Questions about consultation, noise and decommissioning

7 October 2026 – 16 October 2026

A resident asked Blackthorn about consultation, local assessments and funding to remove the plant. On 16 October, Blackthorn said it did not intend to answer his follow-up requests individually.

Names, contact details, the resident's address and housing-estate names are removed. Identifying email headers, repeated quoted text and standard footers are omitted. Original wording and typos are preserved. This copy contains eight emails through 16 October 2026; attachments listed in the original export are not reproduced or assessed here.

What the resident asked

After Blackthorn's first reply, the resident asked for specific answers and records:

- What had residents' feedback changed in the proposal, and what records showed this?
- Had Lackagh National School, Lackagh parish and Claregalway GAA been contacted before the application was submitted?
- What cover existed for the project inbox, and what written community-engagement policy applied?
- Was a fund, bond or other financial security already in place to pay for removing the plant?

What Blackthorn answered

- On 13 October, Blackthorn described its engagement and referred to application reports on noise, glare, decommissioning and stone walls. It also explained the relationship between Blackthorn and BayWa r.e.
- On 16 October, it said it was not obliged to provide internal records, policies, correspondence or internal communication and email-monitoring details beyond the application documents. It said it did not intend to answer these requests individually.
- It directed observations to Galway County Council. The resident replied that most of his questions were not about sensitive or private information and that he needed answers to prepare his submission.

What the reply does not answer

Changes made after residents' feedback

The replies do not identify specific changes, drawing revisions or dated records showing how feedback changed the proposal before submission.

Contact with local organisations

The replies do not provide the requested dates, methods of contact or copies of messages for the school, parish and GAA.

Inbox cover and engagement policy

The replies do not explain the inbox-cover arrangements or provide the requested policy. This does not establish that the inbox was unattended.

Funding to remove the plant

The replies do not confirm whether financial security was already in place, its amount or its start date. The earlier reply refers to the decommissioning statement in the application.

Email 1 of 8 · 7 October 2026 at 10:12

Resident asks eight questions about the proposed development

From: Local resident
To: Blackthorn Solar Farm

Hi folks,

I'm a resident in Lackagh.

I wanted to get in touch about your recent application to develop in our community here.d

1. What public consultation did you do?
2. How does it compare to the standard level of consultation that you usually do?
3. You have a Community Engagement officer. What are they doing to engage the community?
4. Her LinkedIn says that she has worked for you for three years. You only incorporated in July 2026. How is this possible?
5. Have you created a fund to decommission the plant in the event that you're not around to do it?
6. Did you measure noise inside the grounds of [housing estate A], [housing estate B], the school, and the church as part of your study?
7. Have you done any Glint and Glare studies for [housing estate A]?
8. What will happen to the stone walls that you've marked to remove but not put back?

Thanks,

[Name removed]

Email 2 of 8 · 12 October 2026 at 13:23

Resident follows up after receiving no reply

From: Local resident
To: Blackthorn Solar Farm

Hello?

Email 3 of 8 · 13 October 2026 at 15:57

Blackthorn replies to the eight questions

From: Blackthorn Solar Farm
To: Local resident

Hi [name removed],

Thank you for getting in touch.

Apologies for the delayed response; I returned from leave today.

Please see below.

1. What public consultation did you undertake?

The company conducted non-statutory community engagement before submitting the planning application to provide information about the proposed development and give local community members an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback. Public representatives from the Oranmore-Athenry Municipal District and TDs representing Galway West were contacted by email on 28 August 2026. The team hand-delivered project information leaflets to local properties on 31 August and 1 September. The team also contacted local schools, clubs, and community organisations on 1 September. A public information event took place at Turloughmore GAA Club on 9 September, attended by approximately 100 local residents.

Questions and feedback received during this period were considered as part of the finalisation of the planning application, which was submitted to Galway County Council on 16 September 2026. Further details of the engagement undertaken are provided in the Community Engagement Statement submitted as part of the application.

The statutory public consultation process is conducted through the formal planning application process, during which members of the public may make submissions or observations to the planning authority in accordance with the applicable requirements.

2. How does this compare with the standard level of consultation you usually undertake?

Our approach to non-statutory community engagement is tailored to each proposed development, taking account of the project, its location and the relevant circumstances. For all our projects in development, this usually includes a dedicated project website, phone and email, contact with public representatives, local schools, clubs and groups, distribution of project information to local properties, and a public information event.

3. What is your Community Engagement Officer doing to engage the community?

As Community Liaison Officer, I work with the wider project team to communicate information about the proposed development, liaise with residents and public reps, respond to queries, and provide opportunities for feedback. Communication with the community continues as the project progresses through the planning process and, if consented, during construction.

4. Your Community Engagement Officer's LinkedIn profile says she has worked for you for three years, but the company was incorporated in July 2026. How is this possible?

Blackthorn Solar Farm Ltd is a project-specific subsidiary of BayWa r.e. Ireland. Although Blackthorn Solar Farm Ltd was incorporated in 2026, my employment with BayWa r.e. Ireland, as outlined on my LinkedIn profile, predates Blackthorn Solar Farm Ltd's incorporation.

5. Have you created a fund to decommission the plant if the company is no longer operating?

Please refer to the Decommissioning Statement in Appendix B of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan, submitted as part of the planning application, for details of the proposed decommissioning arrangements.

6. Did you measure noise inside the grounds of [housing estate A], [housing estate B], the school and the church as part of your study?

