

Declan Mann

Farm Lodge,

Sharavogue,

Birr,

Co. Offaly,

R42W920

27/06/2026

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| AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA |           |
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**Case Reference: PAX92.324279 Ballincor Wind Farm, Counties Offaly and Tipperary**

Receptor numbers on RWE map: 178 (current home) and 160 (family home)

Photos are included with this submission to illustrate and explain my points.

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Declan Mann. I live with my wife Sheila and family at Farm Lodge, Sharavogue, Birr, Co. Offaly. We are farmers and we own land directly adjacent to this proposed development. My ancestors have worked this land for hundreds of years.

The house my parents lived in and where I and the rest of my siblings grew up, is over 200 years old. It was built by my great-grandfather. RWE has it listed as Receptor 160. My son, who works at home, had hoped some day to refurbish that house and live in it. A few yards from it are the remains of another house lived in by previous generations. Both of those houses were built overlooking the Little Brosna river and valley with views stretching for miles to the west and they enjoyed unhindered sunshine all year round in fine weather. That is the place this application is being made over.

My wife and I built our own home 35 years ago also to make the most of those same views. We can look out the back windows and see the Little Brosna and the clear views to the west. We can also see eight turbines that were built years ago. Those existing turbines are much smaller than the ones being proposed for Ballincor. We will also be able to see the turbines going up on the Carrig site.

#### **The turbines will sit directly between our house and the evening sun**

Three of the proposed Ballincor turbines will be each just under 1,000 metres from our current home. Separately, those same three turbines will each be 740 metres from the old family home where my son hopes to live. Nine of the eleven proposed turbines will be in an almost

straight line to the west of both houses, beside the Little Brosna river. They will be directly between our house and the evening sun.

RWE has submitted a visual impact picture VP21A which is said to represent our view in our area. That picture presented below was taken about 200 metres away from our house, from a hollow in the road. See image below: As is typical RWE chose a viewpoint screened by high trees and hedges. The tree encircled is on my property



The image below is the view for every back window in my home with the same tree encircled in red.



I have added the turbines as we will see them into this image – see below to demonstrate the actual visual impact.



There are 10 houses in my immediate area. See the Receptor Map below. We all share this vista and RWE did not accurately or adequately represent this view.



The RWE VP21a image does not represent what we will actually see. They could have taken it from our entrance. That would have shown the real impact. I would ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to require a visual impact assessment from the actual entrance to our property, not from a hollow 200 metres away.

To further demonstrate the point, the Community group completed a Visual impact study, using WindPlanner licensed software and I requested images from my house which are presented below.



My brother Pat lives on the right of the photo above and my house is on the left.



The view above is taken from my brothers garden at the back, the site beside us and we share this view from our garden. All rooms, kitchen and bedrooms will have full sight of the visual above. You can see how close the turbines are to our home.

In 2020, during Covid when everybody was staying at home, we built a patio beside our house. The sun shines on that patio from about 3 pm until sunset. That area will now be completely useless with the flicker of 27 blades — nine turbines, three blades each — flashing between us and the sun, and with the noise on top of it. We can already hear the eight existing turbines from our house. The turbines going up at Carrig will be seen as well extending into the distance.

This is the wireframe for RWE VP21A and the image does confirm that turbines from both Lacka/Skehanagh and Carrig will be visible from my home.



I suffer from a sleep disorder. I know the noise impact will most definitely make it worse.

### **Our family farm will be sterilised for future generations**

The siting of the proposed turbines would have a direct and disproportionate impact on our family holding. Our existing home is located on the outermost boundary of the family farm, meaning that the entire family holding lies between our home and the proposed turbines. Our home is approximately 1,000 metres from three separate turbines, while the original 200-year-old family home is approximately 740 metres from three separate turbines.

In practical terms, this means that the whole of our family farm would fall within close proximity of multiple industrial-scale turbines. The impact is not confined to our existing residence. It would also prejudice the reasonable future use of the holding by the next generation of our family. Any future dwelling on the farm would be likely to be closer again to the turbines, or within an area affected by turbine noise, shadow flicker, visual dominance, residential amenity impacts and perceived health, safety or nuisance concerns.

