

To whom it concerns in Offaly County Council Forward Planning Department RE:MA443 & MA436 I am asking for Leamonaghan Bog and its surrounds to be removed from Area 5 as an area open to consideration to wind energy. It is very important that our heritage is not forgotten and that as many as possible of the County Offaly structures which played a part in our history are preserved. I am part of the local History group and we are in the process of recording as much history of this area, as possible.

- The ruins of the castle at Castlearmstrong which dates back to the 16th century. The development being considered comes very close to the castle and would unsettle the remaining structure.
- In the centre of this bog, there is a little island, or 'derry', called Derravane. This is the ancestral home of my grandmother. The house is still standing, albeit in poor condition. It was used as a Field Hospital (Safe House) during the Black & Tan era. My family have documented evidence of this and it has been published in a book called "They Put The Flag a Flyin". This activity is also recorded in Offaly Historical Society's Journal, Volume 9. Some well-known volunteers were nursed back to health in this house. My family take regular walks across the bog to visit the ruins of the house and we have also taken visitors who came in search of family history. The peace and quiet and naturalness is amazing. The only sound on this bog island is that of the birds singing in the many trees, which is an ideal habitat for wildlife.
- The monastic site at Leamonaghan is the subject of many articles, books, TV programmes and internet sites. There is an old road across the bog from Leamonaghan to Boher Church, this would be destroyed if the development goes ahead. Indeed, the Annals of the Four Masters mention the five roads leading from Dublin, in different directions around the country. (see extract below): The Great Roads of Ireland. The first routes used by travellers in Ireland were prehistoric pathways which usually followed the natural landscape and crossed rivers at fords. Research suggests that the earliest routes were developed in the Neolithic period 2500 BC. A network of wooden trackways dating to that period was found at Ederloon, near Ballymahon, Longford during excavations and in the 19th Century a Bronze Age 2000 BC trackway was found at Ballykillen, Edenderry. It should be remembered that those routes were not as we know the roads of today. They were pathways which followed the line of least resistance avoiding wet areas and steep inclines and could change according to the weather conditions.

1. The five roads branch out from Dublin, with the Slighe Midiuachra travelling towards Slane, to Dundalk and on through Armagh to Antrim.
2. The Slighe Assail travelled towards Lough Owel, Westmeath and on to Roscommon.
3. The Slighe Mhor joined the Eiscir Riada near Clonard, Meath and followed the Eiscir Riada through

Durrow and Clara. It crossed the River Brosna at a Ford to the rear of Ballycumber House and travelled on the Back Road towards Boher [Bothar] to a Resting House in Killaghantubber. Travellers then made their way through the Cooldorrogha Hills to another Resting House in Doon before proceeding to cross the River Shannon near Clonmacnoise. The route continued through Roscommon and Galway to Galway City. 4. The Slighe Dala ran through Ossory, Kilkenny and Tipperary to Tarbert, Limerick 5. The Slighe Cualann ran from Dublin through the South East to Waterford. In May this year, the Irish Times described the former cross-country trail, known as the Slí Mór, from Ballycumber to Clonmacnoise as a mini Camino, and is ideal for country cycling and meandering. A wonderful article entitled 'Tracing the Past at Leamonaghan Bog' was written by Conor McDermott, in the book 'Bogmen Be Proud' some years ago. The Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit identified the importance of this bog, in that book. The Irish Archaeological Consultancy Cultural Heritage Assessment Report 2018, gives a detailed list of monuments and sites on Leamonaghan Bog and its surrounds. There seems to be a contradiction in the Offaly County Development Plan 2021-2027, as page 11 states that areas shown in orange on the map are 'Landscape Sensitivity Areas' and have not been included in Areas Open for Consideration for Developments. While the map on page 23 states the same area is Open for Consideration for Wind Energy. As peat harvesting has stopped now, it may be time to relook at marking the route from Leamonaghan to Boher, this was done many years ago but the posts were knocked over by bog machinery, so now may be a good time. It was because of the Pilgrim Path to Boher that the whole Leamonaghan Conservation plan commenced. We can see from very old maps that there was always a bog at Leamonaghan. Indeed, a map dated 1620, describes Leamonaghan bog as arable and pasturable. There is an abundance of wildlife in our bog. There is nothing nicer to go for a walk in a quiet place and hear only the sounds of nature. I think this is lovely as the naturalness of the bog provides the ideal habitat for wildlife. We need to prevent habitat destruction by preserving this natural resource at Leamonaghan bog so that our animals and plants can survive. Tons and tons of cement foundations will be detrimental to wildlife and plant life. We live in a lovely country community. The plants and flowers are abundant on the bog and in the woodlands. Leamonaghan Bog and surrounding areas is a very tranquil place. We would not like to see years of heritage destroyed. More than ever, this past year because of the pandemic, we saw much more people walk the bogs as they were adhering to the 5K limit. Local people have admitted that they didn't realise the beauty on their doorstep. County Offaly does not have a coastline, beaches or the seaside to offer

tourists. What it does have is beautiful scenery, history, tranquility, wildlife, country walks and cycles. I would like to see Leamonaghan Bog being used as a nature trail and tourist attraction. This part of our community is very special to us locals. Ideally, I would like to see Area 5 removed from the Offaly County Development Plan. There must be an alternative to a wind farm, something that will not destroy the landscape, wildlife, culture, heritage and archaeology of this area. Please reconsider your plans for a windfarm at this location. Thank you for giving the public the opportunity to make submissions on this issue.