

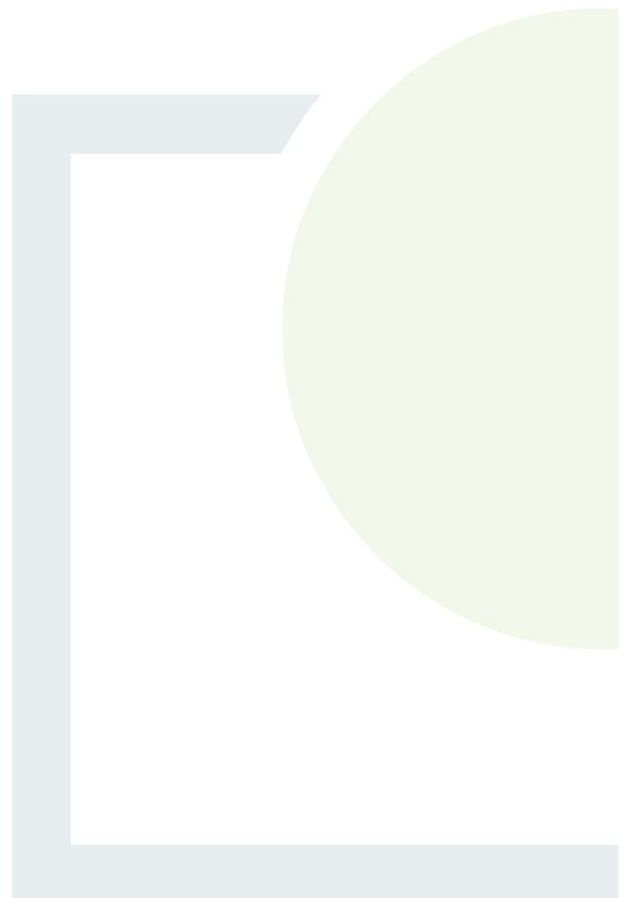


**FEHILY
TIMONEY**

**CONSULTANTS IN ENGINEERING,
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE
& PLANNING**

APPENDIX 5.4

Community Report



Community Report

Ballinagree Wind Farm

Co. Cork

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1 INTRODUCTION

FuturEnergy Ireland and Ørsted Ireland (together, the Developer) are seeking planning permission from An Bord Pleanála to construct and operate a 20 turbine wind farm project on lands at Ballinagree in Co. Cork.

The co-development partners commenced active engagement with the local community in Summer 2019 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 as part of the project design and the Environmental Impact Assessment process.

National guidance on community engagement and consultation for wind energy developments is set out under the *Wind Energy Development Guidelines* (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2006) and states:

“While it is not a mandatory requirement, it is strongly recommended that developers of a wind energy project should engage in active consultation and dialogue with the local community at an early stage in the planning process, ideally prior to submitting a planning application.”

This was further addressed in the *Preferred Draft Approach to Wind Energy Development in Ireland* (June 2017), which stated the following in respect to planning applications for wind farms:

“Planning applications must contain a Community Report prepared by the applicant which will specify how the final proposal reflects community consultation. The Community Report must also outline steps taken to ensure that the proposed development will be of enduring economic benefit to the communities concerned.”

The *Draft Revised Wind Energy Guidelines* (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, 2019) has retained this position, stating the following:

“In order to promote the observance of best practice, planning authorities should require applicants to prepare and submit a Community Report with their planning application and a condition on any subsequent planning permission should require developers to carry out the development in accordance with the approved Community Report.”

This Community Report outlines the engagement and liaison with the community local to the area of the proposed wind farm.

2 BACKGROUND

Coillte Renewable Energy (now FuturEnergy Ireland) and Ørsted Ireland 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. We aspire to work with the communities surrounding our renewable energy sites to build projects that are good for us as commercial companies, good for our neighbours, and that contribute to meeting national and global climate change objectives.

The project developers have developed a large number of wind farms in Ireland over the past decade and have learnt many valuable lessons in relation to working with local communities and the importance of including local people in decisions that affect them. Following a review of our Community Engagement process, a fresh, people-centred approach was adopted, which we refer to as our “Fair Play” model.

The key elements of this approach are:

- Detailed and systematic engagement with all close neighbours to the project (within 3 km of Ballinagree Wind Farm) from a very early stage of project design.
- Open, transparent dialogue and communications.
- Create opportunities for two-way dialogue on key issues.
- Involve local community at all stages of the project design process.
- Empower local communities to be part of project discussions that affect them.
- Ensure local community have access to all relevant information as soon as it is available, in a format that is easy to understand.

This approach emphasises a focus on the residents of dwellings within 3km of the initial 24 turbine layout as these residents will be closest to the development and will therefore be most sensitive to any potential impacts. In the past, engagement commenced when the project was almost fully designed and prepared for planning submission. In our ‘Fair Play’ model, we start engagement in the early stages of layout development. The approach also recognises the need to keep people further away from the development informed about the project as details become more defined.

In order to build better projects, the Developers recognise the imperative of enabling meaningful engagement between the project team and local residents. This engagement has to go beyond mere information provision, and through open, transparent dialogue move towards a more collaborative approach to infrastructure design that is of national interest yet has the potential to have a local impact.

What are the benefits of the “Fair Play” approach?

- Actively engaging in the conversation helps raise awareness and provides insight that can ensure successful project outcomes for everyone.

- Active and open dialogue with our community stakeholders is essential for the success of our projects. It is through two-way dialogue that the Developers can responsibly partner with local communities.
- The Developer is committed to strengthening partnerships with local communities.
- Public support is achieved by actively working with communities towards mutually desirable goals. Meaningful communication with stakeholders creates trust and mutual respect, as well as a shared understanding and vision of what a successful project can look like.
- Timely, proactive, open and honest communication is a cornerstone of our Engagement Charter. This approach helps to minimise possible adverse impacts on our neighbours and instead helps to achieve positive social, economic and environmental outcomes.
- In line with national policy, the Developers are committed to meaningful consultation, which brings about constructive local dialogue, as well as mutual trust and understanding.

