APPENDIX 2-4

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Ireland
FuturEnergy

Knockshanvo
Wind Farm

Community Engagement Report

Table of Contents

Introduction

FuturEnergy Knockshanvo DAC (the Developer) is seeking planning permission from An Bord Pleanála to construct and operate a 9-turbine wind farm on lands at Knockshanvo in Co. Clare and for the associated grid connection (forthwith referred to as the Proposed Development as defined in EIAR Chapter 4).

FuturEnergy Ireland's active engagement with the local community began in November 2022 during the early stages of project design. The objective was to ensure the views and concerns of all members of the local community were considered to the extent possible, as part of the project design and the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

In the realm of renewable energy, wind farms stand as iconic symbols of sustainable progress, harnessing the power of nature to generate clean electricity. However, the journey from conception to operation of a wind farm is far from straightforward. One crucial aspect that significantly influences its evolution is stakeholder engagement. FuturEnergy Ireland believes in involving local communities early in the design process, with a view to creating more inclusive, environmentally friendly and socially acceptable wind farms.

While it is not mandatory in Ireland to actively engage with communities prior to submitting a wind farm planning application, it is highly recommended under the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (Department of Environment, Heritage, and Local Government, 2016).

The Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2019) has retained this position.

At FuturEnergy Ireland, we work hard to be good, long-standing neighbours and develop wind farm projects in a responsible and respectful manner so that local communities, as well as Ireland as a whole, can benefit. As a team, we value and respect honest, straightforward engagement.

This report outlines the community engagement programme undertaken by the Knockshanvo Wind Farm project team prior to submitting this planning application. It also highlights the main issues raised during this process and how community feedback informed the final proposal, alongside the steps taken to ensure the proposed development will be of long-term economic benefit to the local community.

Raheenleagh Wind Farm, Co. Wicklow

Background

In December 2021, Coillte and ESB established a joint venture company owned on a 50:50 basis called FuturEnergy Ireland. The company's ambition is to develop more than 1GW of renewable energy capacity with supportive battery storage facilities by 2030 and make a significant contribution to Ireland's commitment to produce 80% of electricity from renewable sources by the end of the decade.

Both Coillte and ESB have a long history of working with local communities across the country. This experience has generated an inherent understanding of the communities in which we operate. FuturEnergy Ireland aspires to work collaboratively with the communities surrounding our renewable energy sites to build projects that are good for us as a commercial company, good for our neighbours, and that contribute towards national and global climate change objectives.

Our experienced team, many of whom transferred from the Coillte Renewable Energy division into FuturEnergy Ireland, has developed a number of wind farms in Ireland and therefore has a long history of working with communities around the country.

View across Raheenleagh Wind Farm, Co. Wicklow

The key elements of our community engagement model are:

- Detailed and systematic engagement with all 'near neighbours' to the project (within 2km) from a very early stage of project design.
- Wider community outreach through online platforms, local print media advertisements, distribution of an introductory newsletter and a detailed brochure out to 4km and via public community clinics.
- A commitment to open, transparent dialogue and communications.
- Creating opportunities for discussion on key issues via Community Liaison Officer door-to-door visits.
- Involvement of the local community at all stages of the project design process.
- Ensuring that the local community has access to all relevant information, as soon as it is available, in a user-friendly format.

We recognise that enabling meaningful engagement between the project team and residents is imperative if we are to build a high-quality project that benefits everyone. This engagement must go beyond information provision. Thus, our team placed the emphasis on honest, two-way dialogue and the involvement of local people in decisions that affect them.

FuturEnergy Ireland Resources

In order to implement our community engagement programme, FuturEnergy Ireland resourced the project with a dedicated engagement team from the outset. The following key personnel are actively involved in community engagement on the Knockshanvo project:

Sandra Kelly
Project Manager

Sandra has 20 years' experience working in the engineering and project management sectors. For the past 13 years she has worked exclusively on renewable energy projects in Ireland. Sandra believes that wind energy is a key enabler to securing Ireland's sustainable future.

Christy O'Dea
Community Liaison Officer (CLO)

Christy spent 43 years working as a forest manager for Coillte and previously for the Forest Service. In his role as Community Liaison Officer in Co Clare, he values the collaboration with local communities and building respectful relationships with the forests' neighbours.

Kevin Donnellan
Community Liaison Officer (CLO)

Kevin has 43 years' experience in forestry management. Highlights include working on Coillte's dual FSC/PEFC certification, on biodiversity programmes and on the EU Life-funded blanket bog habitat restoration project. Kevin has a keen interest in forest recreation and building strong relationships with local communities.

Anne Walsh
Stakeholder Manager

Anne has worked on both large and small-scale electricity generation projects throughout Ireland for over 25 years. She was involved in the establishment of a successful community benefit fund and community recreation project in Sliabh Bawn, an operating wind farm in Co. Roscommon.

Janine Thomas
Communications and Media Manager

Janine looks after communications and media relations at FuturEnergy Ireland. She worked as a journalist for various national newspapers for over 15 years before joining the team. Janine brings her extensive media and communications experience to this project.

MKO Planning and Environmental consultancy has prepared the planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) on behalf of FuturEnergy Ireland. MKO is the project lead for a large multidisciplinary project team. MKO is also responsible for the design process and is heavily involved in the statutory and community consultation aspects of the project. The MKO team participated in the Knockshanvo webinar, community clinics and stakeholder meetings. Over the past 11 years, MKO has been involved in more than 1GW of renewable energy developments in Ireland.

Summary of Community Engagement

The Knockshanvo team focused on a consistent and open engagement approach with a uniquely personal touch. In accordance with the Code of Practice for Wind Energy Development Guidelines, we recognised the importance of appointing a Community Engagement Officer (CLO). However, to ensure good coverage of the area, FuturEnergy Ireland chose to appoint two experienced CLOs to this project. Christy O'Dea and Kevin Donnellan were appointed prior to the official project launch in September 2022. Both had knowledge of the area and were experienced in community engagement from their previous employment in Coillte CGA. Most importantly, both have a friendly and respectful disposition and were available to respond to phone calls and emails within 24 hours.

The role of a CLO is to communicate key project information, timelines, updates, activities and benefits as the project moved through the design process. This was achieved through systematic door-to-door visits within the 2km zone, coinciding with each project update as it was published (see Table 2). Regular face-to-face interactions and conversations with local stakeholders allowed for a trusted and respectful relationship to build gradually.

Ultimately, the CLOs were on hand to discuss any queries raised by residents and relay those concerns to the project team. Every query submitted, whether by phone, text or email, was answered. Where a response required technical input, the CLOs acknowledged receipt and ensured it was addressed by the project manager or the relevant expert. On many occasions this led to follow-up meetings between the project team and the near neighbours as the project evolved through the design process.

The CLOs were also readily available to take calls and meet with those living outside the 2km priority zone, including with community groups and local political representatives. This was communicated at every opportunity, especially during the delivery of Newsletter 1 (Appendix 1), which extended out to 4km at the project launch and remained a standing offer on all published project material and on the website.

The first newsletter set out the project timelines, clearly stating what the community could expect from us and invited people to register for future updates. In the event people chose not to register for future information, Newsletter 1 confirmed that all project material published would be made available on the project website at ***https://knockshanvowindfarm.ie/project-updates/***. This was supplemented by frequent press releases to local media, a radio interview, a public webinar, a Virtual Tour and two community clinic events alongside two further newsletters and a brochure. These will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this report.

The team undertook a detailed mapping exercise at the early stages of the project to identify all relevant stakeholders including local residents, landowners, community groups, local political representatives and relevant local authority bodies.

