

Gathabawn Windfarm

Community Report



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Community Report details the community engagement plan for the Gathabawn Windfarm development, **as information for the local community, Kilkenny County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála**. It also provides an **overview to the local community of the context** of Gathabawn Windfarm as a new renewable electricity development in the area and the benefits that will accrue to the local community and to wider society, should planning be granted for the proposal.

The Policy Context for Gathabawn Windfarm primarily relates to European, National and Kilkenny County targets for the development of renewable electricity (RE-E) as a means of contributing positively to the increasing imperative to ameliorate climate change by generating electricity without polluting greenhouse gas emissions. RE-E generated at Gathabawn Windfarm, will support UN sustainable development goals on Climate Action; the EU Renewable Energy Directive, the National Development Plan; Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 capacity targets for RE-E; and Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027 Policy Objective to promote and support the development of renewable energy technologies and to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. **Gathabawn Windfarm is in a 'Preferred Area' for windfarms in County Kilkenny as identified in the Plan's Wind Energy Development Strategy.**

Regarding attitudes of Irish adults to Climate Action, the Environmental Protection Agency commissioned a survey **Climate Change in the Irish Mind** in 2023, The survey tells us that most Irish adults worry about climate change and believe the science on the subject. They consider that more can be done by all of us and that action will improve our quality of life. Encouragingly, most people identified switching to renewable energy sources as having a large impact on reducing the carbon footprint of an average person. Young people have also expressed support for renewable electricity generation. At Rural Youth Assembly September 2025 (which included Kilkenny delegates), the delegates expressed strong support for wind, solar, and other renewable technologies and supported a major increase in renewable electricity and public education to help communities understand and engage with the energy transition.

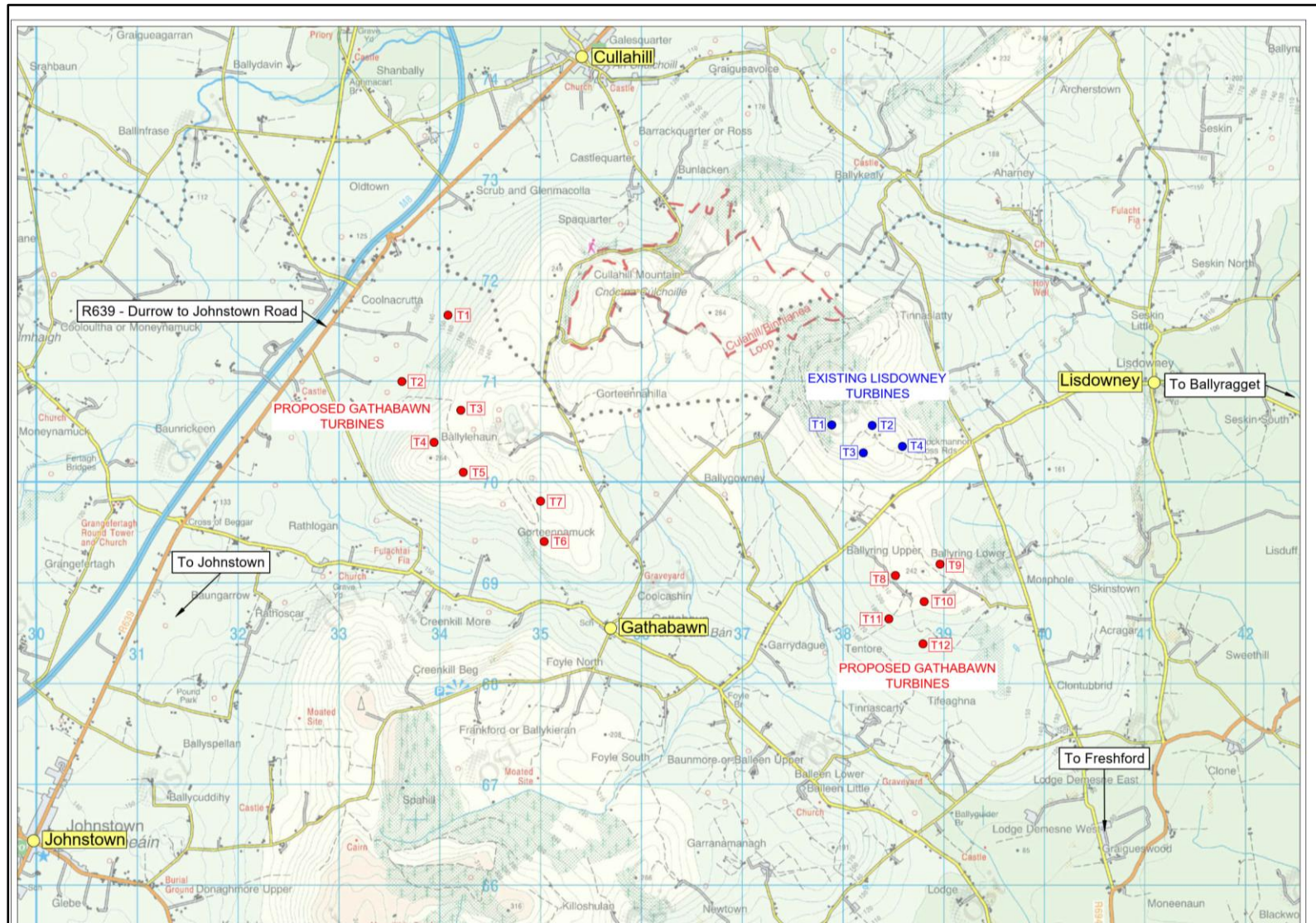
The community engagement plan for Gathabawn Windfarm was developed in accordance with EU and national legislation and guidelines and wind industry best practice. These include the EU Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment; Ireland's Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); the Environmental Protection Agency 2022 document 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports'; Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019. In addition, social inclusion was also considered with guidance from Adult Literacy for Life; Age Friendly Ireland, Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy, Comhairle na nÓg and the National Youth Assembly on Climate.

Gathabawn Windfarm is a proposal by Ecopower to build an twelve-turbine windfarm in north County Kilkenny, in the vicinity of Gathabawn village. The nearest settlements and community facilities are in the villages of Gathabawn, Lisdowney and Cullahill and further away the towns of Ballyragget, Freshford and Johnstown.

The proposal is to build a windfarm comprising seven turbines in the Ballylehaun area and five turbines in the Ballyring area and all associated windfarm site works including site roads; control building in Ballylehaun and control building in Ballyring Upper. Two tip heights are proposed for the turbines – three with 150m tip height and nine with 170m tip height.

The townlands involved in the windfarm development are Coolnacrutta, Glashare, Ballylehaun, Gorteennamuck, Rathlogan, Ballyring Upper, Ballyring Lower and Tentore.

GATHABAWN WINDFARM LOCATION, NORTH COUNTY KILKENNY



Gathabawn Windfarm will generate circa 150 million kilowatts every year of clean electricity from the power in the wind, enough to supply 33,237 houses. **The Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund is estimated to be circa €300,000**, to be distributed annually, over the lifetime of the windfarm.

A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) has been appointed whose role is to communicate key project information, timelines, updates, activities, benefits and proposals through direct and indirect community engagement with the windfarm's near neighbours and the wider local community, throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the windfarm. The email contact details for the CLO contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie will be on the community website, which will be in place for the full operational life of the windfarm www.ecopowergathabawn.ie

The Community Website provides a summary of the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal and the environmental benefits and community benefits that will result from the development of the windfarm. The website also sets out the climate action and planning policy context of the windfarm and details of the content of the EIA Report accompanying the Planning Application. A link to the Non-Technical Summary of the EIA Report and this Community Report is included on the website. The website will be updated with progress of the application through the planning process and key dates such as the public submission dates will be on the website, to facilitate full public participation in the process. **Contact details are prominent on the website.** The dedicated email address for Gathabawn Windfarm is contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie

The following local community stakeholders in the local community area around the windfarm, were identified for engagement pre-planning - Residents within 2km of a proposed turbine; Community Groups; Sporting Groups; Members of Kilkenny County Council for the Castlecomer and Electoral Area and Laois County Council Durrow and Rathdowney areas; Schools Childcare facilities in the area and Churches in the area.

Pre-Application: A Project Newsletter was sent to all houses within 2km of Gathabawn Windfarm. The Newsletter was tailored for each house (by Eircode) whereby the distance of their house to the nearest turbine was stated. A location map was also included.

A shorter email newsletter was sent to community groups active in the Gathabawn and wider area. Included were a summary of the proposal and a location map, details of the website where more information can be found; the CLO email address and the amount of the Community Benefit Fund.

The intention to submit a planning application was posted on the community website. An advertisement was placed in the Kilkenny People with details on the promotor, the proposal, the community website and the CLO email address.

See Appendix A for these communications.

Post-Planning: If Gathabawn Windfarm secures planning permission, Ecopower will engage with the Local Community during the lifetime of the windfarm, that is the construction,

operational and decommissioning phases of the windfarm. This will be done through the Community Liaison Officer, contactable through the Community Website which will be maintained for the lifetime of the windfarm.

An Annual Report will be prepared for the community and the local authority which will detail the various methods which were used to keep the local community updated, any issues which arose and how these were dealt with.

The Community Benefit Fund will be set up, once the windfarm becomes operational and will be distributed annually. The Community Liaison Officer will be available to local community groups at the set-up stage of the Fund to assist in the organisation of a fund committee and thereafter during the distribution of funds.



2. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMUNITY REPORT

The purpose of this Community Report is to set out the method in which Gathabawn Windfarm carried out and intends to continue ongoing community engagement, in the geographical area surrounding the Gathabawn Windfarm site near Gathabawn village, in north County Kilkenny.

This report summarises the community engagement process, including

- The Policy Context for windfarm developments
- EU and National Guidance on Community Engagement for windfarm developments
- Information on the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal, the Community Benefit Fund, the local community context and the community facilities locally. The Community Liaison Officer and the Community website are introduced.
- The local community engagement carried out by Gathabawn Windfarm prior to submission of the planning application for Gathabawn Windfarm and,
- Plans for engagement with the local community, post planning and throughout the lifetime of the windfarm.

The community engagement plan represents Ecopower's commitment to actively engage with the local community, to ensure that their views and queries are taken into consideration during the planning, construction and operation of the windfarm.

It is Ecopower's aim that this Community Report;

- details the community engagement plan for the Gathabawn Windfarm development, **as information for the local community, Kilkenny County Council and An Coimisiún Pleanála**
- **provide an overview to the local community of the context** of Gathabawn Windfarm as a new renewable electricity development in the area and the benefits that will accrue to the local community and to wider society, should planning be granted for the proposal.

3. POLICY CONTEXT FOR GATHABAWN WINDFARM

3.1 European Renewable Energy Directive (RED III)

European Renewable Energy Directive RED III is the legal framework for the development of renewable energy across all sectors of the European (EU) economy and recognises renewable energy as an overriding public interest. The EU RED III Directive sets the overall target for the EU of achieving at least 42.5% of total energy (heat, transport & electricity) from renewables by 2030. Electricity equates to approx. one-third of total energy requirement and this continues to grow as electricity contributes to transportation also, through the roll out of electric vehicles.

Renewable electricity generated at Gathabawn Windfarm, will support Ireland in reaching its legally binding renewable energy target obligations for 2030 under the RED III Directive.

3.2 United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The UN's 'Transforming our World 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' is a plan of action for people, the planet and prosperity. The focus of the 2030 Agenda is the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Each SDG has targets that must be reached by 2030. According to the Irish Government's latest Policy Information on www.Gov.ie, last updated in January 2026, a whole-of-government approach has been adopted for implementation of the SDGs in Ireland.