3 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES

In order to implement this 'Fair Play' approach, the Developer has resourced this project with a number of dedicated staff from the outset. The following key personnel have been involved in Community Engagement on the Ballinagree Project:

John Lyons and David Eves are the Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) for the project. John and David's role is to ensure project communications are distributed to the local community and act as the main point of contact for the community to discuss any queries or concerns that they might have. John spent 40 years in forestry and worked in Coillte since its formation, leading forest engineering operations. He brings a wealth of knowledge, experience and relationships to the project in his role as Community Liaison Officer. David has over 15 years' planning and environmental management experience within the Irish renewable energy industry, and has been involved with some of the largest wind and solar projects in the country at both planning and construction stages.

Kieran O'Malley is FuturEnergy Ireland's Project Manager for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm development. Kieran brings extensive experience having worked as a civil and environmental engineer for over 24 years including 13 years consenting and developing over 800 MW of renewable energy projects, mostly onshore wind.

Fiona Maxwell is Ørsted Ireland Project Manager for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm. A native of Tipperary, Fiona brings extensive experience in renewable energy development, having been involved at all stages of major energy projects, from initial concept and planning application through to construction and ongoing operation.

Anne Walsh is Coillte's Stakeholder Manager for the Ballinagree Project. Anne has worked on both large and small-scale electricity generation projects throughout Ireland for over 25 years and has been involved in the establishment of a successful community recreation project in Sliabh Bawn, a Coillte-operating wind farm in Co. Roscommon.

Fehily Timoney and Company (FT) is a leading Irish engineering, environmental science and planning consultancy with offices in Cork, Dublin and Carlow. FT leads a multidisciplinary team appointed in January 2020 to carry out studies, design and preparation of the planning application and an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm. FT has wide-ranging experience in all aspects of the feasibility assessment, environmental impact assessment, planning, design and construction of wind farms and other energy-related projects. The practice was established in Cork in 1990 and has around 70 staff, including engineers, scientists, planners and technical support. FT delivers projects in Ireland and internationally in its core competency areas of environment and energy, waste management, civil infrastructure, planning and Geographical Information Systems, and data management.

4 SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CARRIED OUT

John Lyons and David Eves were appointed as the Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) for the project in April 2019. The Developer emphasises a focus on the residents of dwellings within 3km of the site as these are closest and most sensitive to any potential effects caused by the proposed development. The 3km zone was identified by taking the initial developable area layout and applying a 3km buffer. Within this area all dwellings, lived in, vacant and with the potential to be occupied, were mapped. As the design progressed, a “buildable” or more accurate developable area was established. This defined 3km area was used as the basis for continuous engagement with near neighbours.

Initial engagement:

Engagement began in August 2019, when both CLOs worked together calling to all houses within the 3km zone (207 houses) with the first leaflet. This was before any detailed design work.

It was considered important to give out the accurate, up-to-date information in print to each household in a timely manner, within about three days, ensuring all local households received this at the same time. CLOs were on hand to discuss any queries, comments or concerns that residents may have had with regard to the project and to take back queries and concerns to the project managers. These initial conversations and questions highlighted items that helped to inform the second newsletter.

The CLOs also worked on Saturdays and some evenings in an effort to meet residents unavailable during weekdays. The project team made arrangements to talk with some local residents individually at their request and also met with a couple of smaller groups.

A second project newsletter was distributed in December 2019. This contained a map of the ‘developable area’ and information on environmental assessments being undertaken.

A low-call number and project email address were created to aid communications. These were subsequently included in all project leaflets.

Project information and newsletters were issued to the elected representatives in the area and to representatives of local community groups at the same time.

All communications issued contained contact details for members of the project team. Householders were invited to make contact if they had concerns or questions. Any significant issues raised at the doors and all issues raised in correspondence were followed up by the project managers.

Prepared notes were left in the letterboxes in cases where nobody was found to be at home on more than one of the calls, explaining that we had called again. Contact details were provided for the householder to make contact if they wished. Householders were told how they would be kept informed in future, as far as possible, as well as how to contact the project team with any queries.

The project team succeeded in meeting with approx. 95% of households within 3km. The balance of houses were written to with an invite to contact the team if they wished.

A project website was also launched in February 2020 and all materials circulated up to then in the local area were uploaded to this site. The project website also included contact details for any queries.

Next Phase Engagement:

Newsletter 3 issued in June 2020 and was a comprehensive 24-page document. This included information about the site and the proposed development, site layout map and information on the Community Benefit Scheme. It also included information on the planning process, the site design process, information on key aspects of the environmental studies and some of the environmental benefits associated with the proposed project and next steps. The leaflet was posted out to properties within the 3km zone due to Covid-19 restrictions.

A project update letter and questionnaire were delivered to all households in Sept 2020 by the CLOs. This asked residents if they had an interest in online communications. A limited number expressed interest, 7 in all, and provided relevant details. These were then contacted directly by the project manager. This satisfied their demand for information and opened a direct line of communications with the householders which they were happy to continue with.

In December 2020, Newsletter 4 was hand-delivered by the CLOs and included detailed information on the Design Iteration 2 process including an updated 21 turbine layout map.

In April 2021, a project update letter was delivered to all households. Due to Covid 19 restrictions this was carried out by Allhomes, a leaflet distribution service. The letter gave an update on the project timeline and also invited submissions on the draft Government document “Good Practice Principles Handbook for Community Benefit Funds”.

In August 2021, a detailed 24-page project leaflet (Newsletter 5) with final 20 turbine layout map was hand delivered by the CLOs to the vast majority of homes within a wider **5km zone**.

At all stages of the consultation process, individual calls and emails received by the project were responded to either in person, by phone or by email as they arose.

Engagement with local political representatives:

In parallel with the general community engagement, all local councillors and TDs were kept updated and each of the above representatives were given copies of all Newsletters and correspondence that issued to the houses in the 3km and 5km areas as outlined in Table 3.

The Ballinagree Wind Farm site is in the heart of the Cork North West Constituency, represented by 3 sitting TDs. The site is also located within the Macroom Municipal District. This Municipal District is represented by 6 councillors.

In Sept 2020, individual letters were issued to each representative by the Project Manager, providing them with relevant information of interest for them.

In April 2021, an on-line Webinar was held for the Macroom Municipal District as part of their monthly meeting. Five of the six councillors attended as well as some local Council staff, both engineers and administration. The format was a presentation by the project Developers outlining key aspects of the project followed by a questions and answers session.