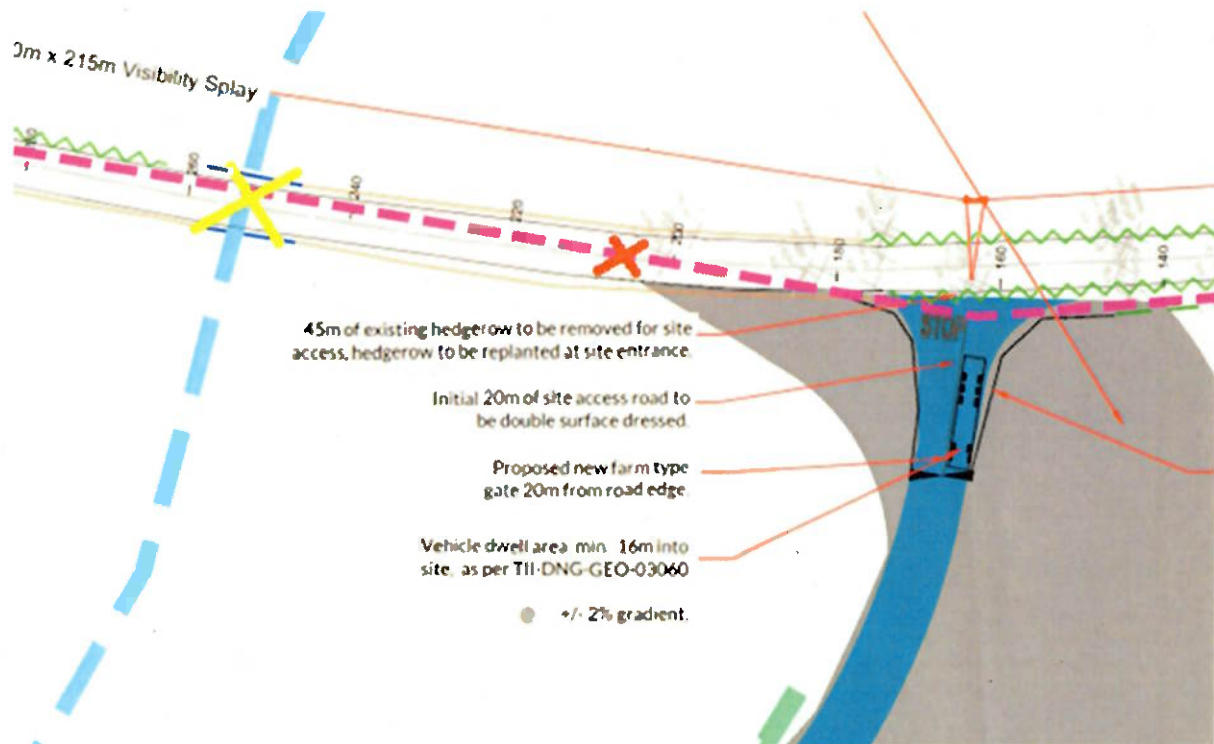
This creates a serious and long-term sterilising effect on the family lands. Future residential development on the holding may become ill-advised, difficult to justify in planning terms, unattractive to lenders or purchasers, or practically impossible because of proximity to the turbines. The proposed development would therefore impose a permanent intergenerational burden on our family farm, removing or severely constraining the ability of future family members to live on their own land.

This is a material planning consideration. The assessment should not consider only the impact on existing houses. It should also consider the effect of placing multiple 185 metre turbines so close to a long-established family holding, where the proposed layout would materially

compromise the future residential potential, amenity, value and ordinary use of the farm for generations to come.