By the generation and transmission of renewable energy from an indigenous source (the wind) and the distribution of a substantial, sustainable Community Benefit Fund and Commercial rates, Gathabawn Windfarm will contribute to the promotion of the following Strategic Development Goals in Ireland:

SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts- in the context that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

3.3 Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25)

Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 CAP25 provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050.

Renewable electricity generated at Gathabawn Windfarm, will align with Ireland's Climate Action Plan CAP25 and will contribute positively to the increasing imperative to ameliorate climate change by generating electricity without polluting greenhouse gas emissions.

3.4 Ireland's National Development Plan 2021-2030

Ireland's National Development Plan commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity by up to 80% by 2030. Gathabawn Windfarm will support the priorities of the Plan by providing renewable electricity from the wind to the national grid, supporting the achievement of a low-carbon Irish electricity system.

3.5 Kilkenny County Development Plan 2021-2027

Kilkenny County Council has renewed its commitment to the EU Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, a voluntary initiative of local governments in Europe. In doing so the Council has committed, alongside other EU local authorities, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

One of the key components of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021– 2027 is the renewable energy strategy for the County in which the Council is supportive of climate action and development of renewable resources including wind energy, in suitable locations in the County.

During the site investigations carried out for the preferred location for Gathabawn Windfarm and guided by the County's Wind Energy Strategy, it was established that the Gathabawn Windfarm site was a suitable location because

1. The site has an adequate wind resource for a viable windfarm due to the extent of the elevated area above surrounding topography.
2. Adequate separation distance can be achieved from the nearest houses
2. The site is compatible with the County Landscape Assessment characterisation as an Upland Landscape Character Type where the relevant Development Management requirement, taking into account Landscape Character Sensitivity (Section 9.2.12.5 Kilkenny CDP) is *"To facilitate, where appropriate, developments that have a functional and locational natural resource requirement to be situated on steep or elevated sites (e.g. reservoir, telecommunications or wind energy structures) with reference to the appropriate County strategies currently in place, and to ensure that any residual adverse visual impacts are minimised or mitigated"*.
3. The site does not include ecological sensitivities having no European Designated Sites within the site boundary i.e Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA).
4. The site has national grid connection prospects at Eirgrid Ballyragget Substation.
5. The site is in an area 'Acceptable in Principle' for wind energy developments in the County Development Plan.

3.6 Public Perception of Climate Change

3.6.1 EPA SURVEY CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE IRISH MIND 2023

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) commissioned a survey called 'Climate Change in the Irish Mind (Wave 2)', which comprised a survey of a representative sample of the Irish population, to measure climate change beliefs, attitudes, policy preferences and behaviour. Interviews were conducted with 1,330 adults between August and October 2023, with an average interview length of 26 minutes. The sample size is considered statistically robust (with a plus or minus margin of error of 3%).

The survey showed that

- 81 PERCENT OF IRISH PEOPLE ARE WORRIED ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE
- 93 PERCENT OF IRISH PEOPLE TRUST SCIENTISTS AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE
- 85 PERCENT OF IRISH PEOPLE SAY THAT BUSINESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT, POLITICIANS, NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, AND CITIZENS SHOULD BE DOING MORE TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE.
- 74 PERCENT OF IRISH PEOPLE SAY TAKING ACTION TO REDUCE CLIMATE CHANGE WILL IMPROVE IRISH PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE.
- 70 PERCENT IDENTIFIED SWITCHING TO RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AS HAVING A LARGE IMPACT ON REDUCING THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF AN AVERAGE PERSON.

See Infographic at <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/Climate-Change-in-the-Irish-Mind-Wave-2---Infographic.pdf>

The survey tell us that most Irish adults worry about climate change and believe the science. They consider that more can be done by all of us and that action will improve our quality of life. Encouragingly, most people identified switching to renewable energy sources as having a large impact on reducing the carbon footprint of an average person.



3.6.2 RURAL YOUTH ATTITUDES TO RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

The Rural Youth Assembly is a Department of Rural and Community Development initiative. The Assembly comprises a group of young people between the ages of 12-24 who discuss the challenges and opportunities associated with living, working and socialising in rural Ireland. The Assembly includes delegates from County Kilkenny.

In the Rural Youth Assembly, Summary Report 2025 it is stated in relation to the theme Climate - Renewable Energy, that the delegates **expressed strong support for wind, solar, and other renewable technologies and supported a major increase in renewable electricity** and public education to help communities understand and engage with the energy transition.

4. GUIDANCE ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON WINDFARM PROPOSALS

The community engagement plan for Gathabawn Windfarm was developed in the context of EU, National and wind industry best practice guidelines for consultation.

4.1 EIA Directive (as amended)

The EU 'EIA Directive on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment', requires that a Non-technical Summary is provided on the assessment report, to assist the general public in examining the scientific data submitted with the planning application.

Article 5 (1) provides guidance on the structure and purpose of the non-technical summary and this guidance is explained in the EPA Guidelines section 3.2 below.

Article 1(2)(g)(ii) of EIA Directive requires that consultation be carried out in accordance with Article 6(2) which states that –

“In order to ensure the effective participation of the public concerned in the decision-making procedures, the public shall be informed, electronically and by public notices or by other appropriate means, of the following matters early in the environmental decision-making procedures referred to in Article 2(2) and, at the latest, as soon as information can reasonably be provided:

- a) the request for development consent;*
- b) the fact that the project is subject to an environmental impact assessment procedure and, where relevant, the fact that Article 7 (author: involving more than one local authority area or other member state) applies;*
- c) details of the competent authorities responsible for taking the decision, those from which relevant information can be obtained, those to which comments or questions can be submitted, and details of the time schedule for transmitting comments or questions;*
- d) the nature of possible decisions or, where there is one, the draft decision;*
- e) an indication of the availability of the information gathered pursuant to Article 5 (author: the EIA Report);*
- f) an indication of the times and places at which, and the means by which, the relevant information will be made available;*
- g) details of the arrangements for public participation made pursuant to paragraph 5 of this Article.*

All of this information is statutorily required to be included in the Site Notice under the Planning & Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and augmented by Schedule 2 of Regulation 6 Form No. 23 of Statutory Instrument S.I. No. 426 of 2025 – Site Notice for Renewable Energy Directive RED III developments.

The Gathabawn Windfarm planning application Site Notice will comply with the EIA Directive and with Irish statutory requirements. Site Notices, including all of the above information, will

be erected in the vicinity of the Gathabawn Windfarm development sites, prior to the submission of the planning application.

4.2 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines

The EPA 2022 document 'Guidelines on the Information to be contained in Environmental Impact Assessment Reports' has been considered for community engagement guidance.

In Section 2.3 of the EPA Guidelines, it is established that the planning authority must take into account the views of the public during the formal planning consent process. Developer engagement with the local community is therefore desirable prior to lodgement of the planning application, in order to help the local community identify potentially significant concerns that they may have.

It is the planning authority's responsibility to facilitate public access to the planning application documents once submitted both remotely through the planning authority's website and in person and their offices.

Prior to lodgement of the planning application, Gathabawn Windfarm circulated information about the proposal to the local community and invited feedback. This engagement was done by postal drop to all houses within 2km of the nearest proposed turbine and an email campaign to identified local community groups active in the area within 10km. A dedicated community information website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie with more detailed information was set up and the website was advertised in the local paper – the Kilkenny People. The website name was also prominent on the postal and email materials. The core objective of this part of the public engagement is to ensure that the local community is made as aware of the details of the proposal and to invite them to make their views known through the contact details provided.

In the EPA Guidelines Section 4.6: Non-Technical Summary, it states that one of the fundamental objectives of the EIA process is to ensure that the public is made aware of the environmental implications of a proposed new project through the production of a Non-Technical Summary of the EIA Report to be submitted with the Planning Application. The Non-Technical Summary report should be laid out in a similar, but condensed, format to the main EIA Report, i.e. describing the project, existing environment, effects and mitigation measures and the final (residual) effects. The Non-Technical Summary should be short and easily followed, but it should not omit or understate any effects which may be controversial. All key likely significant effects should be included. Technical terms, abbreviations, references or jargon should not be used. The inclusion of clear maps, plans and other illustrations can be useful.

The structural and presentation guidance contained in Section 4.6 of the EPA Guidelines has been followed in the Gathabawn Windfarm project Non-Technical Summary. The guidance also informed the written communications and community website which circulated locally prior to submission of the planning application.

4.3 Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 contain advice for developers on public consultation in Section 4.4 Public Consultation with the Local Community.

In summary, Section 4.4 states that developers should engage with communities before submitting planning applications in formats to ensure meaningful dialogue that allows community input. It is recommended that a dedicated contact person is appointed for local community engagement throughout the construction and commissioning stage of the development.

In Appendix 2.2 it is suggested best practice that developers share information with nearby residents and local community groups, explaining the project, its purpose, consultation process, and opportunities for public information. It is advised that information pertaining to the proposal is circulated to the immediate population whose properties are within approx 1km of the proposed wind energy development, and to community groups, churches and clubs within approx 10km radius. It is suggested that this can be done by Newsletter outlining the project location, scale, timetable, environmental and social benefits, and contact details for the developers to provide feedback or look for further information.

Gathabawn Windfarm Community engagement has been carried out in accordance with the Wind Energy Development guidelines 2006 and specifically Section 4.4 and Appendix 2 through the provision of;

- **Appointment of a Community Liaison Officer** for Gathabawn Windfarm to continue throughout the planning, construction and operation phase of the development.
- **A community website was set up** www.ecopowergathabawn.ie which explains the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal itself, the planning application and the environmental impacts studied; the monetary benefits to the local community and the County, the benefits to the Country through supporting climate action and the security of supply benefits through the generation of electricity from a sustainable indigenous resource, the wind.
- **Project Newsletter circulated to all houses within 2km** of the nearest turbine. The Newsletter was tailored for each house (by Eircode) whereby the distance of their house to the nearest turbine was stated. The Newsletter included detailed information on the nature of the proposal, the developer details, the form of the planning application environmental reports, the amount and operation of the community benefit fund, the environmental benefits of the windfarm, the timelines for the planning application, the community website address which includes more detail on the proposal and on windfarms in general. Contact details for further engagement are also provided. (See Appendix A of this report for the neighbour's Project Newsletter)
- **Ecopower Developments studied a 10km area around the proposed windfarm and identified local community groups and other community stakeholders**, centred on the Gathabawn area and including Lisdowney and Cullahill villages and the nearby towns of Freshford, Ballyragget and Johnstown. Community groups, sporting groups,

schools and churches in the area were identified. An email was sent to these groups with a summary of the proposal and a location map, details of the website where more information can be found; the CLO email address and the amount of the Community Benefit Fund. (See Appendix A of this report for the community email)

4.4 Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019

The Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 built on the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006. In addition the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 recommend;

- **Preparation of a Community Report** for the development, to be submitted to the planning authority alongside the planning application. The Report should include details of community feedback on the proposal. The Report should also include a list of the community stakeholders contacted.
- **Ongoing consultation with the community during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases** of the development is also required and the Community Report should set out how this will be done. A dedicated Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is generally the accepted method of ongoing engagement and the contact details should be advertised on the community website. The CLO should be available to meet with community representatives and provide updates on the project progress, as well as being a contact point for complaints or queries. Any planned disruption or traffic restrictions in the local area associated with particular phases of the construction or decommissioning of the project, should be highlighted to the local community in advance.
- **An Annual Report** should be prepared by the developer to outline the various methods which were used to keep the local community updated, any issues which arose and how these were dealt with. The Annual Report should be published on the community website or otherwise made available to the local community and local authority.
- **The key community stakeholders identified** pre-planning should be invited to have the opportunity to influence decision making on any **future community benefit fund** administration and distribution on behalf of the local community following a process of receiving a mandate to do so, rather than being invited to engage as a beneficiary of the fund.