As alluded to above, those living within 2km of the site were prioritised on the basis that these stakeholders are most likely to be impacted by the project development. Within this area 135 dwellings were mapped, which included properties lived in, vacant and with the potential to be occupied (Table 1). Each property was given a unique identifier for the purpose of tracking our engagement and held within a secure stakeholder management software tool (Zoho).

This defined 2km area was used as the basis for continuous engagement with the closest stakeholders and defined as the project "near neighbours". The 2km prioritisation ensured that stakeholders in this area were notified first of all updates, which were communicated in person, where possible. Note, 74.68% of all properties visited by the CLOs were occupied liveable dwellings. The remainder consisted of unoccupied, derelict dwellings, an amenity centre and schools. The CLOs called to all occupied houses on four separate occasions as a minimum and met 75% of homeowners within 2km of the site.

Table 1 - Occupied dwellings within 4km of the proposed final layout of 9 turbines

Distance from turbines	No. of dwellings
750m – 1km	15
1 – 2km	120
2 - 3km	365
3 – 4km	352
Total	**852**

Community Engagement Timeline

Infographic summary of community engagement carried out for the proposed Knockshanvo wind farm (2022 - 2024)

Nov 2022
Introduction
Newsletter 1

Press release
Website
Fact File

April 2023
Newsletter 2

Press release

Spring 2023

Sponsored
Education
Programme

July 2023
Newsletter 3

Press release

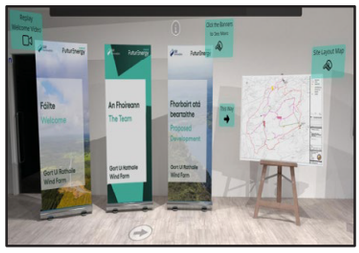
October 2023

Public Webinar & publicity

October 2023

Brochure, letter & press release

October 2023 Virtual Tour launch



November 2023 Community Clinics & publicity

Throughout the process

CLOs available to answer queries & website kept updated

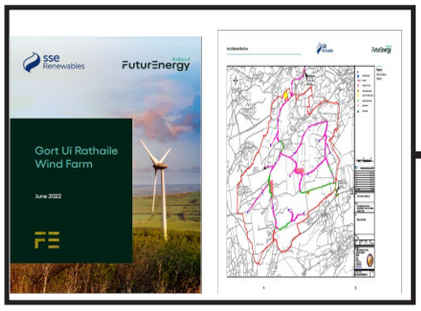


Table 2 - Detailed summary of community engagement with the project's near neighbours and wider community (2020 – 2023)

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY
September 2022	**Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) appointed to the project**
November 2022	**Introductory Newsletter** (Newsletter 1) was distributed to all houses out to 4km from the site boundary by the project CLOs. Deliveries involved door knocks seeking to engage residents in conversation. Where no one was home, a note was left with the newsletter with the CLO contact details inviting homeowners to get in touch. Newsletter 1 explained who FuturEnergy Ireland is (the company was created in late 2021, therefore our name would be new to many people), the need for onshore wind, the reasons for selecting this site, a timeline outlining key milestones ahead and what people can expect from us and when. It also introduced the key team members with photos and short biographies, and gave contact details. Those who wished to be kept informed were encouraged to contact the CLOs and/or download newsletters from the project website. See Appendix 1 for copy of Newsletter 1 When deliveries to the priority area had been completed, newsletters were posted and emailed to all local political representatives for East Clare within 3 days. An open invitation to contact us and meet with us was extended. The community groups identified in Table 3 were also provided with copies. **Newsletter 1 was accompanied by:** - Project website launch ***www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie*** - Press release to local media (Appendix 1 and Table 5) - A detailed ***Frequently Asked Questions*** list (FAQ) The project team replied to all queries and questions that arose from near neighbours and the wider community following completion of deliveries. The initial FAQ list was updated with new questions that arose during this initial engagement. **Sponsored education for local secondary schools: Learn Renewables workshop** Learn Renewables is an independent education and research-based programme run by Dundalk IT. The workshops included information on fossil fuels and the alternatives, focusing on electricity generation, and building a wind turbine and understanding the workings of each turbine part. FuturEnergy Ireland sponsored 9 separate workshops for 163 transition year students in the following secondary schools: - Scariff Community College – 4 workshops on 14th November 2022 - St Anne's Community College, Killaloe – 5 workshops on 17th November 2022

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY
February – March 2023	The Community Liaison Officers began contacting selected property owners adjacent to the project seeking permission for noise monitors to be installed either on or adjacent to their properties. Six locations were secured, and a seventh was requested by a local resident. The timelines for placing noise monitors at 6 house locations was as follows: 16/02/2023 Engagement process with householders commenced. 31/03/2023 Noise monitors installed. 18/05/2023 Noise monitors removed from houses. The additional seventh monitor was installed on 18th May and removed on 11th July 2023. Note that throughout this period, from February to March 2023, the CLOs visited the property owners many times to address concerns, answer questions and to coordinate the logistics for the monitors to be installed. This included accompanying the specialist monitor installer to ensure everything was to the satisfaction of the owner. A **sponsored education programme** was provided to 6 local national schools in the vicinity of the Knockshanvo project site. **STEAM-Ed** is a not-for-profit social enterprise that supplies materials to schools entitled "Climate-Action-in-a-Box". Each box contains material for sessions on climate change and action, including the science of causes and effects, engineering and tech solutions for sustainable energy, humans and nature. **The CLOs** contacted the schools initially to promote the offering. When the schools confirmed their interest, STEAM-Ed took over and ran a training webinar for the teachers and distributed the material. This educational outreach received very positive feedback for the hands-on lesson plans provided and was well received by teachers and pupils.
April 2023	Newsletter 2 was published and delivered to near neighbours within 2km of the site. This contained an initial turbine layout plan, progress updates on surveys and studies and an update on the estimated timelines. Once again, the delivery sequence followed the same order – local residents within the 2km priority zone first, followed by local political representatives and community groups. On each occasion, an invitation to submit queries or meet in person was offered. Newsletter 2 was accompanied by a press release and circulated to the local media. See Appendix 1 for copy. The project team replied to all queries and questions that arose from near neighbours and the wider community following completion of these deliveries. Local radio station Clare FM contacted the project team and requested an interview. FuturEnergy Ireland's Portfolio Director Paul Blount spoke to host Alan Morrissey on 26th April 2023. A recording of the interview is available ***HERE***

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY
June 2023	**Advertorial** The local newspaper, The Clare Champion, printed an advertorial written by Paul MacArtain from Dundalk Institute of Technology. Dr MacArtain wrote the article on behalf of FuturEnergy Ireland and explained in simple terms why there's a need to embrace wind technology. FuturEnergy Ireland sponsored this advertorial. **See Appendix 1** for copy.
July 2023	**Newsletter 3** was published and delivered by CLOs to near neighbours within 2km of the site. This newsletter provided information on the potential community benefit fund, a second revised draft of the proposed turbine layout and a further update on studies and timelines. Once again, the delivery sequence followed the same order – local residents within 2km first, followed by local political representatives and community groups. On each occasion, an invitation to submit queries or meet in person was offered. Newsletter 3 was accompanied by a press release circulated to the local media (Table 3). **See Appendix 1** for a copy of Newsletter 3. The project team replied to all queries and questions that arose from near neighbours and the wider community following delivery completion. ***Turbine coordinates*** were uploaded on to the project website following requests from the local community.
August 2023	FuturEnergy Ireland ***Project Development Brochure*** uploaded to project website. ***RESS Good Practice Principles Handbook for Community Benefit Funds*** uploaded to project website.
October 2023	**A live project webinar** was held on 11th October 2023. The team (consisting of the project manager, stakeholder manager, CLOs, communication & media manager and expert consultants) presented the latest progress update and took questions from attendees. Participants could submit their questions in advance or through the online chatbox. Any outstanding questions that we couldn't get to on the night were subsequently answered via email to individual attendees. The webinar ran for one hour and a total of 34 participants attended, of which 27 were from the local community. The webinar was widely advertised in local shop windows, online and via the local media (see Table 6 and Appendix 1). In addition, an email invitation was sent to local political representatives two weeks in advance. A copy of the ***webinar slides*** was uploaded on to project website on 12th Oct 2023. The location of the ***temporary meteorological mast*** was uploaded to project website following a request from a local stakeholder.

