

Laura Crawford

From: Save Benbradagh
Sent: 26 August 2026 09:34
To: Planning
Subject: FOR URGENT ATTENTION OF SHANE MATHERS_Re. Planning Application LA01/2023/0008/F- Brishey windfarm
Attachments: 26.08.26_Save Benbradagh Group_Objection_Brishey windfarm.pdf; WalkNI map_Benbradagh.pdf; IAT_Dungiven to Castlerock Section 1_WalkNI map.pdf; AllTrails_Screenshot.png; iwea-guidance-ice-throw.pdf; Evishagaran hazards signage.JPG; Map-01_Benbradagh_Public Pathways.pdf

Hi,

Can you please ensure Shane Mather receives this email prior to this morning's Planning Committee meeting at 10.30am.

Thank you.

Catriona McReynolds
on behalf of Save Benbradagh

Re. Planning Application LA01/2023/0008/F

Timelines

We would highlight that it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure submission of full, complete, up-to-date and compliant planning application assessments that stand up to scrutiny – not the local community. This information should be before the public, the planning department and the planning committee to allow for scrutiny and comment, prior to a decision being made.

A robust Environmental Impact Assessment is essential to demonstrate that impacts have been properly identified, assessed, and lawfully balanced.

With regards to timelines associated with this application we would highlight the following:

- The application was submitted in January 2023.
- The applicant was afforded the opportunity to submit a revised scheme on 19th December 2023 and continued to submit ES Addendums in this regard until October 2024. This information was subject to a second round of statutory consultations.
- They submitted further drawings mid-September 2025, after which the application was listed before the planning committee at the end of September 2025. The committee made the decision to defer the application until they had viewed the site.
- The application was listed again before the planning committee in November 2025, but was again deferred after the Environmental Statement and Addendums were found to be deficient and incomplete by a committee member following the committee site visit on 24th November 2025. (Note at this point the applicant had nearly 3 years, of their own accord, to ensure that the Environmental Statement they had submitted was robust but failed to do so).
- The applicant submitted further environmental information posted on portal 16 April 2026 – “Environmental Statement (“ES”) Addendum V” and Addendum Planning, Design and Access Statement.

It is very clear from the above that delays to this planning application over the past 3+ years are as a result of changes to the scheme made by the applicant and their submission of an incomplete Environmental Impact Assessment. Claims in the applicant’s solicitor’s letter of 25 August 2026 that delays are attributable to the local community are not substantiated.

SPPS Edition2 December 2025 paragraph 6.224 states:

“Engaging communities is an essential part of the planning system and community representations are a material planning consideration for planning authorities in plan-making and decision-taking”.

The public are entitled to participate and make comment throughout the full duration of a planning application; this participation cannot be curtailed, undermined or “stymied” by applicants.

The right for public participation in an environmental planning application affecting our surroundings is also protected under the Aarhus convention.

If the application documentation submitted was robust members of the public would not need to make comment. Unfortunately this continues not to be the case and we make further comment as below:-

Walks/ pathways/ Public Rights of Way (PROW)

The applicant cannot claim surprise at the map attached to the Speaking Rights template – it is a reflection of various routes and maps readily available on WalkNI, Appalachian/ Ulster Way and AllTrails websites/ apps, demonstrating pathways already used by members of our community and further afield. These routes should have informed the applicant’s impact assessment. It is notable the applicant chose not to furnish the information they refer to in their solicitor’s letter of 25 August.

Benbradagh is a much used recreational and amenity area with a network of paths established by longtime use. The wider community are in the process of submitting evidence for the assertion of various routes they use, many will undoubtedly have done so already. The very high attendance at the PROW clinic held in Dungiven library last Saturday reflects the degree of usage of the mountain routes and the importance of the mountain to locals, visitors and sporting groups, and their concern regarding proposals. The community and wider public had no reason to suspect that the on-the-ground status and use of the pathways and public routes would not be accurately reflected in planning application documents.

