

OBSERVATION/SUBMISSION TO PLANNING APPLICATION

Case Reference: 324162

Tommy & Kathleen Kelly
Ivy House
CastleLambert
Athenry
Galway
H65 EH74

To: An Coimisiún Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1
D01 V902
Date: 23 May 2026

Re: Observation to the proposed development of a 220kV substation, telecommunications mast and underground electricity cable infrastructure with associated works.

Location: Rathmorrissey, Pollnagroagh, Moanbaun, Castlambert, Knocknacreeva, Caraunduff, Caherbriskaun, Lisheenkyle East, Barrettspark and Cashla (Townlands), Athenry, Co. Galway

Applicant: Bord Gáis Energy Limited

Dear Sir/Madam,

We, Tommy and Kathleen Kelly, are elderly residents and occupiers of an old family home located directly along the proposed grid connection route associated with planning application 324162.

Although I am now a retired farmer and no longer actively farming or owning agricultural lands, I have lived in this area all my life and take enormous pride in my home, my local community, and the rural heritage of this area.

We are writing to formally object to the proposed development and to respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission in its entirety.

Our home constitutes a sensitive residential receptor, located approximately 600 metres from the proposed site, within the meaning of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) and is particularly vulnerable to the impacts arising from the construction and operation of the proposed development, including traffic disruption, noise, vibration, visual intrusion, land access disruption, and prolonged construction activity associated with the grid connection works.

Historical & Family Heritage

Our home and surrounding area are not simply locations on a map. They represent generations of family history, local heritage, biodiversity, and community identity.

Of particular emotional, historical, and environmental importance to our family is a mature tree located beside the proposed grid connection works and proposed joint bay area. This tree stands on the site where my father was born in the early 1900s. While the original house no longer stands and only stones remain in the ground, the location remains deeply significant to our family history and connection to the area.

Recently, our extended family held a large gathering at this location celebrating the Kelly generations and our deep roots in the area. More than 300 relatives, neighbours, and local residents attended the event. For our family, this location represents a living connection between past and present generations.

In addition to its historical importance, this mature tree and surrounding hedgerows form part of the established rural landscape and local biodiversity of the area. Mature roadside trees and hedgerows provide important habitat, shelter, and ecological value for birds, pollinators, and wildlife and contribute significantly to the character and visual amenity of the local environment.

We are deeply concerned about the potential impact that the proposed joint bay excavation works, trenching operations, underground infrastructure, vibration, and heavy construction activity could have on the root system and long-term survival of this mature tree.

The application documentation does not provide sufficient reassurance regarding how the tree roots, surrounding ground conditions, biodiversity features, and this historically significant location will be protected during construction.

Given the scale of excavation proposed for the joint bay and associated underground cable infrastructure, we fear there is a real risk of damage to the root structure which could destabilise or permanently damage the tree over time. Once such damage is done, it cannot be reversed.

The loss or decline of this mature tree would represent not only a devastating personal and historical loss to our family, but also a loss to the biodiversity, rural landscape, heritage, and identity of the area.

We are also concerned that insufficient information has been provided regarding how mature trees, hedgerows, and roadside vegetation along the route will be protected during construction works or properly reinstated afterwards. In our view, the long-term stability, health, and safety implications for mature trees and root systems have not been adequately addressed within the application documentation.

Structural Risks to Our Old Family Home

Our dwelling is an older house and is particularly vulnerable to structural disturbance arising from nearby trenching, excavation, rock breaking, resurfacing works, vibration, and heavy construction traffic.

We are extremely concerned that these works, taking place directly outside our home over a prolonged period, could result in cracking, settlement, foundation movement, or other structural damage to the house, boundary walls, and surrounding property.

We do not believe the application documentation provides sufficient reassurance regarding how older homes along the route will be protected, monitored, or compensated in the event of structural damage.

Human Health & Vulnerable Residents & Emergency Access

As elderly residents, we are medically vulnerable and heavily reliant on uninterrupted access, electricity supply, telecommunications services, and emergency response systems.

Kathleen relies on a stair lift, while Tommy relies on heart monitoring equipment. We also depend on monitored panic buttons and emergency response services connected through telecommunications and electricity infrastructure. These systems are essential to our safety and wellbeing, particularly given our age and ongoing health concerns.

Emergency situations requiring 999 assistance have unfortunately become a more frequent reality in our old age. For this reason, reliable and immediate emergency access to our home is critically important.

Despite the clear vulnerability of elderly residents living directly along the proposed route, nobody acting on behalf of the applicant has ever visited our home to assess our specific medical needs, emergency access requirements, or reliance on assisted living and emergency response systems. No clear contingency measures or emergency access plans have been outlined in the event of a medical emergency occurring during the proposed construction works.

We are deeply concerned that road closures, stop/go systems, trenching works, heavy construction traffic, excavation activity, or service interruptions could delay ambulances, carers, emergency responders, or community support services attempting to access our home.

We are also concerned about the potential disruption to telecommunications and electricity services which support our panic buttons, monitored emergency systems, and medical equipment. Any interruption or delay affecting these services could place vulnerable residents such as us at serious risk.

As elderly residents with ongoing cardiac health concerns, we are deeply concerned about the lack of clear assessment regarding potential electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure arising from the proposed electrical infrastructure.