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY
November 2023	**A Detailed Project Brochure** was published and delivered by 2 teams of CLOs in early Nov 2023. The distribution extended out to 4km to reflect the same coverage as the Introduction Newsletter 1. The purpose was to make those in the wider community aware of progress and to publicise and give advance notice of the planned two-day community clinics. The clinic was highlighted in the brochure and on a separate flyer accompanying the brochure. This 35-page brochure shared information about the project, including details of the wind farm design process and extracts from the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. There is also a final turbine layout map included. **See Appendix 1** for copy the brochure. **The brochure was accompanied by:** - An email invitation to local political representatives to attend the community clinics in November. - A press release to local media The project team continued to reply to all queries and questions that arose from near neighbours and the wider community during and after the brochure distribution.
November 2023	The **Virtual Exhibition** was launched through the project website. It provides a project overview, timeframes, team biographies, site maps and details of archaeology & cultural heritage, ecology, noise, landscape & visuals, a full set of photomontages, community benefit fund information and an e-copy of the 35-page project brochure. The Knockshanvo Wind Farm Virtual Tour can be accessed via the ***project website homepage***. See also Table 5 for a breakdown of visitor numbers. A total of 255 visitors viewed the virtual tour. Overall, 1,100 users came to the project website from November 2022 to June 2024 and there were 9,700 clicks on pages or links.
W/c 6th Nov 2023	Publicity **posters** were placed in local shop windows advertising dates, times and locations for the Knockshanvo community clinics. An advert was also placed in the parish newsletter. Print media adverts were placed in the Clare Champion and the Clare Echo fortwo weeks preceding the two-day clinics (see Appendix 1 for copies).
22-23 Nov 2023 **Community Engagement Clinics**	**A two-day community engagement clinic** was held in the Castle Oaks Hotel, Castleconnell, Co. Limerick which is located within 19km from the proposed project area. This venue location was based on its size, facilities, additional on-site services, security and proximity to Clare and Limerick area commuter routes. While local alternatives were sought, none could offer a two-day event back-to-back without disrupting local sports and community training events. Organised transport was offered to anyone with difficulty getting to the venue (one request was received).

TIMELINE	ACTIVITY
22-23 Nov 2023 **Community Engagement Clinics** *(continued)*	Based on the strong numbers that turned out (72), we are satisfied that the venue suited many and did not unduly preclude/prevent those with an interest in the project from attending. There were a few local people who could not attend the event due to other commitments. The team arranged separately to meet these individuals where requested. Material on display at the clinics included: - 12 pull-up displays - Large AO size maps on location with respect to other windfarms existing or under development in the area - Turbine layout map - Grid route map - Turbine delivery route map - Community benefit fund - Photomontages from varying locations around the site (near and far) More than ten team members were on hand to answer questions and discuss matters of concern with attendees throughout the two days. One political representative from the community attended the event.
December 2023	A ***regional wind farm map*** was uploaded to the project website on 13th December 2023.
March 2024	Members of the FuturEnergy Ireland community engagement team presented a one-hour talk entitled **"Climate Change, Energy & Your Future"** followed by a Q&A session to Transition Year students from St. Joseph's secondary school, Tulla, on 14th and 21st March 2024. More than 80 students attended.
June 2024	**Advertisements** will be placed in a regional and national newspaper, informing the public of 'notice to submit' a planning application for the project. **Site Notices** will be placed around the proposed project site. Near neighbours within 2km of the site will be notified by letter of the intended submission date. See Appendix 1 for the letter template.
Planning application submission	The planning application will be submitted to An Bord Pleanála. The Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be available for viewing at the offices of An Bord Pleanála and Clare County Council. When the full suite of documentation has been received by An Bord Pleanála, it will be uploaded and available to the public to view at ***www.knockshanvoplanning.ie.***
Post-planning submission	The CLOs will remain available as the key points of contact with the project and to answer any queries that may arise.

