

# Knockshanvo Wind Farm

Newsletter 2  
Spring 2023



## Introduction

FuturEnergy Ireland is exploring the potential for a renewable energy project at Knockshanvo, approximately 3km south of Broadford and 4km northeast of Sixmilebridge in Co. Clare.

Since we issued our introductory newsletter in winter 2022, our Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) have been listening to feedback and finding answers to your questions. We have posted a list of Frequently Asked Questions onto the project website [www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie](http://www.knockshanvowindfarm.ie) under the Fact File section.

If you would like to discuss these in more detail or prefer a hard copy, please contact our CLOs whose details are at the back of this newsletter. We look forward to hearing from you.

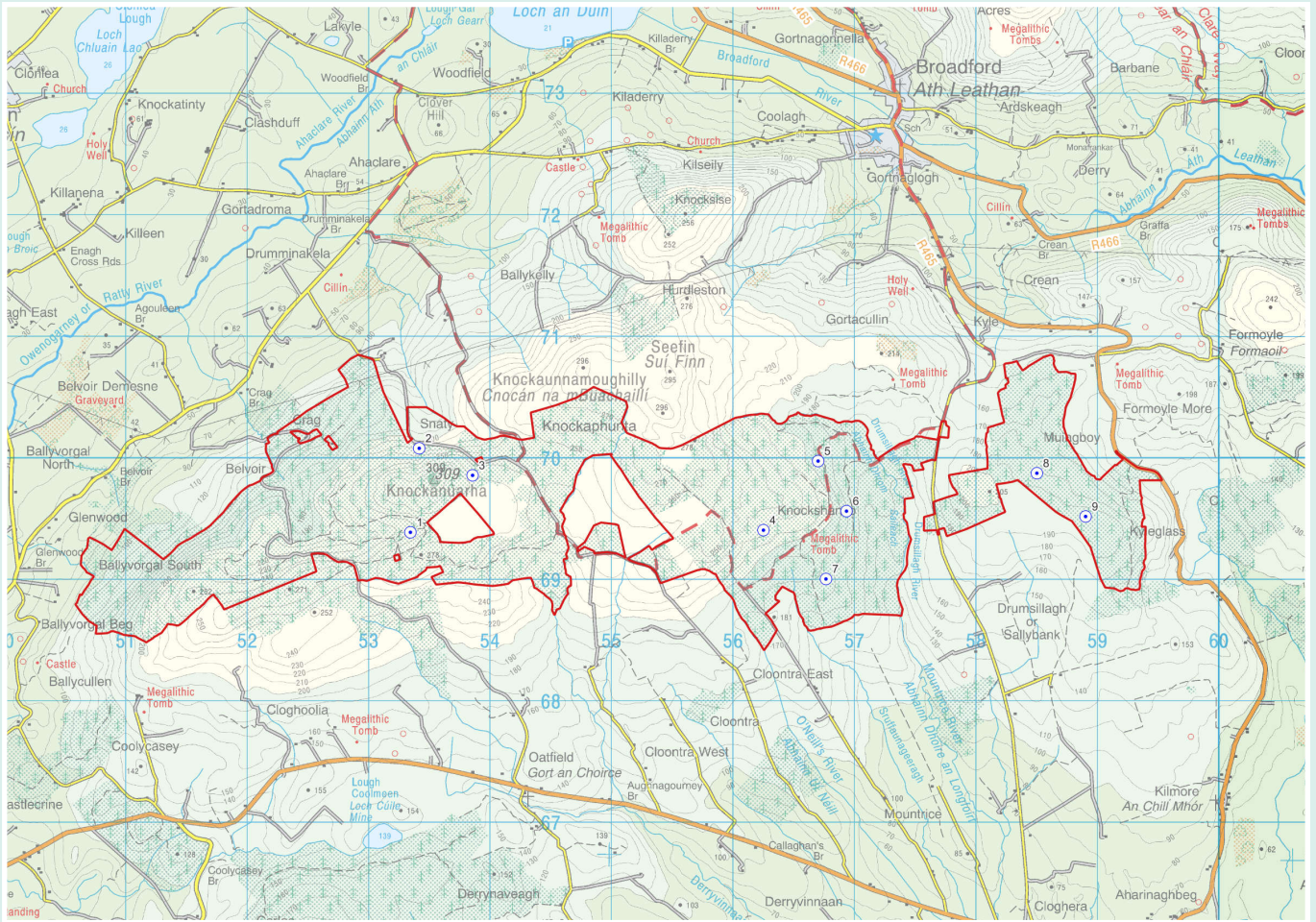
## Initial Turbine Layout

Guided by a desk-based review and available information, the first draft layout (left), 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 CO2 emissions per annum, which would have otherwise been created by the generation of electricity from fossil fuels.

Further detailed environmental studies, including field studies, are now underway as set out in this newsletter. The project team will issue a second draft layout once sufficient progress has been made with these studies.

The location and alignment of site infrastructure, such as site roads, crane hardstands and the substation, will be developed following the completion of the second draft layout. This final layout will reflect the iterative design process and include any changes required following completion of all site surveys, investigations and analysis. It will also incorporate community and general stakeholder feedback where possible. The final layout will form the basis of the planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).





**Draft design layout:** Map illustrating the site boundary and preliminary turbine layout

## Environmental Surveys and Studies

The environment is extremely important to us. Thorough studies and surveys in and around the site are essential to design a wind farm that respects the surrounding environment. The following field studies are underway and progressing well.

