

**From:** [Yvonne Jackson](#)  
**To:** [SIDS](#)  
**Subject:** Fáilte Ireland Submission-Case No. PAX04.324165  
**Date:** Friday 22 May 2026 10:13:22  
**Attachments:** [Outlook-kfzscunx.png](#)  
[Case Ref PAX04.324165 Fáilte Ireland Submission.pdf](#)

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Dear Secretary,

Fáilte Ireland would like to take the opportunity to make a submission Re: 10 year planning permission for Maughanaclea Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines, a 110kV substation and 110kV underground cabling connection and associated works.

The attached submission has been prepared by Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority.

I would be grateful if you could send a reply email acknowledging receipt of submission.

Regards,

**Yvonne Jackson**

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The Secretary  
An Coimisiún Pleanála,  
64 Marlborough Street,  
Dublin 1,

By email: [sids@pleanala.ie](mailto:sids@pleanala.ie)

25th May 2026

**Re: Case reference: PAX04.324165**

**Proposed development for 10 year planning permission for Maughanaclea Wind Farm consisting of 14 no. wind turbines, a 110kV substation and 110kV underground cabling connection and associated works located in Ardrah, Maughanaclea, Ballynamought, Gortloughra, Cousane, Coomclogh, Derragh, Glanycarney, Keenrath, Derrynacaheragh, Shiplough, Coolsnachtig and other townlands Co. Cork**

Dear Secretary,

I refer to the above application which is currently registered with An Coimisiún Pleanála.

As a prescribed body in the planning process, one of the main objectives of Fáilte Ireland is to advocate for the protection of key tourism assets and amenities. The Irish landscape is one of the primary assets for tourism in the country and has been the cornerstone of international tourism marketing campaigns for decades. International visitors to Ireland consistently rate scenery as an important reason for their trip. Therefore, as the Irish landscape is one of the primary reasons for visiting the country, it is essential that the quality, character and distinctiveness of this valuable resource is protected.

It is the policy of Fáilte Ireland to support sustainable development and we acknowledge that there is a requirement to provide for and develop renewable energy, at appropriate locations and in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development. In considering the proposed wind farm development Fáilte Ireland acknowledges the requirement at a national level to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and to increase support from renewable sources, including wind. Notwithstanding, Fáilte Ireland is also aware of the significant effect that wind farms can have on the local and wider landscape, including the landscape as a major asset in support of national and international tourism.

The proposed development would be situated in a mountainous and scenic area of West Cork within the Wild Atlantic Way Region. While the immediate catchment of the WAW is the coastal zone, the

route itself acts as a calling card to gain the attention of the visitor and acts as a device to entice people to the west of Ireland. Once there, visitors are encouraged to further explore and engage with tourism experiences and communities in a wider geographical area.

### **Commentary on Proposed Development**

From a tourism perspective the key impacts arising from the proposed development are likely to arise due to:

- Construction related impacts
- Impacts arising from the operational stage of the development

### **Construction Related Impacts**

These impacts are temporary impacts arising directly from the construction of the windfarm. They include increased traffic movements by heavy goods vehicles in the locality and ‘on-the ground’ impacts arising from construction and ground works. These impacts may have a short-term negative impact on tourists and other users of the local area. These impacts can be mitigated by the implementation of appropriate construction management strategies which will reduce the nuisance associated with the construction phase. During construction of each of the major infrastructure elements and the installation of the wind turbines there is potential for impacts on the biodiversity and ecology of the area.

### **Impacts Arising from the Operational Stage of the Development**

Arising from the operational stage of the development the key impacts that may affect tourism in the receiving environment are visual impacts, and those impacts arising from the operation of the facility.

The Landscape Character Assessment of County Cork which forms part of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2208 classifies the subject area within the Landscape Character Type ‘15a Ridge and Peaked Upland’, which is classified with a; ‘High’ landscape sensitivity; ‘High’ Landscape Value.

A number of general recommendations are outlined in the Draft Cork County Landscape Strategy regarding LCT15a, some of which relate to the Proposed Development:

- *Protect the unique setting and character of villages like Ballingeary and Inchigeelagh.*
- *Recognise the scenic value of the Cousane Gap as a valuable tourist attraction in this LCT.*
- *Recognise the value of Lough Allua as a valuable amenity for tourism and recreational activities.*
- *Recognise the value of the upland areas (Shehy Mountains) in this LCT particularly as a tourism resource for hill walking.*

In addition to the existing amenity and landscape character value of the area, it is important to consider the significance of the visual impacts on the potential amenity value. From a recreational perspective, we note that the EIAR has scoped in several tourism and amenity receptors for assessment.