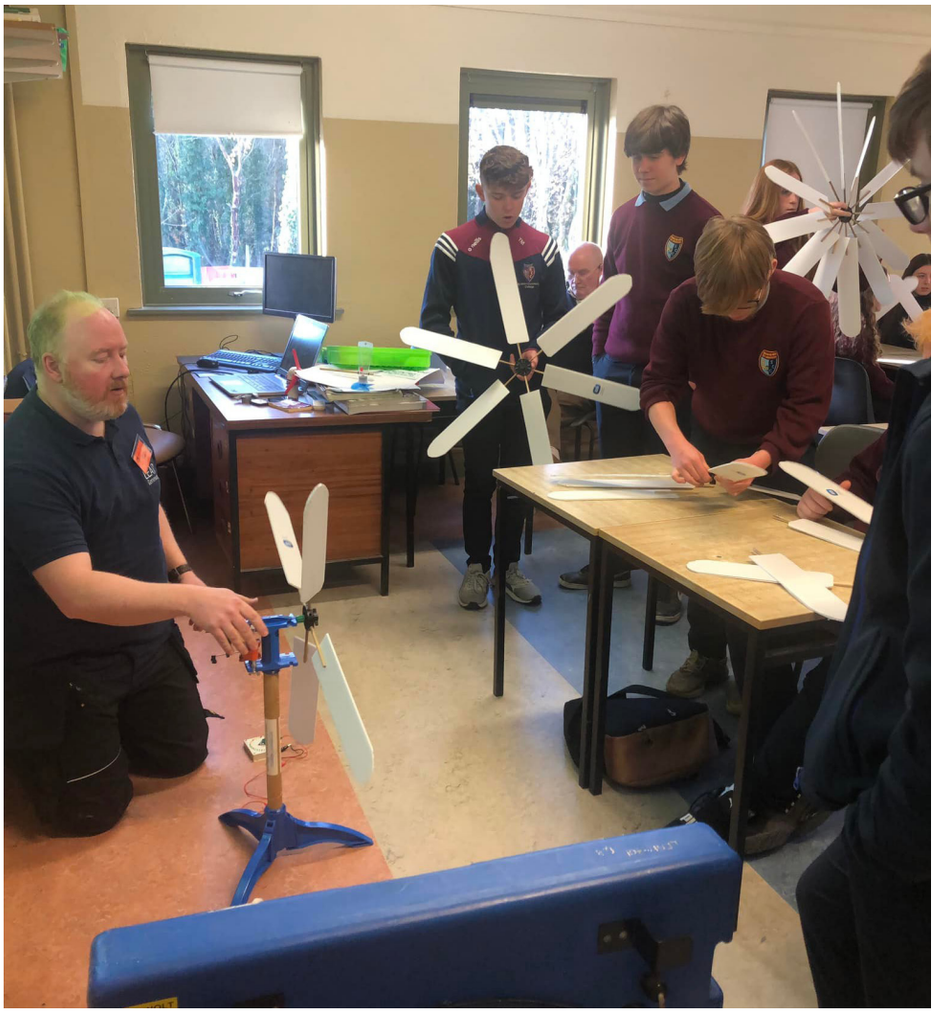
General engagement points to note

- The project team has maintained a continuous log of all communications with stakeholders using Zoho management software. All feedback in the form of questions, concerns, requests for information and general commentary have been logged by the CLOs. All queries were responded to as information became available and we are satisfied that there were no submitted questions left unanswered.
- All published project material has been routinely uploaded onto the Knockshanvo project website, including additional information requested by stakeholders as a result of door-to-door conversations. This can be found on the ***Project Update page*** of the website. The project website will continue to be maintained and updated during the post-planning stage as updates become available.
- An extensive Frequently Asked Questions section on the project website has been maintained and continually updated since the project was publicly launched. This provides detailed responses on a range of topics including, but not limited to, noise, shadow flicker, health impacts, property price impact. See more on the FAQs on page 17 of this report.
- The CLOs' work included being available on Saturdays and evenings in an effort to meet residents unavailable during the weekdays.
- All Knockshanvo project communications material included both CLOs' contact numbers, the project email and postal addresses.
- Fortunately, all Covid-19 restrictions ended in early 2022 and did not impact our face-to-face engagement. However, the CLOs remain alert and respectful to vulnerable residents or those who do not wish to have conversations on the doorstep. In such cases, and indeed where a homeowner may not be at home at the time of calling, the contact details (phone, text, email and website) of both CLOs were always left in the post box.

Local interest groups and local elected representatives in Co. Clare

The project CLOs routinely contacted local interest groups from the wider community and local elected representatives in Co Clare to keep them up to date and informed. Typically, this took the form of hand-delivering or emailing the latest project newsletter. A list of the key community groups is outlined in Table 4.

In the case of local political representatives (see Table 3 below), all newsletters and brochures were emailed, and hard copies posted as soon as the 2km near neighbours had received the material. In addition, political representatives were invited on each occasion to get in touch if they had any queries or concerns.



Learn Renewables workshops were held in two local secondary schools in November 2023

Table 3 - Local political representatives contacted during engagement

Elected TDs/Councillors	Party
Cathal Crowe, TD	Fianna Fail
Joe Carey, TD	Fine Gael
Michael McNamara, TD	Independent
Violet-Anne Wynne, TD	Independent
Roisin Garvey, TD	Green Party
Timmy Dooley, TD	Fianna Fail
Martin Conway, TD	Fine Gael
Cllr Joe Cooney	Fine Gael
Cllr Pat Burke	Fine Gael
Cllr Pat Hayes	Fianna Fail
Cllr Tony O' Brien	Fianna Fail
Cllr Alan O'Callaghan	Fianna Fail

Table 4 - Local interest groups contacted during engagement

Group/ Enterprise	Location	Description
12 O' Clock Hills	Kilkishen	Recreation & heritage group
Sunyata Buddhist Centre	Snaty, Sixmilebridge	Buddhist Centre
Torpey Hurleys	Belvoir, Sixmilebridge	Business
Broadford Community Action Group	Broadford	Community association
Clare Walks	Tulla – Broadford - Bodyke	East Clare Way walking route

Table 5 - Website visits, virtual tour visits, local on-site clinic attendance

Summary of	Numbers
Project website user hits *(Nov 2022 – Feb 2024)*	1,100 users to May 2024
Virtual Exhibition hits *(Oct 2023 – Feb 2024)* **valid up to 6th Feb*	255 visitors Average time spent: 2mins 54 seconds
Community clinic attendance: *(22 – 23 Nov 2023)*	72

Knockshanvo project team members at the community clinic in November 2023

Table 6 - Media Report

Date	Topic	Media Type Available	Purpose & pick-up
2nd Dec 2022	Press release for launch Newsletter 1	Issued to local print/online media outlets and local radio stations	Introduction to the Knockshanvo project. See Appendix 1 for copy. **December 8, 2022** **Clare Champion** **Fiona McGarry** ***Consultation begins for a second Coillte windfarm in east of county*** **December 3, 2022** **Clare Herald** ***FuturEnergy Ireland announces plans for new wind farm***
20th April 2023	Press release for Newsletter 2	Issued to local print/online media outlets and local radio stations	Progress update. See Appendix 1 for copy. **April 26, 2023** **Clare FM articles:** ***FuturEnergy Ireland issues second newsletter regarding proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm*** ***FuturEnergy Ireland claim Knockshanvo Wind Farm would play a key role in Ireland's energy security*** **April 27, 2023** **Clare Champion** **Fiona McGarry** ***€300,000 expected for Knockshanvo community fund***
20th April 2023	Project update	Radio: Clare FM	Radio ***interview*** on Clare FM with Paul Blount, FEI Portfolio Director, on the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm.
9th June 2023	General renewable energy article	Print: Clare Champion and Clare Echo	Advertorial by Paul MacArtain, Learn Renewables & Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Table 6 – Media Report (continued)

Date	Topic	Media Type Available	Purpose & pick-up
7th July 2023	Press release for Newsletter 3	Issued to local print/ online media outlets and local radio stations	Community benefit fund information. See Appendix 1 for copy. **July 14, 2023** **Clare Champion** **Fiona McGarry** ***Turbine layout outlined for Knockshanvo Wind Farm***
2nd October 2023	Webinar publicity	Print advert: Clare Echo and Clare Champion	Webinar advertised in the Clare Champion and Clare Echo two weeks in advance. Also advertised in local shop windows and in the Parish Newsletter. See Appendix 1 for copies.
2nd November 2023	Press release for detailed project brochure	Issued to local print/ online media outlets and local radio stations	Compilation of surveys and studies completed, final turbine layout shared. Gave advance notice of community clinics, time and venue plus offer of transport for those that require it. See Appendix 1 for copy.
w/c 6th Nov & w/c 13th Nov 2023 **1st Nov 2023**	Advertorial for community clinics Press release for community clinics	Issued to local print/ online media outlets and local radio stations	In-person clinics advertised two weeks in advance in the Clare Champion and the Clare Echo. See Appendix 1 for copies.

Table 7 – A summary of the main issues raised during the course of engagement

Topics	Issues raised
Health Impacts	Concerns expressed around the potential for health impacts on local residents. How can the developer mitigate or reassure people? Concerns expressed on behalf of a sound and visually sensitive minor living in the area.
Community Benefit Fund	What is the legal basis for the fund? How will it be governed? Who can be part of the Fund Committee? What type of activities will it support?
Property Prices	How will the wind farm affect property prices in the area and what will the developer do to mitigate against decreases in value?
Traffic/Transport/ Construction Management	How will traffic disruption be managed during construction to and from the site and how would issues be resolved?
Shadow flicker	How can the developer ensure that shadow flicker won't occur?
Visual impact	Concerns expressed in relation to the negative impact on residential properties which may have direct views from windows looking towards turbines. A number of requests for photomontages to be taken at individual properties. Concerns also expressed in relation to the height of the turbines.
Noise	How much noise will the wind farm create? How will the project be cumulatively assessed in terms of noise considering the other wind farms planned in the area? How will the developer ensure that the wind farm will not breach noise limits/ impact upon residential amenity?
Biodiversity & Ecology	What steps is the developer taking to ensure protection of existing wildlife in the area?
Tourism & Recreation	How can the developer minimise the potential disruption that may be caused to the existing recreational amenity at the 12 O' Clock Hills?
Local water supplies	How will construction of the wind farm affect local water supply and quality?

Table 6 summarises the main issues raised as collated by the CLOs during conversations with the local community. All these topics are also addressed in detail within the EIAR, Chapters 5 - 15. Many of the concerns were initially brought up during the door-to-door newsletter deliveries and via subsequent phone calls and email correspondence. By and large, face-face conversations proved to be the most productive in terms of gathering and understanding concerns, and our CLOs were able to respond with accurate factual responses.

