

Queensway Environmental Defenders

HISTORY OF LYTHAM MOSS MEETING ~ REPORT ~

of a meeting to promote the importance of Lytham Moss and update supporters on Kensington's latest plans for Queensway

HOSTED BY: *Queensway Environmental Defenders*

ORGANISERS: *Queensway Environmental Defenders*

SUPPORTED BY: *Fylde Civic Awareness Group*

ISSUE: *Plans to develop 1,150 homes at Queensway*

QED Meeting, St Anne's, 25 February 2009
HISTORY OF LYTHAM MOSS and QED UPDATE

website: www.queensway.org.uk

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WEB: www.queensway.org.uk
EMAIL: info@queensway.org.uk



OUR AIM

- ◆ To defend the natural environment and the local community from the threat of inappropriate development.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To raise public awareness of the effect of new urban development on existing communities, their amenities and infrastructure.
- ◆ To raise public awareness of the natural environment, and the impact of development upon it.
- ◆ To highlight the importance, benefits and significance of local environmental matters.
- ◆ To rally and encourage support for our aim through advocacy, promotion and information.
- ◆ To collaborate with individuals and other organisations to achieve our aim.
- ◆ To raise funds for uses in connection with our aim.
- ◆ To encourage and involve a broad spectrum of the community in QED and its activities.