Ecopower has prepared this Community Report and appointed a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) to engage with the local community during all phases of the Gathabawn Windfarm development, having regard to the requirements of the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019. Gathabawn Windfarm is committed to producing an Annual Report on community engagement and publication of that Report on the community website. The CLO will keep in contact with the key community stakeholders regarding the administration and distribution of the future Community Benefit Fund for Gathabawn Windfarm which will be circa. €300,000 per annum.

Additionally, the Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 advise on identifying the appropriate geographical area and stakeholders who should be invited to engage with the pre-application discussions and suggest the methods of communication which might be used.

Ecopower Developments had regard to the advice contained in the Wind Energy Guidelines 2006 and Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019 regarding identification of and engagement with, local community stakeholders.

A list of the community contacts, who received information on the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm prior to the submission of the planning application, is included at the back of this document. A copy of the Newsletter, Email and Local Paper advertisement is also included.

See **Appendix A: Project Newsletter; Community Groups Contacted; Community Email and Advertisement in Local Newspapers.**

4.5 Wind Energy Ireland Community Engagement – Partnership & Progress 2018

Wind Energy Ireland (WEI) have set out best practice guidance for community engagement that advocates for meaningful consultation throughout the pre-planning, planning, construction, and operational phases. This includes the creation of a community website and appointment of a Community Liaison Officer (CLO). This follows on through the operation phase, where it's recommended to keep the community website updated with information on the project and continuing engagement with the community through the website and project CLO.

The WEI best practice guidelines are compatible with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and the Draft revised Wind Energy Guidelines 2019.

The Gathabawn Windfarm community engagement process is in accordance with the WEI guidelines.

4.6 Social Inclusion

The developer aims to provide information on the proposal that is accessible to as many people as possible, across the generations, in order to achieve enhanced engagement with the local community.

Methodology for reaching the broadest range of people in the locality, in particular people with unmet literacy needs, the elderly and the youth was informed by previous consultation with the following groups -

- Adult Literacy for Life
- Age Friendly Ireland
- Comhairle na nÓg

Feedback from these consultations has been considered particularly on possible methods of communication and how people access information and also what information needs to be included in those communications.

Adult Literacy for Life suggested that plain English is used in written communications and provided advice on how this is achieved.

Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy 2025-2028: One of the key messages from the research and consultations undertaken for the Kilkenny Age Friendly Strategy is expressed under the heading - Access to Information, which states;

***Access to Information** was identified as a common and broad-ranging issue affecting older people. Whilst the issue of access to information is directly related to issues around accessing public services it is also much broader and relates the quality of information that older people have about public services and community activities that are available locally. A common issue reported in the consultations was that many older people are not aware of the range of services and activities in their areas and do not know where to look for this information. The consultations also indicated that there is a need and demand for information on services and activities to be accessible and written in 'Plain English'.*

Ecopower has appointed a Community Liaison Officer who is available to Active Retirement groups or other such groups, to answer questions or make a presentation on the Gathabawn Windfarm project. Contact can be made through the website. Contact details are also included in the Project Newsletter and in the local newspaper advertising.

Comhairle na nÓg – National Rural Youth Assembly was established by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), to provide a forum for young people to present directly to Government and have their rights and views taken into account on policy decisions affecting matters they believe to be in the national interest.

Comhairle na nÓg recommendations have been incorporated into the design of Gathabawn Windfarm's engagement materials, such as visually inclusive design and allowing for feedback.

5. THE GATHABAWN WINDFARM PROPOSAL

Gathabawn Windfarm is a proposal by Ecopower to build a twelve-turbine windfarm in the Gathabawn area in north County Kilkenny. the proposal comprises seven turbines in the Ballylehaun area and five turbines in the Ballyring area and all associated windfarm site works including site roads; control building in Ballylehaun and control building in Ballyring Upper. Two tip heights are proposed for the turbines – three with 150m tip height and nine with 170m tip height.

The grid connection point for the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm, has not yet being confirmed by Eirgrid but is likely to be the Eirgrid Ballyragget Substation, at Moatpark townland circa 6km to the east of the proposed windfarm site. **The grid connection works are not included as part of this planning application** but are assessed in the environmental documents submitted, so that the whole development impact and be understood.

Gathabawn Windfarm is being proposed by Ecopower, which was established in 1996 and is a wholly owned Irish windfarm and electricity supply company group, managed from offices in Kilkenny. Check out www.ecopower.ie

The purpose of Gathabawn Windfarm is to generate electricity without greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore it is a positive in the context of climate action. **The windfarm will generate circa 150 million kilowatts every year of clean electricity from the power in the wind,** enough to supply 33,237 houses (based on the latest SEAI figures for electricity use in Irish homes).

Along with the advantage of being renewable and sustainable, producing electricity in this way using a local source of fuel i.e. the wind, improves security of electricity supply in the country. Using a native fuel source avoids importing oil and gas which is predominately sourced in unreliable and volatile parts of the world.

Wind and solar generation cut more than €1.5 billion in gas and carbon costs in 2025. This represents money that would have otherwise gone directly out of Ireland to the global fossil fuel industry. Instead, it remained within the Irish economy to support domestic infrastructure, jobs, and energy security. (Source: Wind Energy Ireland 2026 <https://windenergyireland.com/blog/irish-wind-farms-provided-a-third-of-our-power-in-2025-clone>)

5.1 Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund

The Gathabawn Windfarm **Community Benefit Fund is estimated to be circa €300,000** (based on electricity production) to be distributed annually, over the lifetime of the windfarm. The Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund will support local projects and community enterprises to deliver projects which will bring social, environmental or economic benefits to the local area.

The Fund will be managed locally and distributed annually to near neighbours and to local community organisations such as clubs, schools, tourism projects, sport clubs and home energy efficiency programs.

The Fund will be distributed in line the Government's Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) 'Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles Handbook'.

Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund will be registered with the Sustainable Energy Authority (SEAI) as a community fund. A Report will be prepared annually and submitted to the SEAI, to demonstrate compliance with the RESS Handbook.

The Fund will be resourced to aid the community organisations to make applications for funding. Gathabawn Windfarm will work in partnership with community representatives in the local area, helping to form a fund committee, develop a fund strategy and oversee the administration of the Community Benefit Fund.

5.2 Employment Opportunities in the Wind Industry

Gathabawn Windfarm will support employment in the energy supply, construction, operation & maintenance, engineering and environmental consultancy businesses throughout Ireland – many operating outside of Dublin. Gathabawn Windfarm will make a positive contribution to the 7,000 people already working in Ireland's wind energy industry.

Based on 2025 figures on the installed capacity at onshore windfarms in Ireland (5,585 MW) and the number of people directly employed in the industry (7,000), it can be calculated that there are 1.25 jobs for every MW of onshore windfarm capacity installed. Therefore it can be calculated that **there will be 68 jobs created in Ireland due to the development of Gathabawn Windfarm.**

5.3 The Local Community

5.3.1 LOCATIONAL CONTEXT

Gathabawn Windfarm is proposed for an agricultural area on the northern portion of the Slieveardagh Hills in North County Kilkenny. Cullahill Mountain is to further to the north and northwest in County Laois. **The windfarm is being proposed for the townlands of Coolnacrutta, Glashare, Ballylehaun, Gorteennamuck, Rathlogan, Ballyring Upper, Ballyring Lower and Tentore.** All of the proposed windfarm is located in agricultural land, with 11 of the 12 turbines located in grassland fields, and the twelfth turbine in tillage lands.

The nearest settlements are Gathabawn village, located 1km southeast, Lisdowney located 3km northeast and Cullahill, Co. Laois 3km northwest, of the nearest turbines. Ballyragget is 6km northeast, Freshford is 4km to the south and Johnstown is 6km to the southwest, of the nearest turbine.

The settlement profile of the area is typical of rural County Kilkenny and Laois comprising farmsteads and one-off housing generally located off the local county roads. Residences are

also clustered in the villages of Gathabawn, Lisdowney, Cullahill and further away – in the towns of Freshford, Johnstown and Ballyragget.

National Schools in the area include Scoil na Críon Coille NS in Gathabawn village, Scoil Bhríde NS in Lisdowney village and Scoil Tíghearnach Naofa NS in Cullahill. The nearest Post-Primary Schools are Coiliste Muire Johnstown and St. Fergal's College Rathdowney.

The road network around the windfarm site comprises County Roads with the Regional Road R639, to the west of the Ballylehaun turbines and the M8 Motorway further to the west of that road. The N77 national secondary road which links Kilkenny City to Portlaoise via Ballyragget and Durrow towns, is located to the east and north of the windfarm site.

There is an existing 4-turbine windfarm – Lisdowney Windfarm 3km to the east of the proposal. Lisdowney has been in operation since 2016.

There is an existing 110kV Eirgrid Substation at Moatpark on the far side of the River Nore, c.6km east of the site. Gathabawn Windfarm is likely to connect to this substation.

There are a number of waymarked walking trails in the local area. The waymarked trail Gathabawn Loop Walk occurs in close proximity to the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm, starting and finishing in Gathabawn village, and looping northwards to Cullahill Mountain along public roads and through forestry and agricultural lands. The Gathabawn Loop Walk is routed along the L5818 local road, to the east of the Ballylehaun Area.

Cycling trails in the area include the North Kilkenny Cycle Route and the Laois Cycle Route which follow local roads in the area, including through Gathabawn and Lisdowney villages.

5.3.2 LOCAL EMPLOYMENT & HEALTH

A notable socio-economic feature of the wider local area is the large Tirlán dairy processing plant, located off the N77 road, in Ballyconra townland, 2km from Ballyragget town. This plant is an important employer in the area, and many of the farms locally supply milk to this plant.

Traditionally, mining has been another important employer to the west of the Gathabawn Windfarm Project, associated with mines in the Galmoy and Lisheen areas.

Due to the rural nature of the area and the separation distance from busy roads and industrial areas, **air quality in the area is good. There are no sources of pollution in or around the windfarm site.**

5.3.3 COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS LOCALLY

Local community organisations include

- Gathabawn Rural Development Council
- Irish Countrywomen's Association Guild in Cullahill, Ballyragget and Graine
- North Kilkenny Macra (Ballyragget)
- Cullahill Community Council
- Foróige in Freshford, Cullahill and North Kilkenny (Ballyragget and Castlecomer area)

- Scouts in Freshford and Ballyragget
- Tidy Towns in Gathabawn, Cullahill, Freshford, Ballyragget and Johnstown

5.3.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES LOCALLY

There are no community facilities in close proximity to the windfarm site. Local amenities near the site are limited to the various waymarked walking and cycling trails.

