

## **Observation & Objection Letter**

To:

An Coimisiún Pleanála  
64 Marlborough Street  
Dublin 1, D01 V902

Re: Ballinlee Green Energy Ltd. – Proposed 17 Wind Turbines and Associated Works, Bruff, Co. Limerick **Case No 323780**

### **Personal Details**

My name is Martin Sheehan, and I live at Camas South, Bruff, Co. Limerick, V35 FF97 and I object to this proposed development. My family and I live very close to where this wind farm is being proposed, so this development would have a major impact on our daily lives and wellbeing.

### **My Position**

I want to be clear from the start: I am not against renewable energy. I fully support the need for cleaner, more sustainable power sources. However, this must not come at the expense of people's health, safety, environment, and quality of life.

The peaceful rural environment we live in is central to our wellbeing, it provides calm, space, and connection to nature. That peace and tranquility are essential for stress relief and mental health, not only for my family but for the whole community. The introduction of industrial-scale turbines in such a quiet, natural setting would destroy the sense of peace and safety we depend on.

Unfortunately, this particular project, in this specific location, does exactly that. It is the wrong project in the wrong place.

### **Main Concerns**

#### **Lack of Proper Consultation**

Local residents have not been properly included or respected in this process. For a development of this scale, the community should have been given full and fair opportunities to understand the project, ask questions, and raise genuine concerns.

The developer's engagement was extremely disappointing. They refused to attend open public meetings and would only agree to meet in groups of three people at a time, with discussions limited to just a few minutes. This meant there was no real dialogue, no meaningful engagement, and no genuine way for us to have our voices heard. The only communication we received was a flyer in the post box. A representative called the house one day and left after two minutes without explaining the reason for their visit.

This lack of transparency and cooperation has left many in our community feeling ignored and deeply frustrated.

### **Environmental Risks**

The proposed site is near local streams and groundwater that many of us rely on. I'm very worried about contamination and long-term damage to local water quality. Once that kind of harm occurs, it cannot easily be undone.

The area around Bruff and Lough Gur supports a rich and diverse ecosystem — including Whooper Swans, badgers, foxes, and many other species that depend on the surrounding fields, hedgerows, and waterways for food and shelter.

The turbines and associated infrastructure will disrupt these habitats, displace wildlife, and increase the risk of collisions for birds. The Whooper Swans are protected migratory birds that return to this area every year, and their feeding and nesting grounds will be severely affected.

The Environmental Impact Assessment does not adequately address these risks or offer credible mitigation measures. This project threatens to destroy the balance of nature that local families have cherished for generations.

In addition, the removal of native hedgerows and mature trees will destroy important corridors for wildlife and nesting birds. The proposed development also sits in the Golden Vale, one of Ireland's most fertile and productive agricultural regions. Converting such valuable farmland into an industrial site represents a permanent loss of high-quality agricultural land and heritage landscape.

### **Traffic and Safety**

The construction traffic alone will be a major hazard. The roads involved (R516, L1414, L1550) are narrow, winding, and already under pressure from existing traffic. Introducing large turbine components and daily construction vehicles will make these roads dangerous. See attached "Site Entrance Road Picture". This photo I have submitted, extracted from develop planning application clearly shows the narrow width and poor visibility of the road leading to one of the proposed site entrances. It demonstrates that this road is completely unsuitable for heavy construction traffic or large turbine deliveries.

Traffic will pass directly by the local national school, putting children, parents, and staff at unnecessary risk. The increased noise, dust, and disruption will affect the school environment as well as local residents.

Traffic will also pass along the road where I live and my house, which is entirely unsuitable for heavy vehicles. This will make our road noisier, less safe, and far more stressful for those of us who live here. As it stands the road is so narrow that a car has to pull in if a tractor is coming in the opposite direction, so the road is totally inadequate for the construction vehicles that would come with this project

The local GAA club is a central part of life in Bruff, with training and matches held almost every day of the week. The heavy construction traffic associated with this project will seriously impact parents and children travelling to and from the GAA grounds. It will increase congestion, reduce safety, and make daily community activities unnecessarily difficult.

Bruff is a small, family-oriented community, it was never designed for this level of industrial activity. Forcing it through feels irresponsible.

### **Noise, Shadow Flicker, and Proximity to Homes**

One of my greatest concerns is the proximity of these massive turbines to my home. The nearest turbine will be as close as 800 meters, and 12 of the 17 turbines are within 2 kilometers of my property.