Online virtual tour and information platform:

Covid-19 restrictions prevented an in-person public consultation event, however an informative online virtual presentation was developed with the assistance of Innovision, a virtual platform specialist. The virtual tour went live in June 2020 and is accessible from the project website homepage, <https://www.innovision.ie/ballinagree>.

The virtual presentation included an introductory video from the Project Managers, Turbine Layout map, detailed information on Archaeology and Cultural Heritage assessments, Ecology Field Surveys, Noise assessment, Photomontages, Aquatic Ecology and all project information issued to date. The virtual tour was updated in August 2021 in advance of the issue of the final design layout.

Advertorials:

Advertorials notifying the public about the recent distribution of the fifth newsletter and the updated virtual tour were placed in the relevant local papers, i.e. the Southern Star, The Corkman and the Lee Valley magazine in early September. The advertorials included key information about the proposed scheme and included the project website where people were invited to go for more information.

Webinar:

As an in-person open event was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions, the project team hosted a Community Information webinar in October 2021. An advert for the webinar, which included contact details and how to register, was published in The Corkman and The Southern Star newspapers and Lee Valley Magazine. Similar information was also included in Local Parish newsletters in Ballinagree and Kilcorney. Information posters were also placed in the Ballinagree Post Office and in local shop windows in Ballinagree Village and Rylane Village, which included details of the webinar and Community Liaison Officer contact details. A hard copy of the webinar presentation was available for anyone who could not attend the webinar, or anyone who wanted a copy of the presentation.

Community Groups:

Table 1 below sets out a list of community groups and organisations generally located or representing areas within 3km of the proposed project. These groups received all the same information as the local householders and there were various contacts and discussions with many of these as queries arose.

Table 2 has a list of groups in the wider area that were included in circulation of the final Newsletter 5.

Table 1 - Local Community Groups within the 3km

Ballinagree Development Company
Aubane Social Club
IRD, Duhallow, CEO + Env Committee
Macroom District Environmental Group
Church, Ballinagree

Ballinagree National School
Macroom and District Trout/Fly Anglers Association
Macroom and District Gun Club
Aghinagh Macra
Aghinagh Comhaltas
Millstreet.ie
Ryane Community Park Development Group
Rylane Gun Club
Rylane Muintir na Tire and Community Alert
Conor Kelleher, Ecologist and bat expert.
Launa Valley Carriage Club

Table 2 - Groups in the Wider Area

Kilcorney Development Group
Kilcorney National School
Rylane National School
LTV Services Ltd, Carriganimma
Bawnmore Play and Learn Playschool
Muinefliuch National School
Millstreet Country Park

A summary of all community engagement is set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Summary of Community Engagement for Ballinagree Wind Farm (2019 to 2021)

Date	Engagement
April 2019	Two Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) were appointed to work part-time on this project.
August 2019	<p>Newsletter 1 was delivered to over 200 properties within 3km by the 2 CLO's working together (see Section 9.1). This involved door knocks, and call backs to houses where nobody was at home. Notes left where direct contact failed, with a phone number for contact purposes.</p> <p>A dedicated project low-call number and email went live.</p>
December 2019	Newsletter 2 was delivered door to door again by the CLOs (see Section 9.1). This included evening and weekend calls to premises where nobody was at home during the day, in an effort to reach out to all.
January & February 2020	<p>A dedicated project website was launched to facilitate communications locally and with the wider public: https://www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie/.</p> <p>This provided information on project design, studies being carried out and expected timelines. It also included the CLOs' contact details, and copies of the two Newsletters issued. Householders were invited to monitor the website for updates.</p>
12 th March 2020	Initial Covid-19 restrictions are put in place nationally.
April 2020	In an effort to get in touch with the small number of remaining houses (c.5%) within the 3km zone where CLOs were unable to make contact, targeted letters were posted to these remaining households (See Section 9.2).
June 2020	<p>Newsletter 3 was delivered by An Post this time due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions on the movements of CLOs. This included a cover letter to explain this (see Section 9.1).</p> <p>Queries were addressed by CLOs and Project Managers and meetings arranged to discuss issues and concerns, subject to compliance with Covid-19 Regulations / Guidance in place at the time.</p> <p>An online virtual presentation was launched adding further to the information available to the public at large – https://www.innovision.ie/ballinagree.</p>
September 2020	A project update letter was issued, with a question to residents asking who would be interested in engaging in online communications due to current Covid-19 restrictions (see Section 9.3). This was hand delivered by CLOs in branded envelopes and contained a stamped addressed

	return envelope for responses. A letter also issued to political reps (see Section 9.4).
December 2020	Newsletter 4 was hand delivered by CLO's to all houses within 3km zone (see Section 9.1).
April 2021	An information update letter was issued along with Community Benefit information to local residents and local Community Groups and political representatives (see Section 9.5).
April 2021	The Developer joined Municipal District Council monthly, meeting to present on the project and answer any questions.
August 2021	The Virtual Tour was updated on the website to provide further information in lieu of project open evening(s) due to Covid-19 restrictions.
August & September 2021	Newsletter 5 was hand delivered by CLO's to most homes within a 5km zone of the project site, roughly 550 houses (see Section 9.1).
2 nd September 2021	An advertorial, " <i>Ballinagree Wind Farm prepares to submit planning application</i> " was published in the Corkman and Southern Star newspapers as well as in the local Lee Valley Magazine in an effort to reach as many as possible in the wider area (see Section 9.6).
30 th September 2021	<p>Public was notified of a Community Webinar scheduled for 7th October. This was advertised in in the Corkman, Southern Star newspapers and the Lee Valley Magazine on 30th September (see Section 9.7).</p> <p>Information posters were also placed in a shop window and the Post Office in Ballinagree village, Shop in Rylane and in Church Newsletters in Ballinagree and Kilcorney.</p> <p>Letters were posted to local Community Groups and political representatives. These included contact details as well as details of how to register.</p>
7 th Oct 2021	<p>The Community Webinar was held at 7pm, followed by a Q+A session.</p> <p>This resulted in follow-up calls/visits with individuals who raised questions (see Section 9.1).</p>

Table 4 sets out the number of occupied dwellings located within 3km of the proposed turbines.