*Due to the elevated and rolling nature of the Study Area, numerous walking trails and cycling trails criss-cross the Study Area. The most notable of these include;*

- *Beara Gougane Barra Cycling Route (Beara Way, Beara Way Cycle Route)*
- *Sli Galetacht Mhuscraí*
- *Sheep's Head Way (Incl. all routes)*
- *Mealagh Valley Loop / Melagh Woods Loop*
- *Pass of Keimaneigh*
- *Rooska Loop*

Having regard to the continued and increased use of the upland landscape for leisure and recreational use, changes in landscape character real or perceived from views of the proposed development need to be considered. The profile of recreational activities in the area is undoubtedly 'landscape based' – walking, cycling, and outdoor pursuits. This is reflected also in section 10.6 of the Cork County Development Plan 2022-2028 which states that the county has a wide range of nationally significant tourism assets namely;

- Mountain ranges including: the Slieve Miskish and Caha Mountains, the Galtee Mountains, the Shehy Mountains, and the Ballyhoura Area –important centres for walking, cycling, and adventure related activities;

In addition, a West Cork initiative, Dark Skies Community, is a collaboration between eco-lodge business Wild Hideaways and the local community in the Mealagh Valley near Bantry. The Wild Hideaways holds DarkSky International Approved Lodging Certification the only such certification in Europe. This initiative will support the creation of an accredited Dark Skies Park in County Cork, creating a memorable experience for visitors and residents to enjoy the tranquillity and benefits of a natural night sky. There is also a DarkSky approved lodging in close proximity to the proposed development.

It is noted that the proposed turbines may require aviation lighting. Visible aviation lighting has the potential to change the character of a landscape after dark, particularly in rural areas with low levels of existing artificial light such as the Mealagh Valley. In areas recognised for their dark sky qualities, this is an especially sensitive consideration. The planning authority should consider the impact of

aviation lighting and how it will affect the night-time environment and DarkSky characteristics of the area in its assessment of the proposed development.

Therefore, the protection and management of the landscape character becomes as much about protecting an economic and cultural asset, as it is about the physical context of those landscape features.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

We note that the EIAR has included the projects and proposals for other wind farms that are either at planning stage, operational and consented/permitted. The capacity of the area to further absorb wind farm development should be determined. We therefore, request that the planning authority considers, assesses and satisfies itself that the proposed Wind Farm development will not result in significant effects, either on its own or cumulatively, on the landscape or visual environment.

### **Tourism Impact Assessment**

We note that the proposal is accompanied by a Tourism Impact Assessment which is welcomed. The report concludes that;

*The Proposed Project location and immediate surrounding area has a low level of tourism assets. Two assets have been identified in this TIA as warranting further consideration with regard to potential impact: the local sections of the Sheep's Head Way; and scenic routes S28 and S29 along Regional Roads R584 and R585.*

*It is considered that the Proposed Project has the potential to have a negative impact on the local sections of the Sheep's Head Way. However, the impacts are assessed as not significant.*

*It is considered that the Proposed Project will have limited impact on the two scenic routes identified in the area: S28 along sections of the R584 and S29 along sections of the R585. However, the impacts are assessed as not significant.*

*It is considered that there will be no significant cumulative impact on tourism arising from the Proposed Project.*

As highlighted at the outset of this submission, the proposed development would be situated in a mountainous and scenic area of West Cork within the Wild Atlantic Way Region. While the immediate catchment of the WAW is the coastal zone, the route itself acts as a calling card to gain the attention of the visitor and acts as a device to entice people to the west of Ireland. Once there, visitors are encouraged to further explore and engage with tourism experiences and communities in a wider geographical area. The TIA acknowledges the impact of the development on the Sheep's Head Way and on the two scenic routes identified in the area: S28 along sections of the R584 and S29 along sections of the R585. The scale of the turbines would be visible from various points along the Sheep's

Head Way and surrounding scenic areas. The Sheep's Head Way is a long distance way-marked way, the main trail is 146km, with additional 37 loop and linear walks. The Sheep's Head Peninsula, a highly important, award-winning European Destination of Excellence for its sustainable tourism practices.

### **Conclusion**

Fáilte Ireland supports the sustainable development of electricity generation by sustainable and renewable sources at appropriate locations and in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.

We ask that An Coimisiún Pleanála take our observations into consideration when deciding on this application including the impact of the proposed development on the sensitive tourism and amenity receptors in the area and in the context of the existing wind energy developments which are already operational and planned for in the area.

Yours sincerely,



Manager of Environment and Planning, Fáilte Ireland