It is noted that there is also considerable conflicting information regarding these pathways between the Planning Report Addendum 4 and information submitted by the applicant. Eg. Addendum 4 details that the Ulster Way is *“in proximity”* to the site, and that *“It is accepted that due to the inherent design characteristics of wind farms and for health and safety that there will be no requirement for access for members of the public or those with disabilities onto the site”*, whilst the application documents detail assessment of the Ulster Way route which runs directly through the site.

The application cannot be determined where there is such conflicting information, confusion and lack of clarity before the public and committee regarding the status of the pathways.

SPPS Edition 2 Paragraph 6.223 notably adds “tourism and recreation” to the list of planning considerations that must be assessed prior to the determination of an application. These together with “public safety” and “public access to the countryside” must be considered with regards to pathways.

Ice-throw

The guidance referenced in Planning Report Addendum 4 is not backed-up by industry guidance, nor on-the-ground evidence in existing local windfarms.

The Irish Wind Energy Association (IWEA) – Guidance Note on Ice Throw (2017) (attached) details that personnel approaching an operating turbine in icy conditions should:

“Stop approximately 300 meters from any turbine in operation or $1.5 \times (\text{hub height} + \text{rotor diameter})$ ”

Evishagaran and Craiggore windfarms, both of which became operational at the end of December 2021, have signage on site warning of the risk of falling ice, despite ice-throw being assessed as being a non-issue in their associated planning application documents and decision. (We attach a photo of Evishagaran signage).

This information is substantially different and entails greater safety margins than for example safe-fall distances (height to tip + 10%) and thus there needs to be an assessment of health and safety implications of the proposed development and impacts on path networks and including the American base site.

Noise

SPPS Edition2 December 2025 paragraph 6.234 details that:

“ETSU-R-97 ... along with ‘A Good Practice Guide to the Application of ETSU-R-97 for the Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise’ prepared by the Institute of Acoustics (58 - or any future update to this UK standard and/or guidance) ...should be taken into account by decision-takers”.

On 19 June 2026 the UK Government published the “Assessment and Rating of Wind Turbine Noise Guidance”, officially replacing the 1996 ETSU-R-97 framework.

A re-assessment of the proposed development needs to be submitted in accordance with this new guidance. The statutory consultee, Causeway Coast and Glens Environmental Health, must assess the revised submission and make comment, and proposed planning conditions must be amended accordingly.

The full extent of this submission and response needs to be placed on the portal and made available for public scrutiny and comment.

AONB Management Plan

SPPS Edition2 December 2025 paragraph 6.188 states:

“In assessing proposals, including cumulative impacts in such areas, account will also be taken of the Landscape Character Assessments and any other relevant guidance including AONB Management Plans and local design guides”...

The last submission made by the applicant, available on the planning portal, is dated 16 April 2026.

On 25 June 2026 the first Sperrin Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2026–2036 and accompanying Action Plan 2026–2031 was launched.

The applicant has not taken account of this management plan in the assessment of the application.

Emissions calculations

The figures claimed are tokenistic and not backed up with robust data and methodology to meaningfully support and demonstrate claims as to contributions to carbon budgets/ NI emissions accounts.

The calculations, essentially informing the EIA, should for example include provision for standby back-up plant (necessary due to the intermittent nature of wind generation), and also emissions associated with supporting infrastructure such as the grid connection (refer to Raeshaw Farms Limited v Scottish Ministers [2026] CSIH 10).

Full carbon emission calculations are submitted with renewable energy applications in other jurisdictions; it is difficult to envisage reasons as to why they would not be necessary here (in NI).

Decommissioning bonds:

There are a multitude of single turbines and windfarms in the Roe Valley area. The Council has not considered or made provision to ensure the protection of communities and borough rates payers from risk of potential developer insolvency by requiring inflation-linked financial bond to be put in place to ensure future decommissioning. Provision is made for this in other jurisdictions. The council has and is exposing themselves and their constituents to unacceptable monetary and environmental risk.

Landscape and visual impacts:

SPPS Edition 2 Paragraph 6.233 details new considerations regarding landscape and visual effects of renewable energy developments that the applicant has failed to address:

- a) "... the level to which the proposed development will become a significant or dominant characteristic of the landscape"
- b) "For large scale developments, developers should seek to avoid areas close to key vantage points from roads, viewpoints, and settlements"
- c) .."The cumulative impact will increase, for example, as the number of wind turbines and/or solar farms in an area increases" ...

