

**From:** SWAP [<mailto:swap@braywatch.com>]

**Sent:** 30 November 2016 22:08

**To:** Press Office Public Expenditure and Reform

**Cc:** [MinistersOffice@OPW.ie](mailto:MinistersOffice@OPW.ie); Deputy Pat Casey; Deputy Stephen Donnelly; Deputy John Brady; Minister Andrew Doyle; Minister Simon Harris; Adrian Mckenna; Brian and Deirdre MacSweeney; Cait Kenny; carmen cullen; catherine byrne; Charlotte Molloy; Derek and Ann Crinnions; herbert wright; Jim Allen; Joan Conway; Mary Dorothy; Niamh Kelly; Pauline O'Brien; Vincent Eaves

**Subject:** Lobbying Act and lobbying.ie

Dear Sirs,

We are a community group from Little Bray in Co. Wicklow who have been fighting for over eleven years now to prevent building on a floodplain of the Dargle river, which is located between us and the sea. This floodplain has provided an escape route for flooding from our homes in four major floods in the last century. Flood defences are almost complete now, thank God, but they can fail, as the OPW and every other expert on flooding and climate change repeatedly points out. In that case, our floodplain is essential, particularly as our community has a very high percentage of elderly and disabled residents, many of them living in one-storey houses.

The floodplain was rezoned in 2005 as Town Centre, and, despite a five year battle via An Bord Pleanala, Pizarro Developments was given a ten year planning permission for an enormous development there in 2010. This was against the recommendation of their own Inspector, following the terrible floods of 2009, and despite the fact that Pizarro was then being taken over by NAMA. They are still in NAMA, their development has not yet been built, and we are still fighting to have the zoning changed so that, if the present planning permission is not utilised, that land will be used as a linear park and playing pitches, leaving us our safety net in case of failure of our defences.

We are not trying to stop the development, simply to have it stepped back across a narrow floodplain to the high ground behind it, which had over 11 acres zoned as Open Space.

This is an enormous battle for a small, elderly community such as ours to fight, and yet we have had to cope with the bureaucracy of registering and trying to complete reports since September 2015 in order to comply with the Lobbying Act. Developers, on the other hand, have paid staff and lots of experience in dealing with such reports. We don't have either.

Today we were told (on seeking advice from the Standards Commission regarding publishing our finally completed reports) that your Department is seeking submissions on this Act. I cannot find such a facility on your web site, and would be grateful if you could help us in this regard, because this Act, in its present form, is adding an extra layer of difficulty for ordinary people like us in trying simply to protect our homes and our lives. None of us will have any monetary gain out of this campaign. Indeed, we have all fund-raised with car boot sales, etc., and dipped into our own pockets to try to fund it. Why then, should the same rules be applied to us as to large, wealthy developers who can gain millions (this plan was touted as a 2.2b euro development in their PR) from rezoning, and have more than enough paid staff to do this kind of return in no time.

We would be grateful to have this burden, at least, taken off our shoulders as we continue to campaign. The Lobbying Act, in its present form, is anti-people and pro-developer – not, we are sure, its intention.

Yours sincerely,

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for SWAP (Safety with Alternative Plan)  
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