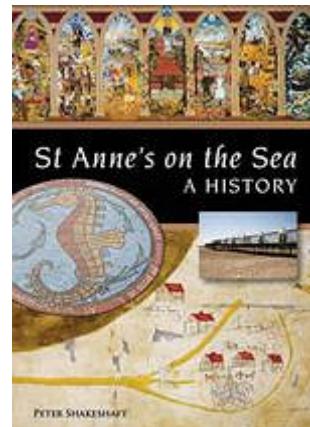
THE HISTORY OF LYTHAM MOSS

A talk by Peter Shakeshaft

**Wed 25th
FEBRUARY**

7.00pm

St Albans Church Hall
Kilnhouse Lane



ALSO: HEAR THE LATEST QED UPDATE
TALK WITH DEFENDERS INFORMALLY

~~~ FINGER BUFFET ~~~ RAFFLE ~~~

Tickets £4 each (includes admission & buffet)

To book, please ring 01253 728047  
or email [info@queensway.org.uk](mailto:info@queensway.org.uk)

More details: [www.queensway.org.uk](http://www.queensway.org.uk)

*Max 70. Early booking is strongly advised, but you can take a chance and pay on the door*

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**BACKGROUND AND PROCESS**

**BACKGROUND**

In July 2005, Kensington Developments' application for 350 homes at Queensway was granted on appeal, but John Prescott stepped in, overrode his own Inspector's decision, and blocked Kensington.

In December 2007 they returned again, this time with plans for 1,150 new homes on land off Queensway. They held an exhibition at St Alban's Church Hall on Kilnhouse Lane to gauge public reaction.

Residents close to the proposed development spoke of their concern about facilities being stretched by such a large-scale scheme. Clearly there was public concern, but it was neither formalised nor organised.

**FORMALISING OPPOSITION TO THE PLANS**

A handful of residents came together at the invitation of the Clerk of the Fylde Civic Awareness Group and resolved to test public opinion on the idea of forming a group to oppose the plans.

They created the identity of 'Queensway Environmental Defenders' and, over several months, sought advice from experts and other groups to see if there were grounds to resist and oppose the plans.

This nuclear group came to the view there were grounds to oppose, and, supported by Defend Lytham and the Fylde Civic Awareness Group, they organised a public meeting 24th September 2008 to test public opinion in the same hall that Kensington had held their exhibition nine months earlier. That meeting produced a report which is available from QED and the Fylde Civic Awareness Group.

This report addresses their follow-up meeting of 25 February 2009 to hear about the historic importance of Lytham Moss and to update residents of five months of QED's progress.

# QED Meeting, St Anne's, 25 February 2009

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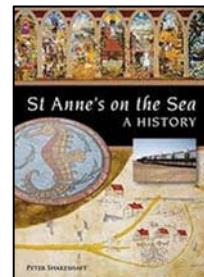
### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Welcome and introduction**

Vice Chairman of the Fylde Civic Awareness Group Bob Plant opened the meeting, and welcomed an audience of about 70 people. He explained that Queensway Environmental Defenders were members of the Civic Awareness group, and as such, they were eligible for support toward their meeting costs, and he was very happy to be able to support them on this occasion.

He went on to introduce local historian Peter Shakeshaft whose book "*Saint Anne's on the Sea – A History*" has recently been published.

Noting that Peter was speaking as an independent person, (*not on behalf of QED*), Bob said he was pleased Peter's talk would give everyone the opportunity to hear about the history of Lytham Moss.



#### **History of Lytham Moss**

Peter began by saying he would give an impartial overview of Lytham Moss. He noted there were issues that needed to be addressed by QED and hoped his contribution would help to inform the debate. Stressing he was not a landscape historian, he said his talk would outline the moss, its history, and its activity over four centuries. He also explained that as well as an interest in history, he has an interest in wild birds. Over the last 37 years he and his wife have been part of the Wetland Bird Survey, counting and recording shorebird populations every month along the Lytham St Anne's foreshore.



The sources for his talk were mainly the Clifton papers, (including leases recording who was farming where and when), and the Court Records from Lytham Manorial Court, under whose jurisdiction most of the moss was controlled. He also noted that historically, descriptions of Lytham Moss would have been included within the more general term Marton Moss.

For anyone with a serious interest in mossland, he recommended a publication called "*The Wetlands of North Lancashire*" – an in-depth academic survey completed 20 years ago.

He began the history in 1189 when the Cathedral at Durham established a Priory at Lytham, at which time the whole area of Lytham moss was just a

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great bog, but by 1532 there were disputes about grazing cattle and the Duchy Court at Lancaster arbitrated. Depositions taken at the time give a good account of what was going on around 1530 to 1532. People from Layton were coming down to Lytham Moss and "casting down ditches." This was the first reference to early drainage of the mossland for agricultural use.

By the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century the Priory had started to develop what became Heyhouses (*in what would eventually become St Anne's, but at that time was just another part of Lytham*) and over time a distinct community subsequently developed. There were no field names from antiquity, so when the Priory started to enclose land, field names like "New Hey" and "South Hey" appeared. Farms came first on the slightly higher or drier ground of Heyhouses Lane, and none extended onto the wet mossland.



However 1606 was a watershed year. Cuthbert Clifton bought the Lytham estate and by 1609 there was agreement on the division of common land between the manors of Lytham and Layton. So far as Lytham Moss was concerned this was the founding of its present day boundary which was then a drainage ditch dug in the vicinity of what is now "Division Lane" to separate Lytham and Marton Moss and allow the according of rights and responsibilities for each.

In 1611 the first Manorial Court was held for the Manor of Lytham naming who would must work on the moss (12 Manorial Court orders were made). This included work to maintain the watercourses and attempts to stabilise the sand dunes with star grass planting. They also set out the turbary rights – this was the right and duty to cut turf for fuel and other uses both for the individuals and as a manorial service to provide turf for the Clifton family.

In 1607 the first leases start to be granted, when farms reached up to the edge of the wet moss but not beyond.

1664 saw three people fined 6d for loading turf at the wrong time of year, and others fined for not taking the allotted amount of turf to Lytham Hall.

1709 saw Roger Charnley farming at Charnley's Farm (*on the site of the now demolished Division Farm*) and being fined for not complying with the instructions for cutting turf. The "Moss Reeves" (*a sort of bailiff on behalf of*