In many cases, the CLOs were able to alleviate concerns but occasionally an in-depth technical response was required and therefore referred to the project manager. Overall, the experience of engaging homeowners in conversations has been positive. It has given the team a full appreciation of what matters most to those who live closest to the project and indeed, to the wider community.

As outlined in Table 2, a list of Frequently Asked Questions was included on the project website from the beginning of the engagement process (see ***FAQ list***). Based on the developer's own experience on projects throughout Ireland, questions relating to those in Table 6 above are quite common. Our approach has been to provide the answers (including peer-reviewed references) from the start, keep these updated and add new questions as they arise.

The Knockshanvo FAQ list consisted of 12 questions at the launch of the project, growing to 17 over the period of the engagement. The additional FAQs concerned impacts on water supply, the nearby proposed Oatfield Wind Farm and how it relates to Knockshanvo, cumulative impacts and the distances between Knockshanvo and other new renewable energy projects in the area.

There were several meetings with local homeowners attended by the CLOs, the project manager and various experts where appropriate (for example, the noise specialist and ecologist). The project team acknowledges that not everyone was satisfied with the answers provided nor pleased about hosting the potential project in their locality. However, we responded to the best of our ability and continue to endeavour to build relationships until such time as a final planning decision has been made.

While it is not always possible to satisfy every community member on engagement matters, it is important to point out there are many members of the community who welcome the wind farm, have found the engagement programme to be very extensive and were appreciative of our efforts to respond to queries and have our CLOs available. It is also worth noting that the CLOs were treated with respect and in many instances have established trusted working relationships with many near neighbours.

The long timeframe for this engagement (18 months) has allowed people to digest the information, discuss the project among themselves and reach out to the team on any items that they felt needed further clarification.

Response to questions asked during engagement & influence of engagement on the evolution of the wind farm design

As outlined in the previous section, the main areas of concerns for local residents include impacts relating to health, the Community Benefit Fund, property price impacts, traffic disruption relating to construction, shadow flicker, potential turbine noise, visual impacts, biodiversity/ecology, tourism and recreation and water supply.

Impacts associated with health

A review of the literature relating to health effects associated with wind turbine noise finds no evidence of any significant health effects associated with low frequency noise or infrasound. The project team posted a detailed Frequently Asked Question (Q.7) on this topic and can be viewed under the ***Fact File*** on the project website.

There is no evidence to support an increased likelihood of significant health issues associated with noise sensitive medical conditions. Meetings with individuals with specific medical concerns were held by the CLOs during their door-to-door visits and during the community clinic with the project manager and portfolio director in attendance.

Further details can be found in chapters of the EIAR.

Impacts associated with the Community Benefit Fund

Concerns were raised with the CLOs regarding the structure and administration of the proposed Community Benefit Fund. The project team posted a detailed response (FAQ Q.9) on this topic which can be viewed under the ***Fact File*** on the project website.

The Knockshanvo Community Benefit Fund will be designed and established based on Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles as published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication in July 2021. RESS is a policy initiative to deliver on the Government's Climate Action Plan that has specific requirements in relation to providing local support for those living close to wind farm developments.

An important feature of RESS is that all projects must establish a Community Benefit Fund to be used for the wider environmental, social and economic wellbeing of the local community. It is accepted that those living in closest proximity to the project should be priority beneficiaries and that is why some of the fund is designated for Near Neighbour payments. However, it is important that broader community benefits apply as well.

See more on the community benefit fund in the next section **"Potential Enduring Benefits"**.

Impacts associated with property prices

Concerns were raised about potential impacts on the value of properties surrounding the site area. There are several wide-ranging international studies that consider potential effects of wind farms on nearby property values. Based on our review of available research papers, we have not identified any peer-reviewed evidence in Ireland that indicates wind farms have a significant impact on property value. In other parts of the world, the vast majority of studies indicate that there is no evidence to support the claim that a wind farm has a negative impact on local property prices.

Much of the research data emphasises the specific context of an individual wind farm, which makes engaging with local communities even more important. The specific location, the quality of the community engagement programme and the level of net community gain in the form of a benefit fund and/or near neighbour scheme have been cited as important considerations. A detailed FAQ response (Q.8) to this topic and can be viewed under the ***Fact File*** on the project website.

Some of the project information signage on display at the community clinic

Impacts associated with traffic/transport/construction management

Concerns were raised about the potential disruption of traffic and construction in the area and the potential of damaging existing roads and properties adjacent to the roads, and follow-up repairs not taking place.

The intention is that a liaison group will be established prior to the commencement of construction. Members of the project team will meet with this group monthly during the construction phase and monitor activities. The group will assist with developing plans for communicating effectively with those directly impacted by construction activity, especially traffic planning to minimise disruption.

The noise assessment considered all construction-related noise associated with machinery and traffic and all site activities and found that the proposed layout complies with all relevant regulations. In addition, during the pre-planning consultation process, FuturEnergy Ireland made a commitment to local stakeholders to avoid using minor roads near the wind farm site entrance, particularly during construction and for maintenance. Further details can be found in the EIAR.

Impacts associated with potential shadow flicker

Concerns were raised directly with the CLOs from numerous households about the potential impact of shadow flicker from the turbines. The proposed layout conforms with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEGs) 2006 of maximum 30 minutes of shadow flicker per day or 30 hours per annum at any sensitive receptor through the management of the turbine operations during periods when there is a potential for shadow flicker.

Further to this, in accordance with emerging best practice and the draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines (WEGs) 2019, the project is committed to elimination of shadow flicker, subject to safe shut down of the turbines, through the daily management of turbine operations. Frequently Asked Question Q.6 was posted on this topic and can be viewed under the ***Fact File*** on the project website. Further details on this can be found in the Shadow Flicker Chapter of the EIAR.

Impacts associated with noise and visual impact

Noise and visual impacts were addressed as part of the layout design process. A decision was made early in the design process to ensure that a minimum distance of 750 metres would be maintained between the nearest inhabited dwellings and turbines. This approach was guided by learnings from previous projects where it proved popular with near neighbours to increase the setback distances to greater than the current recommended setback of 500 metres, as set out in the WEGs 2006. The setback of 750m also complies with the Draft WEGs 2019, which are not, as of the time of writing this report, official policy and may change in the final form. The Draft WEGs recommend a minimum setback of four times the tip height of proposed turbines to protect residential amenity.

Visual Impact

Various configurations and layouts were examined as part of the initial design considerations, which at the early concept stage included a layout comprising up to 18 turbines. Following a series of design iterations, as detailed in Chapter 3 (section 3.6.2), however, the proposed layout was refined down to a 9-turbine layout. This was led by feedback from the project team, landowners, neighbours, and the need to ensure sufficient separation distances are maintained for on-site constraints. In particular, a detailed visual impact assessment and ecological constraints dictated that a 9-turbine layout was deemed to be the most suitable, providing a balance between efficient use of the project site area and minimising the visual impacts on the local and wider area as much as possible.

In the case of Knockshanvo, designing a project layout that is appropriate was the main driver in the initial assessments from the project's Landscape and Visual consultant. Conversations with local residents on maximising property setback distances influenced the layout along with the environmental constraints of the site.

A number of residents requested images of what the wind farm would look like from their particular location. The photomontages prepared for the project are not intended to show the view from every dwelling but to be representative of local, regional and sensitive views in a wide area around the development site. However, where practicable, montages were generated following feedback from local stakeholders. One such example is VP2 Snaty, located at the summit of the 12 O'Clock Hills (see photomontage viewer within the Virtual Tour which can be accessed via the ***project homepage***.