Table 4 – Occupied Dwellings Within 3 km of Proposed Turbines

Distance from Turbines	No. of Dwellings	Cumulative Total
750 - 1000 m	18	18
1000 – 2000 m	123	141
2000 – 3000 m	66	207

A summary of the key issues raised during the course of engagement is set out in Table 5.

Table 5 – Summary of Key Issues Raised During Community Engagement

Topic	Issue Raised
Turbine Noise	<p>Potential effects on residential amenity.</p> <p>Potential effects on health associated with wind farm noise / low frequency noise / infrasound.</p> <p>How will the Developers ensure that the wind farm will not breach noise limits / impact upon residential amenity?</p> <p>How will the project be cumulatively assessed in terms of noise?</p>
Health Concerns	<p>How will the Developers ensure that there will be no health impacts associated with the operation of the wind farm?</p>
Visual Impact	<p>Negative impact on residential amenity - direct views from residents' homes (windows) to turbines.</p> <p>Scale of the turbines is very large.</p> <p>Why is the Ballinagree area being considered in the first place?</p> <p>Why is offshore / tidal not being used instead?</p> <p>Negative impact on Duhallow Way walking route.</p> <p>Will I be able to see what the proposed wind farm will look like from my property in advance of planning being submitted?</p> <p>Enough WFs in the locality already.</p> <p>Concerns over visual impact of red aviation lights at night-time.</p>
Local Concerns & Consultation Process	<p>How do the developers take on local concerns, and are these actually taken into consideration?</p>

	<p>Is this a genuine consultation process?</p> <p>How do the Developers respond to the accusation of community division and infringement on the rights of citizens to enjoy the residential amenity of their own homes?</p>
Archaeology & Local Heritage	<p>Potential negative impact upon St Johns well (Musheramore) and Musheramore Mountain.</p> <p>How will local heritage in the wider area be assessed?</p>
Shadow Flicker	<p>How can the Developers ensure that Shadow Flicker won't occur from the project?</p>
Disruption to Wi-Fi / TV signals	<p>How will the Developers ensure that the project won't impact on signals (Wi-Fi and TV) and how will this be rectified if any disruption occurs?</p>
Access to Wind Farm	<p>How will the Developers limit access to the wind farm once operational, will barriers be installed?</p> <p>Concerns over anti-social behaviour at night time.</p>
Who are the Developers / Landowners?	<p>Who are Ørsted, and why is the project being developed by two companies?</p> <p>Who are the local landowners involved in the project?</p>
How can I get involved in the project?	<p>Queries from local landowners as to how their lands could be utilised as part of the project, i.e. siting of a turbine or to be used as biodiversity enhancement lands.</p>
Construction Traffic and Noise	<p>Potential effects arising from use of local roads during construction – large trucks on narrow roads, how will this be managed and who is liable for any potential road damage?</p> <p>Will there be a liaison officer or point of contact person during construction phase?</p>
Grid Route	<p>Concerns over the grid route passing close to houses, and disruption during the construction phase.</p>
Property	<p>Potential effects of the project on property values in the area.</p> <p>Potential effects on ability to obtain planning permission for dwelling in the future.</p> <p>Will I be compensated for a loss of value to my property as a result of the construction / operation of the wind farm?</p>
Community Benefit Fund	<p>Questions around how the community benefit fund would be structured.</p> <p>Explain why the community benefit fund is needed? Is this just a bribe?</p> <p>How much will the community benefit fund be worth / when will it begin?</p>

Recreation	<p>Will there be a recreation aspect associated with the wind farm such as walking trails?</p> <p>Will there be an area for walking dogs, or a fenced area for dogs only?</p>
Water Quality	<p>Will there be disturbance to local groundwater / aquifers / water quality during construction phase / operational stage?</p> <p>Who will enforce regulations / monitor water quality? Who will be liable should a pollution incident occur?</p>
Ecology	<p>Will there be a negative impact upon local populations of Hen Harrier, Red Grouse and general local ecology and habitats?</p> <p>Negative feeling by some expressed towards Coillte Forestry / Coniferous forestry in the local area as being of no ecological value.</p> <p>Potential effects of turbines on horses.</p>
Bonds	<p>Who guarantees that the turbines will be removed at the end of the project?</p> <p>If the Developer goes bust during the project, who will pay to remove the turbines?</p>

These themes were discussed throughout the engagement process and were answered in a transparent and open manner as far as possible. Ultimately not all themes could be or were addressed to the satisfaction of all, but the project team remains open in trying to find fair and equitable solutions for all, including sharing information sources at our disposal. All of the above themes are also addressed clearly in the EIAR.

It is to be noted that the CLOs were treated with respect in the vast majority of cases, and while some neighbouring households were not pleased with what they were hearing, we were thanked at times for bringing the information to them. The long timeframe for this engagement has allowed people to digest what they were hearing, consult, discuss among themselves and reach out to the project team on any items that they felt needed further clarification.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions on public meetings, where requested further liaison/communication was carried out individually or in small groups outdoors in line with the applicable public health policy in place at the time. This allowed the project team to engage directly with local residents and address their concerns or queries regarding the project design, which was beneficial to all parties.

5 INFLUENCE OF ENGAGEMENT ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE WIND FARM DESIGN

As outlined in Section 4 above, the main concerns of local residents include impacts relating to wind turbine noise, visual impacts, shadow flicker and associated impacts on residential amenity, the structure of the Community Benefit Fund, ecological impacts, impacts on local archaeological features and impacts on telecommunication signals.

5.1 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH NOISE AND VISUAL IMPACTS

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 750m would be maintained between nearest dwellings and turbines. This is more than the current recommended setback of 500m as set out in the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006. The setback of 750m also complies with the Draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2019 which are not, as of the time of writing this report, official policy and may change in the final form. These draft guidelines recommend a minimum setback of 4 times the tip height of proposed turbines to protect residential amenity – this would equate to a minimum setback of 740 m based on proposed tip height of 185 m.

Various configurations and layouts were considered as part of the initial design considerations which included 24 turbine, 19 turbine and 21 turbine arrangements. Based on detailed visual impact assessment undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment, a 20 turbine 179-185 m tip height layout was deemed to be the most suitable and provides a balance between efficient use of the project site area and consideration of visual impacts on the local and wider area. In the case of Ballinagree, designing a project layout that did not encroach onto the higher slopes of the Musheramore mountains was an overriding consideration from early in the design process. This was important feedback taken on board from 2019 community engagement as well as initial assessments from the project's Landscape and Visual consultant. Conversations with local residents ultimately resulted in potential development being removed from the upper slopes of Musheramore.

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 project. In these cases, where the photomontages did not cover a particular cluster of dwellings, informal images were prepared and issued to these residents to help them get a sense of what the project might look like from their location. Furthermore, within the Ballinagree Virtual Community Consultation room an interactive photomontage viewer presented 34 viewpoints where residents could judge the visual impact of the project from these selected locations; <https://innovision.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Ballinagree/Output/index.html>

The 20 turbine layout was subject to a detailed noise impact assessment and it was determined that the proposed layout would 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 where noise monitors were placed at local residences surrounding the project's Study Area.

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. There is no evidence to support increased likelihood of significant health issues associated with noise sensitive medical conditions.

Further details on this can be found in the Noise and Vibration Chapter, Population, Human Health and Material Assets Chapter and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment Chapter of the EIAR.

5.2 IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH SHADOW FLICKER

Concerns were raised directly with the CLOs from numerous households about the potential impact of shadow flicker from the turbines. Shadow flicker was considered as part of the environmental impact assessment process. The proposed layout can conform with the Wind Energy Development Guidelines 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 2019, the project is committed to elimination of shadow flicker through the daily management of turbine operations.

Further details on this can be found in the Shadow Flicker Chapter of the EIAR.

5.3 IMPACTS ON PROPERTY

Concerns were raised about potential impacts on property values surrounding the site area, both to the CLOs and the project team. There are a number of wide-ranging international studies that consider potential effects of wind farms on nearby property values. Based on our review of available 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 all the 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.

Our community liaison team has explored the appetite for recreation facilities along with other local projects, which helps to increase community gain benefits. This is evident on other wind farm projects such as Mount Lucas Wind Farm, Sliabh Bawn Wind Farm and Galway Wind Park among others.

The Developers are committed to developing a Community Benefit Fund proposal, including a Near Neighbour Scheme, along with the potential for a Recreational Amenity Trails and Biodiversity Enhancement Areas to co-exist within the proposed development. The project team welcomes any input from members of the local community to help advance these proposals.

Impact on property values is discussed in further detail in the assessment of Population, Human Health and Material Assets Chapter of the EIAR.

5.4 COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Concerns were raised with the CLOs regarding the structure and administration of any proposed Community Benefit Fund. The Ballinagree Community Benefit Fund will be designed and established based on RESS Community Benefit Fund Good Practice Principles as published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communication in July 2021. RESS (Renewable Electricity Support Scheme) is a policy initiative to deliver on the Government's Climate Action Plan and 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.

The scheme mandates all RESS projects to establish a Community Benefit Fund worth €2 per MWh (megawatt hour) of generated electricity for any future wind farm. Therefore, the project owners are required to contribute €2 per MWh annually into a community fund for the RESS contract period i.e. the first 15 years of operation. Further to this, the Developer commits to continue contributing to the Community Benefit Fund for the remaining duration of the project operation at a rate of at least €1 per MWh. The total fund per annum will depend on the final power output of a successful project.

The Ballinagree Wind Farm, if constructed as proposed, has the potential to produce more than 300,000 MWh of clean electricity a year. This means that the project could provide more than €600,000 per annum to the Community Benefit Fund, depending on the size of the permitted scheme and the wind resource which varies from year to year, for the first 15 years of its operational life.

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 kilometre 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 kilometre, but within a distance of 2 kilometres from such RESS 1 Project.

The Developer remains fully committed to facilitating an equivalent annual Community Benefit Fund if the project does not enter into or qualify under a future RESS process.

How the fund works

The Government’s ‘Good Practice Principles for Community Benefit Funds’ 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 at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/5f12f-community-projects-and-benefit-funds-ress/>

It is envisaged that, 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 Ballinagree 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.

5.5 IMPACTS ON LOCAL ECOLOGY

Concerns were raised about potential impacts on local ecology and habitats in the site area, both to the CLOs and the project team. 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 initial layout design. More detailed surveys were undertaken following from the preliminary infrastructure layout designs and some amendments were made to the layout to avoid sensitive areas. 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.

Significant ecological enhancements will also be provided throughout the wind farm site as set out in the Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan which includes over 300 hectares of improvement lands. Local community interests will be encouraged to contribute to a range of biodiversity initiatives which it is hoped will enhance the area, such as broadleaf planting in suitable areas, and these initiatives, with appropriate signage and access, can be used as an educational resource.

Further details on this can be found in the Biodiversity Chapter of the EIAR.

5.6 IMPACTS ON ARCHAEOLOGY

Concerns were raised at the beginning of the consultation process about potential impacts on local archaeological features. As is evident from OSI mapping, the Ballinagree area and the wider Macroom and Millstreet areas are rich in archaeology, and information on local traditions associated with the lands in the environs of the proposed wind farm was sought from the local community to include as part of the archaeological assessments. There are significant archaeological features in the South East of the project's study area, and careful assessment of turbine locations by the project archaeologist has taken place to ensure sensitivity to features and to maintain each monuments lines of visual alignment. The layout was also discussed with the Cork County Archaeologist,

Further details on this can be found in the Archaeological, Architectural and Cultural Heritage Chapter of the EIAR.

5.7 IMPACTS ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Concerns were raised directly with the CLOs about the potential impact on Wi-Fi / Television signals at certain properties which have a line of sight to transmitter towers. The Ballinagree project is being designed with all existing radio, internet and television receptions in mind and all telecommunications providers were consulted on the proposed layout. All telecommunications links in the area were avoided by design. The Developer commits to rectifying any issues with signal reception at individual dwellings if the need arises. This is uncommon with the new digital transmission format but the solutions are relatively simple and straightforward.

Further details on this can be found in the Telecommunication and Aviation Chapter of the EIAR.

6 POTENTIAL ENDURING BENEFITS OF THIS PROJECT

Ballinagree Wind Farm has the potential to bring significant positive benefit to the local community. The project will create sustainable local employment, contribute to local authority annual rates provide a local community benefit fund in line with the new Renewable Energy Support Scheme. The fund will remain in place for the duration of the project's RESS period providing direct funding to those areas surrounding the project.

6.1 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 the Renewable Energy Support Scheme, and its terms and conditions which have been published by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. The second is the updated Wind Energy Guidelines which have yet to be released. Both sets of policies specify Government requirements on future community benefit funds for renewable energy projects. The project partners confirm that these important policies will be fully adopted and integrated in our design and establishment of the Ballinagree 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. Further to this, the Developer commits to continue contributing to the Community Benefit Fund for the remaining duration of the project operation at a rate of at least €1 per MWh. If this project is constructed as currently designed, we estimate that a total of approximately 15 million euro will be available in the local area for community funding over the operational period of the project. The above figure is 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.

6.2 COMMUNITY INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

What is meant by Community Investment?

The proposed Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS) sets out that future renewable energy project proposals enable the possibility for local communities to invest in projects in a meaningful way as a means to directly gain from the financial dividends that a project can provide should it be consented, built and operated. In response to this, Coillte have been working hard with external agencies to develop workable models of Community Investment. At the time of writing, the details of a Community Investment Scheme continue to be worked through by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. We look forward to its publication in due course and promoting this innovative offering to the community.

6.3 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It is estimated that the proposed project will create over 120 jobs during the construction phase and over 35 jobs will be supported during the operational phase although the number of local jobs during operation stage will be low. During construction, additional employment will be created in the region through the supply of services and materials to the development. In addition to this, there will also be income generated by local employment from the purchase of local services i.e. travel and lodgings.

6.4 RECREATION

It is proposed to use the wind farm access tracks and existing forestry and farm tracks and paths as recreational amenity trails for community use. This includes the installation of associated signage and information boards, and the repurposing of the proposed temporary construction compound as a permanent trail-head car park and picnic area including landscaping.

7 ONGOING LIAISON AND CONTACT

A number of different phases have been detailed below with differing levels of engagement anticipated depending on the levels of project activity. Underpinning all of the engagement below will be a dedicated Community Liaison Officer for the project 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 project progresses, regular updates will be posted to this website.

Post Planning submission until 6 months pre-construction

During this period (12 -24 months) a number of key community related activities will continue to be progressed. The first is a participatory design process for the Ballinagree Community Benefit Fund (CBF). Approximately 6 months after the project has been submitted into the planning system the team will start a process of reaching out, initially to residents within the 3km zone and then slightly further afield, in order to bring together a small group of people who are interested in working on the design and structure of a community-based entity that would ultimately run this Community Benefit Fund. At the point at which the project receives a positive planning outcome this process will then start with a scoping exercise followed by a series of facilitated workshops. It is hoped that representatives involved in existing local development initiatives will be stakeholders in this process and will therefore contribute to this strategy.

The second piece of work is to explore the potential for Community Investment in the project as outlined in the new Renewable Energy Support Scheme (RESS). This will probably follow on from the CBF work stream and is predicated by the release of clear guidance on this from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications.

Pre- Construction and Construction phase

Six months prior to the commencement of construction on the project we will initiate the set-up of a liaison group. The project will meet with this group on a monthly basis to prepare for the construction phase and monitor activities during construction. This group will develop plans on communicating effectively with residents directly impacted by construction activities and deliveries, especially traffic planning to minimise disruption.

The project will also engage with local suppliers prior to the construction phase in order to outline the project's 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 continue with a proposed annual meeting with the liaison group to update the group on project performance and address any issues identified. The Community Liaison Officer will also be available throughout this period to directly address any issues raised by local residents. As stated above, the project website will also be maintained as a method of providing regular, up-to-date information on the project. There will be regular updates on performance of the community benefit fund and regular calls for proposals for funding.

Decommissioning Phase

A year prior to the commencement of decommissioning of the project, the project team will engage with the established liaison group as well as all residents within the 3km zone to outline the decommissioning plan and address any issues identified at that time.

8 CONCLUSION

As outlined throughout this Community Report, there has been engagement on the project throughout the planning design phase to date. We fully recognise, however, that the development of a proposed wind farm is a long and complex process and that there is ample time to jointly develop our community offerings with our near neighbours and other stakeholders, and we will be progressing these after the planning adjudication and decision phases should the project receive planning consent.

9 PROJECT LITERATURE

9.1 NEWSLETTERS AND WEBINAR

All of the newsletters and brochures and webinar information are accessible from the Latest News section of the project website at:

<https://www.ballinagrewindfarm.ie/>

9.2 APRIL 2020 TARGETED LETTER



Ballinagree
Wind farm



Brookfield

Coillte Office
Hartnetts Cross
Macroon
Co. Cork
P12 XA50
14/04/2020

XXXXXX,
XXXXXX,
Macroon,
Co. Cork,
XXXXXX.

Dear Householder,

We, Coillte Renewable Energy and Brookfield Renewables, hope this correspondence finds you well. As communicated through previous community engagements in your area, we are currently looking at developing a wind resource in the locality. Please find enclosed our recent project information newsletter for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm project which outlines further information.

We have been engaging in conversations and listening to everyone's opinions and ideas in the locality via door to door house calls since mid 2019. We have already met some of your neighbour's, but haven't called yet at the right time to meet you. We have previously called to your home on the 08.08.2019, 23.11.2019, 05.12.2019, 01.02.2020, 06.02.2020 and the 07.03.2020.

Once travel restrictions laid down to curtail the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic are lifted, we will endeavour to continue our face to face engagements and if there is a time that would suit you best, we would appreciate if you could email or call us on the below contact details and we will arrange a visit.

In the meantime please visit the projects website at www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie for further project information and updates.

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards

John, David, Edwina and Michael,
Ballinagree Wind Farm Project Team,
1890 928740

ballinagreewindfarm@coillte.ie



9.3 SEPTEMBER 2020 UPDATE LETTER

Dear Homeowner,

September 2020

We hope that this note finds you and your family safe and well as we all continue to adjust to this new ‘normal’.