The latter essentially means that the cumulative impact needs to be assessed against the original landscape character ie. pre-wind turbine, rather than a constantly moving baseline that changes with each approved windfarm/ turbine application. The applicant has not assessed the application on this basis.

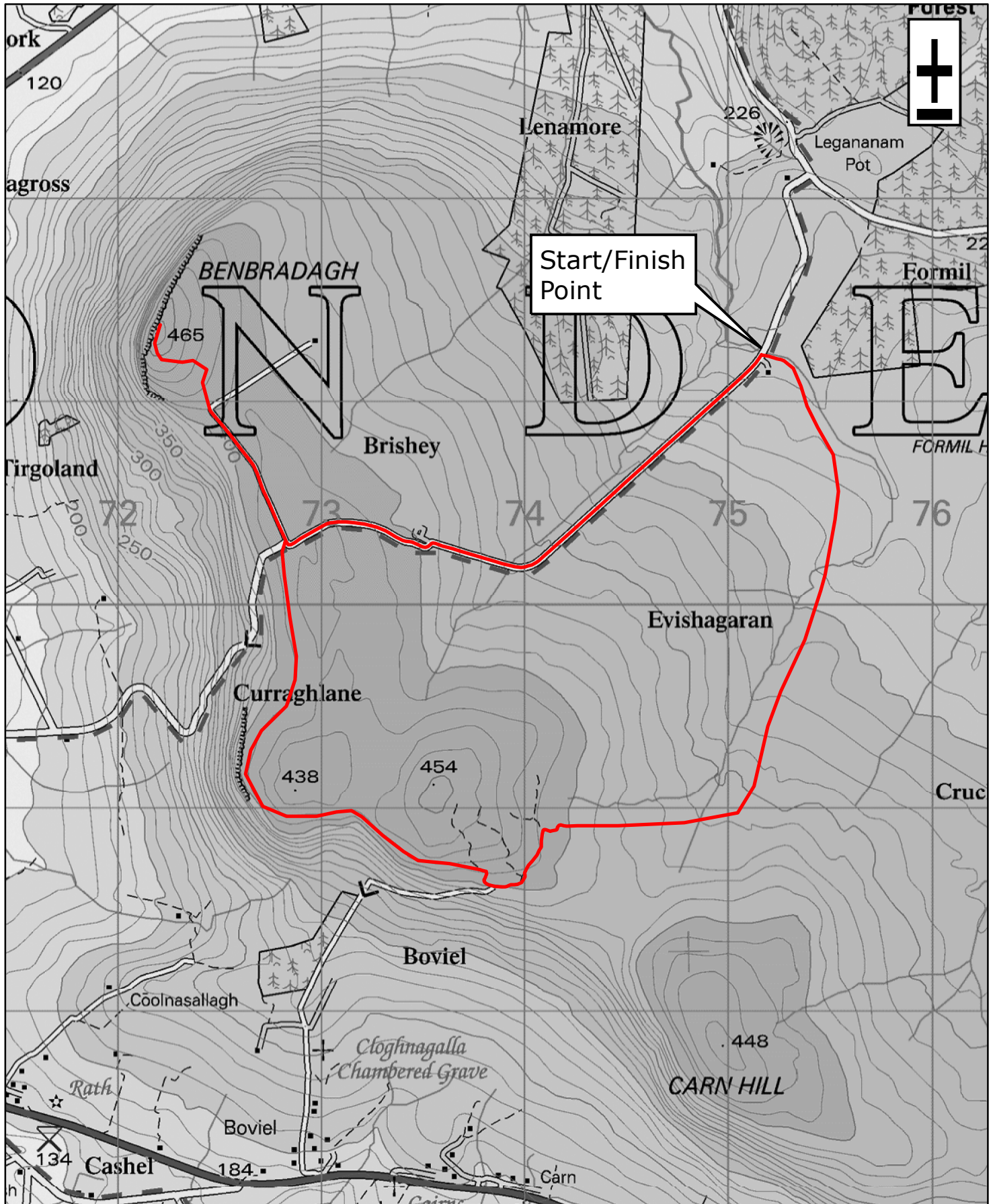
It does not appear that the applicant has considered the recently approved solar farm in the Roe Valley, in their assessment.

