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T56W142

<b>AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA</b>	
LDG-	<u>087176-26</u>
ACP-	_____
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An Coimisiun Pleanala  
Case Reference Number: VA04.324082

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**Submission/Observation on proposed development at Ballyanelagh, Knockraha, Co. Cork:  
10-year planning permission for the construction of 1 Battery Energy Storage System, 1 110kV AIS  
electrical substation building and 1 single-storey customer substation building and all associated  
infrastructure.**

There have been many changes to our local area since we purchased a site in 1980 and subsequently built our home here. Expansion and development of the Knockraha Sub-Station have resulted in the granting of planning permission for huge electrical infrastructure in the area including solar farms, synchronous compensator, Celtic Interconnector and Battery Storage facilities. We recognise the importance of renewable energy infrastructure and transition towards lower carbon energy systems. However, we have concerns about the suitability of this site and its potential impacts on this rural community.

We are concerned about the proximity of this proposed development and other developments to us and their potential cumulative impacts on our daily lives and on our health and safety.

We believe Cork County Council have failed to help put proper and feasible plans in place for the successful development of renewable energy projects. It is so unregulated at present, it is causing problems, stress and tension between residents and landowners and unnecessary worry and anxiety among the local community. Cork County Council need to put in place a system whereby developers of renewable energy need to look at and consider alternative and more suitable sites and locations which will not interfere or have huge negative impacts on residents and the local community. Landowners who make their land, especially good quality agricultural land, readily available to large private international companies for huge developments need to be monitored and assessed very carefully. Developers need to include this information in their application for planning.

We are concerned at the lack of National Policy on land use. Cork County Council must request that developers need to look at alternative sites eg brown field sites, parking sites, roof tops, and must not be close to residents and communities.

While An Coimisiun Pleanala is not a policy-making body, decisions and approvals made by ACP should not be made until proper policies regarding planning, regulations, rules and safety standards are in place first.

We as residents close to this proposed development and future developments, are concerned about the lack of specific safety regulations for large scale battery installations:

#### **Fire and Safety Concerns.**

This site is in a very rural location and local fire services may have longer response times (nearest fire station is located approximately 12Km away).

There may be limited access to specialised firefighting equipment.

Nearby homes, livestock, etc would be placed at risk.

Smoke damage can have huge impacts on livestock, residents and buildings

Potential release of toxic fumes could impact residents, wildlife and livestock.

Potential negative impact of contaminated fire water run-off on ground and surface water.

While the risk of fire is low, nonetheless the risk is there and when it does occur thermal runaway and fire can be extremely difficult to control and may burn for long periods. We believe it is important to mention here the fire

that occurred in February 2025 on the Xerotech site in Claregalway and the outcome – evacuation of an entire business park, two schools and nearby residents. Also, firefighters spent three days dousing faulty batteries before an explosion occurred which caused a number of firefighters to be taken to hospital. So, not only could local residents be put in danger, but also firefighters dealing with potential fires. We believe this is of huge significance. Clear, publicly available emergency plans and independent safety assessment should be provided before any approval is granted. (We have just received a copy of a statutory notice issued by An Coimisiun Pleanala in relation to Appeal Case No: ABP 320276-24, which requires the developers to furnish further information regarding a Fire Risk Management Plan; Emergency Response Plan; details in respect of Firefighting water and Fire water storage; drainage plans to manage rainfall runoff and fire water runoff; water status impact Assessment report and a revised Construction and Environmental Management Plan). This consolidates the importance and necessity of having plans in place before any planning is granted.

### **Traffic and Construction Impact**

The proposed development will cause a lot of disruption to local traffic and farm vehicles; it will increase safety risks for pedestrians and cyclists; increased HGV traffic will cause further damage to our narrow road (L6989). This road measures between 3.1m and 4m wide in several stretches. It beggars belief that Cork County Council is granting planning permission to several large developments such as this, and putting the lives of pedestrians and drivers at risk. At present, when 2 cars meet they have to pull in to the muddy verges to pass. Our concern is how we are expected to cope with further increases in the volume of traffic as a direct result of this development? We believe if planning is granted traffic safety issues on L6989 will deteriorate.

