

	Ainm	Aighneacht
1	Denis & Fiona Henderson	<p>We are responding to your recent public announcement regarding the above and we wish to submit as follows.</p> <p>We are, and have been, regular visitors to Clifden, the Cleggan area and Inishbofin over the past 50 years. We want to continue to visit West Connemara and we would – like many others in Dublin and elsewhere – be very interested in the provision of an air travel option to the area.</p> <p>As the country emerges from a difficult economic period it is understandable that the Department is not in a position to undertake further investment in the airstrips at the present time. However, there appears to be growing optimism that economic circumstances are improving and that tourism opportunities could develop significantly in the years ahead.</p> <p>Our proposal is that the Department retains ownership of the two airstrips for the next 5 years and that their possible use be formally assessed at the end of that period. We submit that the cost to the Department of retaining ownership over that period would be minimal. We further submit that for the Department to abandon at this time the significant investment already made in the airstrips could well be seen in the future to be a major strategic error.</p>
2	Colm Grogan – Grogans Chartered Accountants	<p>A. Introduction</p> <p>We have been and are Auditors to Clifden West Connemara Airport PLC (“The Company”).</p> <p>We have requested and received consent from the company to comment, in the public interest, on the bone fide origins and endeavours of the company to have established an air service in and out of Clifden – that air service to include a scheduled service to Inishbofin. Also, the company envisage the airstrip at Clifden as facilitating and encouraging air traffic from elsewhere.</p> <p>B. The company was founded in 1989 and was funded by share capital contributions by 155 persons and entities – most of whom contributed €5,000 and own similar quantities of shares. There is no dominant single shareholder or indeed group of shareholders.</p> <p>The company, though registered under the Companies Act, is in the nature of a community initiative. This is reflected by the facts that:-</p> <p>(1) No dividends have ever been paid.</p> <p>(2) No directors’ remunerations has ever been paid.</p> <p>(3) The company and its directors have applied themselves entirely and solely to getting air service facilities in Clifden.</p> <p>Generally speaking, the shareholders contributed to the share capital with a view and hope for provision of the airstrip facility at Clifden rather than in the expectation of a profit return. This background is pertinent to the submission.</p> <p>C. Our submission:</p> <p>We recommend the following:</p> <p>A. Government complete the licensing process of the airstrips at Clifden and Inishbofin to enable each airstrip to function in receiving and embarking fare paying passengers.</p> <p>B. The Clifden and Inishbofin airstrips be the subject of discussion with the company with a view to getting them operational.</p> <p>D. Rationale for this proposal:</p> <p>i. The intervention and rationale for this proposal is to initiate the air service to Inishbofin and the provision of the airstrip facilities in both locations and bring them into use.</p> <p>ii. The bone fide philanthropic intentions and objectives of the company in regard to provision of this service and facility is clearly evident from the company’s record and origins.</p> <p>iii. The company has been a local community initiative and is dedicated to the provision of air service facilities at Clifden.</p> <p>E. Conclusion: The institution of the air service envisaged, while challenging, is an easier mission than what was faced by the company and Government when it set out 28 years ago to get the physical airstrip facility in place in Clifden and Inishbofin.</p>

3	Seamus Coughlan Athenry Aviation Services	<p>Athenry Aviation Services are based in Athenry, Co.Galway. We specialise in the Catering and Fuelling supplies to aircraft. In the past we were responsible for all catering on Aer Arann Regional Aircraft based at Galway Airport. We also supply Jet-A-1 and Avgas to Airfields throughout the country e.g. Shannon, Knock, Cork, Navan, Birr, Trim, Kilkenny, Galway Flying Club to name a few.</p> <p>We would be in a position to supply aircraft fuel and install a fuel facility at Cleggan and Inishbofin Airstrips, and also fire protection.</p> <p>Since Galway Airport closed local and visiting aircraft have no place to land except Craughwell Airfield, but nowhere west of Galway. We feel that it is a great pity that the two strips in the Clifden areas aer not operating at least for light aircraft. We feel that a lot of the business is lost as a result. In the past we have had enquiries from the UK based places as to the position at Clifden only to be told that it is a “No Go” area. What a pity.</p>
4	John C. Day Inishbofin Community Centre	<p>We are submitting the view of the Inishbofin Development Company that the airstrips on Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) should be completed for use as they were originally intended, to provide an air service for Inishbofin. As with previous Ministers with responsibility for the Islands we have stated that at no point should the Department have given any consideration to selling the airstrips and the Department did so with the full objection to said proposal from Inishbofin.</p> <p>It has taken a thirty year campaign to achieve the construction of the airstrips and now that the airstrips have been built by the Government and your Department has fallen short on the provision of the actual service. The construction, and the funding of same, was by far the most difficult part to achieve and now that the valued infrastructure is in place the only item left is to go through the process of putting the service into operation for the benefit of the Island and all who visit.</p> <p>On the Departments website on the ‘Islands’ page it is clearly stated “A central objective of this Department is to ensure that sustainable vibrant communities continue to live on the islands. Satisfactory services and a developed infrastructure are important prerequisites for maintaining island populations. The Department’s aim is to seek to meet these requirements through current and capital investment via the Department itself and through other relevant Departments and organisations.” Given what is the stated position by the Department on the Islands you would have to understand how we can not see any logic in what follows the above quote on your website where directly underneath the webpage outlines the Departments decision to dispose of the airstrips infrastructure. This is a complete contradiction by the Department in its core objective to sustaining Island communities.</p> <p>The infrastructure is in place, connectivity is the lifeblood of the Islands into the future, and we are calling on the Department to do what was originally intended and that is to provide the air service between Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) and get both the airstrips and the service into use.</p>
5	Margaret Schofield O’ Halloran	<p>We are submitting the view of the Inishbofin Development Company that the airstrips on Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) should be completed for use as they were originally intended, to provide an air service for Inishbofin. As with previous Ministers with responsibility for the Islands we have stated that at no point should the Department have given any consideration to selling the airstrips and the Department did so with the full objection to said proposal from Inishbofin.</p> <p>It has taken a thirty year campaign to achieve the construction of the airstrips and now that the airstrips have been built by the Government and your Department has fallen short on the provision of the actual service. The construction, and the funding of same, was by far the most difficult part to achieve and now that the valued infrastructure is in place the only item left is to go through the process of putting the service into operation for the benefit of the Island and all who visit.</p> <p>On the Departments website on the ‘Islands’ page it is clearly stated “A central objective of this Department is to ensure that sustainable vibrant communities continue to live on the islands. Satisfactory services and a developed infrastructure are important prerequisites for maintaining island populations. The Department’s aim is to seek to meet these requirements through current and capital investment via the Department itself and through other relevant Departments and organisations.” Given what is the stated position by the Department on the Islands you would have to understand how we can not see any logic in what follows the above quote on your website where directly underneath the webpage outlines the Departments decision to dispose of the airstrips infrastructure. This is a complete contradiction by the Department in its core objective to sustaining Island communities.</p>

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6	Padraic Forde & Peter McKenna – Craughwell Flyers	<p>Craughwell Airfield started 10 years ago. Up to that time our planes were based and operated at Galway Airport. When Aer Arann Regional Airport started to operate flights out of Galway, two large hangers were erected to facilitate Aer Arann's needs. As a result the hanger that housed our planes to make room for the new ones and we had to find an alternative as these planes could not be left out in the weather.</p> <p>We located a farm near Craughwell and agreed with the farmer to develop it into an Airstrip. With a loan from the bank we erected a hanger 63' x 63' and levelled a strip 600m x 30m and after 10 years it is considered one of the finest airstrips in the country, drawing planes from all over the country and the UK.</p> <p>In June 2016 we had a call from Whitewalham Airfield, London requesting the visit of twelve aircraft to our strip. This we accepted and we catered for them over the Bank Holiday Weekend which included fuelling, taxi service, car hire and "cup of tea". They were thrilled with the service they got and as a result on their return to the UK contacted Galway Bay RM and sang our praises with Keith Finnegan.</p> <p>On their previous visit to the West they used Galway Airport as a base and at a great cost. Now that service no longer exists. These UK visitors over the weekend visited Connemara and Kilfinora in hired cars. Now if Clifden had their airstrip opened a large number of light aircraft would go there and avail of the services. In our strip at Craughwell we have planning permission as an airfield (not licensed) so no need for expensive overheads, like similar airfields. Planes come and go at their risk with own insurance cover and we have the strip insured for public risk. If Clifden could do something similar then it would create a lot of aviation interest and develop local business.</p> <p>Surely with two very fine airstrips already developed in Clifden and Bofin it would not cost much to open them up to light aircraft and go from there.</p> <p>Note - there are six aircraft and one Gyrocopter now based in Craughwell.</p>
7	Joan King – Kings Paper & Gift Shop	<p>Dear Minister, I have read your notice. I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State. The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.</p>
8	Siobhan King – Siobhan's House, Home & More	<p>Dear Minister, I have read your notice. I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State. The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.</p>
9	Ann Gorham – Celtic Shop	<p>Dear Minister, I have read your notice. I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State. The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.</p>
10	John O'Brien	<p>Dear Minister, I have read your notice. I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State. The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.</p>
11	Thomas Burke	<p>Dear Minister, I have read your notice. I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State. The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.</p>

12	Declan Moran Moran's totalhealth Pharmacy	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
13	G. King	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
14	P Coyne	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
15	Matt O'Sullivan	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
16	Sinéad O'Sullivan	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
17	Shane O'Grady – Guys Bar	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
18	Donal Mannion	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
19	Lorraine Barry	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
20	Patricia O'Toole	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
21	Donal O'Scanaill	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
22	Declan Mannion – Mannion's Bar	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
23	Eileen Wallace	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
24	Brian Hehir	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.

25	John Malone – Malone Virtualisers	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
26	Sean Vaughan	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
27	Sally Madden	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
28	A Ní Raighne – Ní Raighne Opticians	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
29	Patrick Sammon	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
30	Tom Wallace	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
31	K Barry Snr	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
32	Kevin Barry	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
33	Eileen Conneely	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
34	Adrian Mangan Auctioneers	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
35	Oliver G Coyne	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
36	Michael Prendergast Antiques	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
37	Patrick Lyons Jnr & Elizabeth Lane	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.

38	Jarlath Hession	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
39	Andy McEntee	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
40	Michael Murray	I would like to see the government keep the airfield in Cleggan. A lot of money has been spent on this and it would be shameful to give it away to a public company for little or nothing. The Cleggan Coast guard team needs a building and this would be a suitable place to have it. By giving it to the coast guard it would remain in ownership of the state. Who knows what the next few years may bring and the state will still have possibly a very worthwhile asset.
41	Jackie Jefferson	As a long term resident of Inishbofin, I feel very strongly that there should be a public community meeting regarding the future of the airstrip on Inishbofin.
42	Vincent Lennon	<p>I refer to your invitation for comments regarding the above and wish to make the following suggestions :</p> <p>General Principles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both sites should be retained in public ownership and should not be privatised or sold to private interests 2. Both sites should be used for the benefit of the local communities 3. Any revenues accruing from use of the sites should be reinvested in the local communities . 4. Consult with other State services/Agencies/ Departments regarding the possibility of using the sites to add new or improve/enhance services for the communities concerned . 5. Intensive consultation/public meetings with members of the local community in both areas should be initiated immediately to facilitate the widest possible consideration.(While the web invitation is welcome and extremely useful - it does not reach many local citizens) 6. Following these meetings, officials of the Department should convene public meeting in both areas to consider and review suggestions made . <p>Provision of Air Service at both sites</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Appropriate sections of both sites should be identified as helicopter landing areas and made secure with appropriate international safety, access and security standards . 2. Adequate provision for health and fire safety and emergency response should also be an integral part of such a plan. Each local community should be consulted and involved in this regard . <p>Suggested uses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explore possible use of sites for the gathering of solar energy 2. Explores possibility of using sections of both sites for provision of local authority housing. 3. In the case of the Middlequarter Inishbofin site - investigate the possibility of providing a new state of the art Health Centre on the site.
43	Austin Coyne	<p>As regards the Inishbofin Airstrip I would like to second the words of Dr. John Mercer: " the airstrip should be held in trust as an island asset and any rental income be put to the good of the island".</p> <p>Personally I believe that the worst thing that could happen is that the airstrip be privatised.</p> <p>Also a public meeting is necessary. More info is needed. The local Development Office has made little effort to communicate with the local populace on this matter.</p>

Thank you for the opportunity of making a submission of the future of the Airstrips & Surrounding Sites. I was born and raised on Inishbofin and I know well the importance of access to and from the island for the people who live on the island and for those who visit for work or leisure.

By the time the airstrip came to be built on the island there had already been major improvements in the ferry service to the island. Many fine people and boats had worked the crossing over the years. However, the advent of comfortable modern vessels and set schedules had transformed transport to the island. The building of the new pier at Inishbofin harbour also had a major impact. Some would say that these facts alone diminished the relative importance of the proposed air service. However, it could also be argued that having both kinds of service in place – a regular ferry and an air services – was the correct and best approach for the longer term.

For many people it came as a disappointment therefore that the proposed air service was never put in place. However, the disappointment - felt by some - turned to total disbelief felt by many when it was decided that the Dept would dispose of the sites. Having invested so much into this new infrastructure why would the state now relinquish ownership? Whilst I am not privy to the full details, I assume that the cost of maintaining the properties and the apparently unlikely chance of an air service being put in place are major considerations in this regard.

This brings us to the current situation. What to do now?

(1) I believe it is imperative that the state retains ultimate ownership of the properties. Under no circumstance should the Dept. dispose completely of the two sites. There are ways in which other bodies could be granted rights in the properties, for example by lease or licence. This would allow others to use the properties whilst the state would retain ownership and, through the terms and conditions of legal instruments utilised, influence the way in which the properties are used. This would allow for the sites to be returned to their intended use at some time in the future.

The inclusion of both sites in this consultation is understandable but erroneous. The ownership and use of an airstrip in Cleggan may give rise to some discussion but it may not be a major cause for concern...a doctor or ambulance can still come to your door if you live in the area. Any person on the island of Ireland can visit you at will. Within reason, your children can go to your chosen school and you can come and go to work or leisure as you please. The area may be remote but it is not inaccessible. However, once the last ferry has left and depending on weather and sea conditions thereafter, Inishbofin is completely isolated. Allowing a completed and ready to use airstrip to slip out of state ownership in that instance is a very different matter.

(2) The state itself also has many potential uses for the facilities. The emergency services can use both sites for emergency landings. In a wider context, would our search and rescue services not benefit for having access to this most westerly of landing strips? Could they not use the place to land and refuel and extend the range of their operations? Recent tragic events in Mayo have shown how fragile our reach can be and any advantage in that regard should not be given away lightly. Would our defence forces have use for these facilities - fishery patrols, training exercises etc. We are told that our Atlantic seaboard is a valuable asset with as yet untapped potential in renewable energy, hydrocarbons, fisheries etc. why relinquish a very useful stepping stone toward accessing these assets.

(3) Inishbofin is also an ideal venue for work in the fields of science, the environment and related research. Whether it is in regards to fisheries and or marine life more generally or weather, climate and environmental changes the island is a perfect open air laboratory. It is very regrettable that there is no permanent scientific presence on the island. This may emerge perhaps in conjunction with one of our universities, the marine institute, the meteorological service etc. The presence of an airstrip on the island would surely be a boost and benefit to a development of this kind. Likewise the whole arena of renewable energy is just now beginning to take shape. The west coast has great potential in that regard and again air access will be useful in exploiting these assets.

(4) The site also has potential to be a useful addition for sport and leisure purposes as a public park in community ownership. The strip itself could be retained and used for running and cycling etc. The surrounding land - to the perimeter fence - could be a cross country track and walking circuit. The land could be planted and landscaped with native and other plants and bushes. Parts could be set aside for specific habitats.

My own background is in both property management and community development. I would be interested in working with others locally to see how the airstrip site could be developed for the benefit of the local community... this could be achieved whilst still keeping the option of a future air service open and allowing emergency service access at all times. Perhaps a final decision on the sites should be delayed until after greater public consultation.

I believe there is a clear and inescapable obligation on the Dept. to ensure that whatever purpose the properties are used...that use is to the benefit to the

		<p>community at Inishbofin.</p> <p>This consultation should therefore be governed by a simply hierarchy of importance.</p> <p>(Fully state owned) Firstly, try to use the property for what it was intended...an air service for the people of the island. (Not as a plaything for private planes.)</p> <p>Second, if that is not possible, try to use the property for similar ends – ie some other purpose to the benefit of the local community.</p> <p>Thirdly, if this is that is not possible, try to bring the property in to some beneficial (short term) use for the state more generally. This should be a use which will not prohibit its future use as it was intended.</p> <p>(Leased out) Fourthly, if the above is not possible, try to lease the property to the community on the island to see if there is some communal, social or community use that can be developed.</p> <p>Fifthly, if that is not a workable alternative try to lease the site to some state body which will use the site with sensitivity and perhaps bring long term benefit to the island.</p> <p>Finally, if all of the above options have been exhausted, the Dept could opt to discuss the matter with the very people from whom the land was purchased.</p> <p>The last and least welcome option of all would be to see the site been leased or sold (or other wise disposed of) to private interests.</p>
45	Terence O'Toole President Connemara Chamber of Commerce	<p>I write regarding the future of airstrips and surrounding sites at Cloon & Laghtanabba near Cleggan and on Inishbofin, Co. Galway. The Connemara Chamber of Commerce is based in Clifden, Connemara, Co. Galway and has a high membership level and offers a very reflective representation of the views of the business community in the Connemara region.</p> <p>We make the following submissions in regard to the future of both airstrips:</p> <p>Keep the airstrips 'as airstrips' and in public ownership - given the considerable investment by the State of €9 million, we ask that the airstrips be kept as airstrips and be retained in state ownership with a view to providing an air service at Cleggan and Inishbofin. Installing a major regional coastguard station at this site along with providing commercial flights (or a private aerodrome) represents a much better long term social and financial return on investment to the State but especially the people of the area.</p> <p>Low Cost Air Services from Inverin to Cleggan and Inishbofin – we believe it would worth considering (on a trial basis) providing some air services from Inverin to Cleggan and Inishbofin to establish what the demand would be and the viability of future services.</p> <p>Coastguard and Rescue Services – given the remoteness of this region and proximity to the entire west coast of Ireland we see the airstrip at Cleggan as an ideal West Coast Rescue Service Station combining several Rescue services and the Coast Guard. The Inishbofin airstrip could act as a supporting airstrip to Cleggan. The recent tragedy at Blacksod, Co. Mayo shows how these areas need working infrastructure for both day time and night time landings, take-offs and emergency evacuations. We also believe that any future agreement entered into must allow for the continued use of the sites as landing locations for the coastguard and rescue services.</p> <p>Duel Use: delivering both economic and social benefit As well as the proposed coastguard and Rescue Stations, the airstrips could also be in duel use by allowing private traffic to land and take off.</p> <p>Private Use – Unlicensed Aerodrome - While the ideal situation would be for the airstrips to be open to commercial operations such as having scheduled flights</p>