This raises serious fears about noise, vibration, and shadow flicker affecting my family's mental health and quality of life inside our own home and the enjoyment of our back garden. Family members work from home, and the constant low-frequency sound and visual disturbance would make that almost impossible, affecting my family's financial stability.

To make matters worse, the proposed construction phase is expected to last around two years, with a site entrance located only a few hundred yards from my home. The daily movement of heavy trucks, cranes, and machinery will generate continuous noise and disruption, making it effectively impossible for us to work or even live comfortably at home during that period. The thought of enduring two years of industrial activity so close to our home is deeply distressing.

### **Impact on Walking, Jogging, and Local Life**

The impact of this development goes beyond our homes. My family and many of our neighbors regularly walk and jog along the local roads and lanes around Bruff and Lough Gur. These activities are a vital part of our daily routine, providing exercise, peace of mind, and a sense of community.

The constant presence of construction vehicles and, later, the visual and noise intrusion from turbines will destroy the tranquility that makes these walks so restorative. It will make it unsafe, unpleasant, and stressful to use the very spaces we rely on for relaxation and wellbeing.

This will also affect local walking and running clubs, fishing groups, and other outdoor and sporting activities that make our community vibrant. Children walking to school and elderly residents who use these roads for social or support services will also face increased risks and reduced accessibility.

The loss of tranquility will change the character of the area entirely, it will no longer be the peaceful, quiet countryside we depend on for recreation, exercise, and mental health.

### **Impact on Property Value and Future Generations**

We have worked hard all my life to build and maintain our home. It is devastating to think that if this project goes ahead, the value of our property will drop significantly, through no fault of our own.

It is not fair that families like ours should suffer financial loss because of a project imposed on us. Furthermore, this development could affect our children's future, making it harder for them to build homes or continue living in this area. It is heartbreaking to think that they may be forced to move away from the community they grew up in.

### **Visual Impact**

Turbines of this scale will dominate the skyline and permanently change the character of the local landscape. The scenic views around Bruff and Lough Gur, areas of great heritage and tourism value, would be irreversibly damaged.

The beauty and tranquility that attract visitors and locals alike will be replaced by an industrial backdrop of rotating blades and flashing lights. This is not compatible with the cultural or historic importance of the area.

### **Outdated Guidelines**

This project still relies on wind energy guidelines from 2006, when turbines were less than half the size of those proposed today. It is unreasonable and unsafe to approve projects of this magnitude under outdated standards that fail to protect modern rural communities.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

Living so close to large turbines brings constant noise, flicker, and visual intrusion, all of which contribute to stress, anxiety, and sleep disruption. These are genuine health issues that will affect people's mental and physical wellbeing every single day, including my family.

### **Conclusion**

I fully support Ireland's renewable energy goals, but they must be achieved responsibly, with respect for existing communities, the environment, and public health.

This proposed development will damage our community, harm local wildlife and heritage, devalue homes, and erode the quality of life for families who have lived here for generations.

It is also important to note that the evidence often cited to suggest there are no health implications associated with living near large-scale wind turbines is now outdated and unreliable. Modern research and real-life experiences from communities across Ireland and Europe show that noise, vibration, and shadow flicker can significantly affect people's mental and physical wellbeing. Continuing to rely on old studies to justify new developments of this scale is unacceptable.

Furthermore, all suitable onshore sites in Ireland have already been largely exploited. The future of renewable energy lies offshore, where wind conditions are stronger, more consistent, and where developments can be achieved without destroying rural communities and landscapes.

The Irish Wind Atlas indicates that the Dromin and Ballinlee areas experience relatively low average wind speeds, proving that this location is not well suited for industrial-scale wind energy generation.

While the Limerick County Development Plan identifies zones for renewable energy projects, it appears that the Wind Atlas data was not taken into consideration nor a determining factor in defining these areas. We respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála take the findings of the Wind Atlas into consideration when assessing the suitability of this site. As a result, unsuitable sites such as Ballinlee have been wrongly designated for wind projects. However, LCC's own report confirms that the written word of the Development Plan takes precedence over the map, and therefore we respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to take this into serious consideration when assessing this proposal.

For these reasons, environmental, social, health-related, and technical, I strongly urge that this application be refused.

I also request an Oral Hearing in relation to this wind farm application, particularly given the proximity and impact this will have on Lough Gur, an archaeological and architectural site of international importance, as well as the scale of these turbines in a low-lying area and their proximity to so many homes.

Thank you for considering this submission

Martin & Maryse Sheehan

Date 04/11/2025