

An Coimisiún Pleanála,
64 Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1.
D01 V902

31st March 2026

Dear Inspector,

I am aware that planning permission has recently been granted by Cork City Council for a housing development on the Bessborough site. While I acknowledge that a number of conditions have been attached to this permission — including the requirement for a Forensic Archaeological Monitoring Strategy and the presence of a forensic archaeologist during excavation — I must state clearly that, in my personal view, proceeding in this manner is fundamentally wrong.

Where there is even the slightest possibility that burial remains may be located on this site where planning permission has been approved, assurances should have been confirmed as part of that planning process that no burials have taken place on this portion of lands. That did not happen here, and that is a serious concern for me.

Yes, the conditions provide that work must cease if remains are discovered and that the relevant authorities must be notified. But we should not be relying on discovery during construction. We should be ensuring, beyond doubt, before any permission is granted, that such deeply sensitive issues have been fully examined.

It is now a matter for An Coimisiún Pleanála to determine how this application proceeds from here. I would urge the Board to take the utmost care and to ensure that respect, dignity, and due process are at the heart of any decision made. This is not just a planning issue — it is a matter of historical responsibility and human decency.

The history of Bessborough is not just local history — it is part of our national story. It reflects a time when vulnerable women and children were failed by the very systems that were meant to protect them. Acknowledging that history is essential. Learning from it is essential. But so too is ensuring that we continue to respond to its legacy.

Yours sincerely,

John Paul

John Paul O' Shea TD

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**FINE
GAEL**

**John Paul
O'SHEA TD**

Chair of the Oireachtas Committee on Social Protection, Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht.

CORK NORTH WEST CONSTITUENCY

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