The 3rd Newsletter for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm project was posted to households within c.3 km of the project’s Study Area in June 2020. Our preference would have been to deliver and discuss the information within the 3rd Newsletter with you in person. Unfortunately, due to the restrictions in place, this was not possible.

The recent restrictions have also had an impact on project timelines. The submission of a planning application for the proposed Ballinagree Windfarm Project is now scheduled for June 2021. The milestone dates for Design Iteration 2 and Design Iteration 3 are also affected and these are now planned for October 2020 and February 2021, respectively.

Over recent weeks, we have been able to meet with some local individuals outdoors after they had contacted the Project Team to request further information on areas of the project’s design. Please contact the Project Team if this is something you would like to arrange for yourself.

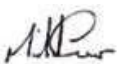
As a result of the continued restrictions on larger group meetings, we are proposing a new communications initiative; a regular online community collaboration meeting, where project design would be discussed and where you could engage in conversation with and ask questions of the Project Team. If this is of interest, please complete the short survey enclosed and post it back to us in the stamped addressed enveloped also enclosed by the 28/09/2020. We will contact you to discuss further thereafter.

We understand that online engagement is not always ideal and may not suit everyone. Therefore, you can also share your thoughts and comments with us by completing Section 2 of the survey enclosed and returning it in the stamped address envelope also enclosed. Once received, we will respond to your comments as soon as possible.

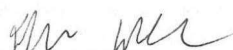
Please visit the Ballinagree Wind Farm project website, www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie, in order to view up to date information on aspects of the project’s design including Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Ecology Field Studies, Noise Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment and Aquatic Ecology.

Please make contact with the Project Team if there are any areas of the project’s ongoing design you wish to discuss further. The Project Team can be contacted by phone on 1890928740 or by sending an email to ballinagreewindfarm@coillte.ie.

Yours sincerely,



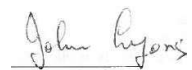
Michael O'Connor



Edwina White



David Eves



John Lyons



Proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm Project - Community Consultation

I am interested in participating in a regular online community collaboration meeting for the above mentioned project and hereby provide details for this purpose in Section 1 below.

SECTION 1

Name	
Address / Eircode	
Phone number	
Email Address	
Other	

What time would suit you best to participate in the proposed project meetings?

Between	Please tick <input type="checkbox"/>	Additional Comments?
10:00 to 12:00		
16:00 to 18:00		
18:00 to 20:00		
Other		

SECTION 2

I am not interested in participating in a regular online community collaboration meeting, but I would like the opportunity to comment on the project or the Community Engagement carried out to date.

Please Insert Comments Below

The data controller for this information is Coillte - For further details as to how your information will be stored and used by Coillte and your data protection rights, please see our Privacy Policy on www.coillte.ie/privacy-policy. The personal details provided by you on this form will be stored by Coillte for the duration of the above mentioned project. There is no obligation on you to provide your consent, and you can withdraw your consent at any time by contacting our Community Liaison Officer on 1890 928740 or ballinagreewindfarm@coillte.ie.

9.4 SEPTEMBER 2020 UPDATE LETTER TO POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES

Coillte Office
Hartnetts Cross
Macroom
Co. Cork
P12 XA50
22/09/2020

Councillor XXXXX
XXXXXX,
Macroom
Co. Cork

Dear Councillor XXXXXX

I hope this note finds you and your family well. As a follow on from our last correspondence in June 2020, please find enclosed for your information a circular recently hand delivered to over 200 homes within c.3 km of the Study Area for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm project.

As our face to face community engagements have had to be curtailed for a while this recent circular is intended to invite further community collaboration and feedback, to explore the potential for a regular online meeting between interested locals and the Project Team , and to update local residents on the current project timelines.

The submission of a planning application for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm Project is now scheduled for June 2021. The milestone dates for Design Iteration 2 and Design Iteration 3 are also affected by recent work and travel restrictions and these are now planned for October 2020 and February 2021, respectively.

Please find below some relevant messaging in relation to the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm project which may be of interest:

- There are 16 landowners, including Coillte, actively involved in the proposed project;
- All lands remain property of the landowner at all times and are leased to the developer, Coillte Renewable Energy and Brookfield Renewables for the duration of the proposed project;
- Set back distances from all nearest dwelling houses are greater than 750m
- Current design parameters indicate that the proposed project could have a capacity of approx. 95MW consisting of approx. 19 individual wind turbines;

- At its current scale, the proposed project could generate enough electricity to power approx. 57,000 homes¹
- Coillte Renewable Energy and Brookfield Renewables are fully committed to facilitating an annual Community Benefit Fund in line with current Government policy and the final power output of the proposed project and believe that it should be governed and belong to the local community.
- At its current scale, once operational, the proposed project would contribute annual rates to Cork County Council in the range of €800,000 – €900,000² – an important future contributor to exchequer funding.
- The current scale of this proposed project means that it is considered Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID) and so the planning application will be assessed by An Bord Pleanála.
- The project will propose a Recreation and Biodiversity Enhancement Plan to help increase the habitat and amenity value of the ‘open forest policy’ in the local area;
- The National Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2019 has set a 70% target for renewable energy production by 2030. To meet this target, the amount of electricity generated from renewables will have to be doubled on current figures;
- The SEAI ‘Energy in Ireland - 2019 Report’ states that wind energy in 2018 provided 28% of Ireland’s electricity, avoided 3.15 million tonnes of CO₂ and cut Ireland’s fossil fuel import bill by €432 million.

Please visit the Ballinagree Wind Farm project website, www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie, for up to date information on aspects of the project’s design including Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Ecology Field Studies, Noise Assessment, Landscape and Visual Assessment and Aquatic Ecology.

As ever, please make contact with us for more information or updates by phoning or emailing myself on the details below. Also you can contact us through the projects Community Liaison Officers (CLOs), John Lyons and David Eves, on 1890928740 or by sending an email to ballinagreewindfarm@coillte.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Michael O’Connor, Edwina White, John Lyons and David Eves

The Ballinagree Wind Farm Team

¹ www.iwea.ie – 600 homes per MW

² www.CorkCOCO.ie - €9000 per average MW installed in County

9.5 APRIL 2021 UPDATE LETTER



Brookfield

April 2021

Dear Homeowner,

First and foremost, we hope this finds you safe and well in these challenging times, and adjusting as best as possible to new ways of going about daily life. Covid19 restrictions have impacted various aspects of the proposed project, affecting the way we communicate, as well as causing some delays to the project's design work.