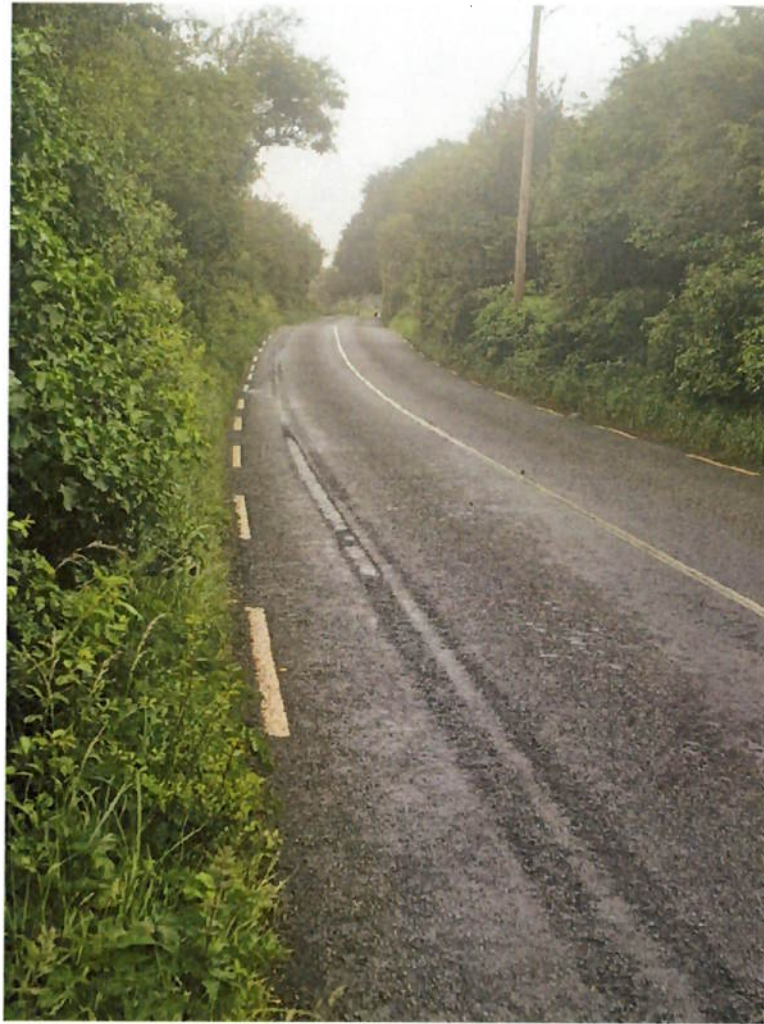
### **The proposed site entrance on the R492 is dangerous**

Our house and our entrance are on the R492. The proposed entrance to the development is about 200 metres from us. The position of that entrance is extremely dangerous.. Between us and it there are two bridges — a humpback bridge over the old railway line, and a bridge over the river. These are not visible the planning drawings submitted by RWE below which suggest a straight line view on flat open road.



The reality is a deep dip on the Sharavogue side, a narrow bridge over humpback with no visibility of the bend nor the road ahead. It is not possible to see the proposed entrance over the humpback bridge until you are right on top of it. The yellow X is the humpback bridge, the Red X is the point at which you get visibility of the site entrance ahead.

The image below is taken directly from the site entrance facing the Sharavogue Bridge – their access route off the N62. The bend, the hollow, the 2 bridges and the continuous white line are visible and the poor line of visibility confirmed.



There have been numerous and frequent accidents at this bridge because of the combination of the turn and the bridge. Travelling from Sharavogue towards Shinrone you go over the bridge first and then into the turn — and most accidents happen because after going over the bridge people cannot take the turn. In terms of the bridges themselves they are both listed in County Offaly Record of protected Structures as having an architectural and technical interest.



County Offaly  
Record of Protected Structures  
Adopted September 2021



57-04

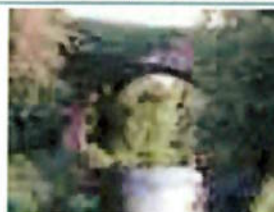
**Sharavogue Bridge**

**BALLINCOR DEMESNE**

**Sharavogue**

**Birr**

**Birr**



**14938021**

Single-arch masonry bridge, constructed c 1850, carrying the Sharavogue Shinnone road over the Little Brosna River. Rock-faced sandstone parapets with rusticated quoins. Dressed string course. Segmental profile arch. Rusticated voussoirs. Roughly dressed blocks to spandrels. Parapets coped with dressed limestone blocks. Wing walls of sandstone blocks.

Sharavogue Bridge is situated beside the Sharavogue railway bridge and together the bridges add to the architectural heritage of the area. It was built on the site of an earlier eighteenth-/early nineteenth-century bridge which was replaced by the Board of Works as part of the Little Brosna drainage scheme works from 1848-1852.

57 04

This view of Sharavogue Bridge built in 1850 will give you a sense of my genuine concern for its capacity to carry the HGV traffic and weight across the 2 year construction phase and the very large turbine component deliveries at the end of it. There is no assessment of its structural capacity to do so in the RWE submission which seems like a significant failing.