The baseline noise assessment was undertaken at measurement locations A1–A3 and L1–L2, as shown in Figure 2 of the Noise Impact Assessment. These results were used to characterise the existing noise environment at the identified Noise-Sensitive Locations (NSLs) 1–13 and the surrounding area.

Tables 5, 6, and 7 of the Noise Impact Assessment provide the times and durations of the attended and unattended noise monitoring surveys at these locations.

7. Have you undertaken any glint and glare studies for [housing estate A]?

Please refer to Figures 1.7 and 1.8 of the Glint and Glare Study, which illustrate the study area considered in the assessment of potential solar reflections.

8. What will happen to the stone walls marked for removal but not identified for reinstatement?

Under section 5.5 of the Planning and Environmental Statement, we will reuse any removed stone on site as part of the proposed landscape mitigation measures.

I hope the above addresses your queries. The planning application and its supporting documentation provide further details of the proposed development and the assessments undertaken.

Kind regards,

[Name removed]

Community Liaison Officer

BayWa r.e. Ireland Limited

Email 4 of 8 · 14 October 2026 at 13:52

Resident requests records and answers to outstanding questions

From: Local resident
To: Blackthorn Solar Farm

Hi [name removed],

Thanks for replying.

Thank you for explaining your employment with BayWa r.e.

That answers that question.

Several of my questions remain unanswered.

Please answer the factual questions below using the records created at the time, with dates and copies of the relevant documents.

1. Who covered the project inbox during your leave?

I understand that people need to take leave.

But residents have only five weeks to make submissions.

I emailed on 7 October and followed up on 12 October.

I have only now received a reply.

What cover did BayWa r.e. put in place during your absence?

Please confirm:

- The dates of your absence and who was responsible for monitoring and answering the project emails during that time.
- Whether anyone monitored the inbox throughout your absence. If there were any gaps, give the start and end dates and the total length of each gap.
- When someone first read each of my two emails, and why neither received an earlier response.
- Whether an automatic reply directed residents to someone providing cover, and who will now take responsibility for answering these questions before 20 October.

Your Community Engagement Report says you will monitor correspondence and respond to residents throughout the planning process.

Please explain how the arrangements during your absence fulfilled that commitment.

2. What did residents' feedback actually change?

Your reference to the statutory planning process does not answer my question about the quality of your own community engagement.

You say you considered residents' feedback before submitting the application on 16 September.

What parts of the proposal were still open to change at the information event on 9 September?

Please identify the changes you made in response to residents before submission, when you made them, and the relevant drawing or report revisions.

If you made no changes, please say so.

Your Community Engagement Report says feedback forms were available.

Please provide anonymised copies of the completed forms and any existing dated records showing how you considered them before submitting the application.

3. Contact with the school, church and local groups

Please confirm specifically whether you contacted Lackagh National School, Lackagh parish and Claregalway GAA before submission.

For each, give the date, method of contact and the role of the person contacted, and provide a copy of the message you sent.

You can redact personal contact details.

4. Your consultation policy

Please provide any written community-engagement policy or protocol that BayWa r.e. applied to Blackthorn before the application was submitted, including its date or version.

5. Funding for decommissioning

Was any decommissioning fund, bond or other financial security already in place when you submitted the application on 16 September?

Is any in place now?

If so, please identify it and provide a copy of the document establishing it, the amount and the date it took effect.

If not, please say so.

Deadline reminder

The Council currently lists 20 October as the deadline for submissions.

Please reply by 5pm on Friday 16 October so we have time to consider your answers.

If you cannot answer a particular point by then, please identify it and give a date for the answer.

Thanks,

[Name removed]

Email 5 of 8 · 16 October 2026 at 13:46

Resident asks when to expect answers

From: Local resident
To: Blackthorn Solar Farm

Hello again [name removed],

Can I expect a response from your today?

I want to do my submission over the weekend.

This is why I requested that you give me the responses to the questions I asked, or let me know when I can expect the answers.

Thanks,

[Name removed]

Email 6 of 8 · 16 October 2026 at 15:26

Blackthorn says it will not answer these requests individually

From: Blackthorn Solar Farm
To: Local resident

Hi [name removed],

Thank you for your email.

The planning application and its accompanying documentation are available to view on Galway County Council’s planning portal under reference 2661567.

We are not obliged to provide internal records, internal policy or correspondence, or details of internal communication and email-monitoring arrangements beyond the documentation submitted as part of the planning application, in response to your individual requests. Accordingly, we do not intend to respond to these requests individually.

Any observations or concerns regarding the proposed development can be submitted directly to Galway County Council as part of the statutory planning process, which remains open until 20 October.

Kind regards,

[Name removed]

Community Liaison Officer

BayWa r.e. Ireland Limited

Email 7 of 8 · 16 October 2026 at 15:55

Resident asks for clarification of that response

From: Local resident
To: Blackthorn Solar Farm

Hi [name removed],

Sorry, can I confirm that you, the Community Liaison, does not want to liaise with me and respond to my questions?

Email 8 of 8 · 16 October 2026 at 19:19

Resident explains why the information matters to his submission

From: Local resident
To: Blackthorn Solar Farm

[Name removed],

I'm very disappointed that you have not responded to my questions.

I am submitting my observation this weekend and I really wanted the info from you to help me.

The vast majority of my questions were not about sensitive or private information.

It's very strange to me that the Community Liaison for Blackthorn would not engage with a member of that community in question.

I personally do not feel that I am well informed enough about the application and it's very dismaying to me that you could not provide the information that I needed to be fully informed.

Thanks,

[Name removed]