26.08.26

Catriona McReynolds

For Save Benbradagh Group.

Benbradagh



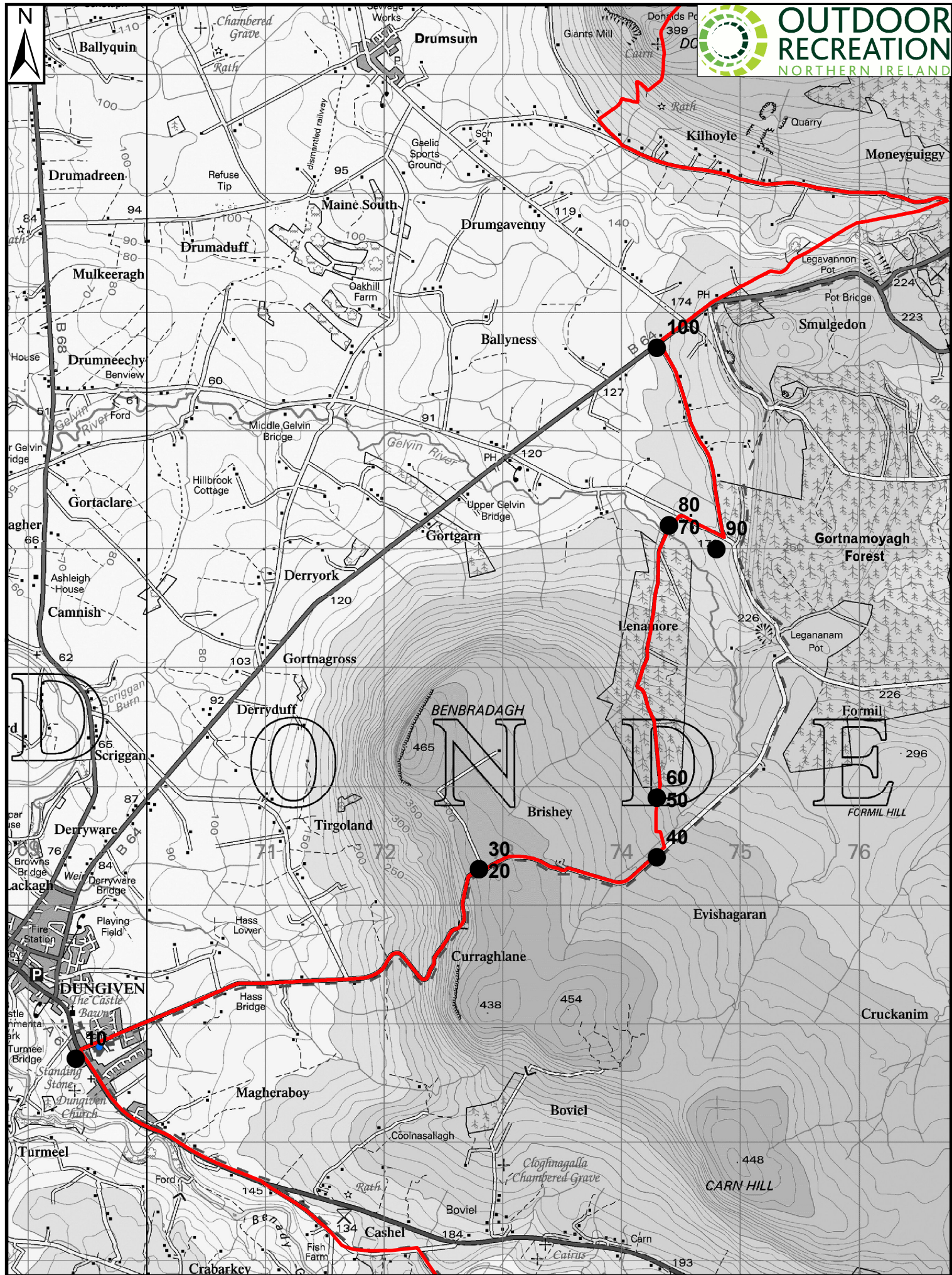
1:25,000



WalkNI.com
Your definitive guide to walking
in Northern Ireland

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

This material is Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land and Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, © Crown copyright and database rights NIMA ESA&LA205.2



This material is based upon Crown Copyright and is reproduced with the permission of Land & Property Services under delegated authority from the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, Crown Copyright and database rights.

