

Greengate Biogas Powerstown Co Carlow

Observations for consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála

Garryhundon

Milford

Carlow

R93 DC85

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Context

This is a rural area of genuine historic interest with an abundance of fertile farmland as well as family homes.

The landscape is boundaried by mature deciduous trees, hedges and ditches with habitats of a variety of flora and fauna. A night-time bat walk is a favoured activity in this house.

There are increasing numbers of young families moving into this area be they renting or building homes. Our community is expanding , albeit very slowly.

We also have a more a industrial side to this area with 2 large working and expanding quarries and some vestiges of 'spent' quarry land.

The county landfill is largely closed now and beside it the civic amenity – recycling centre, is a hive of activity and a vital sustainability locus for many families in the wider region.

The human population locally exemplifies the diversity of occupational endeavour, race and attendant lifestyle requirements as any other rural community. Many, such as us, chose to live here (if not involved in the Agri or quarry sector)for the wholesomeness, peace and privacy rural life offers. Many also have small businesses such as me. In my case (Mary Foley) I work as a counsellor and psychotherapist and the pastoral setting of my office is a key aspect of my service.

People who live here love this area. This is despite the many challenges from existing and 'new' industrial activities.

- The quarries have attendant issues with noise (8am-6pm) from machines and transport, as well as regular explosions. The changes ongoing and suggested to our visual and physical environment have at times been highly contentious, for us and those in the wider area. Air quality is impacted by quarry activity. The quality of our lives is impacted by the quarries. We don't need additions to this.
- Powerstown landfill and recycling are adjacent to your proposed site and close to our home. Over the years we have had major problems with flies and increased vermin. The odour from the dump on top of this meant that often during summer months windows and doors in homes had to be kept shut.
- The recently approved large solar farm in Ballybar area has as yet unknown and unexperienced aspects for us. Without question the visual impact will be most immediate.

All of these major initiatives in one rural area!

It must stand to common decency and 'fair play' to note and consider that people in the area of the proposed Biogas plant have endured (and are continuing to experience) enough in the cause of sustainability, progress and civic responsibility.

In this instance NIMBY-ism cannot hold for this area.

Cursory observations of the Greengate Biogas plans

Wading through the vast amount of information presented is difficult and overwhelming especially when one has to educate oneself speedily about the validity, meaning, relevance and significance of information presented.

- The odour; the persistent smell of rotten eggs. The dump closes, we sigh with relief and now more prevalent noxious odours to become accustomed to. Odour from processing and materials transported to and from the plant. This plant is not a fully closed system.
- I think of those living within the immediate area of the proposed plant who are and may become (such as my husband) bed bound due to illness, existing 24 hours in homes and bedrooms closed up against noxious smells.
- Wind speeds for Carlow are from 23.5km to 33,5km. We live less than a km from your proposed site, with average of 25km per hour wind speed it will take 2.5 mins at 0.4km for odour and gases to arrive at our door.
- There is also a cumulative aspect to this, as we have seasonal activities from farmers which produce foul smells, the difference is it is not sustained
- The leakage of dangerous gases Hydrogen sulphide, methane ... and consequent impact on human health. This plant is not a fully closed system.
- Increase of noise and road traffic. Using your number 240 journeys at least per day that means 1 every 2 mins. This added to current car traffic of work commutes and school runs etc as well as traffic from local hauliers, agriculture, businesses such as quarry etc... your stats must be taken into account with our lived experience of traffic for a rural area.
- Most homes in surrounding area have private wells, what is the impact to our water supply?
- The scale and economies of the proposed plant make no sense. Reading up on biogas plants in other counties e.g. India, I note that many plants consume the energy created themselves and offer little to the national / area grid. Are there enough farmers committed to supply even within a 50km radius let alone 25km radius?
- What is the impact of climate change on such a structure?
- I note the Biogas plant will be working some time before and gas line link will be constructed, therefore I question contributions to the national grid.
- How will vermin, flies etc managed and the impact of this?
- All the pain none of the immediate gain. We have no access to natural gas for our homes, so gas created locally does not assist the heating of our homes or cooking of our food.

- For such an intrusive and visible (despite our trees and ditches) mega-sized structure there is no mention of how this plant / company wish to contribute to the enhancement of our community and lives. As a person who volunteers and helped found a local community hub – which supports sustainable living, and provides space to support and connect people, I am struck by the dearth of discussion and dialogue about corporate social responsibility. No initiatives to offer supports to enhance the lives of those immediately impacted by the biogas plant. Functionality to the fore, no sense of how Greengate envision people living and working in a shared space. This is not a move to build community but again insert industrial process in a rural community space.
- The 40 jobs on offer may not come from the local community – is this not specialised work?
- Of note is also the considerable disruption to peoples lives during the construction phase – again there is a vibrant community of people living in this area trying to manage their own lives as best they can
- I saw no information of the impact of the local ever-expanding quarry and the regular explosions which rumble through our homes. How will this effect safety in a Biogas plant.

This is an account of current observations on the proposed Biogas plant made by Mary Foley and Noel MacEntee, Garryhundon, Milford, Carlow.