

9/6/26

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Eugene Power

Tintean

Rathbeg

Sharavogue,

Co. Offaly

COMISIÚN PLEANALA	
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ASP-	
02 JUL 2026	
Fee: € 52	Type: 093
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Please find below reasons why I strenuously object to the proposed installation of wind turbines bordering the SAC and Sharavogue Bog.

I own property, part of which is in the Sac, situated in the hamlet of Rathbeg. Home to my ancestors for generations, this locality has seen many changes: the small farms that dotted the landscape, the old-world, untamed nature of which little remains. Sharavogue Bog, especially, from my early childhood seemed pregnant with ancient mystery of a world that time had forgotten.

At one point in the mid-nineteen eighties this precious resource was nearly lost to developers seeking to strip it for peat moss. Fortunately, this was halted, and from this reprieve a new lease of life was granted to Sharavogue Bog, as the nature reserve we have today, rich in biodiversity; a rare habitat of international scientific interest, despite the evolution of surrounding area into a modern agricultural environment.

My brother, Albert Power, owned property bordering the Bog, an old railway cottage, remnant from the days of the Bog railway, which he was in the process of renovating when he died suddenly in 2016. Like me and our parents before us, he treasured the unspoilt wilderness and rare, unexploited landscape. As with him, I too and our mother, who was then still alive, were shocked and appalled when Knock She Gowna, the land mark of our lives in Rathbeg and mark of distinction and legend for the surrounding locality, was irrevocably desecrated by the addition of several wind turbines in mid 2000's, which directly impeded the view, breaking the spell of millennia past in one ugly, disfiguring stroke. However, although a permanent reminder of the callousness of so-called progress, even with the ugly spectre of these wind turbines marring the view, in time we were able to appreciate and be grateful that, to a certain extent, the beautiful habitat of the Bog and surrounding wilderness had once again, though barely this time, prevailed against the odds.

To this day the Bog and its surrounding wilderness have continued to imbue the area with a priceless and irreplaceable magical connection to an ancient past, as a haven of unparalleled tranquillity, subtle natural beauty and home to rare plants and endangered wildlife.

Now, with this proposed installation of wind turbines, once again a tragedy greater than before threatens to demolish forever something so delicate, a thing that has survived, though not unscathed, through previous onslaughts. The imposing magnitude of these new turbines, and the scale of intended works will result in irreparable damage to this haven of wildlife and rare natural environment.

I often walk across the bog to the Brosna River, an area known locally as The Callows, that has periodic use for grazing cattle. In between times the grasses grow shoulder high. With the gentle winding River mirroring of the sky, an occasional plop of a fish jumping and the elegantly poised beauty of the resident swans, nowhere in my travels have I felt a greater sense of peaceful seclusion. How could those responsible for the destruction that would be wrought by towering wind turbines bearing down from their concrete foundations be forgiven by future generations, because I don't think anything of this idyl would be left if this proposal goes ahead. And what of the peril posed to the birds and water fowl whose habitat this is? How will they fare against the rotating blades? Not at all well I fear, for the blades are well known to cause of avian fatalities.

Together with the wind turbines on Knock Shegowna, and others at Carriag and Derinlough, this part of Offaly is seeing a proliferation of these developments, threatening to change the appearance of the landscape from agricultural to industrial, having significant visual impact on the land.

In summary, the SAC is to be valued as part of Ireland's national heritage, with significance on a world stage, due to its rarity as a natural resource that is beneficial to the wildlife for whom it provides a habitat, for the research it enables as an ecosystem, the type of which vanishing few remain, and the beauty and tranquillity it offers to people living on its margins and the curious visitors that come from far and wide. As ecosystems around the world are being gobbled up rapaciously by a seeming insatiable appetite for expansion of human habitation and exploitation of resources, it is incumbent up on us, as guardians of the earth, to preserve sites of precious, irreplaceable nature for future generations. Although I appreciate the real need to move away from dependency on fossil fuels in favour of renewables, it is hardly a fair trade off if destruction is wrought on our dwindling precious ecosystems as a result. Therefore, I vehemently oppose this development.

Eugene Power