		<p>from Cleggan to Inishbofin, we believe there is no reason why the airstrips cannot be opened up immediately to private use with an unlicensed aerodrome. Thereafter, depending on usage, commercial options could be explored.</p> <p>Increased Tourism & Quality of Life – active airstrips at Inishbofin and Cleggan (whether private or commercial flights) would bolster tourism numbers from the substantial aviation community (typically high net worth individuals) both in Ireland and overseas to the region. The Aran Islands enjoy a lot of this type of tourism. It would also increase quality of life and ensure connectivity is retained.</p> <p>100 Years of Aviation Heritage - The area has a great heritage in regards to aviation. June 19th, 2019 marks one hundred years of the first transatlantic flight which took off from St. Johns Newfoundland and landed just under 7 miles south of the current Cleggan airstrip. By opening the airstrips as soon as possible, the upcoming date in 2019 offers an opportunity for the State to see some return on considerable investment.</p> <p>And finally, ...</p> <p>Alcock & Brown Airport - we propose that the airstrip at Cleggan be titled the ‘Alcock and Brown Airport/Airstrip’.</p> <p>In summary, Connemara Chamber of Commerce ask that the airstrips be kept in public ownership but opened as soon as possible for the social and economic benefits that need to be seen from the investment.</p>
46	John Mercer	<p>Submission Airstrips and Surrounding Sites Consultation Submission Re: Inishbofin airstrip</p> <p>Introduction: This submission is in relation to the Inishbofin airstrip. The decision by the State to dispose of the Inishbofin airstrip and site has completely changed the situation and now raises some serious questions and concerns for the future of the Island. Clearly the implications of this seismic change for the Island have been recognised by the State and have resulted in the request for submissions on future ownership and usage.</p> <p>Ownership: The airstrip site represents a significant percentage of the land area of the island and clearly anything other than State or Island (Trust) ownership is a matter of the most fundamental concern to the islanders and this alone warrants very close scrutiny. Private ownership would have a major impact, somewhat akin to reverting to the Landlord days and thus, is a most fundamental issue on which the island should be consulted before any further decisions are taken. In this regard, it should be noted that, despite there never having been an island meeting to discuss the original airstrip, it has been claimed that the island unanimously supported the proposal. In fact this may not necessarily have been the case. Nevertheless developments went ahead under the radar. It is to be hoped that this lack of information and transparency will not be a hall mark of this phase</p> <p>Some issues of concern – habitat destruction: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inishbofin is a designated SAC and a full Environmental Impact Statement was never produced prior to the airstrip proceeding. - The airstrip has caused severe environmental damage. For example: it was the home to important breeding assemblages of Lapwing and other grassland-nesting birds (Snipe, Skylarks and more). Lapwings are now listed as an endangered species. Likewise there is a knock on effect to migratory/overwintering species. - The rare Lesser Rock Rose and a variety of mountain bog species have been replaced by the rush (<i>Juncus effusus</i>) and invasive species such as Pampas Grass, Crocosmia, Gunnera etc. - As well as being an ornithological and botanical disaster the airstrip is sited right one of the main watersheds of the island and this has an ecological knock on effect across a much wider area than the 10% of land already destroyed. <p>Some issues of concern – Health and Safety: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landing and taking off virtually across the island national school is a cause for concern, particularly, in windy areas such as the airstrip site. The runway is unidirectional and light aircraft are subject to wind drift/slide slipping etc when taking off and landing in the uncertain winds and gusts that are routinely experienced on the island.

Some issues of concern – Noise pollution: -

- Residents and visitors alike cherish the silence of the island and the high revving whine of small high revving engines shatters this. Despite the airstrip never having been commissioned there have been occasions when this has been clearly demonstrated by aerial joy riding/circuits and bumps and the occasional flying circus. Indeed one article in the Connacht Tribune in 2012 claims that almost 60 pilots flew into 'Bofin on a regular basis. On occasion it's been like having chain saws buzzing around in circles overhead.
- The upset to bird life from aircraft noise does not need spelling out; save to note that bird watching is becoming an important part of repeat custom/tourism on the island

-Continued Air related activities: Consolidation of area as heli-pad for emergency services and provision of lighting for same. In the case of medical emergencies fixed wing aircraft cannot fly in many conditions that are possible for the air sea rescue helicopters. This is particularly true on unidirectional runways located in an offshore area where strong winds are the norm.

Alternative site usages: These could include:-•

- **Health Dispensary:** Provision of site for the proposed new health dispensary. The current dispensary is no longer fit for purpose to the extent that the Public Health Nurse stated at the recent Comhdháil Oileáin meeting on the island that it was "a health hazard to both staff and patients alike". Plans for a new dispensary have been approved for quite some time. However, implementation has been going around in circles as it is felt that the current site may be prone to flooding and it seems that a suitable site cannot be located. This is an extremely urgent public health matter for the island that demands rapid action.
- **Housing for young families:** Inishbofin is a holiday destination and many properties are for seasonal rental. Thus, the price of land or houses (even derelict ones) is inordinately high on the island. Therefore, it is virtually impossible for young families who wish to remain on or move to the island to find a site at a realistic price. Yet it is a stated policy of government and Comhdháil Oileáin to make every effort to encourage this so as to maintain a viable population.
- **Organic waste treatment and disposal:** The Island does not have many of the routinely available waste services of the mainland. For example there is no provision for the disposal of cooked and uncooked waste food and much of this ends up on the foreshore for the seagulls. Also, a suitable shredding facility could incorporate waste paper and cardboard. The site would be a suitable location for a central composter which would have the added benefits of producing quantities of rich loam.
- **Vehicular waste:** There are no facilities or available space for the disposal of waste engine oils, old car batteries or used car tyres. These could be accommodated in a discreet walled off area in keeping with the island's ECO image before shipping to the mainland for recycling treatments. Unfortunately, much of this is conveniently destroyed by burning.
- **Bulky waste:** Likewise, there is no provision for disposal of items too bulky for waste/landfill bags e.g. old mattresses, furniture, large cardboard boxes, etc. which also frequently end up on St John's Night bonfires. A central rendering/ breakdown facility would enable these to be suitably packed for shipment to the mainland waste disposal services.
- **General recycling centre:** Among a variety of possibilities could be the New Zealand practice of salvaging usable items such as hardware, furniture, household goods etc. for low cost resale.
- **Alternative energy sources:** Various possibilities of either single or integrated systems include PV solar panels say up to several Mw peak capacity which would also be a useful sustainable income earner.
Solar hot water panels to provide heating for horticulture and composter with small low level wind generators as back up.
- **Horticulture:** Hydroponic growing of flowers, vegetables etc. would be a good possibility in low level poly tunnel type green houses (possibly made of polycarbonate)
- **Habitat Reinstatement and control of invasive species:** It is not envisaged that any of the above activities would cause any further environmental disruption. It is envisaged that they would all be sited on the periphery of the site and that habitat reinstatement/enhancement would take place over the bulk of the un-tarmacked areas. Silent passive solar panels would be a possibility to occupy the tarmacked areas.

Sustainable job creation: Depending on the level of the above activities it is estimated that between 3-6+ long term local full time jobs could be created. It is understood that at best the airstrip in operation would create more than 2-3 part time jobs.