Dungiven to Castlerock Section 1

1:40,000

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

Guidance Note on Ice Throw

An incident on a windfarm in Scotland highlighted a hazardous Ice Throw event.

Operational Guidance

Access to turbines by site personnel should be restricted if ice is present. If turbines must be approached, they should be safely shut down remotely, the rotor should be yawed to opposite side of tower door, parking should be at least 100m from turbine, PPE should be worn, and the turbine should be restarted remotely once work has been completed.

Checklist

	Check	Yes	No
1	Has snow, freezing rain or freezing fog occurred during the last 24 hours?		
2	Has the temperature at any stage dropped below 37°F/3°C during precipitation? *		
3	Is ice/compacted snow visible on any part of the turbine? (use binoculars)		
4	Has any ice or compacted snow fallen off the turbine in the last 24 hours?		
5	Is there ice or compacted snow formations present in the vicinity of turbine?		
6	Is the current temperature between -2 and +2 degrees Celsius (28°F and 34°F)?		
If NO to all of the above questions, proceed with work as usual			
If YES to any question above, do not approach the turbine unless steps highlighted in the Toolbox Talk below have been completed			

*The definition of precipitation is any form of water – liquid or solid – falling from the sky. It includes rain, sleet, snow, hail and drizzle plus a few less common occurrences such as ice pellets, diamond dust and freezing rain.

Toolbox Talk - Primary Inspection of Turbine for Ice/Snow

1. Stop approximately 300 meters from any turbine in operation or $1.5 \times (\text{hub height} + \text{rotor diameter})$
2. Observe turbine and surrounding area from a distance (specifically for signs of ice on the ground, blade inconsistencies and/or ice hanging from the nacelle)
3. If ice is detected, refrain from approaching the turbine and inform your supervisor of the conditions
4. Proceed with ice stability checks and mitigation
5. If no falling ice is observed, proceed to a distance of 90 meters away
6. Repeat the ice stability observation
7. Any ice on blades, on top of the nacelle or along tower sections may prove difficult to see
8. Please note that ice condition/stability can change rapidly due to temperature rise or change in wind direction making it possible for ice to begin shedding
9. The main danger is when the turbine is yawing or when it starts rotating