Tommy is fitted with a pacemaker and also relies on ongoing cardiac monitoring equipment. Given these medical circumstances, we believe a precautionary approach should apply in relation to any potential electromagnetic or electrical interference associated with major underground electrical infrastructure located in close proximity to our home.

While the applicant repeatedly seeks to minimise potential impacts, insufficient reassurance has been provided regarding the possible implications for medically vulnerable residents relying on pacemakers, heart monitoring devices, and other medically necessary equipment.

The prolonged construction works proposed directly outside our home would impose major stress, anxiety, and disruption on our daily lives and wellbeing. Given our age and medical circumstances, prolonged uncertainty, disruption, and restricted access would have a significant impact on our physical wellbeing, sense of security, and ability to continue living safely and independently in our home. In our view, the application documentation and EIAR fail to adequately assess or address the very real impacts this development could have on elderly and medically vulnerable residents living directly along the proposed cable route.

Absence of Standalone Noise & Vibration Assessment

We are particularly concerned that no standalone noise and vibration assessment appears to have been carried out regarding the proposed grid connection infrastructure, including the substation and associated works.

We do not believe sufficient assessment has been provided regarding construction noise, operational noise, vibration, or the cumulative impact on nearby residents located along the proposed cable route and surrounding rural roads.

Given the proximity of the proposed works to our old family home, this omission is especially concerning.

Impact of the Proposed Cable Route

The proposed 8.1km underground cable route would pass through established rural and residential communities including Rathmorrissy, Castlet Lambert, Knocknacreeva, Caherbriskaun, Lisheenkyle East and Cashla.

These are active farming and residential areas with homes, schools, farms, and local businesses located along narrow rural roads.

We are concerned about the level of disruption the proposed works would cause to residents, farms, local roads, and daily community life through prolonged trenching works, excavation, road occupation, stop/go systems, resurfacing works, and heavy construction traffic.

According to the applicant's own documentation, the construction period associated with the grid connection works is expected to last approximately six months, with additional resurfacing works extending for weeks and months thereafter. The cumulative effect of these works would impose significant and ongoing disruption on ordinary family life and local communities.

Farming, Groundwater & Animal Health Impacts

All of our children live along the proposed route, meaning the impacts of this development would affect not only our household but our wider family and community network. Two of our children continue to farm locally and rely daily on the roads and lands affected by the proposed infrastructure works.

We are concerned about the disruption that prolonged trenching works, road occupation, resurfacing works, and construction activity would cause to livestock farming, machinery movement, milk collection, and normal farm access throughout the area.

We are also concerned that insufficient information has been provided regarding the possible long-term impact of underground infrastructure and electromagnetic field (EMF) exposure on livestock and animal health within an active farming area.

In addition, many farms and rural homes in the area rely on private wells, groundwater supplies, livestock drinking water, and established drainage systems. We are concerned that excavation and underground cable installation works may adversely affect groundwater conditions, drainage patterns, and land stability.

We also rely on our own private well for our household water supply. Given the scale of the proposed excavation, trenching, rock breaking, and underground cable installation works, we are deeply concerned about the potential impact on groundwater conditions, water quality, and the long-term reliability of our private well supply.

The application documentation does not provide sufficient reassurance regarding how private wells and groundwater sources along the route will be identified, monitored, protected, or restored in the event of contamination, disruption, or reduced water flow during construction works.

As elderly residents, access to a safe and reliable water supply is essential to our daily lives, health, and wellbeing. Any interference with our private well would cause major hardship and distress.

We are also concerned that disturbance to groundwater and drainage systems could have wider impacts on surrounding rural properties, farmland, livestock watering supplies, and local environmental conditions.

Impact on Rural Character & Residential Amenity

The affected area forms part of a growing rural residential community within the wider Athenry area, where many families choose to live because of its rural character, agricultural setting, and proximity to local towns, schools, and employment centres.

We are concerned that the introduction of major industrial-scale energy infrastructure into this established rural environment would negatively affect the residential character, visual amenity, and overall attractiveness of the area as a place to live and raise families.

Community Consultation & Engagement Concerns

We believe local residents have not been provided with sufficient information regarding the cumulative impact of the wider project, including prolonged construction activity, traffic disruption, road closures, environmental impacts, and the long-term presence of industrial infrastructure within established rural communities.

In our view, affected residents and communities along the route have not been meaningfully consulted regarding the practical impacts this project would have on homes, family life, local roads, and rural communities.

This submission is grounded in the real and lasting impacts that this proposed development would have on our home, our health, our family heritage, and our rural community. It concerns the protection of elderly and medically vulnerable residents, the preservation of historically important family locations and biodiversity features, and the safeguarding of the rural character and quality of life that has existed in this area for generations.

For the reasons outlined above, we believe the proposed development would give rise to significant adverse impacts on residential amenity, community wellbeing, emergency access, groundwater conditions, biodiversity, heritage features, local infrastructure, and the wider rural environment. We are particularly concerned about the cumulative effects of prolonged construction activity and industrial-scale electrical infrastructure on vulnerable residents, older homes, farming families, and established rural communities.

In our view, the applicant has failed to adequately demonstrate that the proposed development can proceed without causing unacceptable impacts on vulnerable residents, local heritage, biodiversity, residential amenity, and the surrounding rural environment. We therefore do not believe the proposal

represents proper planning and sustainable development and respectfully request that An Coimisiún Pleanála refuse planning permission for the proposed development.

Yours sincerely,

Tommy & Kathleen Kelly
23 May 2026