Summary:

		<p>The lives and interests of the people of the Island will be affected by the decision by the State to dispose of the Inishbofin Airstrip site which occupies such a large area of the island of the island. However, rather than pre judging the issues it is vitally important that the islanders have an opportunity to be able to address and discuss the questions of both ownership and usage. This can only be successfully achieved by a public meeting so that all issues can be examined to arrive at a general consensus.</p> <p>In relation to the above airstrip I wish to request that a public meeting to discuss the matter should be held on the island, in order that the islanders, and other interested parties, can be fully briefed on the proposed change of ownership and usage of the airstrip, and can then make informed suggestions and comments. To my knowledge no such public meeting has been held to date, and many islanders may be unaware of the proposed changes. It seems important to me that the ownership of such a large asset, in the centre of a small island is extremely important and should be locally based. Future usage should of benefit to the community and should in no way detract from the life of that community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideally, the site should be owned by an island authority, who would be in the best position to ensure that its usage is of benefit to the island, and that any profit which might accrue could be used for island investment. There are many alternative uses for the site which could be of benefit to the island. • The provision of a well-maintained, central and easily accessed helipad on the site, to be used for emergency and medical purposes, would be sensible and of immense benefit. • The proposed new health centre, very badly needed, has been delayed due to difficulties with the original site. The health centre could be conveniently located on the site where it is convenient to all and would benefit by location close to a helipad. • Sites for house building could be made available to islanders who currently find it difficult to find affordable sites. The area is close to electricity, phone and water services. • The provision of some form of waste recycling is badly needed on the island, particularly during the tourist season. • The area is very suitable for the installation of solar generation electricity panels. <p>Again, I stress that a public meeting is of vital importance.</p> <p>Apologies two minor corrections escaped notice at first reading viz:-</p> <p>(1) The rare Lesser Rock Rose ...</p> <p>(2)the 10% of the middle of the island already destroyed. (NB: letters in red were omitted from the original)</p> <p>and if its not too late an emended text is attached labelled: "Bofin airstrip submission - JPM 2" This is to replace "Bofin airstrip submission"</p>
47	Keesje Crawford for Simon Avis	My father Simon Avis would like to express his concern that there has been no public meeting on Inishbofin to discuss the future of the airstrip. He feels this is necessary to ensure that any final decision made actually takes the islanders views into account.
48	Cllr. Eileen Mannion	<p>Thank you for undertaking a Public Consultation process on the future use of the airstrips at Cloon & Laghtanabba near Cleggan and On Inishbofin which gives the local community a chance to have their views heard.</p> <p>As you are aware the building of the two airstrips came about as a result of a group of local business people coming together to work towards the provision of air access to Clifden and Inishbofin. Despite several years of disappointments and court cases they persevered.</p> <p>The group subsequently sold their site at Cleggan to the State, land on Inishbofin was purchased under a Compulsory Purchase Order, planning permission was granted and the State built two airstrips at a cost of over €9 million.</p> <p>Minister, firstly I implore you to retain the two airstrips in State ownership as i feel it is unlikely that the State would recoup the €9 million spent to date and also I feel that as the economy improves there will be a demand for the airstrips.</p> <p>Secondly, I urge you to complete the licensing of the airstrips which would allow private aircraft, flying clubs etc. to use the facilities.</p> <p>Thirdly, I welcome the fact that your Department applied and were granted an extension of time on the planning permission for terminal buildings on both</p>

		<p>airstrips and I hope you will allocate funding to complete this phase of the project.</p> <p>Tourism is the main industry in North Connemara and thanks to the success of the Gathering and especially the Wild Atlantic Way we have seen an increase in visitor numbers to the area.</p> <p>The investment in the Wild Atlantic Way 'Signature Discovery Point' at Derrigimlagh just outside Clifden which marks both the first commercial transatlantic wireless station under Marconi and the landing site of the first non-stop transatlantic flight undertaken by John Alcock and Arthur Brown in 1919 has attracted larger numbers since it opened in July 2016. The local community are at present planning a series of events to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the flight in June 2019 with many people planning to travel from Canada for the occasion. It is expected to attract a large number of private aircraft and enthusiasts. The availability of the local airstrips would be an added attraction and could also be seen / marketed as a tribute to the two brave men, Alcock and Brown, who landed on a bog near Clifden and would ensure that the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the flight would not only be local and national news but also international.</p> <p>Connectivity is of vital importance to the sustainability of any are. Unfortunately the latest Census shows that the population of North Connemara has decreased substantially since the last Census which is impacting on the viability of schools, businesses not to mention the difficulties fielding GAA teams.</p> <p>As you are well aware despite the funding granted by the Government progress on vital infrastructure projects have been stymied by designations and planning issues i.e. the N59 project upgrade and the Galway by-pass. This lack of progress is impacting on the lives and livelihoods of people in North Connemara. Many people fine having to drive through Galway city on the way to or from Connemara reduces the time they have to spend in the area, makes them think twice before they undertake the journey and prohibits many people from setting up business in the area. The provision of a functioning airstrip in North Connemara would allow for private aircraft to access the area quickly and may also encourage new business to the area.</p> <p>Jobs, tourism and connectivity are vitally important for the future sustainability of Inishbofin and North Connemara. The retaining of the airstrips in State ownership, the provision of terminal buildings and the completion of the licensing process would provide important infrastructure for the area. As the airstrips have already been built the further costs involved to complete the project would be minimal.</p>
49	Muireann Lavelle	<p>It is our feeling that the future of the site of the airstrip on Inishbofin may be an ideal site to serve the community of Inishbofin for generations to come. It is unfortunate that its use seems not to be in accordance with why it was built but I think that this offers the island now a unique opportunity to attempt to solve the housing needs of the next generation of Islanders.</p> <p>Land is of huge importance on the island and for the farming community to prosper loosing land to building is probably not the best option, old ruins are also always fetching a premium price and get snapped up by people with a desire to have a property on Inishbofin. This makes it a challenge for our younger generations to keep the population growing by being able to remain here and build a home.</p> <p>I would love to suggest and discuss openly the potential for the site of the airport to be rezoned into maybe residential and a scheme put in place for the community to own the land and help the sites to be secured by islanders to build family homes upon it. The area is large enough to possibly locate other services on it too like the nurse station which the current site it is located on is being questioned as a flood risk. I feel this land can serve the community well and I would be happy to be involved in the generation of funds for same.</p>
50	Éamonn Ryan T.D.	<p>I am sending this submission to the above public consultation process, with particular regard to the future development of the airstrip on Inishbofin.</p> <p>I have an interest in the island, having visited it on a regular basis for many years as a holiday maker and I think I have a very good knowledge of the relevant area.</p> <p>I believe that the future air services on the site should be restricted to the provision of landing facilities for air sea rescue helicopter services. The island is currently serviced by a first class ferry service which also connects with a regular public transport service to and from Galway and Cleggan pier. I do not believe the future operation of the runway in Cleggan is reliant on the simultaneous opening of the Inishbofin runway. If it is decided to continue with the development of</p>

the runway at Cloon near Cleggan then it would provide a useful further connection point to the ferry service but it does not require the operation of the island runway to make such a service viable.

Inishbofin has progressed as a very successful tourist destination in recent decades with a thriving family holiday business and a growing list of events and activities which draw people to the island in off peak periods. At no point does it seem that the lack of a operating runway has hindered that development. If anything the arrival of planes on a regular basis would disturb the peace and tranquility that a lot of people see as one of the attractions of the island. The Island is designated a special area of conservation, an area of special scientific interest and an area of outstanding natural beauty. We should be reinforcing those designations by introducing a non- obtrusive development of the site rather than a working air facility.

I believe that a section of the runway should be developed as a base for the establishment of a photo voltaic solar farm to serve the electricity demands of the island and to export excess power when such conditions exists. The island is served by a 20kv power line which connects to a 38kv substation on the mainland. There is a general industry standard that such a rural node on the electricity system could accommodate at least a .5MW solar array feeding into the local power supply without the need for a major upgrade of the network. I believe that permission should be given for the immediate installation of such a scaled array which would require the use of some 2acres of the runway and that following testing of the operation of the facility, a more detailed analysis could be conducted to examine the possibility of reinforcing the local network and putting in a second section of PV panels to increase the power output. There is already a grid connection to the water treatment plant at the end of the runway and the local substation which brings the power supply for houses on the island down to domestic 380v level is also located close to the runway.

The development should be very beneficial to the island for a number of reasons. Firstly while the West of Ireland is not the most optimal area for levels of sunshine, there is I believe a greater potential solar resource on such an island due to it's isolate location seven miles out in the Atlantic, which means it avoids some of the cloud cover that arises when weather systems approaching from the West and South West meet the mainland.

There is a second advantage as the demand for electricity on the island spikes in the summer months at the same time when the levels of sunshine are high. Thirdly this is a suitable site for such a facility as it would not be visible from local roads in the area and is located on a very gently sloping, southerly facing site.

The provision of such a facility on the island would back up other efforts that have been in train for a number of years to make our islands models of sustainable energy development. This makes sense due to both the high cost and safety risks of carrying fuels to the island and also the ability to show demonstrable progress in lowering emissions from measuring what is happening in such compact, easily defined communities.

I understand that the development of a PV array on the site will be recommended by a new Inishbofin Sustainable energy Group as part of this consultation process. I also understand that they have secured the support of a number of people on the island behind such a proposal. I am writing this submission in support of their application and it is my hope that the Department will not exclusively only consider the provision of air services on the site as I do not believe that such a development is the first priority for the majority of the local community.

I understand that the land in question is in the ownership of the County Council and I believe this provides us with the opportunity of vesting the ownership of such a renewable energy project within the local community. Doing so would mirror and replicate some of the positive developments that have been happening in the the Aran island of Inishmor, where a local community co-operative has been making real progress in the development of local clean energy and energy efficiency initiatives.