If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

IWEA Health & Safety Committee – Windfarm Operations

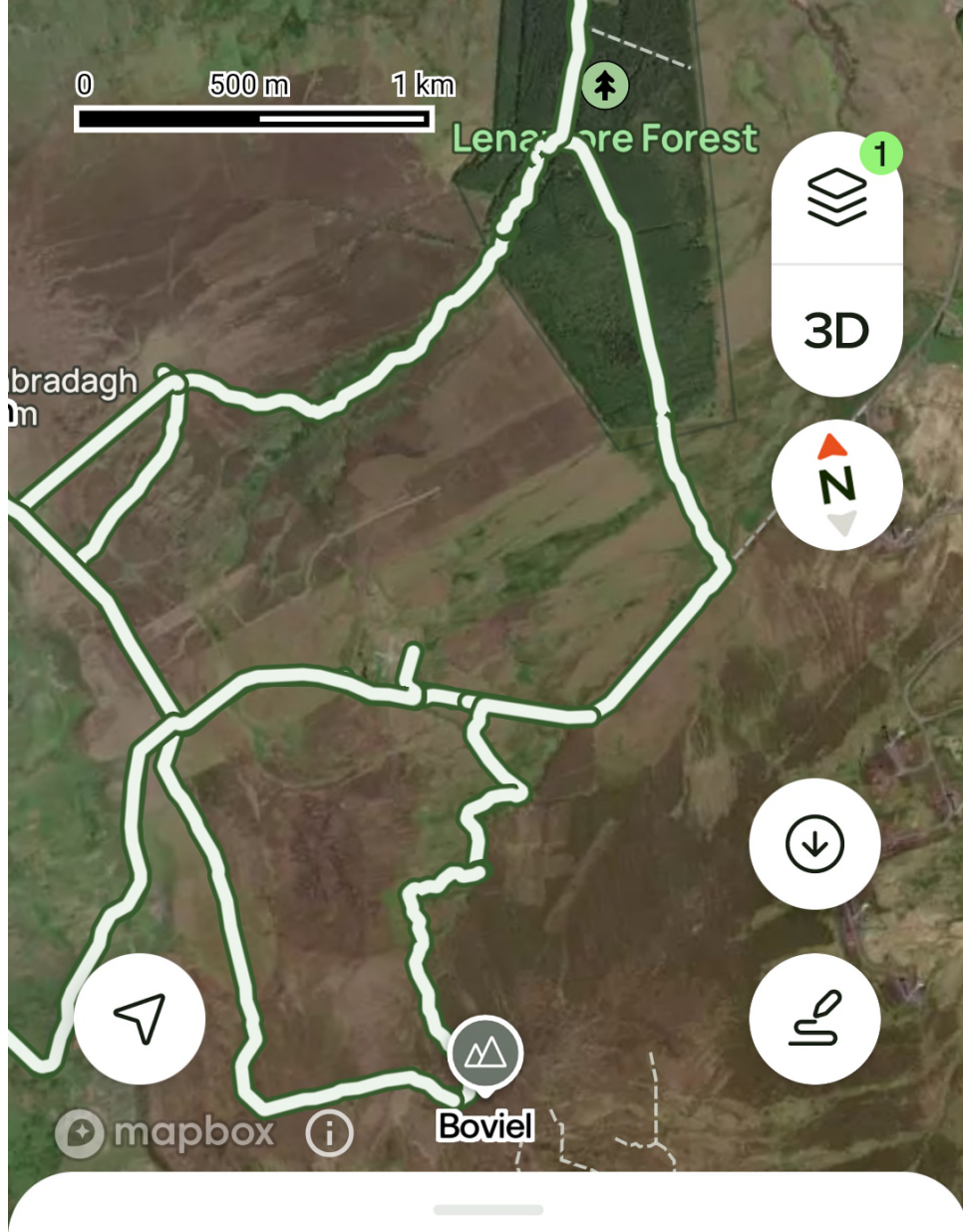
Irish Wind Energy Association

Sycamore House
Millennium Park
Osberstown
Naas
Co. Kildare

Tel: +353 (0)45 899341
Fax: +353 (0)45 854958
Email:
Web: www.iwea.com

This confidential communication issued by the Irish Wind Energy Association is intended for the addressee or his/her authorised servant or agent only. The sender accepts no responsibility for unauthorised copying or processing of this transmission by any third party and disclaims any liability for any loss or damage arising as a result. Unauthorised recipients are requested to contact the sender immediately and to destroy this message.

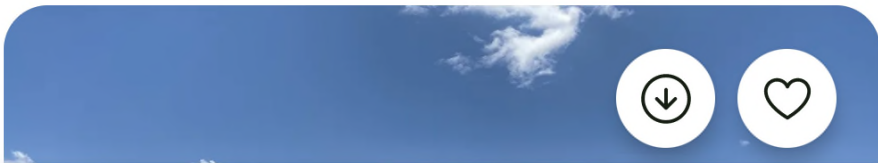
Copyright © 2017 IWEA, All rights reserved.



