

Peter and Madeline O'Meara
Newhall,
Sharavogue
Birr
County Offaly

An Coimisiún Pleanála
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AN COIMISIÚN PLEANÁLA	
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02 JUL 2026	
Fee: €	50 Type: Car
Time:	11:15 By: Henry

7th June 2026

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

My wife Madeline and I farm and live at Newhall, Sharavogue, just southeast of the proposed Ballincor Wind Farm, roughly three miles from it as the crow flies. Our main land holding is a further three miles northeast of our home, beside the N62 road, and from both places we have a clear view of the proposed site. I travel that stretch of the N62 every single day from Sharavogue Cross to Ballyegan to herd my cattle. I have been farming this ground for over sixty years, first with my late father and then on my own with Madeline, and everything I have to say in this letter comes from my experience of this land and these roads. We are strongly opposed to this application and ask that it be refused.

The area in which this development is proposed is well known as a significant wildlife and natural habitat preserve, and we believe the ecological damage that would follow from eleven 180-metre turbines on that bogland has been seriously underestimated by the applicant. Sharavogue Bog SAC lies only a few metres to the site boundary. This is a Priority Habitat under active State restoration, and the proximity of the proposed development to it is, in our view, simply incompatible with this type of designation. The developer has waived both the Article 6(4) IROPI derogation route and the Article 4.7 WFD derogation route, which means there is no fallback position available to them. Either the development passes the Appropriate Assessment test or it does not, and we believe it does not. The Sharavogue Bog SAC is not a backdrop to this development. It is the ground beside it.

The Little Brosna River runs through this landscape and its WFD baseline status is recorded as Poor. The developer has assessed it as Moderate in their own documentation. That is simply not true. Under the Weser judgment, any deterioration in water status is impermissible, and if the baseline is already Poor, the margin for further harm is zero. A development of this scale, involving significant construction

traffic and ground disturbance on bogland, cannot credibly claim it presents no risk to a waterbody already assessed by others as in poor condition. What happens for the six months of the year when the callows flood? Where will displaced construction debris go then only into the Little Brosna River.

We never had a TB reactor in our herd in sixty years of farming. Not once, through my father's time and all of our own years here. Then in October 2025 we lost our clear herd status for the first time. What changed in the years before that was the Bord na Móna wind farm that came into operation northwest of Birr, less than ten miles from our land. Before those turbines were built, I never saw a fox or a badger on this land. In 2024 and into 2025 both appeared, and we believe they moved here from the direction of that wind farm. Badgers are the primary carrier for bovine TB in this country, and the connection between their arrival and our first ever reactor is not a coincidence. The proposed Ballincor development sits in an area the developer acknowledges is rich in wildlife and the Dept of Agriculture acknowledge has several active badger sets. If the experience of nearby wind development is that it displaces foxes and badgers outward into surrounding farmland, then a further development of this kind will push more of them further again. The risk to our herd, and to the herds of our neighbours, is real, and it has already cost us the clear record we kept for sixty years.

There is a wider question in what I have described that I think deserves attention. If foxes, badgers, and birds are choosing to move away from operating wind turbines, the question has to be asked: what is it about those turbines that is driving them out? Animals do not leave good habitat without reason. If the disturbance, noise, or vibration from wind turbines is sufficient to cause wildlife to vacate an area and migrate into surrounding land, that is a harm being done to them that is not captured in any habitat survey taken before construction begins. The cumulative impact on bird populations in this area is particularly concerning. Golden plover have been identified as a species at serious risk from the combination of Ballincor, Carrig, and Derrinlough, according to their own survey. Merlin were confirmed breeding in 2025 by Birdwatch Ireland only a couple of kilometres from the site, yet the developer carried out no survey during the night-time and used no acoustic monitoring equipment in their bird assessment. These are fatal flaws in their assessment and it means that the assessment is not reliable.

Every day I drive the N62 between Newhall and our land. That road is the route I use to work, to herd, to check on the animals, sometimes more than once a day. The construction traffic that a development of eleven large turbines would generate on that road would be considerable and would directly affect my ability to work my farm in any normal way during the construction period. I am also conscious of the bridge on the Shinrone road at Sharavogue. That bridge is over a hundred and sixty years old. It was not built for the kind of loads that transporting turbine components and construction materials. As far as we are aware, there is no alternative route available for that traffic. The people most at risk from any structural problem with that bridge are

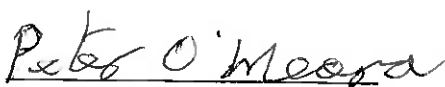
not the developers, who will pass over it a handful of times during a defined construction period. They are the local people, including ourselves, who use it regularly for the rest of our lives. If there is no engineering assessment of that bridge's capacity to carry the construction loads this development requires, there should be. And if the bridge cannot carry those loads safely, the development cannot proceed without a solution that does not yet exist.

The comparison with planning decisions made on the same road is one I feel I have to raise. Not long ago, a neighbour's son was refused planning permission for a house on his father's land, with one of the reasons given being the traffic impact on the N62. A single house, one additional entrance, one family's comings and goings — refused on traffic grounds. If that standard applies to a house, it is very difficult to understand how it does not apply with far greater force to a large-scale wind energy development with a multi-year construction programme on the same stretch of road.

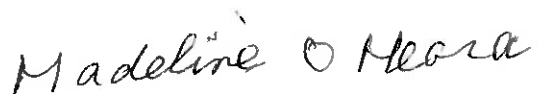
The Offaly County Development Plan designates this area as Not Suitable for wind energy development under its Wind Energy Strategy. It appears in what is commonly described as the red area on the wind energy maps. They reflect a considered judgment by the planning authority about where this kind of development is and is not appropriate in the county after an intensive scrutiny of several different criteria across the entire County Offaly. Following the Coolglass decision in 2026, the weight to be given to such a CDP designation has been confirmed as real and substantial. The burden now falls directly on the developer to demonstrate why the County Development Plan is incorrect. We have not seen that in the application documentation, and we do not believe it can be made anyway, given the ecological sensitivities of this particular site.

We ask An Coimisiún Pleanála to refuse this application. We are not people who object to things lightly. Between us, we have farmed this ground and travelled these roads for the better part of a lifetime. We know this land. We know what has changed here in recent years and we know what a development of this scale would mean for it. The damage to the habitat, the risk to our herd and to the herds of our neighbours, the pressure on roads and on a bridge that was never built for this, and the clear policy decision that says this area is not suitable are the reasons that we believe this planning application should be rejected.

Yours faithfully,



Peter O'Meara



Madeline O'Meara