On the Knockshanvo Virtual Tour an interactive photomontage viewer presents 16 viewpoints. Residents can judge the visual impact of the project from these selected locations online. In addition, a hard copy book of all 16 photomontages was available at the on-site community clinic for attendees to discuss with the project team. This helped to alleviate the level of concern around visual impact for many people at the clinic.

Noise

Potential noise emissions from the proposed development and the potential effects on local residents were an important consideration in the design of the turbine layout. The 9-turbine layout was subject to a detailed noise impact assessment and it was determined that the proposed layout will meet the noise requirements set out in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006 and relevant current guidance and best practice. The noise assessment also involved working with community members in order to compile the background noise levels. To do this, noise monitors were placed at local residences surrounding the project study area during Spring/Summer 2023.

At the on-site community engagement clinic, the process of cumulatively assessing noise was explained along with the difference between 20-year-old and modern wind turbines, 2006 guidelines, post-commissioning noise monitoring, adherence to the planning application and mitigation measures that can be used. According to feedback, these discussions were very informative and helpful to attendees.

The noise assessment considered all construction-related noise associated with machinery and traffic and all site activities and found that the proposed layout complies with all relevant regulations. The noise assessment also included a cumulative noise assessment in relation to other proposed wind farm developments in the area - FAQ 15 on the project websites deals more specifically with this topic.

Please find further details in the EIAR.

Impacts associated with biodiversity and ecology

Concerns were raised about potential impacts on local ecology and habitats in the site area. Detailed site surveys and assessments were undertaken to consider potential impacts on all aspects of biodiversity including habitats, mammals, bats, birds, etc. The initial survey findings informed the layout design such that potentially sensitive areas were avoided in the layout. More detailed surveys were undertaken following from the preliminary infrastructure layout designs and amendments were made to avoid sensitive areas, insofar as possible. Based on these assessments, it is considered that there will not be significant impacts on biodiversity in general and no further changes to the layout are required.

Ecological enhancements will also be provided throughout the wind farm site as set out in the Biodiversity Management and Enhancement Plan which includes over approximately 100 hectares of peatland restoration. The noise assessment also included a cumulative noise assessment in relation to other proposed wind farm developments in the area - FAQ 15 on the project websites deals more specifically with this topic.Please find further details in Chapter 6 Biodiversity and Chapter 7 Ornithology of the EIAR.

Impacts associated with tourism and recreation

The project team has engaged with a number of key recreational stakeholders in the area since the Knockshanvo project launched.

Our aim is to collaborate with the group to enhance the existing recreation amenities. If Knockshanvo Wind Farm receives a positive planning grant, FuturEnergy Ireland has committed to keeping the 12 O' Clock Hills amenity open throughout the entire construction period, except for a period of approximately ten days, and any disruption will be kept to an absolute minimum.

Impacts associated with water supply

A number of queries were received in relation to how local water supplies might be impacted, particularly during the construction period. FAQ 13 on the project Fact File was developed to reassure stakeholders that firstly, wells located close to houses are hydraulically separated from turbine sites and secondly, in the unlikely event that impacts occur, swift action would be taken to remediate the situation.

Potential Enduring Community Benefits

Knockshanvo Wind Farm has the potential to bring significant positive benefit to the local community. The project will create sustainable local employment, it will contribute annual rates to the local authority and provide a local Community Benefit Fund in line with industry best practice, which is the new Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). A Community Benefit Fund will be put in place for the RESS period to provide direct funding to those areas surrounding the project.

Community Benefit Fund

There are two important government policy developments that will have a bearing on the establishment of future community benefit funds. The first is RESS, and its terms and conditions published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The second is the updated Wind Energy Development Guidelines, which are expected to be released later this year.

Both sets of policies specify government requirements on future community benefit funds for renewable energy projects. FuturEnergy Ireland confirms that these important policies will be fully adopted and integrated in our design and establishment of the Knockshanvo Community Benefit Fund.

Based on RESS, for each megawatt hour (MWh) of electricity produced by the wind farm, the project will contribute €2 into a community fund for the RESS period i.e. 15 years of operation. The Knockshanvo Wind Farm, if constructed as proposed, means that the project could provide more than €270,000 per annum to the Community Benefit Fund for the first 15 years of its operational life. For the remaining lifetime of the wind farm, FuturEnergy Ireland commits to contributing around €135,000 per year. Therefore, over the expected lifetime of Knockshanvo Wind Farm, the Community Benefit Fund will be in the order of €6 million. If this project does not qualify for RESS, FuturEnergy Ireland pledges to match these contributions.

These figures are indicative only and will be dependent on the generation capacity of the wind farm, which is influenced by a number of factors including:

1. Number of wind turbines.
2. Capacity and availability of energy production of those turbines.
3. Quantity of wind

RESS guidelines for the annual distribution of this fund are as follows:

- A minimum of €1,000 shall be paid to each household located within a distance of a 1-kilometer radius from the nearest turbine.
- A minimum of 40% of the funds shall be paid to not-for-profit community enterprises whose primary focus or aim is the promotion of initiatives towards the delivery of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 4, 7, 11 and 13, including education, energy efficiency, sustainable energy and climate action initiatives.
- A maximum of 10% on administration.
- The balance of the funds shall be spent on initiatives successful in the annual application process, as proposed by clubs and societies and similar not-for profit entities, and in respect of Onshore Wind RESS 1 Projects, on "near neighbour payments" for households located outside a distance of 1 kilometer, but within a distance of 2 kilometers from such RESS 1 Project.

How the fund works

The Government's 'Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles Handbook' provides full details on how the fund is to be governed and requires local community participation in all decisions in regard to how the funding should be used. The fund is open to individuals, and not-for-profit groups such as community and voluntary groups, charities, social enterprises and clubs and societies. High quality administration, local where possible, is also a key expectation. Further details can be found ***here***.

Should the project receive a positive planning outcome, the project team and the local community will work together to develop an appropriate local structure that would design the Knockshanvo Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund. This group will make decisions on funding allocations and, with the assistance of an administrator, manage the fund, ensuring transparency and good governance.

Employment Opportunities

It is estimated that the proposed project will create approximately 90 jobs during the construction phase and three - four long-term technical jobs during the operational and maintenance phases of the proposed development. During construction, additional employment will be created in the region through the supply of services and materials. There will also be income generated by local employment from the purchase of local services i.e., travel and lodgings.

Local County Council Rates

Should the project be constructed and operated as designed, annual rates will be paid to the local authorities of approximately €550,000 annually. This would make Knockshanvo Wind Farm an important future contributor to county council funding. This could positively impact local infrastructure and amenities such as roads, public lighting, street cleaning, libraries, fire services and public amenities.

Recreation

The Knockshanvo project team consulted with a number of recreational stakeholders in the area when the project first launched. The objective remains to collaborate with the group and to enhance the existing recreation amenities and ensure disruption is kept to the absolute minimum during construction, should the project receive a positive grant. An enhanced recreation amenity would attract tourists and locals alike to the area.

Ongoing Liaison and Contact

The project phases detailed below outline the varying levels of engagement anticipated depending on the level of project activity. Underpinning the engagement will be a dedicated Community Liaison Officer who is contactable by email and phone. These details will remain on the project website, which will be in place for the duration of the project. As the Knockshanvo Wind Farm progresses, regular updates will be posted to this website.

Post-planning submission until six months pre-construction

If the proposed project receives a favorable planning decision and has progressed successfully through the next stages of project development, there will be a period of approximately 24 to 36 months when key community-related activities will begin. The first is a participatory design process for the Knockshanvo Community Benefit Fund (CBF) that will take place in the months preceding and during construction work.

The team will start reaching out to residents within the 2km zone, as well as those living in the wider community, to bring together a small group who are interested in working on the design and structure of a community-based entity that would ultimately run the Community Benefit Fund. This process will start with a scoping exercise followed by a series of facilitated workshops. It is hoped that representatives involved in existing local development initiatives will become stakeholders and therefore contribute to this strategy.