Q Benbradagh X

☰ Difficulty ▾ Length ▾ Elevator

2 trails Most Popular ▾



🔍 Explore 📄 For you 🗺️ Navigate ❤️ Saved ↗️ Activity

**All personnel must book
to visit site via the Natural Power
Control Room - 0345 200**



**Beware of ice
falling from blades
in cold weather**



**Beware of
electric shock**



**Beware of
tripping hazard**



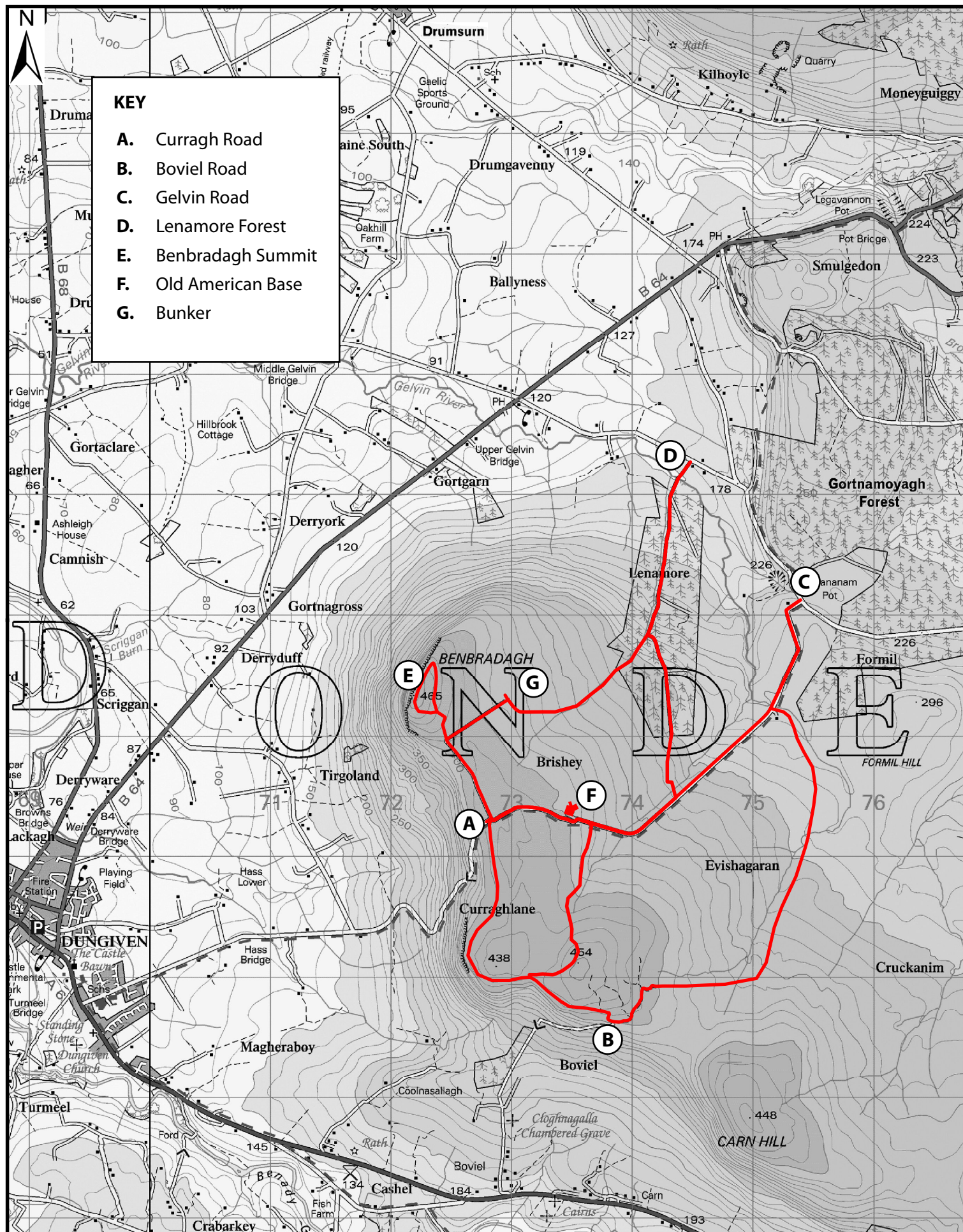
**Do not approach
turbines in high
adverse weather**



**Hazard lights
must be on
whilst driving**



**Protective footwear
must be worn**



Map 01. Benbradagh Mountain Public Pathways

Scale: 1 : 40,000 (@ A4) See also scalebar	Rev: *	Date: 20.08.2026
Revision:		Date:
Revision:		Date: