

Joan Mary Smith
Clarke Cottage
Lacka
Shinrone
R42 RX80

June 11, 2026

Case ref: PAX 92.324279

Dear sir or madam,

I wish to make an objection in respect of the above planning application (Proposed Ballincor Wind Farm Development and Associated Road and Infrastructure Works).

My property, Clarke Cottage (Eircode R42 RX80), would be 860m from the nearest proposed turbine. I would be directly and materially affected by this development. Siting a turbine less than 1km from this property, using outdated 20-year-old guidelines, constitutes an overbearing industrial development in a residential rural setting.

This and neighbouring homes are already negatively affected by wind turbines in close proximity to the rear of our properties (Knockshegowna wind farm), which have created noise, disrupted wildlife and despoiled the landscape. Now we face the prospect of another wind farm right on our doorsteps.

My family has roots in the area dating back to at least the 1700s, as the headstones in Loughkeen graveyard will attest. My father was born in Ballicor in 1905 but was forced to emigrate in the 1930s to find work. As a child who grew up in an impoverished industrial English inner-city district, I always appreciated the unspoiled natural beauty, wildlife and social heritage that we found on our returns to our family homeplace. To see this being obliterated by a wind farm – and one based on calculations and assumptions that could be described at flawed at best – would break my heart.

Some of my fondest memories are of visiting on Cloonaheen bog as a child with my late uncle Mick. This and adjoining bogs are a goldmine of biodiversity, abundant with rare flowers and sphagnum moss. We would hear the cry of the corncrake and watch frogs spawn in the ditches. Peat bogs such as this are a natural carbon sink that are thousands of years in the making, yet RWE proposed to rip the heart out of it to install turbines in a county that already has more than its fair share and in an area that experiences a low amount of wind. It is also an area that has experienced severe flooding, which the removal of bogland will only exacerbate. In a just world, this would be regarded as nothing more than criminal damage.

I have seen first-hand the impact of wind turbines on local wildlife. On evening visits to a near-neighbour before the imposition of the Knockshegowna wind turbines, my late husband

and I would see dozens of bats flitting across the night sky. Since the wind farm arrived, we have not seen a single one.

I fear the arrival of more turbines will affect the birdlife we have enjoyed witnessing, including migrating housemartins, raptors, jays, bullfinches, blackcaps and many more. I let part of my garden go wild in recent years to support biodiversity such as the many butterflies that gather on my flowers, and I know neighbours have taken similar steps. These are small efforts that make a big difference: how crushing it would be to see them undone.

The Knockshegowna wind farm has also given me acute insight into the noise of wind turbines. Using a smartphone decibel meter, I have found this to exceed 50db even on a good day. A representative of RWE told me that the noise created by the Ballincor wind turbines (which would be substantially larger and, unlike the current ones, not partially muffled by trees) would be “roughly the same noise as a fridge makes”. I know this to be untrue.

At 80 years old, I sleep lightly already and am profoundly disturbed by the prospect of wind-farm noise from the front as well as the back of the property. RWE relies heavily on predictive noise modelling, which cannot fully account for low frequency noise and amplitude modulation, which are widely reported near large wind turbines.

The application has also failed to demonstrate that shadow flicker will be eliminated: the main bedrooms and living room at my property would all be facing the turbines.

I have found RWE’s stakeholder engagement to be poor. I am still awaiting an answer to an email I sent the company on February 26, 2026, asking what factors have been taken into consideration when determining the payment of €1,000 per annum and how the company felt this payment would address those factors. I was told by Orla Barrett that this was being passed to a colleague and that “we will be back in touch as soon as possible”. My son also asked Kieran O’Byrne of RWE in August 2023 to send him electronic copies of all consultation documents and all other documents sent to the property. He was told “no problem”. He has not received a single one.

The truth is no amount of money could compensate for the lasting environmental, economic and societal damage that this development would do. Families have been driven from here by famine, by war and economic necessity. To permit a large-scale development like RWE’s, which will make homes virtually uninhabitable and turn a settled rural community into bystanders to industrial vandalism, would be a self-inflicted wound I fear would never heal.

On behalf of the generations that went before and the ones to come, I respectfully request that permission for this development be refused.

Yours faithfully,

Joan Smith