



Lackagh-Knockdoe Solar Action Group

Correspondence · Email from a local resident

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18 September 2026 at 15:01

To: Scoil Naomh Bhríde and its Board of Management

Proposed Blackthorn Solar Farm: school access, safety and special-education provision

Hi folks,

Just following up on something that I promised that I would send on a call with [name removed] earlier this week.

I'm writing to ask whether you and the Board of Management would review the Blackthorn Solar Farm application, reference 26/61567. I'm also wondering if you would consider making a submission about its implications for Scoil Bhríde.

Background

Blackthorn Solar Farm is a proposed solar-electricity development on farmland around Lackagh and Turloughmore. BayWa r.e. is bringing it forward through a company called Blackthorn Solar Farm Limited.

The application covers approximately 93 hectares, or 230 acres, divided between two areas:

- One west of Lackagh
- Another immediately southeast of the village, near [estate name removed].

Underground cables would connect them, with some cable works along the R354.

The development would contain:

- Rows of solar panels on metal frames
- 18 electrical transformer stations
- Access tracks
- Security fencing
- CCTV
- Drainage.

The panels would stand up to about 3.15 metres high, or 3.45 metres in some places.

The overall area includes the panels, supporting infrastructure and cable connections. The electricity would be supplied to the grid, and the proposed operating life is 40 years.

The connection to the school is the proposed construction route.

Heavy vehicles serving the southern section would use the local road serving Lackagh Church and Scoil Bhríde. These would include articulated lorries delivering panels, frames and other materials.

The developer estimates approximately 56 weeks of construction for that southern section, alongside the associated cable works.

Safe access for children, parents, school buses and staff therefore is a potential concern for the school throughout the construction period.

The planning application is now available from Galway County Council under reference 26/61567. View the plans and supporting documents

Impact to the school

The proposed southern construction route uses the road serving the school and Lackagh Church. The developer's traffic plan estimates approximately 56 weeks for that part of the build, involving articulated lorries and other heavy vehicles.

Our concern is whether the arrangements will work safely alongside the school's actual daily routines.

I was reading that the school's published set-down arrangements describe arrivals between 8:40 and 8:50 with space for around four cars, a separate bus drop-off arrangement, and use of the church car park when the school entrance is busy.

The developer's traffic assessment does not examine how construction lorries would safely pass the school while those arrangements are operating.

It does not assess the combination of children walking from the church car park, buses stopping and parents queuing at the school entrance.

Also, as I think I mentioned on the call the last day, [estate name removed] residents have reported extensive parking along the road and on footpaths during funerals and removals.

Because the church car park also forms part of the school's published drop-off arrangements, the developer needs to explain how children, parents and buses would retain safe access when these demands coincide. Lorries need to be held back before they reach an obstruction, with somewhere safe to wait away from the school approach.

We're all just getting to grips with the documents in their application today. From what we can see, their plans include delivery bookings and promises to avoid clashes with local events.

However, they don't explain how those measures would work with the parking conditions we see during funerals and removals.

The developer's traffic plan says that "any site deliveries" should avoid school drop-off and collection times. However, it places that statement in a section about a future plan for laying the underground cables.

It gives no specific times for Lackagh school, including the 1:30pm and 2:30pm collections. It also does not clearly state that the restriction covers every stage of construction.

We would ask the school to consider highlighting these omissions in a submission to Galway County Council.

In addition, their application lists the school extension, including the larger staff car park. Its traffic assessment does not explain how it accounts for those changes.

The developer's noise report predicts construction noise within the limits it uses for residential properties. It does not explain what those findings mean for classroom teaching or pupils who are particularly sensitive to noise.

The construction plan also proposes general dust-control measures, but does not specifically assess dust exposure for children using the school's outdoor walkway and play areas.

Potential submission

We would ask you and the Board of Management to consider doing a submission on the application to raise these gaps with Galway County Council.

Your account of the school's current arrival and collection arrangements, outdoor activities and pupils' support needs would help the council understand what the developer has not addressed.

It might also help to identify any access needed for breakfast care, after-school care or other activities outside normal school hours.

We would be happy to share the relevant application documents with you and discuss them more if you like. We will also be holding workshops in October to help people learn how to do a submission.

The planning documents are available here:

<https://apps.galwaycoco.ie/ViewExternalDocuments/?RefNo=2661567>

Feel free to call me if you want to ask any questions.

Thanks again,

[Name removed]