I think this proposed development could be complemented by the use of the apron facility, attached to the runway as a potential location for a new recycling

		<p>facility of the island, which could further compliment the ongoing drive on the island to improve its sustainable foot print. The site could also be used as a location point and storage facility for building materials and construction machinery which is currently located in a site adjacent to the main pier which is the first thing visitors see when they arrive on the island.</p> <p>Regardless of everything I have written above I believe that this consultation process should be followed by a period of more detailed consultation with all the islanders, before any new development is considered further. The Department needs to insure there is a real understanding locally of all the options that might be available to them and that there is as much consensus as possible behind the future use of this land before anything further is done with the site.</p>
51	Caimin Coyne for Inishbofin Sustainable Energy Group	<p>I. Introduction</p> <p>This submission is in response to the call of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs in relation to <i>‘Public Consultation – Future of Airstrips and Surrounding Sites at Cloon & Laghtanabba near Cleggan and on Inishbofin, County Galway’</i>. The 27 signatories of this submission constitute a community of interest (‘Inishbofin Sustainable Energy Group’) with a shared view concerning the future of the airstrip on Inishbofin. All signatories are individuals native to Inishbofin island and/or whose primary residence is on Inishbofin island 1.</p> <p>II. Background</p> <p>It is important to note by way of background that c. 35 years ago Inishbofin residents and other interested parties were largely in favour of the provision of an air service from Inishbofin to the mainland. This support was contextualised by a number of factors, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A tidal pier and shallow harbour preventing berthing • A wooden ex trawler operating as the only passenger ferry • Unreliable ferry service due to its size versus weather conditions • No bus service from Cleggan and poor bus service from Clifden • Very low levels of private car ownership by islanders on the mainland <p>Since then, however, much has changed. In the views of the signatories of this submission, local support for the development and operation of an airstrip has greatly diminished. Even before the development of airstrip commenced in c. 2003, local support had waned. Our view is that an air service between Inishbofin and Cleggan is virtually pointless and does not serve the local community, mainly because of changes in infrastructure and services since the early eighties, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of a new pier in the early 90s • Modern large steel ferries • Dredging of the harbour area • Government subsidised ferry and cargo service • Excellent bus service (Cleggan – Dublin Airport on one ticket) • High numbers of local private car ownership on mainland <p>In addition, where the current ferry service is compared to a proposed air service, the following disadvantages of an air service are identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity of small aircraft for passengers • Virtual absence of capacity for cargo, such as grocery shopping and other goods for domestic use that constitutes one of the main reasons for traveling by islanders. • Cost – unlikely to be the affordable habitual transport mode of choice for islanders • Location of Cleggan airstrip – there is no added advantage in terms of access to Galway city or any other urban centre

Furthermore, we believe that air activity (either public or private) would generate little revenue for the community and cause considerable noise pollution, constituting furthermore an invasion of privacy due to its low level and circling flight. Such has already been evidenced in the past few years by aircraft landing on the runway, which although closed has been used by private aircraft in the absence of adequate monitoring. Noise pollution and infringement of privacy are antithetical to the established eco & ethno tourism product of Inishbofin island, an accredited destination for 'eco tourism'², characterised by attractions such as rare birdlife & wildlife, agriculture, small-scale fishing, arts, culture, history and heritage³.

It is with this in mind that we make a submission for an alternative use of the site.

III. Proposal

We propose a use of the airstrip that is:

- Environmentally appropriate for Inishbofin,
- Consistent with the needs of Inishbofin islanders
- Compatible with Inishbofin's existing ethno and eco tourism economy
- Supportive of national objectives re. climate change
- Representative of the views of a critical mass of natives of Inishbofin and those whose principal residence is on Inishbofin

We propose the development of a solar farm on the airstrip. In recent years photovoltaic (PV) solar collectors have improved considerably and their price has dropped by 80% since 2009 (SEAI 2017). This energy source is now a viable alternative in an Irish context as can be evidenced by the dramatic increase in planning applications for solar PV projects nationally. (Engineers Journal, 2016)

It is proposed to install a solar farm on the footprint of the airstrip on Inishbofin. The airstrip and shoulder area comprise of 3.36 hectares. This is sufficient for an installed capacity of about 2MW (peak). A 20KV high-tension line runs behind the airport to the water-works to which the farm can be connected. The undersea cable with an individual conductor area of 150mm² at 20kv can handle the transmission load. As the site is already developed and accessible there is no requirement for large machinery or excavation works. The PV panels can be mounted on rails fitted to precast concrete weights and the wiring can be housed in surface mounted conduit. The apron area would be left for use as a helipad.

Other activities and projects may be 'bundled' with the proposed solar farm. The solar farm may be operated simultaneously with particular types of agriculture. Another idea that has been proposed is to establish a space observatory on the site, which can avail of low light pollution and is entirely compatible with Inishbofin's existing tourism economy. A small weather station could also be installed at minimal cost.

IV. Benefits

At a community level the co-operative model allows the profits to be channelled into the local community for democratically nominated projects. Projects nominated to date include the purchase of local houses to rent to people living and working on the island as an alternative to houses being sold on the open market typically as holiday homes, which displaces the local population.

The proposed project also supports the meeting of Ireland's climate change targets. From an environmental perspective, the EU has ambitious targets to reduce harmful emissions by 2020. Ireland has committed to a 20% reduction by 2030 relative to 2005 levels. The EPA stated recently that Ireland is projected to reduce emissions by only 4 – 6% instead of the 20% that is the 2020 target (EPA, 2017). Ireland needs to promote and integrate renewable energy systems at a much faster pace if these targets are to be met. Inishbofin currently imports all energy, electricity, solid fuel, liquid fuel and gas. A PV installation of this size would go a long way in offsetting this energy deficit. A further benefit of solar energy on Inishbofin is that, contrary to the national trend, Inishbofin's annual peak electricity demand is in daylight hours in mid July and August when solar radiation is high. This is due to the influx of tourists in the summer months. This means that most of the electricity generated is likely to be consumed within the local grid.

		<p>V. Ownership of Lands</p> <p>It is considered locally that ownership of the airstrip site is a very important issue and it is felt that private control, ownership or the state's "disposal" of the site is most objectionable and must not be allowed happen. The ownership issue must be discussed with the community and fully resolved before any further development can take place. Further investigation needs to be carried out into ownership/legal structures whereby the island community can have explicit control over any future uses of the site.</p> <p>VI. Organisational structure</p> <p>A potential structure is the co-operative model, a model supported by Energy Co-operatives Ireland⁴. Energy Co-ops Ireland is the Irish representative body for RESCOOP which is the European Association for Renewable Energy Co-ops. Their aim is to give specialist support to community based renewable energy co-operatives from inception to operation.</p> <p>VII. References</p> <p>EPA (2017) http://www.epa.ie/newsandevents/news/name,62088,en.html (Date accessed: 19.05.17)</p> <p>Engineers' Journal (2017) http://www.engineersjournal.ie/2016/12/13/solar-energy-ireland-2020-targets/ (Date accessed: 19.05.17)</p> <p>1 While, due to time constraints, there are 27 signatories, we are unaware of any inhabitant who is against the</p> <p>2 http://www.irishtimes.com/business/transport-and-tourism/inishbofin-the-first-irish-island-to-receiveecotourism-award-1.2633718</p> <p>3 A diversity of cultural and arts events are organised on Inishbofin island annually, including a summer series of music performances. See, for example, one acclaimed example: www.inishfestival.com</p>
52	Catriona Cunniffe	<p>I am aware that today is the last day for submissions with regard to future use of inishbofin airstrip. As a teacher in the adjacent national school I have serious safety concerns should it ever be used for landing light aircraft and would never support it being used commercially for this purpose.</p> <p>Furthermore I believe that whatever use is ultimately made of it, it should be held in public ownership for the benefit of the whole island community.</p> <p>There has been talk of making use of the space as a solar farm among other suggestions. However I believe that more interface with the community must be had before any official decision can fairly be made. A public meeting where any outstanding proposals are discussed is imperative, as is account being taken of island people's opinions and best interests. As it is, it seems as if something contentious might be trying to be pushed through without fair and due consultation with all parties concerned with a positive future for the island, in particular islanders, residents on the island and people with genuine concern for the welfare of the island like myself.</p> <p>I would appreciate being notified of any further decisions or movement with regard to this issue.</p>
53	Emily & Oisin Lavelle	<p>My husband & I are in agreement with the message below. The airstrips & service intended for the island needs to be completed. It is an essential service for the economic & social sustainability of the island.</p> <p>Forwarded message: I am submitting my view that the airstrips on Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) should be completed for use as they were originally intended, to provide an air service for Inishbofin. As with previous Ministers with responsibility for the Islands it has been stated that at no point should the Department have given any consideration to selling the airstrips and the Department did so with the full objection to said proposal from Inishbofin.</p> <p>It has taken a thirty year campaign to achieve the construction of the airstrips and now that the airstrips have been built the Government and your Department has fallen short on the provision of the actual service. The construction, and the funding of same, was by far the most difficult part to achieve and now that the valued infrastructure is in place the only item left is to go through the process of putting the service into operation for the benefit of the Island and all who visit.</p> <p>On the Departments website on the 'Islands' page it is clearly stated "A central objective of the Department is to ensure that sustainable vibrant communities continue to live on the Islands. Satisfactory services and a developed infrastructure are important prerequisites for maintaining island populations. The Department aim is to seek to meet these requirements through current and capital investment via the Department itself and through other relevant Departments</p>