### **The R492 cannot carry this construction traffic**

The R492 is not suitable for the volume of lorries or heavy loads that this development will require. It is already a very busy road, especially morning and evening with work commuters and school traffic. Lorries cannot meet on the full stretch of road and they use people's entrances as lay-bys to pull in — our entrance is being damaged by this already. Widening the road would only make it more dangerous by encouraging speeding.

There is a further point that the planning authority needs to consider. The water pipeline between Parteen and Dublin crosses the R492 is just 300 metres from the proposed development entrance. All of the pipeline construction traffic will be using the R492 too. This will effectively turn the R492 into a construction-traffic-only road, with locals badly affected. A stop-go traffic system or traffic diversions on narrow rural roads would cause very long

delays for people commuting to and from work. My wife works 12-hour shifts at Tullamore Hospital. The day is long enough without having to wait to get out your own gate at 6.30 in the morning.

It is worth noting that none of the landowners making land available for this development live on the R492 or will have to use this road on a daily basis. They will not be affected by any of the construction traffic, and they will not be affected by the evening sun flicker either.

### **The access track on the callow will worsen flooding**

I own 750 metres of Callows on the opposite side of the river where RWE are proposing to build access tracks running alongside the Little Brosna river. In places it would seem the tracks will come within 20m of the river's edge.

I have farmed this land all my life and I have watched the flooding getting worse as each year goes by. Everyone accepts that climate change is increasing flood risk in Ireland and areas in flood zones are clearly the most vulnerable. It seems very stupid to me to disturb land like this in such a devastating way. The only thing I have ever seen done in these callows is draining to get summer grass. There is no guarantee that a development of this nature and size will not do untold damage to the area for generations.

The flood water rises to over three feet at times in the callow and can stay like that all winter. It can flood any time of year in very wet weather. In my own case, I can expect that the access track on the callow opposite my land will cause more flooding on my side. The idea that this level of construction and soil compression or compaction will not affect the river and spread the flooding east is just nonsense. That will happen from site entrance all the way along the callows to the SAC. No doubt in my mind. And the idea that the water in the development site will in no way connect or affect the water table on the other side of the river is also nonsense. I am not a hydrologist or water engineer but I don't need to be. This is an obvious conclusion.

RWE claim they want to minimise impact during construction. If that is so, why are they not using the roadway that is already being used by heavy goods vehicles in and out of the peat harvesting enterprise? That road already goes inside the wind farm site and, with a lot less damage to the environment, it could be developed into the access track.

### **Risk to grazing, water contamination, and livelihood**

I rely on my callow for a large percentage of my summer grazing. If that grazing is reduced, I will be badly affected. As it is, when the flood water goes down it leaves dirt behind on the grass. How can anyone be certain that, after an access track is laid and the callow is dug up to erect turbines with huge amounts of steel and concrete and God knows what else, the water will not be contaminated in some way? It could be that the grass might not grow as well, or

that animals might not do as well as they previously did. It does not necessarily mean that the animals are sick or the grass is dead. But there is a real possibility of loss of income from that, and no answer to it in the EIAR.

There is also the question of dust from the current peat harvesting enterprise adjoining the windfarm site that RWE has not addressed. Dust coming from the peat harvesting operation will be fanned by the turbines and distributed to everyone around.

### **Danger to livestock during construction**

There is real danger to livestock during construction. The callow is a very quiet place, not near roads or people or traffic. It is a place with a lot of drains that are partially full of water. If cattle get frightened or spooked by lorries, or by huge cranes with bright orange beacons flashing in the early hours of the morning — which is the time RWE say they intend to work — cattle will run and end up in drains, or get hurt, or worse. There will also be a lot of pounding and vibration which will terrify livestock. I have a livestock shed about 200 metres from the proposed access track. If cattle get frightened there they could be hurt. If livestock are nervous or frightened on a continuous basis they will definitely not do well, which ultimately means my farming income will suffer.

### **The wildlife on the river and the callow**

My wife and other family members regularly go walking beside the river with our dogs. The swans and other wildlife in the callow get used to people. There are Barn Owls, cranes, otters, ducks and loads of other wildlife living in these callows. Even from our house we can see the swans fly up and down the river and come in to land.

