

My Ref: Anne Davis, B.Sc., DLS, 14 Cappaneale, Birr, Co Offaly (Observer)

Your Ref: Case Reference No. ABP-PAX 92.324279, RWE Renewables Ireland Ltd, Ballincor Windfarms (Developer)

I wish to put forward my observations on the above proposed development. I propose that the above development should **not** be granted permission on the basis of these and other observation of which you will be in receipt.

Context

I was born in Bellefield, Shinrone, Co Offaly just seventy years ago. I spent the first eighteen years of my life in this area (all within the areas 'affected' and within the 'radius' of the development). I returned to this area in 2006 and lived at Lockeen, Carrig until six months ago. (again, within the areas 'affected' and within the 'radius' of the proposed development) I plan to spend the remainder of my life in the Birr area.

This amounts to approximate thirty-eight years in the area.

My late father was 'agent' for the boglands for the Ballincor Demesne. This is within the area of the proposed development. This involved managing the use of turf cutting in the area and the use of 'turbary rights' where they existed. As a young child I spent substantial time with my father in this bogland and grew to love it and the Brosna Callows and I still do to this day hold an extraordinary affection for these very special lands adjoining the River Brosna much of which is an SAC.

To propose to use these lands for the purposes intended by this Developer is nothing short of 'environmental vandalism'. I would hope that this and the many other sets of observations will be considered very seriously by An Comisiun Pleanala in considering the proposal and its impact on the environment and the lives of citizens who reside in the area.

Listed Observations. – The proposed development should **not** be granted permission to develop as proposed on the basis of the following and other observation submitted to An Comisiun Pleanala

- The local authority, Offaly Co. Co. have deemed the area for the proposed development to be unsuitable for development of windfarms. The local authority engages in extensive study of areas under its remit when designating areas suitable or otherwise for developments. The Local Authority is the democratically elected statutory body who has delegated powers from Government to carry out this work.
- This development will intersect with another major infrastructural project. PA92.323980, Uisce Eireann , Proposed Water Supply Project for Eastern and Midlands. This has the potential of increased construction traffic in the area adding to what would result from the RWE development. The impact of these two developments must be considered **together** given the combined impact on the area.
- The R492 is not suitable for the degree of construction traffic which will result from the proposed development. By their designation R roads are designed for a lower level of traffic than for example N roads. It has to be noted that there are two nineteen century bridges on the R492 very proximate to the proposed entrance to the site. Has

the developer had these two bridges expertly examined to establish if they are capable of withstanding the level of construction traffic and weight of vehicles for example those carrying concrete ?

- Proximity to an SAC, Sharavogue Bog is an SAC and is situated very close to the proposed development, these are important peatland habitats and deserve State protection in a time of climate crisis. The River Brosna (again bordering the proposed site) is of huge importance for wildlife in the area (SPA 004086) The Brosna Callows experience extensive flooding in the area of the proposed site and this has been the case in all of my living memory.
- I currently live on the R439 in the town of Birr. At the end of my road in a dense urban area the developer has displayed one of the site notices for the proposed development. This indicates the scope of this development and the level of disruption to the town of Birr with construction work and construction traffic. This town is a hugely important historic town. The site notice is displayed adjacent to the walls of Birr Castle Demesne and a terrace of houses which had 'listed' status. Has the developer demonstrated that no damage will come to structures such as those listed?
- Intensification – Offaly is carrying a disproportionate share of Ireland's onshore renewable energy infrastructure. If this proposed development was to go ahead then the historically important town of Birr will be virtually surrounded by windfarms. That surely is not the case for any other town in Ireland. With permission being granted for Carrig Renewables in recent times (appeals ref 318689) and the proposed development would complete that ring of turbines surrounding the town.
- RHSI Bellefield – As a member of the RHSI (and I must stress I am **not** representing the RHSI and my observation are absolutely personal) it has to be noted that the House and Gardens at Bellefield are within the radius of the proposed development (no 364) and is within 2 km of the development. For those reasons RWE has identified it as 'affected'. As an Official Receptor within 2 km RWE must consult with the Receptor. Has RWE provided proof for consultation with the RHSI ? It is my understanding that they have not done so.

Commented [AD1]: RHSI – Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland – Registered Charity