		<p>and organisations”. Given what is the stated position by the Department on the Islands you would have to understand how I cannot see any logic in what follows the above quote on your website where directly underneath the webpage outlines the Departments decision to dispose of the airstrips infrastructure. This is a complete contradiction by the Department in its core objective to sustaining Island communities.</p> <p>The infrastructure is in place, connectivity is the lifeblood of Islands into the future, and I am calling on the Department to do what was originally intended and that is to provide the air service between Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) and get both the airstrips and the service into use.</p>
54	Adrian Herlihy & Orla Day - The Beach, Days Bar & B&B	<p>It is our feeling that the future of the site of the airstrip on Inishbofin may be an ideal site to serve the community of Inishbofin for generations to come. It is unfortunate that its use seems not to be in accordance with why it was built but I think that this offers the island now a unique opportunity to attempt to solve the housing needs of the next generation of Islanders.</p> <p>Land is of huge importance on the island and for the farming community to prosper losing land to building is probably not the best option, old ruins are also always fetching a premium price and get snapped up by people with a desire to have a property on Inishbofin. This makes it a challenge for our younger generations to keep the population growing by being able to remain here and build a home.</p> <p>I would love to suggest and discuss openly the potential for the site of the airport to be rezoned into maybe residential and a scheme put in place for the community to own the land and help the sites to be secured by islanders to build family homes upon it. The area is large enough to possibly locate other services on it too like the nurse station which the current site it is located on is being questioned as a flood risk.</p> <p>I feel this land can serve the community well and I would be happy to be involved in the generation of funds for same.</p>
55	Fergus Merriman , Merriman Solutions	<p>Go raibh míle maith agat chun freastal ar dúinn inné.</p> <p>As suggested, please find attached our submission to the consultation process relating to the two runways under scrutiny.</p> <p>The project team trust their presentation was informative regarding the proposals underway to realise a world class visitor centre in the Clifden vicinity to celebrate and inform tourists and visitors about Alcock and Browns achievement and the importance of the event near 100 years ago. Should you wish to have any further detail, please do not hesitate to contact either myself, Brian or Emelyn.</p> <p>Whilst your Department review the proposal here tabled we will continue our discussions with other parties, however, the team will refrain from finalising on any site until we have had a response from you and in the meanwhile look forward to discussing the matter with your officials.</p> <p>On behalf of our clients ‘Project Flight’ we are instructed to lodge this formal submission in relation to ongoing consultations for the future possible use of the airstrips and surrounding sites at both Cloon and Inishbofin.</p> <p>The Project Flight proposal is to create a world class visitor attraction with a budget in excess of €20M, initial rising footfall in excess of 300,000 per annum and designed to celebrate in 2 years time the centenary of Alcock and Brown’s seminal transatlantic flight, all as outlined in the Project Flight proposal recently presented to you.</p> <p>As you know, the Project Flight team are considering several potential locations to construct this interpretive centre which will require around 2 hectares of land ideally situated relatively close to the actual landing site at Derrygimla Bog some 98 years ago, or, any site in the Clifden environs close to the Wild Atlantic Way that might be appropriate.</p> <p>The potential to site this world class interpretive centre alongside the existing runway at Cloon & Laghtanabba is a very attractive proposition since it can add considerable commercial activity thereby increasing the overall viability of flights to connect the airport at Inishbofin.</p>

		<p>In addition, the potential to actually fly from a runway adjacent to this proposed centre affords further viability for commercial opportunities including: tourist sightseeing flights, flights between other Irish airfields and also link to other key tourist destinations.</p> <p>Such commercial viability underpins the operation of the runway for other uses since the requisite services such ATC and fire safety can be more readily funded over an extended season or even year round.</p> <p>The interpretive centre will provide an all weather tourist destination and will enclose not just the interpretive centre celebrating Alcock and Brown, but a museum, interactive displays, virtual reality ‘rides’, the exploration of all things flight, its history and the future potential of aircraft, airports all of which came to reality in the air because of Alcock and Brown’s success.</p> <p>The important role that Clifden provided in the wider sense to the world of flight and communication gives the opportunity to provide this fully encompassing world class centre with unique appeal during and after the upcoming centenary year, a centre with a vibrant future.</p> <p>The project flight team already have vast experience of commercial flight operations in the state through the operation of other enterprises. In their considered opinion a standalone operation cannot be viable from either the two locations promoted because a commercial climate is required for the successful future of any airport. The significant additional tourist footfall that the Project Flight centre can provide would certainly create such viability.</p> <p>There are sizeable challenges to be overcome at these sites such as Planning and technical requirements, time is of the essence if the Project Flight centre opening is to coincide with the centenary date.</p> <p>Accordingly the Project Flight team look forward to engaging fully with your Department to expedite the project towards realising the potential of these runways, in the meanwhile should you or your Department have any comments or queries on this submission please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>
56	John Sweeney – Sweeney Oil	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
57	Seamus Sweeney	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
58	Pupils of Scoil Náisiúnta na Naomh Uile	<p>We are the pupils of S.N. na Naomh Uile in Cleggan, Co. Galway.</p> <p>We would like to make a submission for the airport site in our area. We have given it a lot of thought and the following are our ideas; in order of preference:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1: Helicopter Emergency Site 2: Training Centre for Rescue/Emergency services for land and sea. 3: Small Business Centre to cater for locals and tourists and to include manufacturing, catering, crafts, bicycle hire, etc. <p>We hope you will give our ideas serious consideration because more jobs are needed in our area.</p>
59	Lorraine McClean	<p>I am writing with regards to the consultation process in relation to the disposal of the airstrip at Inishbofin, Co. Galway, Ireland.</p> <p>As a full time resident and business owner here for approaching 15 years I feel it is imperative that there is openness, transparency and full communication to the island residents in relation to the proposed disposal.</p> <p>I feel that a well advertised open island meeting should be held so that everyone on the island is fully informed and has an opportunity to discuss all relevant</p>

		<p>issues as to ownership and usage before a decision is made.</p> <p>Although there has never been a full meeting to discuss the airstrip, it has somehow been maintained that the island is unanimously in favour of same. Whatever the usage the airstrip should be held in trust as an island asset, with the island benefiting from any income from the airstrip.</p> <p>There are a number of alternative uses, that could be eco friendly, not damage the special area of conservation any further, and which could help sustain the bird population on the island.</p> <p>Suggestions for potential alternative uses are as follows :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Irish Air/Coast Guard rescue site II. Wind Farm - or other sustainable energy centre III. Health clinic site IV. Small commercial units to encourage a sustainable economic future on the island (craft village, for example) (aesthetic wooden craft units) V. Specialised training ground for professional sports people (not available elsewhere in Ireland) VI. Food waste/compost recycling centre VII. Commercial horticulture centre/polytunnels - for supplying local hotels and Clifden area VIII. It has been suggested that small affordable housing units be built. (This would be of concern if it were abused - by those wishing to live on the island at the expense of the state ie social welfare abusers) IX. Training base for the air corps, Irish search and rescue, an garda, army etc. or other civil service department.
60	Mary Day Lavelle	With regards to Inishbofin Airstrip I think under NO circumstances should it be sold. I think it should be used by the island for either solar power and or social housing which there is a need for. I think a public held to discuss the future of the site.
61	Simon Murray	<p>I am submitting my view that the airstrips on Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) should be completed for use as they were originally intended, to provide an air service for Inishbofin. As with previous Ministers with responsibility for the Islands it has been stated that at no point should the Department have given any consideration to selling the airstrips and the Department did so with the full objection to said proposal from Inishbofin.</p> <p>It has taken a thirty year campaign to achieve the construction of the airstrips and now that the airstrips have been built the Government and your Department has fallen short on the provision of the actual service. The construction, and the funding of same, was by far the most difficult part to achieve and now that the valued infrastructure is in place the only item left is to go through the process of putting the service into operation for the benefit of the Island and all who visit.</p> <p>On the Departments website on the 'Islands' page it is clearly stated "A central objective of the Department is to ensure that sustainable vibrant communities continue to live on the Islands. Satisfactory services and a developed infrastructure are important prerequisites for maintaining island populations. The Department aim is to seek to meet these requirements through current and capital investment via the Department itself and through other relevant Departments and organisations". Given what is the stated position by the Department on the Islands you would have to understand how I cannot see any logic in what follows the above quote on your website where directly underneath the webpage outlines the Departments decision to dispose of the airstrips infrastructure. This is a complete contradiction by the Department in its core objective to sustaining Island communities.</p> <p>The infrastructure is in place, connectivity is the lifeblood of Islands into the future, and I am calling on the Department to do what was originally intended and that is to provide the air service between Inishbofin and near Cleggan (Cloon and Laghtanabba) and get both the airstrips and the service into use.</p>
62	John Hannon	May I suggest the Cleggan and Inishbofin airstrips be ran and treated the exact same way as the Udaras airstrip in Belmullet, Co.Mayo and just allow the local leader company (FORUM letterfrack) in this case to administer the annual standing costs (less than €5000 for both airstrips to be IAA licensed and insured as a private use aerodrome).