### **Noise**

The proposed development is close to residents. Future developments in the area will only add further to the already high levels of noise from the Sub-Station. An increase in noise levels will have a serious impact on people's mental and physical health, which in our opinion is totally overlooked in the developer's submission. Developers need to put workable and practicable measures in place during construction; during operational phases and most importantly long term. We appeal to An Coimisiun Pleanala to consider the adverse effects of noise pollution on our health. To date, mitigation measures from developers to minimize noise levels in their proposed developments are totally unsatisfactory.

### **Water Safety Concerns**

We are concerned about the danger of water contamination that may result from this and other developments in the area. Potentially groundwater will be affected over time, which in turn will affect our water supply (private well) and put our health and safety at risk. We believe this is a major Health and Safety issue. It should be noted that all the residents living close to this proposed development have their own well (there is no mains supply for the majority of households on this road). Contaminated water from this and other developments in the area will eventually make its way to the Glashaboy Water Treatment Plant (approximately 7.5km from the proposed site). Risk of contamination to the reservoir and waterworks is high and therefore should be of major concern to Cork County Council, who have failed to acknowledge the possible negative impact this proposed development could have on water from this site. Also, with increase in rainfall amounts due to Climate change and more frequent and longer spells of rainfall, this development could potentially lead to large amounts of surface water and runoff. Risk of flooding and damage to property on the western side will increase.

### **Landscape**

The extension and development of Knockraha Sub-Station over the recent years have resulted in very noticeable and sometimes unwelcome changes to the landscape here on Road L6989. The extension to the Sub-Station and the proposed developments (Killeena Energy for a Synchronous compensator; Ballyvatta solar farm; Neoen Renewables for Battery storage facility; Drumkee Battery Energy Storage system; Celtic Interconnector; Ballysallagh Solar Farm) will result in unsightly features which will be visually intrusive and totally out of character for this rural landscape and surrounding areas. We would appeal to An Coimisiun Pleanala to consider the cumulative effect of all this development on the landscape here before granting permission.

## **Biodiversity**

We would appeal to An Coimisiun Pleanala to protect the biodiversity of this area. Dr. Deirdre Lynn, Assistant Director, Science Advice and Research, National Parks and Wildlife Service says "There is a Biodiversity duty that is being placed on Government Departments and other Public bodies. This means they have to give due consideration to biodiversity as part of their policies, plans and programmes at work, then report on that". Biodiversity needs to be protected. These proposed developments are adding further to loss of land to industrial type developments in a rural area and adding to further loss of diversity and ecosystems. This type of development will result in interference, displacement and upheaval to the many animals, birds and insects that live here as well as loss of flora. Measures to properly protect Biodiversity need to be included in all planning applications but especially in large scale developments such as these (as listed above in Landscape concerns). The developers have been very submissive and unsympathetic towards the welfare of habitats, mammals, flora, etc. Any loss of habitats, etc should be assessed to be significant.

## **Conclusion**

Proper planning policies and national planning guidelines urgently need to be in place before any application for Solar farms, Battery storage facilities and other energy renewable projects is considered.

Proper plans and guidelines from multi-government agencies (eg HSA, HSE, Fire and Safety Authority, Dept of Agriculture for land use policy, Uisce Eireann) need to be in place.

Cumulative Impact Assessment is urgently required for every application as these huge renewable developments are turning vast areas of prime productive agricultural land into industrial zones.

A detailed and comprehensive Fire Safety Management Plan must be included in the application

A feasible, workable and achievable Traffic Management Plan is essential and must be included in the application and this is very relative to this development because of the unsuitability of L6989 for large scale developments

Assurances in the conditions that our health and safety will not be impacted in any way vis a vis water supply, air pollution, mental health.

Careful consideration be given to the fact that this area is already saturated and seriously overloaded with electrical equipment: Knockraha Sub-Station, Celtic Interconnector.

The need for developers to look at possible alternative sites

The lack of public consultation between developers, residents and communities where these developments are taking place. This must be part of the planning process and shows the necessity for proper regulations and policies. Public opinion matters.

Yours faithfully,  
Margaret & John Jones.