an eyesore. We have always tried to live in harmony with nature and respect the rural character of the area.

2. Health, Wellbeing and Local Amenity

My physical and mental health benefit greatly from daily walks in my locality, particularly along the R516. It is a busy road, especially during school and work hours, but walking there connects me to nature, and to my local community. The additional heavy-goods traffic and disruption, during the construction of this project, would make these walks unsafe and unpleasant, depriving me of a vital part of my wellbeing.

3. Biodiversity and Ecology

I understand and value the delicate balance of local ecosystems. I know the importance of every species, from wildflowers and pollinators to birds, bats and mammals. I love to observe the local flora and fauna and appreciate how each contributes to the health of our shared environment.

The disturbance, lighting and noise from this proposal would threaten that balance and damage habitats that have evolved undisturbed for generations.

Not only do I care deeply about the flora and fauna of our locality but the sky itself is also an essential part of our natural environment. Every day I observe the path of the sun from sunrise to sunset. When darkness falls, the night sky becomes a source of peace and wonder. Following the lunar cycle and watching the phases of the moon, provide a meaningful connection to the natural world.

Looking skywards on a clear, quiet, starry night would be no more – replaced by constant noise, motion and artificial lighting from the planned 160m industrial turbines. This loss would not only diminish the landscape but also the spiritual and sensory experience of living close to nature.

4. Visual Landscape and Environmental Impact

From my home, I look out across open, flat countryside that has always brought peace and joy. In winter, temporary flooding attracts swans, ducks and seagulls. In April, the cuckoo returns. These natural rhythms define the character of our area.

I do not want our beautiful landscape to be replaced by concrete, steel and gigantic wind turbines, that would be entirely out of scale with the existing landscape. From my home, the turbines would be highly visible from every main window, replacing a peaceful rural view with an industrial skyline of concrete, steel and flashing lights.

This intrusion would permanently alter the visual character of our countryside, which has remained largely unchanged for generations. The proposed development does not respect the rural setting or the pattern of low-rise dwellings, small farmsteads and hedgerows, that define this part of Ireland.

5. Agriculture and Environmental Sustainability

I live in the heart of the Golden Vale, where fertile land and farming, sustain both people and nature. Agriculture produces excellent quality food with minimal emissions and no air miles. I enjoy growing my own fruit, vegetables and herbs, made possible by our clean air and healthy soil.

Dust, fumes and pollution from construction traffic and concrete works would harm air quality, threaten crops and damage the natural advantages that make this area so productive and sustainable.

6. Shadow Flicker and Health Impacts

Three of the proposed industrial turbines would be located between 0.7 km and 1.1km from my home. With the remainder also close by. This proximity would expose my home to persistent shadow flicker, the alternating light and shade caused by rotating blades. Such effects are known to cause stress, headaches and anxiety. For me, this would seriously affect both my mental and physical wellbeing and diminish my enjoyment of my home.

7. Traffic, Noise and Construction Impact

The main site entrance is approximately 1 km from my home. During construction there would be continuous HGV movements bringing machinery and materials to the site. The resulting noise, dust, vibrations and danger to pedestrians would make daily life unbearable.

Looking upwards on a clear day, the sky would be visible - replaced by a noisy noise in other industrial areas. From a general industrial building, the noise would not only be heard in the building but also in the surrounding area. It would be heard in the area.

4.7 Visual Landscape and Environmental Impact

From my house, I look out across open fields. The landscape is green and open and the air is clear. The buildings are white and the sky is blue. The landscape is green and open and the air is clear. The buildings are white and the sky is blue.

I do not remember seeing the landscape to be replaced by concrete walls and glass windows. The landscape would be entirely out of sight. The existing landscape from my house is a green and open landscape. The buildings are white and the sky is blue. The landscape is green and open and the air is clear. The buildings are white and the sky is blue.

This intrusion would be perceived after the visual character of an open side which has remained largely unchanged by generations. The proposed development does not respect the visual setting or the pattern of historic buildings - which form a part of the landscape. This is a part of the landscape.

5. Agriculture and Environmental Sustainability

I live in the heart of the Golden Vale, where fertile land and farming sustain the landscape and nature. Agriculture produces excellent quality food with minimal pesticides and no artificial fertilisers. I enjoy growing my own fruit, vegetables and herbs, made possible by our clean and healthy soil.

Fast times and pollution from concrete, asphalt and concrete walls would harm the quality, threaten crops and damage the natural landscape that makes this area so productive and sustainable.

6. Shadow Flicker and Health Impacts

Three of the proposed industrial turbines would be located between 0.7 km and 1.1 km from my house. With the turbines close by, the morning would expose my house to persistent shadow flicker, the alternating light and shade caused by rotating blades. Such effects are known to cause stress, headaches and anxiety. For me, this would seriously affect both my mental and physical wellbeing and diminish my enjoyment of my home.