Pre-construction and construction phase

Six months prior to construction, we will initiate the formation of a liaison group with the CLOs acting as the key point of contact. The project team will meet this group monthly to prepare for the construction phase and monitor activity during construction. This group will develop plans for communicating effectively with residents directly impacted by construction activity and deliveries, especially traffic planning to minimise disruption.

The project will also engage with local suppliers to outline its future needs and promote the use of local suppliers and service providers wherever possible. This may take the form of a “meet the buyer” event.

Operational phase

The project will move forward with a proposed annual meeting with the liaison group to update them on Knockshanvo Wind Farm's performance and address any queries. Once again, the CLOs will be available throughout this period to directly address any issues raised by local residents. The project website will also be maintained as a means of providing regular, up-to-date information. There will be regular updates on the performance of the Community Benefit Fund and regular calls for funding proposals.

Decommissioning phase

A year prior to decommissioning, the Knockshanvo project team will engage with the established liaison group as well as all residents within the 2km zone to outline the decommissioning plan and address any issues.

In line with the Government's Renewable Energy Support Scheme and the Code of Practice 2016, the project will publish an annual report of all engagement activities on the project website.

Conclusion / Commitment

This report illustrates that there has been very active and extensive community engagement in the vicinity of the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm project throughout the planning/design phase. Many of our neighbours are supportive of the project, despite the fact that the local anti-wind group do not wish to see it proceed.

The Knockshanvo project team has worked hard to ensure that information has been made available to the local community on a transparent basis, that all concerns and questions raised locally have been addressed to the extent practically possible and that the community engagement work on this project has been extensive and carried out to the highest standards. To this end, we are satisfied that we have achieved and surpassed these objectives.

APPENDIX 1 : Project Literature

All Project newsletters, brochure, webinar information and other information are accessible from the project website at ***www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie***

Nov 2022 Newsletter 1:

Press release

December 2, 2022

FuturEnergy Ireland launches new wind farm project

FuturEnergy Ireland is exploring the potential for an onshore wind farm in Co. Clare. The proposed site for the renewable energy development is located approximately 3km south of Broadford and 4km northeast of Sixmilebridge.

The 'Knockshanvo Wind Farm' project is in the early stages of development. The project team is undertaking initial site studies and environmental assessments that will inform a draft design layout, the results of which will be shared with the local community as soon as they are available.

This initial stage will be followed by in-depth studies on topics including hydrology, ecology, landscape/visual, noise, shadow flicker, telecoms, traffic, soil and archeology alongside further community engagement activities. The results of these studies and engagements will be used to inform an appropriate final turbine layout that will be submitted to planning. The application is likely to be submitted for independent review to An Bord Pleanála under ABP's Strategic Infrastructure Development process.

This week, two local Community Liaison Officers, Christy O'Dea and Kevin Donellan, are introducing the project to the community. As part of their engagement, the first project newsletter is being distributed to houses in the vicinity of the project site. The Community Liaison Officers are available to answer any queries about the project in person, by telephone or via email.

This marks the start of a comprehensive community engagement programme that will include newsletter and website updates, a webinar and a community engagement clinic, which give local community members many opportunities to learn about and discuss the project with the team.

In light of the energy crisis, which is threatening electricity supply and hiking energy costs, the Government is calling for a rapid increase in the construction of renewable energy projects to support our national requirements and reduce costs for consumers. The Knockshanvo project has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to this by utilising Ireland's unique natural wind resource to provide low-cost electricity to the national grid.

The FuturEnergy Ireland team has a strong track record of developing and delivering projects exclusively in Ireland, and is excited to explore the full potential of the Knockshanvo project, including the important benefits the project could bring to Co. Clare. Once operational, the project would provide a substantial local Community Benefit Fund and significant rates contributions to Clare County Council. It also has the potential to provide recreational amenities and employment opportunities.

Sandra Kelly, project developer for the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm, said: *"As we recently saw at COP 27, which highlighted the urgency of the global climate crisis, Ireland's need to increase its renewable energy supply has never been more critical. Wind energy projects such as Knockshanvo are one way in which we can combat climate change. There is also an urgent need for the nation to achieve greater security of supply, reducing Ireland's reliance on imported and expensive fossil fuels, and improve price stability in our energy system.*

"The project team is available for open, active engagement with the community and local representatives throughout the consultation process. We welcome your feedback. Our aim is to develop responsible wind energy projects in a way that is good for us, good for society and good for our neighbours."

If you have a query about the Knockshanvo Wind Farm proposal or require more information, please call Community Liaison Officers Christy O'Dea on 087 395 8867 or Kevin Donnellan on 086 253 2337, or email knockshanvo@futurenergyireland.ie. For regular updates visit www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie.

Sponsored Education Programme (National Schools):

STEAM Education Climate-Action-in-a-Box

Presentation: Climate Change, Renewable Energy & You

April 2023 Newsletter 2:

Press release

April 20, 2023

FuturEnergy Ireland issues a draft turbine layout for Knockshanvo Wind Farm

FuturEnergy Ireland has issued a second newsletter for the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm, which includes a first draft turbine layout, to the local community. The proposed renewable energy development is located on a site approximately 3km south of Broadford and 4km northeast of Sixmilebridge in Co. Clare.

Initial site studies and assessments have informed the preliminary design layout, which consists of nine wind turbines. If this design is adopted, these turbines would generate enough clean electricity to power around 32,300 homes and save approximately 55,600 tonnes of CO_2 emissions per annum, which would have otherwise been created by fossil fuels.

Further detailed studies, including field surveys and noise monitoring, are underway, the results of which will inform a second draft layout. This will be followed by additional field studies to validate the design, after which the project team will issue a third turbine layout. The expectation is that this third layout will be included as part of the planning application.

This week, two local Community Liaison Officers (CLOs), Christy O'Dea and Kevin Donnellan, are hand-delivering the second project newsletter to houses within 2km of the proposed project site. The newsletter also includes a project update, key milestones and information on several environmental studies and surveys. If you would like a hard copy, please contact the CLOs. Otherwise, the newsletter is available to read and download at www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie.

The FuturEnergy Ireland team has a strong track record of developing and delivering renewable energy projects. Sandra Kelly, project developer for Knockshanvo, said: *"We are pleased to share the first draft turbine layout with the community. This will be refined as the project progresses based on site studies and community feedback.*

"Community Liaison Officers Christy and Kevin have been out and about talking to local homeowners and community groups to answer their questions and gather feedback. If you have any queries at all at this stage, please get in touch with the CLOs who are available to discuss all aspects of this project."

Renewable energy projects such as Knockshanvo are vital if Ireland is to meet its climate action target of generating 80% of electricity from renewables by 2030. The Government is also calling for a rapid increase in renewable energy development to improve national energy security and independence.

Once operational, the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm would provide a substantial local Community Benefit Fund. More information on this will be provided in the next newsletter.

If you have any queries about the Knockshanvo Wind Farm proposal, please call Community Liaison Officers Christy O'Dea on 087 395 8867 or Kevin Donnellan on 087 431 5976, or email knockshanvo@futurenergyireland.ie. For regular updates visit www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie

June 2023 Paul MacArtain, Dundalk Institute of Technology writes an Advertorial in the Clare Champion:

Link to the webpage

July 2023 Newsletter 2:

Press release
July 7, 2023

Local community stands to gain €6 million in funding from the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm

What can Knockshanvo Wind Farm do for your community? That is the question asked by FuturEnergy Ireland in its latest newsletter, which includes details of the Community Benefit Fund that would accompany this renewable energy development if it gets the go ahead. The project is located approximately 3km south of Broadford and 4km northeast of Sixmilebridge in Co. Clare.