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*the Lord of the Manor) were, by order, appointed to inspect and check on the work being undertaken. If the work was not done by the relevant leasehold farmer, the Reeve could invite all and sundry to dig 'his' turf.*

Drainage of the area was always seen as paramount, with the Manorial Court making orders as early as 1611 to enforce the maintenance and repair of ditches. In 1708 regulations were set that specified the size and depth of each ditch and the dates by which the work had to be undertaken. By 1769 the "Moss Sluice" had become the main watercourse in the Manor of Lytham. Today drainage feeds into the Moss Sluice and Liggard Brook and out to the River Ribble at Dock Road, Lytham.

In terms of farming on the moss, it was marginal for many years. In the early days it was too wet for sheep that would have succumbed to the disease 'foot rot' although there may have been occasional cows pastured. Sheep were mostly pastured in the sand dunes. Even by 1850 it was marginal, but work by James Fair, the new land agent appointed by the Clifton's started to change that, he embarked on a massive plan to modernise farming practices within Heyhouses, rebuild farmhouses, improve drainage, and thereby increase income for the Clifton estate.



The Manorial Court continued oversight of the moss, requiring ditches to be cleaned, and imposing fines for failure. Even in 1928 and 1931 the Manorial Court still had influence although it was waning – its main power now was persuasive, that it was working for the common good. One of the last known Manorial Court Orders was in 1943 when the then Lytham St Anne's Corporation was fined for failing to maintain ditches in its control. A fine the Corporation paid voluntarily without prejudice to their liability.

The Manorial Court's power over land drainage was subsumed into the powers of the South Fylde Drainage Board in 1947.

In his concluding remarks, Peter stressed the importance of the drainage of the area for agricultural use, and wondered today who had that responsibility and whether it was being adequately discharged.

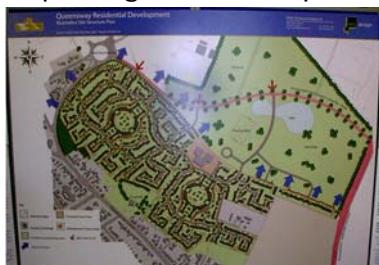
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### **QED Update**

In opening the QED update Janet Lees posed the questions:



- Where were we?
- What have we done?
- Where are we now?, and
- The Big Picture?

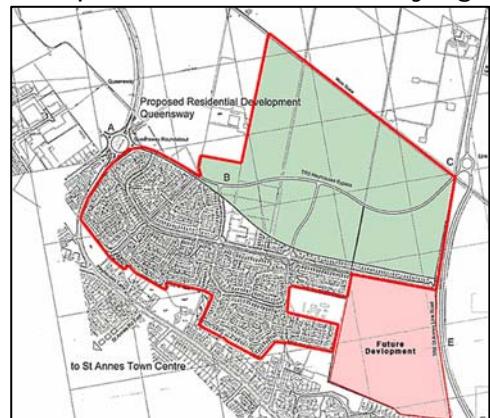
She said last year when Kensington held their exhibition and showed their first plans, people had been concerned. Even though it appeared to be generous with open space and well spaced houses, the overall number of houses had caused concern. Several people had come together to launch the group, which began a successful campaign to draw attention to Kensington's proposals.

Janet's slides reminded everyone what the original proposals had looked like and she noted how much better they looked then than the most recent set. Using maps and sketches she showed the outline of the site and the original layout with the 1,150 houses and a deer park shown in green, the site of a primary school and some tennis courts.

The map also showed the route of the proposed link road which runs from the M55 to Cypress Point (running top to bottom on the map).



The plans also showed varying lines for the Heyhouses by-pass which runs



*(more or less horizontally across these drawings)* from a proposed junction on the Lytham St Annes Link Road to a new roundabout junction near where the present traffic lights are at Kilnhouse Lane and Queensway.

She mentioned that as well intending to get traffic to the motorway easily, this road will also become the main route into Lytham, Ansdell, and St Annes for all traffic, with large commercial vehicles using it to service industry,

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supermarkets, and small businesses in these areas. This would mean juggernauts arriving at Cypress Point and Kilnhouse Lane and wending their way along roads there were not intended to take such traffic.

The new scheme appeared to be a much more dense layout as well. Gone were the green areas within the estate, gone was the Deer Park and now there a spine road runs through the middle of the open land.

She also pointed out that these drawings showed the link road to be outside the Kensington site.

More worrying had been QED's discovery that it could be eight years before the road across the moss was built - if it was built at all, because Kensington said they would not pay for the road to be built until after the 700<sup>th</sup> house was occupied. At Kensington's planned rate of 175 houses a year, it would take over four years to get to that position (and that was before the credit crunch).

In the latest '*Illustrative Masterplan*' produced by Kensington, (*which has increased water areas, a football pitch and tree planting*) the line of the M55 Link Road appears to have changed. It now appears to run through Kensington's site (*which does not accord with any of the council's maps*), but it gives the illusion that Kensington control the means of access to their site. This impression



is incorrect so far as all previous maps showing the line of the link road are concerned.

Turning to what QED had done since the launch; Janet said the first job had been to produce a technical objection to Kensington's proposals. This had involved the group studying many lengthy technical documents - several over 300 pages long. QED had asked the Council to extend the consultation period and the Council had agreed. Eventually after many hours of work a comprehensive technical objection of 30 pages had been submitted.

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The group had also produced a website to keep people informed of developments and had advised local people how to frame their objections for maximum effect. Copies of objections had been circulated to all Fylde councillors.

On the issue of flooding, she said whilst she wanted to call it a "flood plain" this technical definition used by the Environment Agency is specific to sea or river flooding, so she would instead call it "*a plain that floods.*" Noting the comments of Peter Shakeshaft about the need throughout history to keep ditches clear to avoid flooding, she made the point that land all the way from Blackpool's Stanley Park area and Marton Mere, together with all St Annes North and Lytham, all drain through the moss to the pumping station at Dock Road.



The Environment Agency's second letter had shown the need to attenuate the surface water run off to a rate that would occur naturally, and this was to "*reduce the increased risk of flooding*" Janet noted that this showed the Environment Agency was aware there was an increased risk of flooding from this scheme and that the run-off strategy **would only reduce, not eliminate** the increased flood risk.

