

# FORMAL OBSERVATION/OBJECTION

**TO:** AN COMISIUN PLEANALA  
64 MARLBOROUGH ST.  
DUBLIN 1  
D01 V902

**CASE REFERENCE** PAX19.324161  
**CASE NUMBER** 324161

**DESCRIPTION; PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF 15 NO. 220 METRE WIND TURBINES, A PERMANENT 220KV ON-SITE SUBSTATION AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE IN LEAMANAGHAN AND SURROUNDING TOWNLANDS, CO OFFALY.**

**NAME: EILISH KEYES & NOEL COOLAHAN**

**ADDRESS: CAPPANALOSSIT BALLINAHOWN ATHLONE CO WESTMEATH N37 PT82**

## **OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT:**

We, Eilish Keyes and Noel Coolahan, wish to lodge a formal objection to the above planning application on the following grounds.

- A Environmental, biodiversity and pollution**
- B Wildlife/birdlife, natural habitat**
- C Visual impact and noise pollution**
- D Property value**
- E Heritage**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL BIODIVERSITY AND POLLUTION**

Peatlands are a type of wetland that is critical for preventing and mitigating effects of climate change, preserving biodiversity and minimising flood risk. They are the largest natural terrestrial carbon store and store more carbon than all other vegetation types in the world. Therefore, it would make sense that Offaly and the midlands of Ireland should conserve and restore its peatlands to assist the country in reaching its climate commitments.

For windfarms to exist, it will comprise of millions of tonnes of cement and this is just for the foundation of each turbine, notwithstanding the access roads and emissions from the vehicles to transport this concrete. Surely this will need to be considered.

It also must be noted, that Lemanaghan bog will have to be drained for this windfarm to proceed. Flooding already affects Pollough and surrounding areas on an annual basis. So where is the water going to go? The brosná cannot take any more water.

## **WILDLIFE/BIRDLIFE AND NATURAL HABITAT *EXAMPLE PHOTOS ATTACHED***

The wildlife and birds in our area is already in decline and needs to be managed carefully. The Hen harrier and whooper swans, which are red listed species, along with various amber listed species such as kestrel, sparrowhawk and snipe occur on Lemanaghan bog frequently.

Additionally, the swallow, buzzard, along with mammals such as the bats, pine martin, foxes, hares' mink and many more are regulars on the site.

Lemanaghan bog is home to an array of insects and spectacular butterflies, frogs and creatures. It also contains beautiful flora and a wide variety of wildflowers, which the bees pollinate, and many insects and animals rely on for survival.

The construction of the windfarm, which has its own collision report in their application, is going to decrease this bird and wildlife even further.

## **VISUAL EFFECTS, NOISE VALUATION OF PROPERTY**

On the application in question, we are dwelling number 63. (Ref chapter 5 population and human health and it states we are 1132 metres from the closest turbine number 10. It states we will not be affected by the light flicker. Our question is, is it just turbine number 10 they refer to?

All the photos in the application are generically published from areas that are miles away from the site, and have a lot of obstacles e.g. forestry, buildings etc which reduces the visual effects of the turbines. Unfortunately, there are no photos of the visual effect from our house, which have NO obstacles to dilute this effect.

With reference to the **noise pollution**, the companies constructing the windfarm are insisting the noise levels are within legal limits. BUT residence from surrounding areas of other windfarms in Offaly alone will tell you differently. This to me shows how much notice is taken of complaints. In our last community meeting, there were residence from Derrinlough Windfarm, who were crying with frustration, as they told us about how these turbines have effected their lives.

## **PROPERTY VALUE**

Nobody wants to live close to an industrial windfarm, so it is without doubt the value of our properties reduce.

## **HERITAGE**

The Lemanaghan Conservation Plan, published by the Heritage Council, which was sponsored by Offaly County Council, was developed so as to protect this area.

- A key point in this document is that "It is important that the options considered for the post-industrial use of the bog are sympathetic to the significance of the site"
- Statement of Significance; Lemanaghan is a sacred place of great antiquity. The site was an important centre of Christian worship throughout the Middle Ages. Untouched by modern life. There is also evidence to suggest that it may have provided a focus for pagan ritual before the establishment of the monastery. The place retains a sense of peace and tranquillity and is relatively

*I have attached some photos to show you the beauty of the Heritage site, and I'd also like to point out that it has a 4.8 out of 5 rating on trip advisor.*

## **PLEASE TAKE THE FOLLOWING INTO ACCOUNT**

It should be noted that BNM and SSE are companies, they exist to make money as do all companies. Therefore, the future of our peatlands, flora, fauna, heritage animal and birdlife, will understandably not be foremost on their agenda. Offaly and the midlands consist of so much peatland, it is becoming obvious that wind energy is the next process to take these companies into the future. In fact Offaly is now looking like a dumping ground for Wind Turbines. In our mind, **National Parks and Wildlife** is the agency that could ensure the peatlands are preserved and, in the future, can do what they do naturally.