The nearest community facilities are

- Mackey's Bar Gathabawn
- Big Dreams B4 & After-school Care, Gathabawn
- Cullahill Community Centre; Aishling's Little Angels Creche Cullahill; O'Connell's Bar & Kitchen Cullahill
- Lisdowney Community Centre; Lisdowney Montessori Play & Learn; Downey's Pub Lisdowney
- Freshford Hall; Prague House and Meals on Wheels Freshford; The Loop Freshford Community Café; Oasis Freshford and District Community Childcare; St. Lachtáins Church, Arts and Heritage Centre, Freshford
- CYMS Hall Ballyragget; Ballyragget Men's Shed; The Wishing Well Creche and Montessori Ballyragget; Croia Early Childhood Education & Afterschool Care Ballyragget
- St. Kieran's Community Centre Johnstown; Johnstown Community Childcare
- Grocery in Ballyragget, Freshford and Johnstown
- Playgrounds in Johnstown, Freshford and Ballyragget
- Park amenity in Gathabawn, Cullahill and Freshford
- Post Office in Cullahill, Johnstown, Freshford and Ballyragget
- Health Centre in Freshford and Ballyragget

5.3.5 SPORTS FACILITIES LOCALLY

Sport is well catered for in wider area with GAA, Soccer, Badminton, Boxing, Squash, Weightlifting, Athletics, Golf and Walking Clubs. The nearest clubs and facilities to the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm are

- Lisdowney GAA hurling, camogie, gaelic football and handball
- Harps GAA hurling, gaelic football and camogie, Cullahill and Durrow
- Handball, Cullahill Community Centre
- St Lachtáins GAA hurling and camogie, Freshford
- Freshford Town FC Football Club
- Boxing, Freshford Community Hall
- Squash Club, Freshford
- St Patricks GAA hurling, camogie and Gaelic football, Ballyragget
- Galmoy GAA hurling and handball
- St. Annes Camogie Club including players from Galmoy, Johnstown and Crosspatrick
- Badminton and Squash Clubs in Galmoy

- Fenians GAA hurling, Johnstown

5.3.6 LOCAL CHURCHES

Local Churches include

- St. Munchin's Church, Gathabawn
- St Tighearnach's Church, Cullahill
- St. Brigid's Church, Lisdowney
- St Lachtáins Church of Ireland, Freshford
- St. Lachtáins RC Church, Freshford
- St. Nicolas Church, Tulla, Freshford
- St. Patricks Church, Ballyragget
- Immaculate Conception. Galmoy
- St. Mary's, Johnstown
- St. Kieran's, Johnstown

Despite extensive research we recognize that this is not an exhaustive list. The research was limited by the lack of publicly available contact details for individual group or lack of visibility of these groups on social media. The list can be extended over the lifetime of the project, if appropriate.

5.4 Community Liaison Officer

A Community Liaison Officer (CLO) has been appointed as a bridge between the community and Gathabawn Windfarm. The role of the CLO is to introduce and communicate key project information, timelines, updates, activities, benefits and proposals through direct and indirect community engagement with the windfarm's near neighbours and the wider local community, throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the windfarm. Email contact details for the CLO will be on the community website. which will be in place for the full operational life of the windfarm.



5.5 Community Website - www.ecopowergathabawn.ie

A community website was set up prior to submission of the planning application - www.ecopowergathabawn.ie

The website explains the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal in summary and in non-technical language. The website also sets out the climate action and planning policy context of the windfarm and details of the content of the EIA Report accompanying the Planning Application. Information is also provided on how to participate in the planning process.

A link to the Non-technical Summary of the EIA Report and this Community Report is included on the website.

The website will be maintained across the full lifespan of Gathabawn Windfarm from planning, development, operation and decommissioning. The website will be updated with progress of the application through the planning process and key dates such as the public submission dates will be on the website, to facilitate full public participation in the process.

5.5.1 PRESENTATION TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

It is Ecopower's aim to present a welcoming, relevant, functional and inclusive website. Consideration was given to how people might use the website, to ensure that accessibility is a foundational part of the design and that the information is presented in a logical manner. The website has been designed with consideration of potential intergenerational and diverse user needs. Clear calls to action, with descriptive language like 'Read More' are used to guide the user through the information. The website includes links to 3rd party information on windfarms. The website text is written in non-technical language and avoids jargon and acronyms as far as possible.

The simple, intuitive navigation aims to facilitate the user across devices – desktop, tablet and mobile.

5.5.2 FEATURES OF THE WEBSITE

5.5.2.1 Home Link on the Website

The Home Page provides a written summary of the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal and the environmental benefits and community benefits, that will result from the development of the windfarm. The EIA Report is also introduced. Information on the promoter Ecopower, is also provided. There are Read More links on the About, Climate Mitigation Project, Community Benefit and Environmental Impact Assessment topics, for more detailed information.

5.5.2.2 About Page on the website

The About Page provides a more detailed description of the proposal. The webpage details the beneficial aspects of the project in the context of the following -

Climate Mitigation

Climate Mitigation and the value of the proposal to Ireland's Climate Action Measures are described. Gathabawn Windfarm will generate circa 150 million kilowatts every year of clean electricity from the power in the wind. This is enough electricity to **supply 33,237 homes**. Every unit of electricity generated by these eight wind turbines will replace a unit of electricity that would otherwise be generated in Ireland, predominantly by fossil fuel gas, coal or oil – helping to prevent pollution that would otherwise be emitted. The generation of 150 million kilowatts of clean electricity would mean **saving 38,250 tonnes of greenhouse gases being emitted into the atmosphere**.



Climate Mitigation

Addressing climate change requires two types of responses – adaptation and mitigation. Gathabawn Windfarm is a climate mitigation project that aligns with national policy as expressed in the latest national Climate Action Plan CAP2025.

Gathabawn Windfarm will generate circa 150 million kilowatts every year of clean electricity from the power in the wind. This is enough electricity to **supply 33,237 homes every year**.

Along with the advantage of being renewable and sustainable, producing electricity in this way **using a local source of fuel** i.e. the wind, which improves the security of electricity supply in the country. Every unit of electricity generated by Gathabawn windfarm will replace a unit of electricity that would otherwise be generated in Ireland by fossil fuel – either gas or oil and that prevents pollution that would otherwise be emitted. The generation of 150 million kilowatts of clean electricity would mean **saving 38,250 tonnes of greenhouse gases being emitted into the atmosphere**.

Security of Electricity Supply

Security of Electricity Supply: Along with the advantage of being renewable and sustainable, producing electricity in this way **using a local source of fuel** i.e. the wind, improves security of electricity supply in the country.

Community Benefit Fund

The Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund is estimated to be **circa €300,000 per annum (based on electricity production) which will be paid every year, over the lifetime of the windfarm**. The Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund will support local projects

and community enterprises to deliver projects which will bring social, environmental or economic benefits to the local area.

Community Benefit

Within the area, the local community will benefit directly from the Gathabawn Windfarm **Community Benefit Fund which will be circa €300,000 per annum depending on electricity production.** The Community Benefit Fund will be **managed locally and distributed annually.** The Fund will operate a near neighbour scheme of direct payments to local residents in the vicinity of the windfarm annually and will also provide sustainable funding for local community organisations such as community clubs and projects, local schools, local tourism projects, local sport clubs and home energy efficiency programs. The Fund will be operated in accordance with the Government's Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) Community Benefit Fund rules. **The Fund of circa €300,000 will be paid every year irrespective of whether Gathabawn Windfarm is a participant in RESS or other Government price support scheme, or not.**

Commercial rates payments to Kilkenny County Council of c.€800,000 per annum, for the lifetime of the windfarm will also deliver a positive benefit to the people of County Kilkenny.

A **Community Report** has been prepared for submission with the Planning Application. The Report details the community engagement plan for the development. It also provides an overview of the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal and the context of the windfarm as a new renewable electricity development in the area and the benefits that will accrue to the local community and to wider society, should planning be granted for the development.

[Gathabawn Windfarm 2026 Community Report can be found here](#)



Commercial rates

Commercial rates payments to Kilkenny County Council of **c.€800,000 per annum**, for the lifetime of the windfarm will also deliver a positive benefit to the people of County Kilkenny.

Local, National, International Policy on Climate Action

Local, National, International Policy on Climate Action is described and useful links to Policy Documents are provided.

Local Policy – One of the key components of the Kilkenny City and County Development Plan 2021– 2027 is the renewable energy strategy for the County in which the Council is supportive of climate action and development of renewable resources including wind energy, in suitable locations in the County. The Gathabawn site is suitable for the development of a windfarm because due to it's elevation and scale there is an adequate wind resource for a windfarm, adequate separation distance can be achieved from the nearest houses, there are no EU Designated Sites present and it has national grid connection prospects.

National Policy – The Irish government is creating and implementing policies and strategies to achieve its long-term goal of transitioning to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. The Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25) provides a roadmap for taking decisive action to halve Ireland's emissions by 2030 and achieve climate neutrality by no later than 2050. The National Development Plan 2021-2030 commits to increasing the share of renewable electricity by up to 80% by 2030. The Gathabawn Windfarm proposal will align with CAP25 and National Development Plan ambitions.

Wind Energy Guidelines (2006 & Draft 2019) have been considered in terms of the design of the Gathabawn Windfarm.

European Policy – Renewable Energy Directive (RED III) is the legal framework for the development of renewable energy across all sectors of the EU economy and significantly, recognises renewable energy as an overriding public interest. RED III sets the overall target for

the EU of achieving at least 42.5% of total energy (heat, transport & electricity) from renewables by 2030. Electricity equates to approx. one-third of total energy requirement and this continues to grow as electricity contributes to transportation also, through the roll out of electric vehicles. Renewable electricity generated at Gathabawn Windfarm, will support Ireland in reaching its legally binding renewable energy target obligations for 2030 under REDIII.

The Planning Application Section

This sections provides an introduction to the Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) status of the Application and the requirement to submit the Application and any 3rd Party Submissions, directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. Information on viewing the planning application and how to make your views known during the submission process, are also provided. This information is set out in separate boxes.

The Gathabawn Windfarm Planning Application The proposed Gathabawn Windfarm is a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), for the purposes of planning and therefore the planning permission application must be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. The Planning Application will be lodged in Autumn 2026. A copy of the Application will be furnished to Kilkenny County Council. A dedicated website www.gathabawnwindfarmplanning.ie has been set-up and this will contain all of the Planning Application documents once they are submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála, so that they can be examined by interested parties.	Viewing the Planning Application The full Planning Application will be available on the dedicated planning website www.gathabawnwindfarmplanning.ie. A copy may also be inspected, free of charge, or purchased on payment of a specified fee (which fee shall not exceed the reasonable cost of making such copy) during public opening hours for a period of seven weeks commencing on the day of lodgement of the Application at the following locations: • The Offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 • The Offices of Kilkenny County Council, County Hall, John Street, Kilkenny	How to participate in the planning process Submissions or observations on the Application may be made ONLY to An Coimisiún Pleanála 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 D01 V902, in writing or online at www.pleanala.ie, for a period of seven weeks from the date of the submission of the Application. Submissions/observations must be accompanied by a fee of €50 (except for certain prescribed bodies). For more instructions on the content of submissions/observations, see the Site Notice which will be uploaded here.
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Box 1 The Gathabawn Windfarm Planning Application is described - The proposed Gathabawn Windfarm is a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID), for the purposes of planning and therefore the planning application must be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála. **The Gathabawn Windfarm Planning Application will be lodged in Autumn 2026.** The Planning Application will have environmental documents including - an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report** which examines the effects on Climate; Community; the Landscape; Heritage (built and natural); Traffic & Telecoms; Water; Noise; Shadow Flicker; Soil & Land; Nature, and - an **Appropriate Assessment (AA) Report** which examines the effects on European Designated Sites for the protection of nature such as SACs and SPAs.

A **Non-Technical Summary** of the environmental documents will also be submitted with the Application. There will be a link on the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie, once available.

