

Implementation Date: 01 September 2023

Template for Requesting Speaking Rights at the Planning Committee

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provides for interested person(s) to register to speak on a planning application that is scheduled to be determined at the next meeting of the Planning Committee. This request must be received by the Planning Department no later than 10am on the Monday before the Planning Committee meeting via email account planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

Planning Reference	LA01/2023/0133/O
Name	Maeve McAlister and Ciaran O'Donnell
Contact Details	Tel: Email:
Support or Objection – please tick relevant box	Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objection <input type="checkbox"/>

Written representation summarising key points to be addressed and supplementary information in support of your case (minimum font size 10 and maximum length two sides of A4 page).

- My name is Maeve McAlister and I am the applicant for planning permission on the lands west and adjacent to 15 Kilnadore Road, Cushendall. As the applicant to this planning request, I wanted to make a personal representation on behalf of myself, my husband and my three young children.
- As well as rearing three children, I work in the media, I am the voluntary chairperson of our local parent and toddler group, member of the PTA and a member of the local development group. Furthermore, I have recently started up a social enterprise that offers an afterschool homework club for primary school aged children, activities for local families and a business which regenerates an empty commercial unit in the village, creating employment. As someone whose family has lived in Cushendall for centuries, I have a deep respect and understanding for this place.
- I have wholehearted respect for the principal of planning policy, but I urge the committee to look beyond this. The point on how the rural/urban distinction would be marred strikes me as entirely absurd when you take into consideration there are 35 social housing units being built directly

across from our site, a picture paints a thousand words as can be seen from the drone images in our submission and if anything the addition of one additional house on the opposite side of the lane would have little material impact. I don't understand how one house in an inconspicuous corner of an unremarkable field constitutes "urban sprawl" yet a mere few metres away on the other side of the lane, there are 35 news houses being built, surely this rationale does not stand to common sense?

- I noted that the planning officer who spoke at the committee in May in objection to our planning request was keen to point to planning policy that protects rural character and the significance of views of 'Lurigethan', or Lurig as locals would call it. I think that it is prudent to remind ourselves that our rural character is only partly upheld by our beautiful views and physical geography, in truth, it is the people of these places that make them what they are. Regardless of this, our house would not impact any views that would interfere with the character of Cushendall or take away from the views of Lurig. I don't understand why it is "arrogant", as he suggested, to want to build a family home for people who truly value this place, on family land.
- We understand that this is an unusual request, and that appealing to the local development plan is an alternative, but as that consultation is going on five years delayed, how much longer should our young family have to wait before we can create a family home on family land?

Speaking Notes: September 2024

Planning Application LA01/2023/0133/O: Lands adjacent and west of 15 Kilnadore Road

My name is Maeve McAlister and I am the applicant for planning permission on the lands west and adjacent to 15 Kilnadore Road, Cushendall. As the applicant to this planning request, I wanted to make a personal representation on behalf of myself, my husband and my three young children to support our application.

As well as rearing three children, I work in the media, I am the voluntary chairperson of our local parent and toddler group, member of the PTA and a member of the local development group. Furthermore, I have recently started up a social enterprise that offers an afterschool homework club for primary school aged children, activities for local families and a business which regenerates an empty commercial unit in the village, creating employment. As someone whose family has lived in Cushendall for centuries, I have a deep respect and understanding for this place.

I have wholehearted respect for the principal of planning policy, but I urge the committee to look beyond this. The point on how the rural/urban distinction would be marred strikes me as entirely absurd when you take into consideration there are 35 social housing units being built directly across from our site, a picture paints a thousand words as can be seen from the drone images in our submission and if anything the addition of one additional house on the opposite side of the lane would have little material impact. I don't understand how one house in an inconspicuous corner of an unremarkable field constitutes "urban sprawl" yet a mere few metres away on the other side of the lane, there are 35 news houses being built, surely this rationale does not stand to common sense?

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Written Statement

In support of Planning Application LA01/2023/0133/O: Lands adjacent and west of 15 Kilnadore Road

My name is Ciaran O'Donnell and I am the applicant for planning permission on the lands west and adjacent to 15 Kilnadore Road, Cushendall. I am submitting this written statement to outline my support for the proposal.

As the applicant to this planning request, I wanted to make a personal representation on behalf of myself, my wife and my three young children.

My wife was born and raised in Cushendall and has always deeply valued her upbringing here. Our children are 7, 3 and 1 and we look forward to being able to give them a childhood in Cushendall. I strongly believe we need to protect the beauty of our place, but not at the expense of building family homes for a young family like ours.

Coming from a similar area elsewhere in the country, I have seen first-hand how areas like ours are becoming less attractive for families to live in. If we don't enable young families to live and work in the area, our beauty spots, like Cushendall, will only be good for postcard pictures, not as viable places to live, work and play. I know that Cushendall is not the only settlement across Causeway Coast and Glens who faces this challenge. Young families are being priced out of the market, housing stock is inadequate, and we are now in a position of being refused a family home. We need radical change for rural planning that supports people to live and work in these areas but that is much bigger than our small planning request.

I have wholehearted respect for the principal of planning policy, but I urge the committee to look beyond this. The point on how the rural/urban distinction would be marred strikes me as entirely absurd when you take into consideration there are 35 social housing units being built directly across from our site, a picture paints a thousand words as can be seen from the drone images in our submission and if anything the addition of one additional house on the opposite side of the lane would have little material impact. I don't understand how one house in an inconspicuous corner of an unremarkable field constitutes "urban sprawl" yet a mere few metres away on the other side of the lane, there are 35 news houses being built, surely this rationale does not stand to common sense?

I noted that the planning officer who spoke at the committee in May in objection to our planning request was keen to point to planning policy that protects rural character and the significance of views of 'Lurigethan', or Lurig as locals would call it. I think that it is prudent to remind ourselves that our rural character is only partly upheld by our beautiful views and physical geography, in truth, it is the people of these places that make them what they are. Regardless of this, our house would not impact any views that would

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interfere with the character of Cushendall or take away from the views of Lurig. I don't understand why it is "arrogant", as he suggested, to want to build a family home for people who truly value this place, on family land.

While the technical points of the rationale to overturn planning policy for this application have been dealt with by our consultants, I believe firmly that the human element to our application is just as important. Being able to build a house for myself, my wife and our growing family on family land so that we can be next-door to my wife's elderly parents is of utmost importance to us now, and as they advance in years.

We understand that this is an unusual request, and that appealing to the local development plan is an alternative, but as that consultation is going on five years delayed, how much longer should our young family have to wait before we can create a family home on family land?

Finally, I want to refer to the minutes of the site meeting documented on 22 August 2024 as they contain several inaccuracies and I think they ought to be retracted. A paragraph within the Minutes has very sinister undertones and seem to question the integrity of my wife's aunt, who we spoke to about this exchange to after reading these minutes. The minutes note that a neighbour "who identified as the applicant's sister" – **this person was not her sister**, this was her aunt, who lives next door to my father-in-law (at no. 15). The broader context of this exchange is not fairly represented within the paragraph in my opinion. For context, my in-laws were away at the time and my wife's aunt noticed 5 strangers entering their property and as someone who had no idea of the planning site visit nor the protocol that is attached to it, out of concern, she approached these 5 strangers to ask what they were doing, noting Andrew was away. When she recognised Councillor McMullan and was asked to leave, she departed politely and left them to it. It is very strange that the inaccurate statement allegedly said by my wife's aunt is the only item recorded verbatim in a whole site visit that covered several items and is entirely irrelevant to this housing application, therefore, I would like this to be retracted.

Contact details: