

Laura Crawford

From: Nodlaig Ní Bh
Sent: 25 August 2026 14:40
To: Planning
Cc: Save Benbradagh; Ciaran O'Hare
Subject: Brishey Planning Application URGENT LR***
Attachments: Brishey Lr 25 August 2026.pdf

A Chara,
please find attached in respect of the above.

Kindly acknowledge receipt of same.

Is mise,
Nodlaig
Save Benbradagh

Brishey Wind Farm Application
Ref: LA01/2023/0008/F

25 Lúnasa 2026 | August 2026

A Chara,

Benbradagh is an iconic mountain that dominates the Northwest of Ireland. It stands as a sentinel of history, legend and natural beauty. Rising majestically above the town of Dungiven, it is central to our sense of place and important to our cultural identity.

- The immense cultural value, connection with landscape and sense of belonging has not been considered or appropriately assessed.
- The pathways on Benbradagh constitute legal permanent entities that have been created by long, undisputed use. A list of documentary evidence has been submitted to the Council as part of the Investigation process.
- The vital issue of public access and the status of the pathways over the mountain has not been determined. There has been no consultation with the community, no due process, transparency or accountability.
- All pertinent information has not been provided to the community as part of the planning application process, particularly in respect of public access.
- There has been no free, informed or prior consent given by our community because of misinformation and lack of information in respect of public access.

Access over well-worn walkways over the mountain have been openly used by the public for decades and the walkways are actively promoted by State and non-state agencies. These walkways are vital to the tourism architecture of Dungiven and the Sperrins AONB. The pathways are public right of ways by deemed dedication and are permanent legal entities, created by undisputed long use. The Council may have failed in its duty to assert and record the pathways however, that does not alter the legal status of the pathways.

The mountain is first recorded in the Annals of the Four Masters which refers to the mountain as “Binn Fhada Rí Chiannachta” which translates as ‘the long peak of the Kind of Ciannacht’. This is informative in respect of the topography and the genealogy of the indigenous people. The mountain connected the communities of Dungiven and Glenullin by foot and later, by road for carriages and a tarmacked road since the 1960’s.

The mountain also marks historic injustices such as the forcible displacement of all families from Currach Leathan (Curraghlane) in the early 1800’s by Robert Ogilby of Pellipar as recorded in the Ordinance Survey Memoirs.

The Gaelic language is embedded in both the ecology and culture of the mountain. The site of the development at ‘Briseadh’ signifies the place of a local battle and the placename appears as the name of a classroom in Gaelscoil Neachtain from which the townland can be seen. ‘Currach Leathan’ means the broad moor. Benbradagh has been incorporated into the local school curriculum – its stories, legends, biodiversity and as a place to visit and explore. Students from the secondary education sector in Dungiven and Limavady utilise the mountain for the Duke of Edinburgh and Pope John Paul II

schemes. The local camogie team trains on the mountain and the hurlers hold their 'Poc Fada' competitions across the summit.

Our elderly citizens remember a bonfire was light on VE Day to mark the end of World War II. The US Base and bunker offers a fascinating insight into the Cold War era and are places of interest for locals and tourists. When the base closed in 1977 the Chief Engineer of the US Base wrote a piece for the Benbradagh magazine in which he recorded how he spent many hours walking across Benbradagh mountain over 4 years,

"The mountain's sheer peak and its panoramic view of the surrounding mountains with its patch quilt like countryside have never failed to awe me. Sunset from the western face of Benbradagh is a soul stirring experience...The view from the top is a gift that I will carry with me forever".

"The Yankee at Benbradagh" is a novel by author Laura Jennings published in December 2024. It is set in the time of the Cold War depicts the impact of the US base on the local community and the life of a young woman who lives on the side of Benbradagh and her relationship with a US Naval officer.

Liam Begley, a retired and much respected teacher from the area wrote recently,

"A wind farm imposed on our people in a location that could completely destroy the mystique, the indescribable beauty, the allure and the sacred symbolism of the iconic mountain that is Benbradagh, which ranges over Dungiven and its surrounding districts."

For our people, walking the mountain and experiencing the 360 panoramic views is a spiritual experience. The pilgrimage to the peak, the serenity and peace is a haven enjoyed for time immemorial. It is valued by the community and groups such as S.T.E.P.s as an important place for mental health and well-being. Our emigrants make the journey to the summit on their return to the area with children and grandchildren.

Dinnseanchas - the sense of cultural connection and belonging to a landscape - should be a material planning consideration (Considered by PAC in Doraville Wind Farm Decision) Infrastructure Minister, Nichola Mallon planning permission for the Doraville Wind Farm.

Dinnseachas means "lore of places" and is a class of onomastic text in early Irish literature, recounting the origins of placenames and traditions concerning events and characters associated with the places in question. Since many of the legends being related also concern the acts of mythic and legendary figures, the Dinnseachas has been an important source for the study of Irish mythology.

The conservation of sacred natural sites in Ireland plays a paramount role in both biodiversity conservation and cultural preservation. These sites hold immense ecological value and are regarded as cultural treasures by local communities. To ensure their long-term preservation, it is imperative to implement sustainable management practices that prioritize the protection of biodiversity and cultural heritage.

The cumulative visual impact of the wind farm would markedly detract from the sense of remoteness, ambience, evocation of the past, removal from the modern world, cultural identity and spiritual response. Cultural importance in the local context and that it is valued by the local community for its historic significance.

The lore of the mountain is extremely rich with a vast array of songs, poems and legends down through the ages. The most prominent legend relates to Finvola the Gem of the Roe as on her death, the cry of Gráinne Rua was heard from Benbradagh. Indeed, many of the descendants of the Ó Catháin still hear her cries on the death of a loved one today. The bed of Gráinne and Diarmuid is located on the upper slopes of the mountain and a holy well. Shane Crossagh, the highwayman had his den on the mountain where he stored his treasures.

The mountain has inspired poets, musicians and artists over many generations and continues to capture the imagination. An album published by world renowned singer, Cara Dillon was entitled “Hill of Thieves”, its title track which pays tribute to the scenic beauty of the mountain and the many legends associated with it. Benbradagh has a central place in our traditional music and story-telling tradition.

Songs:

- An Bheann Fhada (collected in the Benedy by John O’Donovan in 1834)
- The Flower of Sweet Benbradagh Hill
- The Winding River Roe
- The Gem of the Roe
- The Banks of the Roe
- The Benedy Glen
- Dungiven
- Hill of Thieves

Poems:

- Benbradagh Prince of Hills by Packie Kealey
- The Windings of the Roe by John James McVeigh

The loss of Benbradagh as a public amenity would be incalculable and nothing could compensate the community for its loss. Our families are rooted in this place and can trace their lineage back to the pre-plantation, Gaelic era. As the indigenous community in this post-conflict society, we have a right to self-determination and the authorities must ensure that there is free, informed and prior consent to this planning application. It should be noted that the U.K. government supports the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Our community should have been informed and consulted in respect of public access to the mountain. For the first time in our history, we are being told by Causeway Coast and Glens Council that there is no public access beyond the Curragh Road to Benbradagh. There has been no engagement with the community and no transparency in respect of any decision that has been made in this regard. The Council has not moved to protect public access or replace the wayfaring signage that has been removed from an international route that is deemed to be a “key project” for the Sperrins Partnership.

The public right of ways, designated walkways and public access must be determined before a decision is taken in respect of the Brishey Wind Farm.

Nodlaig Ní Bhrollaigh

On behalf of Save Benbradagh