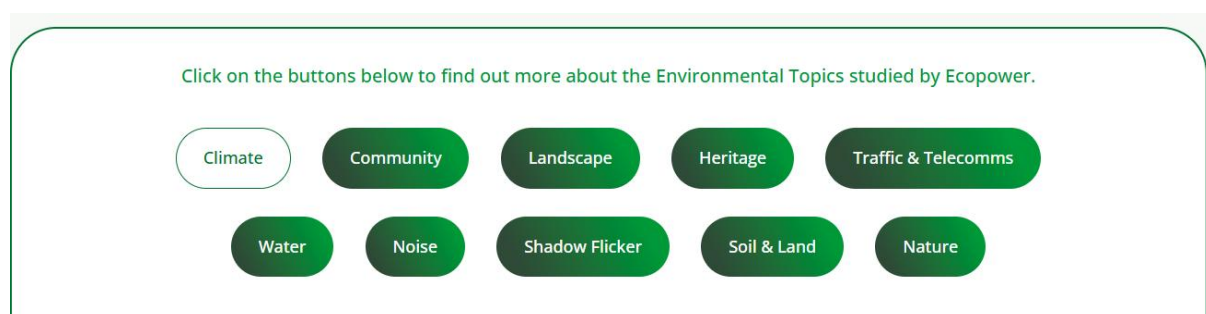
Box 2 How to view the Planning Application is described - The full Planning Application will be available on An Coimisiún Pleanála's website - a dedicated project website must be set-up for an SID Planning Application with all of the Planning Application documents available. The dedicated website is accessible through the An Coimisiún Pleanála's website www.pleanala.ie by inputting the **Planning Application reference number** in the search bar. The dedicated planning website link www.gathabawnwindfarmplanning.ie will be found on the page with the Application details. **This community website will be updated with the Planning Reference Number** once the Planning Application is lodged with An Coimisiún Pleanála and the information becomes available. A **paper copy** may also be inspected at the offices of An Coimisiún Pleanála and the offices of **Kilkenny County Council**.

Box 3 How to participate in the planning process is described - Submissions on the Application may be made **ONLY** to An Coimisiún Pleanála 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 D01 V902, in writing or online at www.pleanala.ie, for a period of seven weeks from the date of the Application. The **final date for Submissions** will be put up on this website, once known.

Submissions must be accompanied by a **fee of €50**. Submissions must include the name of the person making the submission, the correspondence address, the Planning Application reference number and the reasons, considerations and arguments on which the submission is based. Any enquiries relating to the application process can be directed to the **SID Section of An Coimisiún Pleanála (Tel. (01) 858 8100 or Lo-call 1800 275 175)**. This information is also available on the Citizens Information Service website www.citizensinformation.ie

5.5.2.3 [Environmental Impact Assessment webpage](#)

This section is an introduction to the Environmental Impact Assessment process and the topics assessed.



Scientific Experts gathered information in the local area, as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process. They used consultation with local landowners, public bodies, environmental non-governmental organisations, desktop studies and fieldwork as part of this process. This information will inform the EIA Report and AA Report to be submitted with the Planning Application. To understand some of the topics evaluated, summary descriptions are provided on the webpage, under the topic headings –

- **Climate** - Climate is defined as the average weather over time. Climate change is a significant change in this average weather. Climate change has accelerated since the Industrial Revolution in the 1800's because of human activities, through the release of greenhouse gases which alter the Earth's atmosphere resulting in a 'Greenhouse Effect'. This is causing an increase in the atmosphere's heat trapping abilities, resulting in increased average global temperatures (global warming). The release of carbon dioxide because of burning fossil fuels, has been one of the leading factors in the creation of this 'Greenhouse Effect'. The proposed windfarm is a Climate mitigation project. The purpose of the proposed windfarm is to generate electricity without greenhouse gas emissions and therefore it is a positive, in the context of climate action. Experts have predicted the gas emissions during the manufacture and installation of the turbines and ancillary works and also the savings in greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the generation of green electricity over 40 years and have assessed the impact on Ireland's efforts on climate action. The scientific experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
- **Community** - The Community topic known as Population and Human Health, relates to people living in the local area & includes people's health and wellbeing, their way of life, the local economy, their local community, sense of place and the natural resources in the local environment. The Scientific Experts in this field analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
- **Landscape** - The Landscape topic is a study by Scientific Experts that includes a description of the landscape context of the proposed windfarm and an assessment of the likely landscape and visual impacts of the windfarm on that landscape. The experts established appropriate Viewpoints for photomontage illustrations through examination of the landscape and landscape policy in the Kilkenny County Development Plan; local settlement pattern and houses; major roads; tourism, recreation and heritage features; and scenic destinations and areas. Site visits were conducted and photomontages were produced and analysed. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
- **Heritage** - Cultural Heritage, includes archaeology, architectural heritage, folklore and history. The Scientific Experts in this field analysed the information gathered during studies of current and historical maps, Kilkenny County Development Plan and site walkovers to survey known archaeology and recorded geophysical features within the site. Geophysical survey and LiDAR surveys were also carried out on site. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
- **Traffic & Telecomms** - The Traffic & Telecommunications topic known as Material Assets is a study by Scientific Experts in the field of the effects of the construction and operational traffic on the roads and traffic volumes locally. Existing traffic was measured. Effects on telecommunication signals particularly from the local masts, are also studied. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.

- **Water** - The surface water and groundwater topic is a study by Scientific Experts of the hydrology and hydrogeology in the site area catchment. Hydrology is the term used for surface water drainage within regional and local catchments. Hydrogeology is the distribution and flow of groundwater in local groundwater bodies. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
- **Noise** - The Noise topic is a study by Scientific Experts on the likely Noise from the construction and operation of the proposed windfarm. National and international noise and vibration guidelines for the assessment of Noise from windfarms have been followed. Field work included the measurement of existing noise levels (baseline) at various points around the windfarm site. The effects of the windfarm on the local baseline noise environment were then predicted, using computer modelling. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
- **Shadow Flicker** - The topic Shadow Flicker is a study by Scientific Experts that considers how wind turbines, like other tall structures, can cast long shadows when the sun is low in the sky. The effect known as “shadow flicker” occurs where the rotating blades of a wind turbine cast a moving shadow which, if it passes over a window in a nearby house or other property results in a change or flicker in the incoming sunlight. This effect could only occur for a short period during a given day and only under specific concurrent circumstances. Possible Shadow Flicker effect at neighbouring houses from the rotating turbine blades is determined by the distance and position of the house in relation to the turbine and the direction of the wind and whether the sun is shining at a given time. The experts have predicted Shadow Flicker effect from the proposed windfarm by inputting the location of the nearest houses and the prevailing wind regime on site. The average sunshine over time is also input. A calculation is then made as to the predicted hours of shadow flicker effect both on particular days and over the whole year. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.
Shadow Flicker Control Measures can be installed in Windfarm turbines. For example, when wind turbines are fitted with a Shadow Flicker Control Module, it allows for the Control Module to be set to automatically turn off a turbine if the defined parameters for shadow flicker events, at a house, are predicted to occur. This will eliminate shadow flicker at the residence.
- **Soil & Land** - The topics Soils & Land are studies by Scientific Experts on the local soils and land environment. Soil comprises a complex mixture of weathered minerals, organic matter, organisms, air and water. The Soil topic includes land coverage and use, topsoil and subsoil along with the underlying bedrock, associated geological heritage and supported ecological habitats. Land relates to the portion of the earth’s surface not covered by water, both land and landuse are addressed in this topic. Landuse relates to the various ways society uses land. For example land take is the removal of

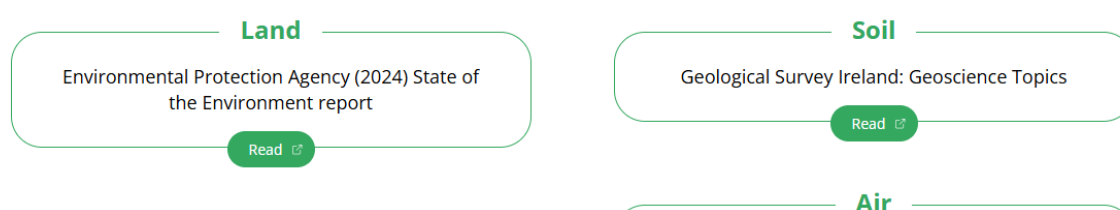
land from agricultural or other beneficial uses. The experts analysed the information gathered on these topics and prepared the chapters for the EIA Report.

- **Nature** - The topic Nature, known as Biodiversity is a study by Scientific Experts on the variability among living organisms, including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part.

The Irish Hare, Hedgehog, Red Fox, Deer, Otter, Badger, Pine Marten, Bats, Birds such as the Owl and Sparrowhawk, and Fish such as Salmon and Trout are just some of the species, familiar to many of us, that are considered during the fieldwork carried out for the assessment. The fieldwork included for example: site walkovers, habitat classification surveys, mammal surveys, bat transect and static detector surveys, bird surveys, vantage point surveys, wintering waterbird surveys, catchment-wide fishing surveys and aquatic site survey including environmental sampling and biological water quality sampling. The experts analysed the information gathered on this topic and prepared the chapter for the EIA Report.

5.5.2.4 [More information and Resources webpage](#)

The **More Information and Resources section** of the website provides links to sources of information about the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm specifically and also windfarms in general and their part in climate action.



Links are provided for the source documents for the Local, National and European policy context per;

- Kilkenny City & County Development Plan 2021-2027
- Appendix K: Kilkenny County Wind Energy Development Strategy
- Ireland's Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25)
- European Renewable Energy Directive III

Links are provided for the information sources and educational material on the topics **Land; Soil; Water; Air; Noise; Shadow Flicker; Biodiversity; Climate and Population & Human Health**, published by government agencies, environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the Wind Energy Ireland. Inspirational videos on the public's role in climate action are also linked.

In **Other Resources and Fun Facts** there are links to;

- Do you want to know how electricity works?'
- Top Five Myths about Wind Energy

- Wind Energy Facts Reaching Resources in English agus as Gaeilge
- Video We Will Change the World – Our Energy. Our Future. Young people have their say across Ireland.
- Wind Energy Ireland’s graphic ‘Your County’s contribution to renewable electricity generation from the power in the wind in Ireland’.
- Wind Energy Ireland Learn about Wind Energy - Teaching resource pack including Hands-on activities for small kids and Primary Schools, Junior Classes & Senior Classes
- ‘Calculate Your own Carbon Footprint and Act Now’ - this online facility helps people to understand and hopefully be encouraged to reduce their carbon emissions.
- Wind Energy Ireland Video – We have the Power to Power Ourselves. Inspirational video about the opportunity for self-reliance in electricity generation, that the modern wind energy industry delivers.



- Interactive Quiz - a tool provided by the European project Algowatch, which focuses on educating people about the challenges of algorithms and Artificial Intelligence (Algo- and AI-literacy) in the field of online information on Climate Change. The Quiz guides the player through provocative questions along the theme ‘Algorithms, AI, Information and Climate Change’.
- WATTS UP is a 12-part podcast series produced over the autumn and early winter of 2025 by Renewable Energy Ireland partnered with **KCLR** in Kilkenny and Carlow. The series explores aspects of renewable energy with different thematic experts.
- Video ‘Clean Secure Affordable - Creating jobs, supporting communities’. This video explores employment in Ireland in the wind industry.

5.5.3 CONTACT WEBPAGE

The link to the Contact Page ‘**Gathabawn Windfarm values your feedback - Get in touch with us here**’ is prominent at the end of each page and is also listed on the menu on the top and bottom of each page. Contact is invited by email and by post. The user is prompted by the questions

- Have you any particular questions on the project?
- Would you like to subscribe for updates on the project?

The dedicated email address for Gathabawn Windfarm is contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie

Gathabawn Windfarm values your feedback

Have you any particular questions on the project?

Would you like to subscribe for updates on the project?

