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AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA	
LDG-	088932-26
ACP-	
02 JUL 2026	
Fee: €	50
Time:	11:15
By:	Hand

8th June 2026

**Re: Objection — Planning Application PAX 92.324279 — Ballincor Wind Farm,
County Tipperary/Offaly**

Dear Sir/Madam,

My wife Anne and I beef farm here in the Sharavogue area and this land and this landscape is what we work in every day of our lives. One of our two farmyards sits close to the Railway Bridge, close to the entrance to the proposed Ballincor site, and I am down there working most days of the week. I have serious concerns about how I will safely enter and exit that lower farmyard if this Windfarm goes ahead. The increase in traffic alone will make this a far more dangerous job in the future, given that the entrance is so close to mine. The turbines, if built, would be visible from our own house, and the construction would happen on our doorstep. We object to this application in the strongest possible terms and ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse it.

There are barn owls breeding in one of our farm sheds. This is not something we noticed once in passing. It is a confirmed, active breeding nest, and as I write this there are chicks in it. We had long-eared owls here too for years, but they are no longer coming. Barn owls are an Annex I species under the Birds Directive and a red-listed species of conservation concern in Ireland. The EIAR for this project does not, to our knowledge, reflect the presence of an active breeding barn owl roost at this location. Our shed is close to the road. The construction phase alone, the HGV movements, the lighting, the vibration and disturbance would threaten what we have here. Barn owls are known to be highly sensitive to disturbance at and near nest sites, and a failed breeding season at an active roost is a serious harm.

I have been told something about the law on this that I think the Inspector needs to take seriously. Sharavogue Bog beside the site is a European protected site, and the barn owls and other species here are protected under European law as well. It has been explained to me that the developer has given up the two legal routes that would have let this project go ahead even if it caused some harm to that protected site.

What that means, as I understand it, is that the test now is a simple one. If harm to that bog cannot be ruled out beyond reasonable doubt, then this permission cannot lawfully be granted. Given what is at stake here, the bog, the owls, the water, the whole system that we live in the middle of, I would ask the Inspector not to take the developer's word that there is no harm. I would ask the Inspector to require it to be proven, properly, before any decision is made. That is the job, that is the law and on a site this sensitive, it needs to be done right.

The flooding and water impacts of this development are something we are genuinely worried about. We have callow ground adjacent to the proposed site entrance, low-lying seasonal wetland that floods for at least six months of the year. This is not unusual land in this area. It is the character of the landscape here. The photograph below shows what this area looks like when it floods, and that happens regularly for six months of every year. It is not an exceptional event. It is the annual reality of farming this ground. In the photo you can also see the two bridges, the railway bridge and the river bridge. This photo was taken in November 2025.



Photograph 1.

What concerns us in particular, is the proposed five-kilometre floating road across the bog. That is a significant interference in a water system that is already saturated for half the year, and we cannot understand where the water displaced by that road is supposed to go. There is really only one place it can go, and that is onto land like ours. We also own a couple of acres of bog in the Corrlanty bog, in the vicinity of the site. Sharavogue Bog SAC sits with its boundary only a few metres from the development site and it is a Priority Habitat under active State restoration. The Water Framework Directive requires that no project cause deterioration in water body status. The Little Brosna River, which drains this catchment, has a baseline status of Poor, yet the developer appears to have assessed it as Moderate. If that baseline is wrong, then the entire assessment built on it has to be wrong. Any damage,

interference or pollution that this proposed development brings on the Little Brosna River will have a huge effect on the floodplains and the biodiversity not only in the immediate area but further down the river. Under the Weser judgment, any deterioration in a waterbody already at Poor status is a legal breach. We ask the Inspector to look at this carefully.

The road situation is one of the biggest worries we have, and I want to explain it properly using some photos taken recently. The R492 is the main route, really the only viable delivery route, for this proposed site, and we use it every single day. We move our stock along that road between our fields and between our two farmyards, the second which is very close to the Railway Bridge.