### Biodiversity

Ecological site walkover surveys were carried out in July, August and September 2021 followed by further surveys in September 2022. Site surveys to date have consisted of bat, aquatic, non-volant mammal and habitat surveys. A summary of habitats on site have been mapped using both desktop mapping studies and the site walkovers.

Habitat mapping followed best practice guidance and the presence or signs of birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles were noted.

The vast majority of the site comprises coniferous forestry plantation, which has been targeted for the siting of proposed turbines and access roads.

Intact areas of peatland have been avoided and will be further investigated for potential ecological and biodiversity improvements as part of the proposed development.

The proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm will be designed to avoid ecologically sensitive areas. Further habitat survey and condition assessments will be completed to inform the project design.

**Ornithology**

It is recommended to conduct bird surveys for two full breeding seasons on potential wind farm sites. Ornithological surveys started in April 2018 and are ongoing. Preliminary data from these early-stage surveys informed our decision to proceed with the preparation of a planning application at this site.

Vantage point surveys and hen harrier roost surveys continue on site. When the ornithological consultants have gathered all the data over the survey period, it will be used to assess what impact, if any, the proposed wind farm is likely to have on the bird population.

**Hydrology & Water Quality**

The proposed Knockshanvo site lies within two Water Framework Directive catchments: the Shannon Estuary North catchment and the Lower Shannon catchment.

Desktop constraints studies have been carried out along with an initial hydrological/hydrogeological constraints identification site walkover. Hydrological-related investigations will continue across the proposed site.

**Geology and Soils**

The geology of the proposed development site comprises peat and silty clay. Site surveys have been undertaken including peat depth probing, peat shear strength testing, identifying of areas with low/medium/high risk of peat instability, logging of trial pit and borehole investigations and identification of borrow pit locations.

These findings together with the detailed assessments, will inform the final layout design and ensure that our approach to peat stability is fully compliant with best practice.

**Noise**

When considering a wind farm development, the potential noise and vibration effects on the surroundings must be considered for each of two distinct stages: the short-term construction phase and the longer-term operational phases.

The existing noise environment will be surveyed at locations representative of the nearest noise sensitive properties and typical background noise levels for day and night periods at various wind speeds. This baseline noise monitoring

assessment is currently underway and will confirm the existing noise environment prior to development.

**Archaeology & Cultural Heritage**

Cultural Heritage includes archaeology, architectural heritage and any other tangible assets. This assessment is based on desktop GIS mapping and information from other mapping technologies together with a detailed site walkover survey.

**Telecommunications, mobile and television**

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) scoping and consultation exercise, the project team contacted the relevant broadcasters, telephone operators, aviation authorities and other relevant consultees.

Consultation was also carried out with ComReg to identify other licensed operators in the vicinity to be contacted. This has informed the wind farm layout, which has been designed to avoid impacts on telecommunications.

**Traffic and Transport**

The traffic and transport section of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) will assess the effects on traffic and transport during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the proposed development.

**Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping and Consultation**

An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping is underway. This assessment will identify all the factors that need to be considered in the EIAR submitted with a planning application.

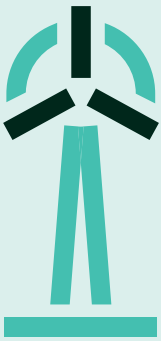
More than 50 organisations are being consulted including Clare County Council and the Environmental Protection Agency. The project team will continue to engage with consultees throughout the EIA and design process.



## The planning application

If a wind farm is expected to have a capacity greater than 50MW, An Bord Pleanála must be consulted to determine whether the project is a Strategic Infrastructure Development (SID). The project team will meet with An Bord Pleanála in the coming months and will continue to engage following the development of further design versions of Knockshanvo Wind Farm.

If the project is classified as SID, an application for planning permission is expected to be submitted directly to An Bord Pleanála.



## The benefits of wind energy

Onshore wind developments bring local, national, and global benefits.

The proposed Knockshanvo Wind Farm would:

- Deliver clean, green renewable electricity
- Lower Ireland's carbon footprint
- Contribute towards Government climate targets
- Improve our nation's energy independence
- Build our economic security
- Provide a substantial local Community Benefit Fund
- Make significant local rates contributions
- Support Ireland's growing energy needs
- Strengthen our green economy

## Estimated timeline

Sometimes, for reasons beyond our control, timelines may change. If this should happen, we commit to keeping the community informed through letter-drops and via the project website.

**The project's Community Liaison Officers will be available throughout all stages to discuss any queries or concerns.**

### Summer 2023

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- Newsletter 3 with progress updates on environmental studies and surveys, information on the potential Community Benefit Fund and an updated turbine layout design.
- Baseline noise monitoring commences.
- Installation of an 80-metre meteorological mast.
- Landscape and Visual assessments begin.
- Community engagement continues with CLOs Christy and Kevin calling to houses in the locality.
- Information webinar with a Q&A session for the local community.

### Autumn 2023

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- Detailed project brochure and virtual exhibition with all project information including updates from study reports, photomontages and a final turbine layout map.
- Local community engagement clinics.

### Winter 2023

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- Planning application target: December 2023.



## Contact Us

We welcome your comments and feedback on any aspect of this project. Furthermore, please call or email if you would like to be added to our mailing list.

### Community Liaison Officers

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