This is how you can reach us

Email us

contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie

Write us a letter

Gathabawn Windfarm
Zetec House, Purcellsinch IDA Business Park
Dublin Road, Kilkenny, R95 PX5X

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES

The email correspondence is managed and monitored daily by the Community Liaison Officer. Gathabawn Windfarm endeavours to respond to all emails received, in a timely manner

Check out the Community Website at www.ecopowergathabawn.ie

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Ecopower is committed to engagement with the local community and interested groups in the Gathabawn area, pre-planning and post permission during all phases of the life cycle of the windfarm i.e. construction, operation and decommissioning – as described below;

Pre-Application: Notifications to the local community, community groups and area representatives with information on the plans for the Gathabawn Windfarm and invitation to engage with those plans. Appointment of a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and development of a community website to be maintained for the lifetime of the windfarm www.ecopowergathabawn.ie

Post-Application, during the public submissions period: Provision of information on the community website and in the Planning Notice (Newspaper and Site Notice) on how to make submissions during the planning process and the method, timeline and cost of making those submissions. The CLO will also be available with advice on submissions.

Post-Planning Grant - Construction: Information about the construction schedule will be provided on the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie. Personal contact by the CLO will be made with neighbouring residents, that may be affected by increased traffic and turbine component deliveries.

Post-Planning – Operation, Community Benefit Fund: There will be advertising placed on the community website and local newspapers on the **commencement of the Community Benefit Fund and an invitation to get involved in the administration of the Fund**. Meetings will be held with interested local groups in a timely manner prior to the operation of the fund, to explain the whole fund process and to support the administration of the fund.

Post-Planning – Operational and Decommissioning Phase: The dedicated Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is appointed for the full life cycle of Gathabawn Windfarm, including the operation and decommissioning phase. The CLO's contact details are published on the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie and this will be a contact point for complaints or queries.

Ecopower will prepare an Annual Report which will outline the various methods which were used to keep the local community updated, any issues which arose and how these were dealt with. The Annual Report will be published on the community website and a copy will be made available to the local community and local authority, if requested.

6.1 Identification of the Local Community for Direct Engagement pre-planning

The Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and the Draft Revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019 were taken into consideration in Ecopower's approach to identifying the appropriate community for engagement.

Ecopower studied a 10km area around the proposed windfarm and identified the local community stakeholders based on the following criteria;

- houses within 2km of the nearest turbine, which would be considered as 'near neighbours' of the windfarm
- the population geography in the surrounding rural area, including local settlements and visibility of the windfarm from these areas
- the location of key services and facilities in the surrounding rural area, including local schools, sports, churches, and voluntary groups providing services to the community
- the likely distribution of the Gathabawn Windfarm Community Benefit Fund

The following local community stakeholders in the rural hinterland of the windfarm, were identified for direct consultation

- **Residents within 2km of a proposed turbine**
- **Community Groups** including community development councils, community centres, community support groups and facilities within 6km of the proposal.

6.2 Community Engagement Pre-Application

6.2.1 PROJECT NEWSLETTER

A Project Newsletter was posted to all houses with Eircodes within 2km of a Gathabawn Windfarm turbine on 11th September, 2026.

All houses within 2km of the nearest proposed turbine received a newsletter with the distance of the nearest turbine to their residence noted and an invitation to seek more information from Ecopower through the CLO, on areas of concern. This distance was chosen because these houses are within the study area for noise (study area 2km) and shadow flicker (study area 1360m). This area includes Gathabawn village. Prominent on the Newsletter front page -

Your Eircode is XXX XXXX	
Your house would be XXXXm	from the nearest turbine

The information in the newsletter includes;

- Introduction to the Promoter - Ecopower
- The reason for the Gathabawn Windfarm site selection
- Introduction to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA Report) that has been prepared and what topics were studied

- The appointed CLO Community Liaison Officer's email and post address details
- Introduction to the Gathabawn Windfarm dedicated community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie
- Description of the windfarm proposal
- Description of the windfarm location
- Location of the likely grid connection
- Details on the Planning Application and the Strategic Infrastructure Development status; where the Planning Application can be viewed in person or online; how to make a submission and the final date for those submissions; reminder that the public will be notified by newspaper notice and site notice of Ecopower's intention to make the Planning Application. Invitation to contact the CLO with any queries or feedback.
- Timelines for the Gathabawn Windfarm development
- The Construction phase haul route for construction materials and turbine components
- The methodology for assessing operating turbine noise and the results of the assessment, are summarised
- Shadow Flicker is explained, the possibility of occurrence and the mitigation available should it occur, is summarised.
- The benefits of Gathabawn Windfarm should it be constructed, are summarised under the headings Climate Action; Security of Supply and Community Gain i.e. the Community Benefit Fund
- A Site Layout map is included showing the turbines in relation to the local roads in the vicinity so that residents can find their houses in relation to the proposal.
- Contact Details are listed again.

The Project Newsletter was designed as a non-digital method of providing a proposal summary and as a compliment to the community website, where more detailed information on windfarms in general is also available.

6.2.2 EMAIL TO COMMUNITY GROUPS

An email was sent to community groups on 14th September, 2026. The email newsletter was sent to community groups active in the Gathabawn and wider area. Included is a summary of the proposal and a location map, details of the website where more information can be found; the CLO email address and the amount of the Community Benefit Fund.

6.2.3 ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

An advertisement was placed in the Kilkenny People publication date 18th September, providing an introduction to the Gathabawn Windfarm proposal and the Community Benefit Fund, and inviting feedback through the community website.

A list of the community contacts, who received information on the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm either by post or by email prior to the submission of the planning application, is included at the back of this document. A copy of the Project Newsletter and Local Paper advertisement is also included. See **Appendix A: Project Newsletter; Community Groups Contacted, Email to Community Groups and Advertisement in Local Newspapers.**

6.3 Public Notice by EIA Portal, An Coimisiún Pleanála website, Community website, Newspaper and Site Notice

6.3.1 NOTICE ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) PORTAL

Because the Gathabawn Windfarm Planning Application is accompanied by an EIA Report, the public must be notified on the EIA Portal hosted by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, prior to the lodging of the application. The EIA Portal is an online map-based website that provides users with information on current/pending applications for development consent which are accompanied by an EIA Report. Notice was provided to the public through the EIA Portal on the Gathabawn Windfarm application. The web link for the EIA Portal is

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a1a85d92623147b191dd25a14b2571da>

6.3.1 NOTICE OF LODGEMENT OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION

The lodgement of the Planning Application will be advertised on the An Coimisiún Pleanála's website www.pleanala.ie in the Weekly Lists Section – New SID Cases.

The full application will also be available through a link www.gathabawnwindfarmplanning.ie on the Commission's website.

6.3.2 NOTICE ON COMMUNITY WEBSITE

When the planning application is lodged, an announcement will be made on the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie. The new planning reference number and weblink which will facilitate finding the application on the Commission's website, will be put on the community website, as soon as it is available. The last day for submissions on the application will also be noted.

The Community Report and the Non-Technical Summary will be uploaded to the community website

6.3.3 NEWSPAPER NOTICE

Prior to the lodgement of the application, a formal Planning Notice is placed in the Kilkenny People and the Irish Independent newspaper all of which are circulated in the North Kilkenny and South Laois areas. The Notice informs the general public that the planning application will be lodged within 2-weeks of the publication date of the newspaper.

6.3.4 SITE NOTICE

Prior to the lodgement of the application, Site Notices will be erected at the development sites, to inform the Local Community that the planning application will be lodged within 2-weeks of erection of the Site Notice.

6.3.5 HOW TO MAKE A SUBMISSION

All of these notices – Newspaper, Site and Websites include details of how to get involved in the post-application consultation process and make your views known to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

Submissions or observations may be made only to An Coimisiún Pleanála 64 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1 D01 V902, in writing or online at www.pleanala.ie during a period of seven weeks, relating to;

- I. The implications of the proposed development for proper planning and sustainable development;
- II. The likely effects on the environment of the proposed development;
- III. The likely significant effects of the proposed development on a European site, if carried out.

Any submissions/observations must be accompanied by a fee of €50 (except for certain prescribed bodies) and must be received by the Commission not later than **the date advised on the community website**. Such submissions/observations must also include the following information:

- the name of the person making the submission or observation, the name of the person acting on his or her behalf (if any) and the address to which any correspondence relating to the application should be sent, and
- the subject matter of the submission or observation, and
- the reasons, considerations and arguments on which the submission or observation is based in full.

6.3.6 RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT CLASSIFICATION (REDIII PROJECT)

The Public Notices include a reference to the fact that Gathabawn Windfarm is a Renewable Energy Directive III (three) Project – a RED III Project.

RED III is the legal framework for the development of renewable energy across all sectors of the EU economy and significantly, recognises renewable energy as an overriding public interest.

When a renewable energy project is submitted for a planning decision, the project is labelled as a RED III Project and different timelines apply for the making of a decision on the case.

However, the timeline for the public to make a submission is the same i.e. 7-weeks from the date of receipt by An Coimisiún Pleanála, of the application.

7. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY POST-PLANNING

Should planning be granted, the construction phase of a windfarm commences usually within 1-2 years of completing the planning process. The whole development cycle from planning application to operational windfarm is usually 5-6 years.

It is current practice that the operational phase of the windfarm is limited by planning condition, usually 35 – 40 years. Once the operational phase is over a planning application is usually made by the owner to continue operating the windfarm as it is or, to install more modern turbines. If that is not permitted, then the windfarm is decommissioned, the turbines are removed and the site is restored to previous agricultural use.

Ecopower will engage with the Local Community during the lifetime of the windfarm, that is the construction, operational and decommissioning phases (if any) of the windfarm.

- **The Community Liaison Officer (CLO)** for Gathabawn Windfarm will be available to discuss issues with the Local Community throughout the lifetime of the windfarm. The CLO will be directly contactable through the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie
- **The Community Website** will be maintained through the lifetime of Gathabawn Windfarm. During the construction phase there will be regular updates placed on the website and the CLO will be available to call to householders or answer any questions by email or phone. Once construction is completed the website will be the point of contact for the CLO for any complaints or issues with the operation of the windfarm. www.ecopowergathabawn.ie
- **An Annual Report** will be prepared for the lifetime of the windfarm. The Report will detail the various methods which were used to keep the local community updated, any issues which arose and how these were dealt with. The Annual Report will list the recipients and amounts received from the Community Benefit Fund and the environmental benefits of the windfarm, for that year. The Annual Report will be published on the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie and be made available to the local authority, if requested.
- **The Community Benefit Fund** will be set up once the windfarm becomes operational and will be distributed annually. The CLO will be available to local community groups at the set-up stage of the Fund, to assist in the organisation of a fund committee and thereafter during the distribution of funds. The latest recipients of the funding will be listed on the community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie Ecopower will advertise the Community Benefit Fund annually when the fund opens for application, on the community website, on Local Radio and in the Local Newspapers.
- The Community Liaison Officer will be available throughout the lifetime of the windfarm **to make presentations on windfarms** in general and their role in the energy transition away from fossil fuel electricity generation to clean, renewable and indigenous sources of electricity. This could be a useful educational resource for **schools, youth clubs, active retirement groups, local library and other interested community groups.**

The householders and community/sporting groups already contacted will be the 1st point of contact, along with any other local groups who have been in touch during the planning and development phases of Gathabawn Windfarm.

Appendix A:
Project Newsletter
Community Groups Contacted
Email to Community Groups
Advertisement in Local Newspaper

Project Newsletter to all Houses within 2km
(sent 11th September 2026)

**INTRODUCTION TO A PROPOSAL FOR A WINDFARM IN THE
GATHABAWN AREA**

Dear Householder,

Ecopower is a **windfarm development company based in Kilkenny** for the past 30-years. We are involved in the full development process for windfarms, from initial site identification, design, planning, construction and operation of the built windfarm. Ecopower has planned and developed windfarms throughout Ireland. We also sell electricity to **homes and businesses under Ecopower Supply**.