The walls along the R492 are original estate walls from the old Sharavogue estate where we live. They are old cut stone, built as part of this estate over a century ago, and they have stood the test of time because there has been no pressure put on them. We are really worried about what the weight and size of these HGVs would do to our walls, if this project goes ahead. Just to be clear, there are no foundations under these walls as was the normal practise of the time.

Photograph 2 below shows a man standing against the wall for scale. As you can see, the wall comes above his head. Our walls are six-foot-plus stone wall sitting directly on the road boundary with no setback, no verge worth speaking of, nothing between it and the road itself. Large HGVs will be bringing filling for months. I am told one every six minutes.



Photograph 2

Photograph 3 shows the wall running along the R492. This photo does not even show the full length of our walls. Our walls measure 395m in length with just a break for our entrance. The construction traffic will pass this wall repeatedly, every delivery, every construction vehicle, every worker, every concrete pour, every turbine component. And there is almost no verge between the wall face and the road surface. The road is very narrow and we know without doubt that two of these big trucks will not be able to pass by each other on this stretch of road. Where will they go? Once again, just like the floating road, the answer is obvious to us. They will squeeze out past each other by pushing up on our almost non-existent verge putting huge pressure on our beautiful old historic walls.



Photograph 3

Photograph 4 shows the point where the old stone wall meets the newer rendered piers at our entrance. You can see that the old rubble stone and the rendered pier are not the same thing and will not behave the same way when something shakes them. The junction between the two is the weakest point in the whole structure. That is where it would go first. There are recognised standards for assessing vibration impacts on old masonry structures like this, and no such assessment has been carried out on these walls anywhere in the application documentation.



Photograph 4.

We contacted Offaly County Council to ask who would be responsible if these walls are damaged or destabilised. We were told that responsibility lies with us as the landowners. That is a deeply worrying answer. If one of those walls fails, not from neglect but from vibration and traffic loading it was never built to absorb, and it falls onto the road, onto a vehicle, onto a person, that is on us. We need to know that there is a legally enforceable mechanism to protect these walls before a single vehicle moves, and we do not see that in the application documentation. The responsibility for our walls must be taken by the developer, their development, their traffic and their profits.

There is also the question of emergency access. During the construction phase, with heavy vehicles on a narrow rural road, how do ambulances, fire brigades and Gardaí get through to the homes along this route? This has not been adequately addressed.

We will see some of the proposed turbines from our house. We already live with Knockshigowna Wind Farm clearly visible in the landscape, and we have accepted that. But the Ballincor turbines would be different in scale. These are 180-metre tip-height machines, Nordex N163 turbines on bogland that sits at 42 to 62 metres elevation, while our home sits higher at around 67 metres. At that relative elevation these turbines would not be sitting below the horizon or tucked into the landscape. They would dominate the skyline to our south. 180-metre turbines at 1.74 kilometres from our nearest point, on land we can see from our beds, is a genuine visual impact on our daily lives that the application does not adequately address.

The Offaly County Development Plan says this area is not suitable for wind energy development. It is in the red zone of the Wind Energy Strategy, and that was not a casual decision. It went through the full planning process and it means something. Following the An Coimisiún Pleanála decision in the Coolglass case in 2026, it is clear that CDP designations of this kind must be given real and substantial weight, and that the burden falls on the developer to demonstrate why a departure from that designation is justified. We have not seen a coherent case made for why this application should be permitted in the face of an explicit red-area designation. The designation is there for reasons, reasons that relate to the landscape, to the ecology, to the hydrology and to the communities that live in this area, and those reasons have not changed.

We understand that Ireland needs to transition to renewable energy. We are not people who oppose that in principle. But this site, at this scale, with these turbines, in this landscape, beside this bog, on these roads, is the wrong development in the wrong place. Our barn owl family in the shed close to the Railway Bridge, our six-foot estate walls on the R492, our flooded callows, and our daily lives on this land deserve to be weighed honestly in this process. We ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse planning permission for the Ballincor Wind Farm.

Yours sincerely,


Michael O'Connor


Anne O'Connor