FuturEnergy Ireland's third newsletter for the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm also includes an updated draft turbine layout which shows nine turbines. More work has yet to be carried out before the layout is finalised.

The Knockshanvo Wind Farm project intends to apply for the Government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), which mandates a Community Benefit Fund worth €2 per megawatt hour (MWh) of generated electricity for any future wind farm. An important cornerstone of RESS is that the local community participates in all decisions regarding how the funding should be used. This places the community at the heart of the decision-making process and will be key to its success.

If Knockshanvo Wind Farm is consented based on the current draft design, the project would contribute an estimated €270,000 annually to the Community Benefit Fund for the first 15 years of operation. For the remaining lifetime of the wind farm, FuturEnergy Ireland commits to contributing €1/MWh, which equates to around €135,000 per year. Therefore, over the expected 30-year lifetime of the wind farm, the Community Benefit Fund would be in the order of €6 million. If this project does not qualify for RESS, FuturEnergy Ireland pledges to match these contributions.

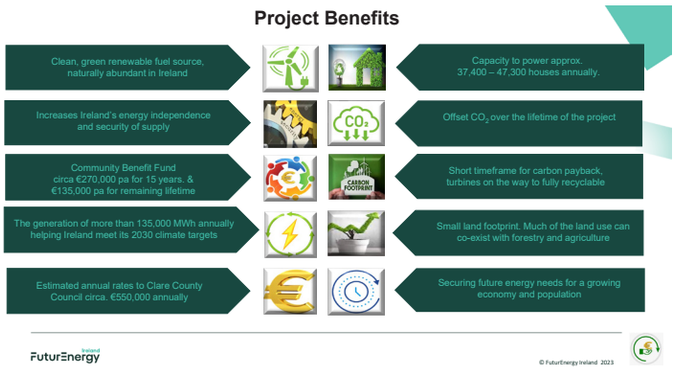
The proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm project would expect to contribute approximately €550,000 in annual rates payments to Clare County Council. This would positively impact the development of Co Clare's infrastructure and amenities, from street lighting and recreational spaces to path and road upgrades.

Sandra Kelly, project developer for Knockshanvo, said: "The Community Benefit Fund will have truly transformative potential for the local communities surrounding Knockshanvo Wind Farm should the project succeed in obtaining planning permission and proceed to construction. The impact of such significant funding for rural areas cannot be overstated considering how difficult it is these days for communities to secure reliable funding.

"Most importantly, the Community Benefit Fund is run by local people. A local, volunteer-based Fund Committe would make all decisions regarding which projects and initiatives should receive funding with strong governance and administration in place as required by Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland."

This week, Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) Christy O'Dea and Kevin Donnellan are hand-delivering the third project newsletter to houses within 2km of the proposed site. If you have any queries about the Knockshanvo Wind Farm proposal, please call CLOs Christy on 087 395

October 2023 Public webinar:



Nov 2023 Detailed Project Brochure:

Press release: Community clinics to take place for Knockshanvo Wind Farm

November 1, 2023
FuturEnergy Ireland is holding community clinics for the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm as it enters the final phase of public consultation. The renewable energy project is located on a site of around 936 hectares approximately 3km south of Broadford and 4km northeast of Sixmilebridge in Co. Clare.

Community clinics will take place on Wednesday November 22, 12pm-8pm, and Thursday November 23, 10am-4pm in Castle Oaks House Hotel, Castleconnell, V94 EH94. The two-day event will give the local community the opportunity to access the most recent and extensive information about the project, meet the team and ask any questions they may have.

This week, Community Liaison Officers Christy O'Dea and Kevin Donnellan are delivering a final project brochure to homes within 4km of the proposed site. The Knockshanvo brochure shares information about the project, including a detailed section on the wind farm design process and extracts from the Environmental Impact Assessment Report. There is also a final turbine layout map, which shows nine turbines. The brochure is also available at www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie.

A Virtual Exhibition can also be accessed from the project website above. This online tour includes project information and photomontages that clearly show what the proposed turbines will look like from different viewpoints.

The Knockshanvo team has been engaging with the community, working with local people and looking for feedback since the project launched in November 2022. Knockshanvo is positioned to support the local area in terms of investment in the local economy, employment and community funding.

Subject to a positive planning determination, it has the potential to produce more than 135,000 MWh of electricity a year, support a Community Benefit Fund of an estimated €270,000 per annum for 15 years and a further 'lifetime' fund of €135,000 per annum for the remaining operational lifetime of the wind farm. The 'lifetime' fund post year 15 is an exclusive FuturEnergy Ireland initiative. All told, approximately €6 million would be contributed to the local area via the community funds during the operational 30-year period.

Knockshanvo Wind Farm has the potential to combat climate change by contributing towards the national target of producing 80% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030. Nine turbines would generate enough clean electricity to power between 37,449 and 47,304 homes annually and save between 1.7 million and 2.1 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions over the lifetime of the project.

Nov 2023 poster advertising community clinics:

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Knockshanvo Wind Farm has the potential to combat climate change by contributing towards the national target of producing 80% of electricity from renewable energy sources by 2030. Nine turbines would generate enough clean electricity to power between 37,449 and 47,304 homes annually and save between 1.7 million and 2.1 million tonnes of CO_2 emissions over the lifetime of the project.

As winter arrives, so does the worry about fuel bills, which have risen due to Ireland's reliance on imported fossil fuels. Projects such as Knockshanvo Wind Farm have the capacity to strengthen our energy independence and security of supply.

Sandra Kelly, Knockshanvo's Project Manager, says: "This renewable energy proposal comes at a time when climate change requires immediate focus. Extreme weather events, which experts are attributing to global warming, are becoming increasingly common. In the past two weeks, severe floods have struck twice, first in Cork, where the army were deployed to help with the worst flooding in living memory, and now in Counties Down and Armagh, wrecking hundreds of homes and businesses. We urgently need to reduce our carbon emissions, and the only way we can do this at scale is by harnessing our excellent natural resources to generate electricity."

The project company, FuturEnergy Knoackshanvo DAC, intends to make a planning application to An Bord Pleanála this winter.

For further information or to arrange a meeting, please contact Kevin Donnellan on 087 431 5976 or Christy O'Dea on 087 395 8867, or email knockshanvo@futurenergyireland.ie. All information to date is available at www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie

March 2024 Presentation to Transition Year secondary schools

June 2024
'Notice to Submit' letter template

Ireland
FuturEnergy

FuturEnergy Knockshanvo DAC
The Rubicon Centre,
Bishopstown,
Cork, T12 Y275

LETTER TEMPLATE

Dear Homeowner,

We hope this letter finds you well.

A Notice to Submit a planning application for the proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm has been placed in the [ ] newspaper and the [ ] newspaper this week. Planning notices will also be erected and displayed around the project site for this development. The application is expected to be submitted by Knockshanvo Wind DAC to An Bord Pleanála shortly.

When An Bord Pleanála has received and validated the planning application, the full suite of planning application documentation, including the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), will be uploaded and available to view at www.knockshanvoplanning.ie and at www.pleanala.ie. A hard copy of the planning application and EIAR will also be available at the offices of An Bord Pleanála and Clare County Council.

There is a useful FAQ section on An Bord Pleanála's website that provides guidance on public participation. Any person or body may make observations on the project to An Bord Pleanála after the application has been submitted. The timeframe to make an observation is five weeks. To give you an indication of the planning decision timeline, on average it is taking 12 to 18 months for a decision to be made on wind energy projects.

We will keep you up to date with any further news.

Yours sincerely,

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