The Gathabawn area was identified as a suitable area for a windfarm development in the Wind Energy Strategy of the Kilkenny County Development Plan. Ecopower investigated sites in the area that have an adequate wind resource and where wind turbines could be located at a suitable distance from houses and not on lands with nature designations. We have identified a site that satisfies all these requirements. The site will accommodate a **12-turbine windfarm scheme – called Gathabawn Windfarm**. We have prepared a Layout Plan for the scheme **(enclosed)**.

We identified all residences within 2km of any turbine in this scheme using Eircodes, desktop map investigations and site visits. We are sending this Booklet to these houses.

Your Eircode is

Your house would be from the nearest turbine

We intend to apply for planning permission for Gathabawn Windfarm this Autumn, and we have almost completed the environmental reports that will accompany the Planning Application. These reports will be compiled in an Environmental Impact Assessment Report or EIA Report. The impact of the proposed windfarm on the local community is studied in various chapters in the EIA Report, including Land, Water, Air Quality, Noise; Shadow Flicker; Landscape, Material Assets (Roads and Telecommunications); Population; and Human Health.

This Booklet sets out a general summary of the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm, but if you would like **any more information on the windfarm in relation to your house** or have any questions on the proposal, please contact us.

Ecopower has appointed a **Community Liaison Officer** (CLO) for the Gathabawn Windfarm project who can be emailed at **contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie**. Alternatively write to the CLO at Gathabawn Windfarm, c/o Ecopower Limited, Zetec House, Purcellsinch IDA Business Park, Dublin Road, Kilkenny, R95 PX5X. **Please quote your Eircode.**

COMMUNITY WEBSITE

A dedicated Gathabawn Windfarm community website has been set up **www.ecopowergathabawn.ie**. The website includes the details of the proposal, the climate action and planning policy context of the windfarm, the project **Community Report** and details of the content of the EIA Report which will accompany the Planning Application. The website also includes information and links to information sources, on the impacts and benefits of windfarms in general.

A link to the **Non-technical Summary of the EIA Report** will be included on the website in the coming weeks.

THE GATHABAWN WINDFARM PROPOSAL

The proposal is to build a windfarm, ancillary and associated works comprising the following elements:

- **Twelve (12) wind turbines** with a rotor diameter of 136m. Two hub heights are proposed – 82m for Turbine T6, T7 & T9, and 102m for all other turbines, thus giving an uppermost tip height of 150m for T6, T7 & T9, and 170m for all other turbines. Construction of twelve turbine foundations and adjacent hardstandings
- **Site roads of 7.7km in total length**, comprising 6.3km in length of new roads and the upgrading and widening of 1.4km of existing private farm tracks
- **Two (2) electrical Control Buildings - one in the Ballylehaun area and one in the Ballyring area.** The buildings will contain electrical and communications equipment. Electrical cabling under the wind farm roads linking the wind turbines to the Control Buildings
- One (1) 30m lattice tower mast and one (1) LiDAR unit for measuring on-site meteorological conditions
- **Temporary haul route works** to facilitate the transport of the large components to the turbine locations. These works comprise temporary access road; some minor public road widening; temporary hardstanding area; temporary widening of existing field entrances off the public road. All works will be reinstated following completion of deliveries.
- **Creation of Biodiversity Areas** for the protection, enhancement and creation of habitats for local plants and animal communities.

THE PROPOSED GATHABAWN WINDFARM LOCATION

It is proposed to build a windfarm of 12 wind turbines, in two areas in the vicinity of Gathabawn – **7 turbines in the Ballylehaun area and 5 turbines in the Ballyring area.**

The wind turbines are proposed for locations in the townlands of **Coolnacrufta, Glashare, Ballylehaun, Gorteennamuck, Ballyring Upper, Ballyring Lower and Tentore.**

The nearest village is **Gathabawn village which is 1km southeast** from the nearest Ballylehaun turbine and 3km west from the nearest Ballyring turbine.

Lisdowney village is located 3km to the northeast of the nearest Ballyring turbine, and 6km from the Ballylehaun turbines.

The town of Ballyragget is located 6km northeast of Ballyring and 10km east of Ballylehaun, while the town of **Johnstown is located 6km** from Ballylehaun and 9km from Ballyring.

In neighbouring County Laois, **Cullahill village is located 3km** north of the nearest Ballylehaun turbine and 6km northwest of the nearest Ballyring turbine, while **Durrow town is located 9km** to the northeast of the nearest turbines.

THE LIKELY GRID CONNECTION

The grid connection point for the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm, has **not yet been confirmed by Eirgrid, but is likely to be the Eirgrid Ballyragget Substation**, circa 7km to the east of the Gathabawn Windfarm site.

The grid connection element will not be included as part of the windfarm planning application, it will be subject to a separate Planning Application, at a future date. However, the grid connection method is **assessed in the environmental documents** to be submitted with the Planning Application, **so that the whole development impact can be understood.**

THE PLANNING APPLICATION

Ecopower is proposing to lodge the Planning Application for Gathabawn Windfarm, this Autumn.

The proposed windfarm is classified for planning purposes as a **Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID)**. Therefore, the Planning Application must be lodged directly to **An Coimisiún Pleanála**, rather than Kilkenny County Council. A copy of the Planning Application will be provided to Kilkenny County Council, for display and examination locally.

People and organisations have the same right to make submissions on the Planning Application, **but the submission must be made directly to An Coimisiún Pleanála, instead of Kilkenny County Council**. A period of 7-weeks from the date of the lodgement of the Application is allowed for submissions.

The full Planning Application will be available once it is lodged, on the An Coimisiún Pleanála website www.pleanala.ie at the following weblink www.gathabawnwindfarmplanning.ie.

The Ecopower community website www.ecopowergathabawn.ie will also have a link to the full application documents and environmental reports that were submitted, for your information. The website will also include details **on how and where to make submissions on the planning application and the final date for submissions**.

Prior to lodgement of the Application, site notices will be erected locally, and advertisements will be placed in the **Irish Independent, the Kilkenny People and the Leinster Express**.

In the meantime, the Gathabawn Windfarm Community Liaison Office can be contacted at contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie

GENERAL TIMELINES FOR WINDFARM DEVELOPMENTS

Windfarms require planning permission; a grid connection agreement from Eirgrid or ESB Networks and power purchase agreements. Generally in Ireland it takes 5 to 6 years from submitting a Planning Application for permission to An Coimisiún Pleanála, to a finally built windfarm.

The Gathabawn Windfarm is at the beginning of the planning application stage and therefore, if planning permission is granted by An Coimisiún Pleanála, **the windfarm could be expected to be built by 2032.**

THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE HAUL ROUTE

Construction materials traffic: Most of the stone required on site will be won from on-site borrow pits. This will reduce the number of deliveries of stone to the site. Most of the construction traffic will be concrete deliveries for the turbine bases which will be concentrated over a single day for each turbine base, i.e. over twelve days. Construction traffic will gain access to the windfarm using the following routes:

- **To the Ballylehaun Area** - from the R639 Durrow to Johnstown Road, turning onto a local road at Coolnacrutta and travelling for 1km before turning onto the Ballylehaun site. This gives access to Turbine numbers 1 to 7 and the Ballylehaun Control Building
- **To the Ballyring Area** - from the N77 Ballyragget to Durrow Road, turning onto the Lisdowney Road and continuing through Lisdowney village and turning off at Ballyring, onto the site. This gives access to Turbines numbers 8 to 12 and to the Ballyring Control Building.

Turbine Delivery Traffic: The turbine components will be delivered on specialist trailers, in convoy with a Garda escort either in the late evening or the early hours of the morning, so as to cause the least disruption to local road users. Turbine component traffic will access the windfarm site via the following route:

- **Using the Motorway Network** as far as Portlaoise, then along the N77 as far as Durrow and then straight onto the R639 to circa 3km past Cullahill, turning left onto the local road at Coolnacrutta and travelling for 1km before turning onto the Ballylehaun site area. All of the 12 turbines will be delivered using this route from the motorway. The 5 turbines for the Ballyring area will then be transported from that point, using the Ballylehaun Area site roads and then on the public road, through Gathabawn village and on to the Lisdowney Road near Foyle Bridge, to the Ballyring site area.

OPERATING TURBINE NOISE

A Noise Assessment Report will be submitted with the planning documents. All houses within 2km of a proposed turbine – there are 274 houses in all, were assessed for noise impact.

To inform the noise assessment, site visits were made during the morning and afternoon, when the primary noise sources noted were traffic on the local roads and agricultural activities. There were no significant night-time sources of noise, at any location. Background noise levels were measured at eight house locations surrounding the development site.

The results of the background noise measurements, details of the site layout and the turbine dimensions, and the turbine noise emission levels warranted by the turbine manufacturer, were modelled. The results of the modelling showed that the worst-case operating turbine noise levels at your house, for a range of operational wind speeds, **will be within best practice noise limits recommended in Irish guidance.**

In the event that the windfarm is granted permission, there will be a Planning Condition to operate the windfarm in accordance with specified noise limits at all houses.

OPERATING TURBINE SHADOW FLICKER

A Shadow Flicker Assessment Report will be submitted with the planning documents. All houses within 1360m of a proposed turbine, were assessed for shadow flicker i.e. 10-rotor diameters, which is in accordance with Best Practice in the wind energy industry.

Wind turbines, like other tall structures, can cast long shadows when the sun is low in the sky. The effect known as “shadow flicker” occurs where the rotating blades of a wind turbine cast a moving shadow which, if it passes over a window in a nearby building

results in a flicker in the incoming sunlight. This effect can only occur for short periods during a given evening or early morning and only under a combination of specific circumstances, namely when: the sun is shining and is at a low angle and there are turbines between the sun and the house and there is a window on that side of the house and the wind is blowing in the right direction for the rotating turbine blades to be facing towards or away from the property window and there is sufficient wind to turn the turbine blades.

Shadow flicker is predicted to occur for very short periods during the year at some neighbouring houses to the Gathabawn Windfarm turbines.

In the event that the windfarm is granted permission, there will be a Planning Condition to operate the windfarm in accordance with specified shadow flicker limits at all houses, which currently allow no more than 30-minutes per day, within a total of 30 hours per year.

The time period in which a house may be affected by shadow flicker is completely predictable in real time by software called a Shadow Flicker Control Module, which can be fitted in modern wind turbines.

The developer commits to the installation of this Shadow Flicker Control Module software on the Gathabawn Windfarm turbines which will control the operation of the turbines in order to stay within the permitted shadow flicker limits at each house.

Furthermore, should a complaint/request regarding shadow flicker be received from a neighbouring resident, the developer also commits to investigating the occurrence of shadow flicker at the house and **setting the software to automatically turn off the turbine to eliminate shadow flicker at the house, if required.**

THE BENEFITS OF WINDFARMS

Climate Action: Gathabawn Windfarm is being proposed in the context of the Irish Government's response to climate change. The windfarm **will generate clean electricity and thereby avoid 38,250 tonnes greenhouse gas emissions every year**, because the equivalent amount of electricity will not need to be generated by oil or gas-fired power stations.

Security of Supply: Gathabawn Windfarm will also enhance security of electricity supply in the country, because it will generate additional electricity for the National Grid. The windfarm will generate enough **clean, Irish electricity to supply approximately 33,237 Irish homes** and which **does not rely on imports of oil and gas**, much of which comes from volatile parts of the world at the moment.

Community Gain: It is Government policy that, once the windfarm is operational, a **Community Benefit Fund** will be set up. Based on the electricity that the windfarm is predicted to generate every year, the Fund will be about **€300,000 per annum for the lifetime of the windfarm**. The Fund will support local projects and community enterprises to deliver projects which will bring social, environmental or economic benefits to the local area.