		I for one could base an aeroplane with piece of mind at the cleggan airstrip then.
63	Andrew Murray	Ownership of the airstrip on Inishbofin should be handed to the people of the island for use by them for the future benefit of the island, whether as a site for social housing for the younger members of the island population, priced out of the housing market, a site for the long awaited health clinic and a myriad of other potential uses, of both social and financial benefit to the island.
64	Andrew Murray	<p>I would like to make the following suggestions regarding the future potential use of the above mentioned airstrips.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The apron in Cleggan could be developed for paid secure car/bus parking facilities to replace those removed on and near the pier in Cleggan, while creating employment for a courtesy bus driver/carpark attendant. <p>With the continued increase in tourist numbers to Inishbofin, there is inevitably going to be a shortage of parking spaces and increased congestion in the village.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The airstrip itself should be used for landing and refuelling of emergency flights and a permanent coast guard base, and even a flying school or flying tours of Connemara. 3. Management of the strip on Inishbofin should handed over to the people of the island, or the existing Community Development Council on their behalf, to be opened up as a landing strip to attract some of the hundreds of flying clubs around Ireland, the UK and mainland Europe to the island, creating extra revenue for the island, thereby creating extra employment. 4. It must also be available for use as an emergency landing strip and continue to be available for the emergency service helicopters.
65	Phyllis Mercer	<p>In relation to the above airstrip I wish to request that a public meeting to discuss the matter should be held on the island, in order that the islanders, and other interested parties, can be fully briefed on the proposed change of ownership and usage of the airstrip, and can then make informed suggestions and comments. To my knowledge no such public meeting has been held to date, and many islanders may be unaware of the proposed changes.</p> <p>It seems important to me that the ownership of such a large asset, in the centre of a small island is extremely important and should be locally based. Future usage should of benefit to the community and should in no way detract from the life of that community.</p> <p>Ideally, the site should be owned by an island authority, who would be in the best position to ensure that its usage is of benefit to the island, and that any profit which might accrue could be used for island investment.</p> <p>There are many alternative uses for the site which could be of benefit to the island.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of a well-maintained, central and easily accessed helipad on the site, to be used for emergency and medical purposes, would be sensible and of immense benefit. • The proposed new health centre, very badly needed, has been delayed due to difficulties with the original site. The health centre could be conveniently located on the site where it is convenient to all and would benefit by location close to a helipad. • Sites for house building could be made available to islanders who currently find it difficult to find affordable sites. The area is close to electricity, phone and water services. • The provision of some form of waste recycling is badly needed on the island, particularly during the tourist season. • The area is very suitable for the installation of solar generation electricity panels. <p>Again, I stress that a public meeting is of vital importance.</p>
66	Tara McMahon	My family and others on Inishbofin are having significant problems finding suitable homes in which to raise our families.

		<p>We are currently renting a small, two bedroom house (for my, my husband and our two children – we are expecting our third baby in August) that we are rapidly outgrowing but we simply cannot find an alternative, year round option, for renting (due to the large number of holiday rentals on the island that are let seasonally). If we do not secure somewhere we are facing the very real prospect of leaving the island once our third child is born in order to live in a house that meets our needs – a decision that we would not make lightly nor would we accept easily. We are not the only family of children that are pre or national school age that are doing this and aside from the size and suitability of rental accommodation there is also the issue of paying a significant monthly rent – averaging at around €650 per month – and the feeling of wasting that money – the sense of having nothing to show for such a large annual outgoing.</p> <p>The alternatives to people like us anywhere else would be to build or buy but as you probably know, houses and sites on Inishbofin fetch premium prices as increasing numbers of outsiders buy for holiday homes – thus for those of us living here all year round on meagre incomes, buying a house or a site is well beyond our reach. Grants come up occasionally from LEADER but these grants are for the building of holiday accommodation only – which means that they are tied to short term, seasonal lettings. This is short sighted, one thing Inishbofin does not urgently need is holiday homes – it needs accommodation for local people, local families, people that will populate the island all year round and will secure the future of the island for future generations.</p> <p>My husband and I have been examining every possible way that would allow us to own a modest home on the island and when the idea of a consultation regarding the air strip came up it seemed obvious for us to suggest/request using that land for residential sites.</p> <p>Families here who survive on meagre incomes have some hope of raising the money required to either build or buy a site, but to do both together is an impossibility. Might some of the air strip site be broken up into sites and donated to families with young children? I feel that the provision of sites for family homes would improve the quality of life for a significant number to a degree we currently only currently dream of and as you know children represent the future of the island and children in the preschool age group will be critical to the survival of our primary school over the next decade and to the sustainability of this small community. Securing the future of the island is imperative and we feel that by providing sites for housing would contribute to preserving the island way of life for generations to come.</p> <p>Of course, mine is just one family, but like I said there are others in the same position who would welcome the opportunity to discuss this.</p> <p>Obviously the site would also need to be used for a helipad for search and rescue helicopters etc. but that would only be a small portion of the site.</p> <p>Whatever happens I think it is key that the land be given back to the island, to the people of Inishbofin and not sold to private individuals or companies.</p>
67	Malise Gibney	<p>I live on Inishbofin Island very close to the airstrip. My family have a commonage share for the area that the airstrip is located on. There was never a public vote on whether the island wanted an airstrip at all even though this was promised when the plans were put up in the community centre.</p> <p>My family refused to take the compensation offered to give up our commonage share as we felt that the airstrip was being foisted on us by external political and internal business concerns. The airstrip has been both a white elephant and a vanity project which has cost a ridiculous amount of money and caused structural damage to our home when the explosives were first set off, the charges were incorrectly sized and the subsequent detonations damaged several properties.</p> <p>Now there is an outside contractor paid, we are told some €90,000 per annum to maintain the site which seems to involve an annual visit to spray a few litres of "Round-Up", which has no effect on the Gunnera infestation which was brought into the Island and is suspiciously heavily located on the airfield site.</p> <p>The site should be returned to local island ownership as it has not been put to the purpose that it had been taken for.</p>
68	Ronan Coyne	<p>I'm a resident of Inishbofin, I was born on the island, I spent a long time on the mainland and have recently moved back to Inishbofin.</p>

		<p>I saw an article in the paper with request for submissions on Inishbofin / Cleggan Airports</p> <p>I doubt very much a commercial service would be viable to Inishbofin / Cleggan for any private company without a subsidy. I doubt the Government is willing to give out another subsidy to Inishbofin when it already has two, one for passenger ferry and one for cargo service (which I must say both services are excellent).</p> <p>A few thoughts on what could become of the airport on Inishbofin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly an area should be made available for the Coast Guard helicopter which provide medical emergency evacuations from Inishbofin, a crucial service. Basically a Heli pad with lighting, Probably the hard stand area to the South East of the airport • Also the area could be used for solar panels, it's quite a large area and a solar panel farm would not be seen from the road and could probably produce on average enough electricity to power the Island. (similarly solar panels could be put on Cleggan airport) <p>Some other ideas would possible be a weather station for Met Eireann or an observatory as there is no light pollution on Inishbofin (Dark Skies)</p>
69	Judith Kay	<p>Further to your newspaper announcements I write to urge those considering the disposal of the planned Airstrip near Cleggan, Co Galway to reconsider this matter.</p> <p>Given the large amount of work already undertaken on this site, the large sum of public money already expended and the high level of public support evidenced by the scale of private investment raised for the project it would seem profligate in the extreme to abandon this site.</p> <p>Further it would be less than even handed to deprive those engaged in tourism on Inishbofin of such an important link to the mainland, especially as the Arran Islands have the benefit of an air link when Inis Boffin already has an airstrip to receive incoming flights from Cleggan.</p> <p>Indeed, tourism to much of Connemara, especially its capital Clifden, is sadly lacking in any means of easy access especially since the closure of the Airport in Galway. I am sure that the committee is well aware of the poor state of road link from Knock rendering Clifden and its environs almost less accessible than at the early part of the last century when at least there was a railway!</p> <p>As a licenced private pilot I can assure the committee of the very real opportunity presented by the availability of a general aviation terminal in this part of Ireland which, by definition, would open the area to affluent individuals from Britain especially given Cleggan's proximity to an excellent golf course at Ballyconnelly coupled with many quality hotels in the area.</p> <p>I understand that there is also interest by the Coastguard Service in basing air/sea rescue support at the Cleggan strip which would have very significant lifesaving implications and must therefore be another crucial aspect of your considerations.</p> <p>You ask for proposals in terms of the provision of air services for the site. Many airfields in the UK, and also in other parts of Ireland do, as you must know, operate on the basis of PPR (Prior Permission Required) and thus requirements such as Fire Truck Support, Air Traffic Control and fuel bowsers could easily be made available on an ad hoc basis in the early stages of operation, with permanent availability instated once the demand was established.</p> <p>Given the above points I profoundly hope that you will decide in favour of bringing the already significant progress with the Clifden and West Connemara Airport</p>