If these turbines are built we will also see the swans being battered by turbine blades and watch them die in the callow.

### **This development is directly contradictory to 20 years of agri-environmental work**

I have been taking part in Agri-Environmental Schemes for over 20 years. I do not spread fertiliser or manure of any type beside or near the river. My cattle are fenced away from the riverbank. I have done this, year after year, under State-supported schemes designed to protect water quality and biodiversity along exactly this kind of watercourse.

This proposed development is totally contradictory to those schemes. It proposes to dig up the ground, destroy the natural habitats in and along the river and release thousands of tonnes of carbon emissions from the bog at a time when we are being told we are not doing enough to enhance, support and promote biodiversity. The same State that has paid me for two decades to protect this stretch of river is now being asked to permit its industrialisation. More than anything else that contradiction has to be answered before any permission is granted.

## **Property value**

The value of our house is going to be significantly affected by this development. There is a real possibility that it might not have any worthwhile monetary value at all once the development is built.

## **The site has been deemed unsuitable by Offaly County Council**

This area has been deemed unsuitable for wind turbines by Offaly County Council because of its natural beauty, its natural habitats, and the fact that it is a flood plain. Offaly is already providing huge amounts of land for wind farms, and the County Council has zoned other areas as suitable for wind turbines. There is no acceptable reason for this particular application in this particular place.

## **The "not significant" problem**

Our objection has been summarised as follows:

- Significant negative impact on our home and our quality of life
- Significant negative impact on the future of this farm — and the surrounding farms — for the next generation
- Significant negative impact on our health, through noise and shadow flicker
- Significant negative impact on our house value
- A dangerous proposed site entrance and a road network that cannot carry the traffic
- No structural assessment of the 1850 Sharavogue Bridge despite two years of HGV use
- Extra flooding and water contamination from the access track and excavation
- Danger to livestock — fright, injury, chronic stress, and loss of productivity
- Direct contradiction with 20+ years of State-supported agri-environmental work on this river
- Loss of livelihood
- Loss of wildlife, natural habitats and biodiversity
- A site already deemed unsuitable for wind turbines by Offaly County Council

RWE has reviewed all of these concerns across their submission. They have written long reports about each of them, and then deemed them all to be **NOT SIGNIFICANT**. What they and anyone supporting this wind farm, are really saying is that the concerns of people adversely affected by this wind farm are **NOT SIGNIFICANT**.

All of these concerns are very significant to me. I only have one life, one home, one address, one farm and one way of making an income.

I respectfully ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse this planning application. This particular area has been deemed not suitable for wind turbines by Offaly County Council because of its natural beauty, natural habitats and the fact that it is a floodplain. Offaly has already provided huge tracts of land for windturbines and still has alternative areas zoned as suitable for same. There is no acceptable reason for this application.

I thank you for taking the time to read my objection.

Yours sincerely,

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Declan Mann

Declan Mann  
Shane Mann  
Damien Mann  
Sara Mann  
Michelle Mann  
Shane Mann



This is just an  
example of the birds  
found in the callows





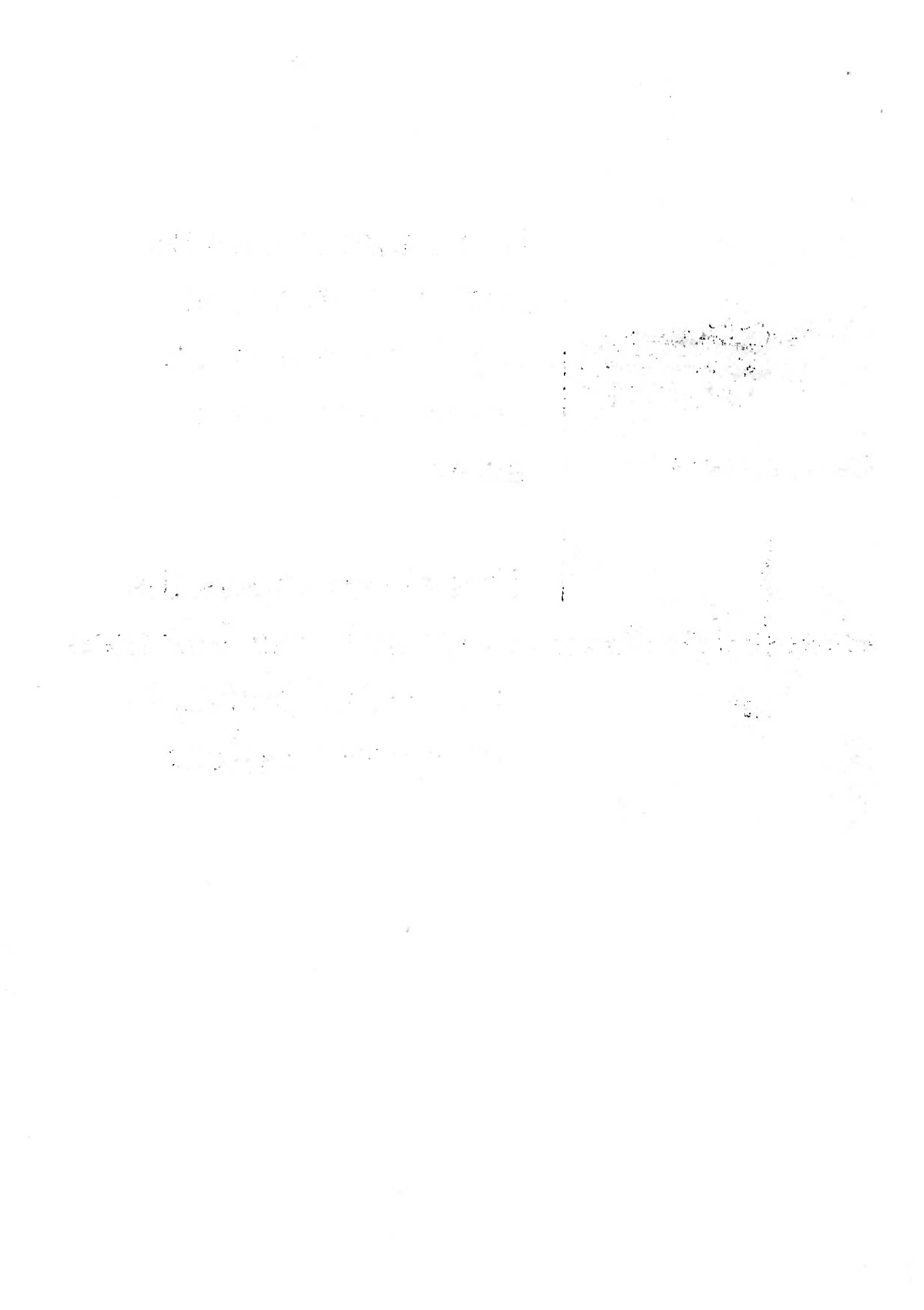
This shows the callow where they want to put an access track and turbines.



This is the dirt already being left behind after floods. If this gets contaminated it will affect cattle or grass growth

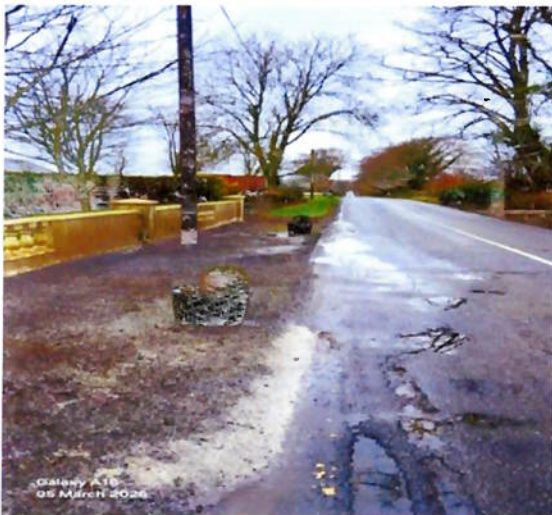


This photo shows the height the flood rises all over the callows at least 3 foot to over wire.





This photo shows the existing turbines at night that are much smaller and further away



This photo shows the damage to our entrance from HGVS pulling in to meet other lorries.





These photos show our view from outside and through our back windows at present.



Eleven turbines will cause serious sun flicker and make it impossible to use any outside area on any evening the sun shines. It cannot be



wright to grant permission to a development that destroys peoples homes in such a manner