Our most recent newsletter (Newsletter 4) was issued in December 2020. This outlined the project timeline from the commencement of studies in 2017 to date, with a proposed Planning Application expected in Summer 2021. This is still the expectation.

A final Newsletter will issue in a few weeks' time, providing a detailed overview of all aspects of the project design as well as summary information on studies carried out. This will include a map of the final site layout, (number and location of turbines), and updates on work carried out in the areas of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, Ecology, Noise Assessment, and Landscape and Visual Assessment as well as the many potential benefits of the project.

In a few weeks' time also, the www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie web site will be updated with relevant information, including some short videos and a series of questions and answers. This web site was set up to facilitate communications, not only locally, but any interested parties further afield who are not in receipt of the newsletters that are circulated to all householders in the c3Km local area.

The months following the issue of this next newsletter, prior to the submission of an application, i.e. April-July, provides an opportunity for you to discuss specific queries on any aspects of this proposal with members of the project team. During this period also, communications will take place in the press etc to reach a wider audience.

Community Benefit Fund update: the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications has just published a Good Practice Principles Handbook for Community Benefit Funds (CBF) and this is currently open for consultation¹. You are invited, as a member of the public or community groups to send in comments on any aspect of this draft document so that this will be a very fair and inclusive process. Closing date for submissions is **5.30pm 24 May 2021**.

Please feel free to make contact with the Project Team anytime if there are any areas of this project that you wish to discuss further by sending an email to ballinagreewindfarm@coillte.ie or using the other contacts listed on the web site.

Yours sincerely,
Project Team.

Kieran O'Malley, Project Manager, Coillte
Fiona Maxwell, Project Manager, Brookfield
and
Community Liaison Officers, John Lyons, David Eves.

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/consultation/995be-public-consultation-on-good-practice-principles-for-community-benefit-funds-under-the-renewable-electricity-support-scheme/>

9.6 PROJECT ADVERTORIAL

Ballinagree Wind Farm prepares to submit planning application

This is a "code red for humanity", warned UN Secretary-General António Guterres after the recent IPCC report revealed the frightening reality of global warming.

The evidence is clear: devastating storms, severe flooding, punishing droughts and scorching heatwaves have wreaked havoc around the world in recent months. Climate change can no longer be ignored.

To help tackle global warming, the Government's Climate Action Plan commits the country to generating 70% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, which requires an additional 4,000MW of onshore wind to be developed. Coillte Renewable Energy and Ørsted's intent is to contribute to Ireland's ambitious renewable energy goals with their co-development project, Ballinagree Wind Farm in Co. Cork.

Coillte, the state-owned forestry business, and Danish renewables company Ørsted, which recently acquired Brookfield's Irish operations, will submit a planning application for the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm to An Bord Pleanála in late October. The submission comprises 20 wind turbines with a proposed overall blade tip height of up to 185 metres to be constructed on Coillte land and that of local landowners.

This planning application comes after an extensive community engagement programme. Over the past two years, the Ballinagree project team has actively looked for input and feedback from local communities and representatives.

Our aim is to develop a wind farm that benefits the local community as well as the country as a whole. We want Ballinagree to be a well-designed wind farm that marks us as industry leaders in terms of community engagement, project management, construction and operations. Ballinagree Wind Farm has the potential to contribute significantly to reducing Ireland's carbon outputs by generating more than 300MWh (megawatt hours) of clean, green electricity every year.

Ballinagree's dedicated Community Liaison Officers recently distributed the fifth brochure containing a wealth of updated information while the second virtual community consultation is available at ballinagreewindfarm.ie. Webinars will follow in late September to provide an opportunity to meet the team and ask specific questions within Covid guidelines.

If the planning application is successful and the project enters the construction phase, a substantial

Community Benefit Fund will be available. This consists of a Near Neighbour Fund and a wider community fund that provides direct local project funding.

Based on the Government's Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS), if the project is approved and constructed as proposed, Ballinagree Wind Farm could contribute more than €600,000 per annum to the Community Benefit Fund for the



first 15 years (based on RESS mandated amount of €2/MWh). The developers also commit to more than €300,000 a year in funds for the remainder of its operational life (based on a contribution of €1/MWh).

Participation in the RESS scheme obliges developers to establish a Community Benefit Fund where communities are placed at the heart of the decision-making process. Full details on the recently published 'Good Practice Handbook for RESS Community Benefit Funds' can be found at www.gov.ie.

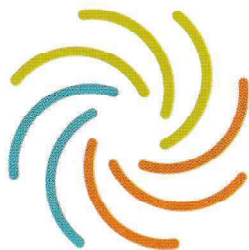
There are other benefits on a local level, including landowner payments and local authority rate contributions, as well as local services required mainly during the construction stage. The wind farm site itself would also have access tracks and

existing forestry paths upgraded to recreational amenity trails for community use. This includes the installation of signs and information boards, a car park and picnic area.

There's the bigger picture, too. This project could deliver sufficient electricity to power the equivalent of more than 70,000 homes, improving Ireland's energy security while avoiding approximately 110,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions every year.

When An Bord Pleanála has received the submission, the full planning application, complete with all relevant submitted documentation and diagrams, will be available at ballinagreeplanning.ie.

For more, see ballinagreewindfarm.ie



Ballinagree Wind farm

Advertorial

9.7 WEBINAR ADVERT



Ballinagree Wind farm

COMMUNITY WEBINAR

Thursday October 7th 2021 at 7pm

You are invited to attend an information webinar on the proposed Ballinagree Wind Farm in Co Cork, a co-development between Coillte Renewable Energy and Ørsted. This is an opportunity to meet the team and ask any questions you might have about the project.

Please email ballinagreewindfarm@coillte.ie before midday on **Wednesday October 6th** to receive registration details. If you cannot attend, please email or call our Community Liaison Officer on **1890 928740** and we can send you the presentation and arrange a one-to-one meeting with the project manager if so desired.

For more information on the project visit
www.ballinagreewindfarm.ie