		to its logical conclusion.
70	Brendan Day - Inishbofin House Hotel	I write on behalf of Inishbofin House Hotel. We believe that keeping the airstrips in state ownership is the best option to protect the future viability of the airstrips
71	Des Moran - Moran's Meats	I am in support of the retention of the airport sites at Cleggan and Inishbofin in state ownership with a view to provisional air services at both sites. As a major contributor at both community and national levels to economics, as a critical transport infrastructure asset, employment location and as a commercial activity centre, i give my full support.
72	James Hayward	<p>There is a consultation process with regards to the airfields</p> <p>Cleggan and Inishbofin</p> <p>Having toured Ireland a couple of times these airfields are important should you wish to facilitate my return to the areas concerned</p>
73	Martin Kirrane	<p>I understand that you are looking for suggestions for the above airfields. I am a private pilot with my own two seater plane. I recently flown my plane from Czech Republic to Ireland. During that trip I called to a number of small non commercial airfields. There was a lot of private activity with local restaurants etc. There was a lot of activity with little formalities.</p> <p>One very interesting feature was that the airfields were available at all times for aircraft to land without having to have ground staff. I used to travel to the Aran Islands on a regular basis but now we can not fly into the Islands unless it is manned and it means that if you do fly into Aran you have to have leave early so it is not flexible and restricted. There is a local airfield in Craughwell which has little formalities and it is very popular.</p> <p>I would suggest that Inishboffin and Cleggan airfield be open for general aviation at pilot responsibility. I believe pilots would voluntary contribute towards a landing fee for the use of the airfields. I have no doubt a lot of Irish, UK and French aircraft would visit the area if the airfields were available.</p>
74	Alex Jeffers	<p>I'm a keen general aviation pilot as well as a commercial pilot with Stobart Air.</p> <p>It would give a valuable boost to these two areas for this superb resource to be open to the general aviation community.</p> <p>It would be another access to the incredibly successful wild Atlantic way, and would undoubtedly draw new general aviation visitors from the UK and further afield</p>
75	Chris Gibbons	<p>I am writing to you to urge to do what must be done to save the runways of Cleggan and Inishboffin. I am a General Aviation pilot from Westport Co Mayo. I am a member of a very active flying club (Ultraflight, Abbeyshrule) and we have often organised flights of several aircraft at a time to visit all over this wonderful country of ours. I am old enough to remember Castlebar Airport and I still feel its loss.</p> <p>Once aviation resources are lost, they are lost for ever. Please in the name of common sense please save our runways and ensure that they are open to all who wish to use them. General aviation has a lot to offer these Island communities.</p>
76	Seamus King	<p>I'm writing to urge the department to go ahead and open the airfield at Cleggan, Co. Galway.</p> <p>I own a small aircraft, registration EI-SMK, based in Co. Kildare. I have flown to the west Galway area but have been unable to land because there is no light airplane friendly airstrip available. My daughter and her husband have a mobile home in the area and it would be ideal for me to visit with them if the airfield was open.</p> <p>I would use the airfield several times a year if it was available.</p>
77	Mannion Aird & Co	<p>We write to advise that we support the future use of the Air Strips and Surrounding Sites for the provision of Air Services at both Sites in Cleggan and Inishbofin by the State.</p> <p>Both Sites are in a completed state of Development such that they only now need to be licenced, so as to be able to be used for the purpose for which they were</p>

		<p>constructed. User of the Air Strip will justify the Investment of approximately 10 million euro by the State in their Development. It is entirely an appropriate use of Public Funds that the Air Strips be retained in State ownership and be opened as soon as possible, as Air Strips to service the Island of Inishbofin, to connect it to the Mainland, the Aran Islands and Minna and further, so that the important Tourism area of Connemara be connected to Belfast, Dublin, Manchester and London by the Provision of direct Flights.</p> <p>We urge the Minster to make the appropriate positive decision to have the Strips licenced so that Aer Arann, Private Individuals and other Air Services, can use the Strips.</p>
78	Paul Hughes	<p>We believe that the two Airstrips (Cleggan & Bofin) should be kept in State ownership.</p> <p>Hopefully in time when money is more plentiful a PSO for an Island Service between Cleggan and Bofin could become a reality.</p>
79	HSE West	<p>I am enquiring about the possibility of a site for consideration at the airstrip for new Primary Care centre on Inishbofin.</p> <p>We are about to review two site options in the vicinity of the airstrip under the ownership of Galway Co. Co. However, after seeing the recent advert attached we would be keen to clarify – rule in or out, as quickly as possible if there is another possible option at the airstrip?</p> <p>I am available to discuss with you or whoever is dealing with the matter in your department.</p> <p>I would appreciate if you would advise who is the best person to speak with and provide their contact details. We were about to start ecology and environmental investigations at Galway Co Co sites near airstrip when we became aware of the advert. We are most anxious to move with these site investigations and surveys and would extend to another site at the same time if an option presented.</p>
80	Gerry Mac Closkey - Connemara Safari	Regarding the airport site at Inishbofin and Cloon I would strongly support these sites remaining in state ownership pending their further development when the time is right.
81	Mannion Lochrin & Co Chartered Accountants	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
82	Enda Keane - Cleggan Riding Centre	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
83	Regina Hopkins Kingston House B & B	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
84	John Earls – Earls Engineering (Kiltullagh) Ltd	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
85	Chris McDonnell	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
86	Ronnie Counihan – Renvyle Hotel	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
87	Dean Gibson –	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in

	Connemara Sands Hotel	State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
88	Emer Joyce Solicitor	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
89	Shane Joyce	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
90	Eilish Joyce – Lowry’s Bar	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
91	Eugene Casey – Mannin Bay Salmon Co. Ltd	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
92	Paul Lydon The Celtic Shop	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
93	Simon M Trezise – Clifden Boat Club	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
94	Cathal Joyce	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
95	Ronnie Millar	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
96	Neil McLoughlin	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
97	Donal Coyne	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
98	D Vaughan – Roundstone House Hotel	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
99	Nicole Shanahan – The Book Shop	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
100	Thomas Conneely – The Furniture Store	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
101	Ben Crow – Connemara Blue	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
102	Lowrys Sweater	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in

	Shop	State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
103	Martin V Mannion	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
104	Rogans Shop Cleggan	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
105	Suzann Schley – Schley Accountancy	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
106	All things Connemara	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.,
107	Mary Margaret O'Reilly – The Bens Music and Framing Shop	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
108	G Shanahan – Shanahans Filling Station Clifden	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
109	Kestutis Bilghis	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
110	Cathal Walsh – Walshs Bakery	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
111	Joseph Conneely	Dear Minister, I have read your notice.I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State.The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.
112	Peter Waldron	<p>Warm greetings and good wishes.</p> <p>I write to say it was with some amazement and indeed dismay that I read your notice regarding the possible sale of the two Airstrips at Cleggan and the Island.</p> <p>As you know the marvellous Clifden Airport initiative, led by a small but deeply committed, energetic and visionary group of local entrepreneurs in Connemara at the time, encompasses the huge hopes and aspirations of a very large number of people. These would be not only Tourism and business interests but from a wide swathe of public opinion across all sectors, and not only from Connemara itself, big as it is, but from all parts of the country and beyond. All of this is reflected brilliantly in the mammoth voluntary effort involved in the successful raising of the staggering €1 million during the campaign for the purchase of the site, through the Planning Process and the final construction of the splendid Cleggan Airport itself. The €10 million State investment indicates the Department's total belief in and commitment to the project at the time.</p> <p>To consider putting this and the Inishbofin strips for sale now would surely be a most retrograde step. Such a move would certainly cause widespread disappointment, confusion, anger and outrage. It should not be entertained. And for a mere €10 million...?!</p>

		<p>On behalf of my fellow Directors and Shareholders and the 1000 members and thousands of adherents of Connemara Gold Club, I appeal to you in the strongest terms to do all in your considerable power to ensure that this sale never happens. Indeed it has been and remains our fervent hope and expectation that these two Strips will soon be brought into daily operation for the benefit of all our tourism and business interests in the Connemara region. Historically, it can't have escaped anyone that there is such a perfect symmetry in having an Airport just a short distance from where Alcock and Brown landed in that first historic transatlantic flight back in June 1919. Perfect! Additionally, the safety and relative inexpensiveness of aeroplane flight as against Helicopter transport clearly weighs heavily on the public mind these days. I myself witnessed and unforgettably attended at the aftermath of a tragic chopper flight from Ballynahinch, caught in fog, in July 1982. – Let it never be forgotten, connectivity safe, easy and available, for Connemara and for the Island, is everything!</p>
113	Des Moran – Moran's Victualler	<p>Dear Minister, I have read your notice. I urge you to take all steps necessary to proceed to license and open the Airstrips, I think also they should be retained in State ownership as €10 million has been invested by the State. The development will be a positive impact on the life of the Islanders of Inishbofin and will greatly advance the Tourism area of West Connemara.</p>