The Fund will be managed locally and distributed annually to near neighbours and to local community organisations such as clubs, schools, tourism projects, sport clubs and home energy efficiency programs. The Fund will be distributed in line the Government's Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) Community Benefit Fund Rules. In accordance with the Rules, Ecopower will work in partnership with community representatives in the local area, helping to form a fund committee, develop a fund strategy and overseeing the administration of the Fund.

A map which shows the location of the proposed turbines has
been included with this booklet

Contact Details

The Community Liaison Officer for the Gathabawn Windfarm project can be emailed at [**contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie**](mailto:contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie).

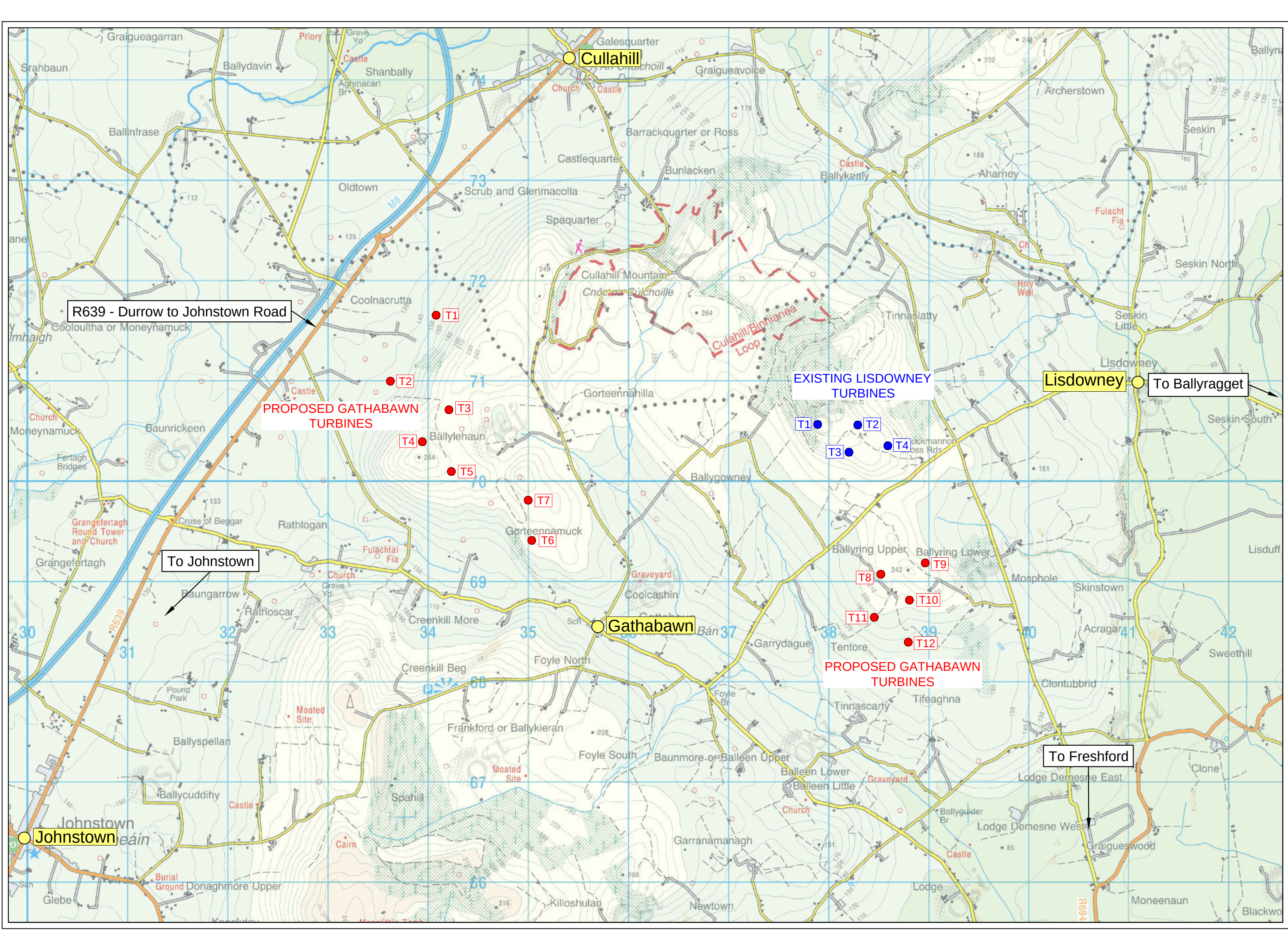
Alternatively write to the Community Liaison Officer at:

Gathabawn Windfarm,
c/o Ecopower Limited,
Zetec House,
Purcellsinch IDA Business Park,
Dublin Road,
Kilkenny,
R95 PX5X.

Please quote your Eircode.

Community Website

[**www.ecopowergathabawn.ie**](http://www.ecopowergathabawn.ie).



Cullahill

Lisdowney

Gathabawn

Johnstown

R639 - Durrow to Johnstown Road

To Ballyragget

To Johnstown

To Freshford

PROPOSED GATHABAWN
TURBINES

EXISTING LISDOWNEY
TURBINES

PROPOSED GATHABAWN
TURBINES

Community Groups who received proposal summary and location map by email or post
(sent 14th September 2026)

#	Name	Method of Contact
	Houses	
	All houses by Eircode within 2km of a turbine. The distance of the house from the nearest proposed turbine is noted for the House Eircode in the Newsletter	Project Newsletter in the Post
	Community Groups	
1	Gathabawn Rural Development Council	Email
2	The Community Centre, Cullahill	Post
3	Community Centre Lisdowney (GAA Club)	Post
4	Prague House & Meals on Wheels Freshford	Email
5	Freshford Community Team	Email not valid
6	Freshford Community Cafe	Email
7	Ballyragget Community Hall	Email
8	St. Kieran's Community Centre, Johnstown	Post
9	North Kilkenny Macra	Email
	Sports Groups	
1	Lisdowney GAA Club	Email
2	St. Patricks GAA & Camogie Club Ballyragget	Email
3	Harps GAA Durrow and Cullahill	Email
4	St Lachlain's GAA club Freshford	Email
5	Freshford Squash	Email not valid
6	Freshford Town FC	Email
7	Freshford Boxing Club	Email
8	Fenians GAA Club, Johnstown	Email
9	Galmoy GAA Club	Email
		Email
	Schools	
1	Scoil na Críon Coille, Gathabawn NS	Email
2	Scoil Bhríde National School Lisdowney	Email
3	Scoil Tíghearnach Naofa (Cullahill National School)	Email
4	Scoil Lachtaín National School Freshford	Email
5	Scoil Chiaráin Naofa / Ballyragget National School	Email
6	St Kieran's National School Johnstown	Email
7	Coláiste Mhuire Johnstown Post-Primary	Email
8	St Fergal's College Rathdowney Post-Primary	Email
		Email
	Childcare	
1	Big Dreams B4 & After School Care Gathabawn	Email
2	Lisdowney Montessori Play & Learn	Email

#	Name	Method of Contact
3	Aishling's Little Angels Cullahill	Email
4	Oasis Freshford and District Childcare Centre	Email
5	The Wishing Well Creche and Montessori Ballyragget	Email
6	Croia Early Childhood Education & Afterschool Care Ballyragget	Email
7	Johnstown Community Childcare	Email
		Email
	County Councillors Castlecomer Electoral Area	
1	Cllr. Michael Delaney	Email
2	Cllr. John Brennan	Email
3	Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh	Email
4	Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick	Email
5	Cllr. Michael McCarthy	Email
6	Cllr. Maurice Shortall	Email
	County Councillors Borris-in-Ossory-Mountmellick Co. Laois	
1	John King (Rathdowney)	Email
2	Ollie Cooney (Durrow)	Email
	Churches	
1	St. Munchin's Church Gathabawn	Email
2	St Tighearnach's Church Cullahill	Email
3	St. Brigid's Church Lisdowney	Email
4	St Lachtain Church of Ireland Freshford	Email
5	St Lachtain RC Church Freshford	Email
6	St. Patrick's Church Ballyragget	Email
7	St. Nicholas' Church, Tulla Freshford	Email not valid
8	Immaculate Conception Church Galmoy	Email not valid
9	St Kieran's Church Johnstown	Email

Email to Community Groups

Dear Community Group contact

Ecopower is an experienced windfarm development company, based in Kilkenny for the past 30-years. Ecopower has planned and developed windfarms throughout Ireland.

Gathabawn Windfarm is a proposal by Ecopower, **to build a twelve-turbine windfarm in the vicinity of Gathabawn village.** It is proposed to apply for planning permission to build a windfarm comprising seven turbines in the Ballylehaun area and five turbines in the Ballyring area. The townlands involved in the full windfarm development are Coolnacrutta, Glashare, Ballylehaun, Gorteennamuck, Rathlogan, Ballyring Upper, Ballyring Lower and Tentore. The nearest settlements and community facilities are in the villages of Gathabawn (1km), Lisdowney (3km) and Cullahill (3km) and further away in the towns of Freshford (4km), Ballyragget (6km) and Johnstown (6km) – to the nearest point of the windfarm. **See the Map attached.**

Ecopower is proposing to lodge the Planning Application for Gathabawn Windfarm, this Autumn.

The Gathabawn Windfarm is at the beginning of the planning application stage and if planning permission is granted, **the windfarm would be expected to be built by 2032.** It is Government policy that, once the windfarm is operational, **a Community Benefit Fund is set up. Based on the electricity that the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm is predicted to generate every year, the Fund will be about €300,000 per annum for the lifetime of the windfarm.**

The Fund will be managed locally and distributed annually to near neighbours and to local community organisations, local schools and sport clubs. Ecopower will work in partnership with community representatives in the local area, helping to form a Fund committee, develop a Fund strategy and oversee the administration of the Fund.

For more information I invite you to check out the community website at www.ecopowergathabawn.ie You can contact the Community Liaison Officer at contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie with any questions or feedback that you may have.

I would be much obliged if you would forward this email to your team or other parties, in the interest of engaging with the local community prior to the making of the Planning Application.

Kind regards, Gathabawn Windfarm Community Liaison Officer at Ecopower



Advertisement in the Kilkenny People
(week beginning 14th September 2026)



Proposed Gathabawn Windfarm County Kilkenny

It is proposed to apply for planning permission for a windfarm in North County Kilkenny located between the villages of Gathabawn and Lisdowney, County Kilkenny and Cullahill, County Laois.

The proposal, **to be called Gathabawn Windfarm**, comprises **seven wind turbines in the Ballylehaun area and five wind turbines in the Ballyring area**; two control buildings; and all associated windfarm works. **Two tip heights are proposed for the turbines – three with 150m tip height and nine with 170m tip height.**

The promoter of the proposed Gathabawn Windfarm is **Ecopower** which is a **windfarm development company based in Kilkenny** for the past 30-years. We are involved in the full development process for windfarms, from initial site identification, design, planning, construction and operation of the built windfarm. **Ecopower has planned and developed windfarms throughout Ireland.**

If the windfarm gets planning permission and is built, it **will have a Community Benefit Fund of circa €300,000 every year** which will be distributed to near neighbours and **local community and sports groups every year**, for the lifetime of the windfarm.

The community website **www.ecopowergathabawn.ie** has more **details on the nature and location of the proposal**. We welcome you to contact us with any questions and feedback on the proposal that you may have. The email contact for the Gathabawn Windfarm **Community Liaison Officer** is

contact@ecopowergathabawn.ie