

Mr Chairman! My submission at the An Bord Pleanana Oral Hearing was similar to this but I feel so strong about the proposal of this Super-dump that it is important to reiterate my feelings.

I am here to speak simply as a caring mother and resident who will be evicted from my home should this Super Dump go ahead!

We all know that the proposed Landfill will not be decided on sentiment and emotions, nevertheless it is important and certainly part of the equation!

Before I begin I would like to thank and praise, from the bottom of my heart, the work carried out by the Nevitt Anti-Landfill Group.

I am sure no one will mind when I pin-point and thank sincerely my husband John Shortt, my friends and neighbours Shay Lunney, Joe McNally, Declan White, Paddy Boyle and Gemma Larkin.

Not one person here, apart from their direct families, can even begin to comprehend the long hours spent, including nights and week-ends, on the research and work carried out in order to put forward the submissions and findings heard during both Oral Hearings.

Not having the tax-payer's money at their disposal they were left with no option but to pump thousands of personal finances, along with donations from the local community and businesses, into their campaign to protect the environment and stop the destruction of a community, but mostly they were forced into stressful times away from their family life.

They have been totally unselfish and committed to fighting against this proposed Super Dump on behalf of the community and environment and no matter what the outcome is of this Hearing we will *never* forget them for their hard work and their morals – I know my sons and I are forever grateful.

I ask The Agency to please put yourself in my shoes and *really* imagine what it is like. When this landfill was first announced I heard it via a neighbour when he telephoned me to give the terrible news and inform me that my home was in the middle of the selected site! In fact each time some news came out we heard it 'in the street' prior to Fingal Co.Co. contacting us personally to confirm the nightmare.

The stress and upset that lies with us daily in this 'limbo' cannot be put into words. The upset I experienced and felt on the first day of hearing this terrible announcement has not diminished. I will forever remember the words of Mr Gilbert Power of Fingal Co.Co. at a meeting with the Residence some weeks after the initial announcement i.e. 'you can shout and you can protest all you like, this dump will go ahead'. I thought then that all was lost but feeling as strong as I do about the environment and the beauty of our countryside I could not give up my home or allow the environment be destroyed without a fight!

During this 2<sup>nd</sup> Oral Hearing I have again heard over it's course the mention of property, land, houses etc. but not once have I heard the words 'home' or 'eviction'. I would like to reiterate the feelings from my heart as to what it means to me to be under the threat of being evicted from my home!

Over the course of the last 6 years friends and family have tried to console me saying it is just bricks and mortar and that I can bring my memories with me! My reply is always the

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same 'it is not as simple as that. I am being forced – evicted - from my home. Something I thought was gone from Ireland since the 1800's'.

To put it in perspective - My husband John and I built our home in 1980 by direct labour with my father-in-law, along with the help of family and friends. We worked 7 days a week trying to build it within a very tight budget available to us at the time.

Since then we have had the good fortune of raising three children in a fantastic rural community. Over the last 2 years I have asked myself many times 'what does my home mean to me and my family'? The following are some of my answers.

- My home is priceless; it is not just bricks & mortar.
- The wonderful memories of building our own home with my Father-in-law, my brothers and sisters, my in-laws and our friends.
- Where I share my happiness, sadness, and life with my husband and our three sons. Where we have laughed and cried!
- It is the place where each of my sons was brought to when they were born – to their home! Where myself and my husband planted a tree for each of them when they were born!
- I often recall and tell my sons that during the celebration on the day of our first son Eóin's christening, my father-in-law, Jack, walking in our garden with Eóin in his arms and saying to him with great pride 'Son! One day this will all be yours – this is the 'House that Jack built'!
- My home is the place where my sons grew up and celebrated every occasion with family and friends. Where they set an acorn in the garden and watched over it as it grew into the Oak tree that stands proudly there today!
- These trees, like my boys, have grown up and to destroy these along with the destruction of our home would be like a death! In fact since the announcement of the proposed Super Dump we have in fact been grieving!
- My home is where all the local children, during their young lives, gathered to play football and chat. Some parents in the community have told me that when their children were absent from their homes the first call was to "The Shortts" where they would surely find them! Even now, as young adults, these football matches still occur!
- Having all attended the local school i.e. Hedgestown - To this day my sons are best friends with their school buddies; some would say they are never seen apart! Not many can boast this childhood-friendship of 20 plus years and it is impossible to put into words the impact this would have on my sons should we be evicted from our home and the community!

In fact the sad thing is that our sons would be evicted from their home and community and their best friends left in the area surrounding the largest landfill in Europe!

Having experienced the loss of my mother and my young sister I know what great loss feels like. To lose my home would be a sudden death to the life we currently have and to the community we have shared for over 27 years. It is something that could never ever be replaced by money or material things. My husband and I have raised our sons to understand that family and people are the most important things in the world and to

always do and stand for what is morally right. We raised them to respect the world around them as it is **this** we will pass on to our future generations; we are only its Guardian's!

I am asking you to see this for what it is i.e. immoral, greed, destruction and totally unnecessary. That it will not only affect this generation but should this super-dump be approved you will force the ramifications on generations to come that have no say in this matter whatsoever!

We must ask ourselves the following and answer **them honestly** –

1. Is this proposed dump and destruction of a community, the environment and an aquifer with the purest of water actually for the good of our fellow human beings and planet? To say categorically that the aquifer will not be destroyed actually insults our intelligence. There isn't a human being in the world that can 'guarantee' landfill will not leak no matter what type of lining or technology is put in place!
2. Is this a case that a site has been chosen purely on geographical basis and financial gain? Is it also a case that it must be 'made fit' regardless of the impact to people and the environment?
3. Should this destruction of a community and the most beautiful scenic area be approved, then ask yourselves and answer honestly 'Is it something you will boast about to your children and grandchildren and be proud of as an achievement for the environment and the good of us all'?

Thank you Mr Chairman and associates for giving me this opportunity to speak!

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