This windfarm is breaking the law with regards to shadow flicker, and nobody knows until the turbines are up how the noise will affect us. But we are contacting you in hope that you take into consideration the effects these turbines will have on the ordinary taxpayer, and how their lives will be destroyed by them.

Our home is just one dwelling that will be directly negatively affected by the construction of this proposed windfarm, and the proposed windfarm in Bellaire Co Offaly (this will just be to the north east of our house, (within 2500 metres). We ask that you take our grievances into account when you come to your final decision.

Many thanks for your time in reading our objection.

Regards

Eilish Keyes & Noel Coolahan



March Violet, good food source for fritillary butterflies and solitary bees.

3:29 pm



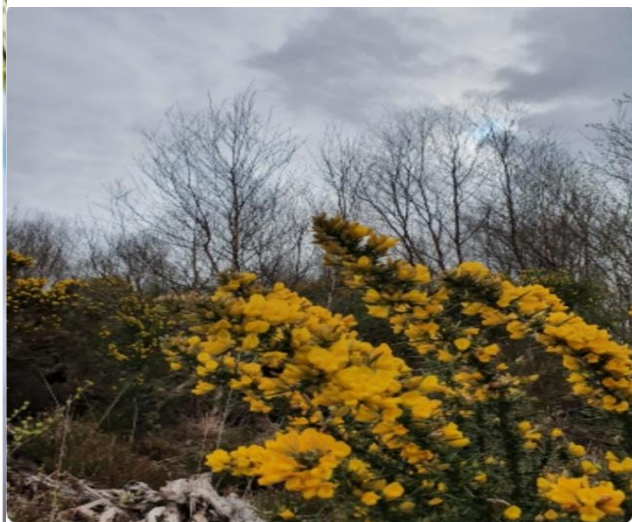
Blackthorn flowers - The blackthorn provides valuable support to all kinds of wildlife all year round.

3:35 pm



Cuokoo Flower or "Ladies Smock" really good for food source for Butterflies.

2:10 pm



This scene shows how early-flowering shrubs like gorse boost local biodiversity by providing vital food and shelter for insects, birds, and other wildlife when few other resources are available



Coltsfoot provides critical early nectar for emerging pollinators and essential shelter and nesting materials for local wildlife.

3:49 pm





### St Manchan's Well

#### Holy Well

Along the togher (ancient trackway) from **St Manchan's Church** to **St Mella's Cell** is a holy well. Legend says that one day the saint was thirsty and there was no water at the monastery. He struck a rock and a spring well bubbled up. However, St. Manchan's well was more than likely a sacred well since pagan times. Tradition has it that when you are sick you should pray here, walk three times round the well, and then leave a votive offering in gratitude to the saint in the window of the church. It is claimed that many people have been cured of ailments after visiting the well. When the well was renovated in the 1930's, four upright graveslabs in a cruxiform pattern were discovered. These graveslabs are now housed in the visitor centre (schoolhouse).



A rag tree near the well displaying clouties is pictured right. Usually the rags are placed there by people who believe that if a piece of clothing from someone with an ailment is hung from the tree, the problem or illness will disappear as the rag rots away. At the entrance to the well is a very large bullaun stone similar in size to the one situated at the road junction where we parked the car. The whole complex at Lemnaghan has a wonderful ancient feel to it, from the moment we stepped out of the car we could feel something special. The atmosphere we experienced here was to increase as we moved along the togher to **St Mella's Cell**.



Situated: From Lemnaghan church, take to togher to the right. The well is situated along the togher on the right hand side.

Discovery Map 48: N 1715 2695. Last visit March 2011.

Longitude: 7° 44' 34.03" W

Latitude: 53° 17' 33.34" N

[Google Map](#)

Photos: Jim Dempsey and Deb Snelson.



**SUNDAY 14th AUGUST, 6.30-7.30pm**

## **Lemanaghan Monastic Site Heritage Tour**



Lemanaghan Monastic Site, located near the boglands at Lemanaghan, between Ballycumber and Ferbane was founded by St. Manchan in the 7th century. The locals will guide visitors down a 150 metre stretch of the pilgrim path to St. Mella's Cell. This peaceful setting is rich in history and good for the soul. On the return trail, locals will discuss the folklore and stop at St Manchan's holy well which is reputed to cure all kinds of ailments. Last, but certainly not least, the architectural

significance of St Manchan's Church will be explored before finishing up in the old school house with some light refreshments. The historic event will start at 6.30pm immediately after the annual blessing of the graves in Lemanaghan graveyard. Mass at 6pm for anyone wishing to attend.

**Venue:** Lemanaghan Monastic Site, Ballycumber, R35 HR61

**Organiser:** Lemanaghan Bog Heritage & Conservation Group

**Telephone:** 086 3320269

**Email:** lemanaghanboghcg@gmail.com