7. Traffic, Noise and Construction Impact

The main site entrance is approximately 1 km from my house. During construction there would be constant HGV movements bringing machinery and materials to the site. The resulting noise, dust, vibration and danger to pedestrians would make daily life unbearable.

The peace and safety I now enjoy would be replaced by constant disruption. I fear that I would feel trapped in my own home – a home built with love, to blend into the landscape.

8. Impact on the Local Community

This development would devastate our community. Rural life here is built on cooperation, respect for the land, and shared responsibility for our environment. Industrial scale turbines would divide neighbours, destroy the tranquillity that binds us, and change our community forever. Our sense of place and belonging would be lost.

9. Property Value and Residential Amenity

Such a development would inevitably reduce property values in the area. Homes near turbines become less desirable because of visual dominance, noise and shadow flicker. Even for those who never wish to leave – as in my case - the knowledge that our homes have lost value and that our surroundings are industrialised would be deeply distressing. My home, built to harmonise with nature, is the heart of my family life; I could not bear to see it devalued and diminished in this way.

10. Visual and Psychological Impact

The proposed industrial turbines could never blend into a vibrant, living countryside. Their scale and movement would dominate every view and create a sense of unease. Instead of complementing the natural landscape, they would overwhelm it and erode the peace, safety and emotional comfort, that rural life provides.

11. Outside Interests and Local Consequences

The developers do not live in our community. They will never experience the shadow flicker, constant noise, and loss of beauty, that we would face daily. Those who live here - not the developers - will bear the full impact of this project. Planning decisions must weigh, not only national targets, but also the consequences for local residents.

12. Support for Renewable Energy in Appropriate Locations

I fully support renewable energy when developed responsibly and in suitable locations. My family installed 16 solar panels on our home, at substantial personal expense, to contribute to Ireland's clean-energy goals. I believe in sustainable solutions that protect biodiversity and respect communities. However, placing industrial wind turbines in this sensitive rural landscape is not the right solution.

The panel and seats I now enjoy would be replaced by constant vibration I fear that I would feel trapped in my own home - and that with little hope to blend into the landscape.

8. Impact on the Local Community

The development would destroy a community. But the local council on occasion is quiet for the land and quiet in supporting for our environment. Industrial scale turbines would have the neighbours - the tranquillity the birds and change our community for ever. The noise of planes and engines would be lost.

9. Property Values and Residential Amenity

Such a development would inevitably reduce property values in the area. House prices would become less desirable because of visual dominance, noise and shadow. It is for those who are not in the area - as in my case - the knowledge that our homes have lost value and that our surroundings are industrialised would be deeply distressing. My home built in harmony with nature is the heart of my family life. I could not bear to see it destroyed and diminished in this way.

10. Visual and Psychological Impact

The proposed industrial turbines could never blend into a landscape being considered. Their scale and movement would dominate every view and create a sense of unease. Instead of complementing the natural landscape they would overwhelm it and erode the peace, safety and emotional comfort that rural life provides.

11. Outside Interests and Local Concerns

The developers do not live in our community. They will not experience the shadow threat, constant noise and loss of beauty that we would face daily. Those who live here - not the developers - will bear the full impact of this project. Planning decisions must weigh our own national interests, but also the concerns for local residents.

12. Support for Renewable Energy in Appropriate Locations

I fully support renewable energy when developed responsibly and in suitable locations. My family installed 16 solar panels on our home, at substantial personal expense to contribute to Ireland's clean-energy goals. I believe in sustainable solutions that protect biodiversity and respect communities. However, placing industrial wind turbines in this sensitive rural landscape is not the right solution.

13. Question of Necessity and Grid Capacity

During storm Amy on October 3rd, I observed that the turbines near Roscrea, were shut down. I believe the reason being, that the National Grid could not absorb the excess power being produced. I also understand that the wind-farm operators are compensated when such curtailment occurs. This raises serious questions about the need for additional turbines when existing capacity already exceeds grid demand during high-wind periods. Until grid infrastructure is upgraded, further large-scale developments, cannot be justified.

14. Conclusion

I want to help preserve the beautiful, biodiverse communities we treasure – for my lifetime, for my children, and for my grandchildren. This landscape and its people deserve protection from inappropriate industrial development. For all the reasons set out above, I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála, to refuse permission for the proposed Ballinlee Wind Farm. The project would cause lasting harm to the environment, to our community, and to the peaceful way of life that defines this part of rural Ireland.

Yours faithfully,

Josephine Clifford