

25 AUG 2021

PLANNING DEPT.

# WEST WICKLOW WIND ACTION GROUP

**The following is a submission (WWWAG) from West Wicklow Wind Action Group to the Draft Wicklow County Development Plan 2021-2027.**

West Wicklow Wind action group (WWWAG) are a community group primarily organised in order to protect the unique upland landscape of Kilranelagh hill, a central part of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex.

The following documents have previously been submitted as formal objections to an industrial windfarm planning application to Wicklow County Council, planning file ref: 2160. The main purpose of the submission of these documents is to highlight the unique archaeological integrity of the entire Baltinglass Hillfort Complex, and also to ensure that Wicklow County Council take seriously its responsibilities to protect this unique landscape in the current draft development plan 2021 – 2027. These documents are from leading Archaeologists and state bodies supporting the protection of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex.

West Wicklow Wind Action Group (WWWAG) have noted that to date the Draft Wicklow County Development Plan has no formal proposals that would substantively have the effect of giving the proper protection to the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex. This is extremely disappointing as most elected council representatives are fully aware of the national and international archaeological landscape importance of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex. It is long past time for this unique archaeological landscape to have landscape protections. These protections are critical in order to stop any further potential industrial development such as the recent industrial

windfarm planning application by ABO Wind Ireland to WCC Planning File Ref: 2160.

The time has now come for Wicklow County Council to realise the full importance of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex. The diminishing of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex integrity by method of tokenism funding to investigate the importance of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex is no longer acceptable. The various mentions of the landscape importance of the Baltinglass Hills in the previous CDP are clearly not enough to stop inappropriate industrial planning applications. The importance of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex is already nationally and internationally recognised, the recent allocation of 2k to investigate the importance of the Hillfort Complex can only be perceived as totally inadequate and no longer a valid response to the requirement for proper landscape protective actions.

Leading Archaeologists have written extensively and published articles on the importance of the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex. Wicklow County Council now need to secure funding for an extensive archaeological dig with a view towards the Baltinglass Hillfort Complex becoming a centre of excellence in the educational sector. The Baltinglass Hillfort Complex could be regarded as an educational resource for the entire country with huge tourism development potential to follow. We would like to request that Wicklow County Council should appoint a qualified archaeological officer. The need for this has been made apparent from planning file ref: 2160 as no comment or intervention was forthcoming from the Wicklow County Council's Heritage Officer. This highlighted the fact that the expertise of a qualified archaeological officer is required in Wicklow County Council.

Save Wicklow's Ancient East group (SWAE) have during the past year submitted a comprehensive tourism vision plan. This plan was submitted to both Wicklow County Council Heritage Office and the

Glendalough Master Plan administration, and to date Save Wicklow's Ancient East have received no formal response or correspondence. In our view the Glendalough master plan is an excessive waste of public funds-for example the Glendalough Master Plan has as it's brief to explore the necessity to spread and manage the excessive tourism pressure on the Glendalough Valley a brief that appears to be totally ignored by both the present Draft County Development Plan and the Glendalough Master Plan. If anything this highlights the need for Wicklow County Council to take seriously its obligations to manage and protect the unique upland landscapes of County Wicklow.

We trust that you will consider our submission and finally protect this most unique of Landscapes which has the potential to become an UNESCO World Heritage Site that is indeed unique to Wicklow.

Sincerely,

Chairperson: David Case