Using photographs that were taken in December, she showed an area of the moss which, according to the Council and the Environment Agency is not in a flood zone.



It is the area where Kensington's plans show they will build houses.



The photographs were taken behind one of the houses of a QED member and Janet argued they show what most people would call "flooding" on the land.

Noting that Heyhouses already had foundational

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instability as a result of groundwater changes she wondered what would happen if the groundwater was further interfered with.

She also asked who would be accountable for further damage to existing properties. Who would pay the increased insurance premiums? Who would be accountable for further flooding or property instability? Would it be the Council, or United Utilities, or Kensington?

She said all of these issues had been raised, checked as far as possible with experts, and included in QED's detailed objection, copies of which were available from the group's website.

Another aspect that had been addressed was media relations and QED was fortunate to have access to a communications expert and also a local environmental expert who had liaised with all the wildlife and countryside groups and organisations, and has left no stone unturned to draw attention to the biodiversity that will be affected by the development if it goes ahead.

*Press Release January 2008*

**Homes fight to focus on wetland habitats**

**CAMPAGNERS** are stepping up their efforts to halt plans to build more than 1,000 new homes on **Queensway**.

Grenville residents, alongside supporters by Kensington's plans to build over 1,000 new homes at St Anne's and have signed up to the Queensway Environmental Defenders (QED) campaign opposing the move.

Both RSPB and Natural England have now come on board and asked that Fylde Council puts further work into the scheme to assess its impact on the nearby Ribble Estuary.

The groups have identified that the Moss is an important inland winter feeding ground for internationally important birds.

QED now believes its case, supported by evidence from ecologists, environmentalists and professional planners, is strong enough to force

By James Riley  
[lens@citizensaction.co.uk](http://www.citizensaction.co.uk)

Kensington to re-think its plans as the protest gathers momentum.

A spokesman for group said: "We need to keep pushing and try to take an active part in the campaign and encourage other people to get involved as we need to help our cause."

"We think Kensington could withdraw its application and submit another to try and get round some of the problems it has caused us."

"If it is withdrawn, it will only be a half hearted withdrawal and not a long haul. Our Defenders stand behind the campaign and believe that unless Fylde Council realises the importance of the moss, they may well decide to keep Kensington the site is not appropriate for housing."

Kensington has declined to comment.

The RSPB has joined protests against the proposed Queensway homes scheme



As a result of QED's press coverage and contact with organisations, both the RSPB and Natural England have requested Fylde Council to assess the impact the plan would have on the nearby Ribble Estuary. This is because QED and they believe the moss functions as an inland winter feeding resource for internationally important migratory birds.

The group had spent (at least what seemed like) hundreds of hours poring over policies, scoping reports, strategies, planning policies and the Councils own local plan.

They had explained their findings to the Saint Anne's on the Sea Town Council's Planning Committee who, after careful consideration of all the issues had formally objected to the Queensway application.



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Looking to the immediate future, Janet said she expected the next stage in the campaign to focus more on hearts and minds issues, aiming to convince individual councillors that the scheme was a bad idea, and helping local people to protest against the plans.

But she also warned of a bigger picture that is emerging as a threat to the traditional character and way of life of this area.

Using slides from the David Lock Associates presentation on the Growth Point Scheme she outlined her concerns, saying the M55 roundabout is being seen as a 'Hub' and we are to be just one spoke coming out of that enormous wheel of development that will ruin the character of the area.

**M55 Hub Growth Point Stakeholder Consultation**

**INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the feedback report of the M55 Hub Growth Point Conceptual Master Plan stakeholder workshop. It is prepared by David Lock Associates who are leading the consultant team.

Following a desk based assessment of the M55 Hub area, around 40 stakeholders with technical expertise and / or local interests in the area and its development were invited to participate in a half day workshop.

Held on 17th November 2008 at the Solars Centre, Blackpool, the aim of the workshop was to elicit those key issues which stakeholders considered important to the future development of the M55 Hub and to encourage people to think creatively about what sort of place the M55 Hub Growth Point could be.

Over 20 stakeholders attended the workshop and took part in round table discussions of the key issues. A group design workshop session explored how these issues might be best incorporated into a conceptual master plan for the site.

Stakeholders from the following organisations participated:

- Blackpool Council
- Fylde Borough Council
- Blackpool Health Authority
- Environment Agency
- United Utilities
- Blackpool Council
- St Annes on the Sea Town Council
- Blackpool Transport Services
- Fire Service
- Blackpool Primary Care Trust

**M55 Hub Growth Point Location**

This report provides a record of the discussions and workshop sessions. It draws out some of the key issues which are to be explored further by the consultant team as part of its ongoing work on the project.

She said she had always thought the proposed new road from Whitehills was the biggest problem. Whilst at this time it is shown to run from the M55 to Cypress Point, (with the spur to Kilnhouse Lane), she believes that in the future there will be a further link through to the Freckleton By-pass which will create a new 'limit of development' at the back of Warton, Lytham and St Annes, enabling massive development between the existing towns and the new road. This could double the size of the present built-up area.

**M55 Hub Growth Point Stakeholder Consultation**

**WORKSHOP 2 – SCALE / MIX / DIRECTION OF GROWTH POINT**

**GROUP 1**

- Yeadon Way sewerage
- local centre hub at Tesco?
- employment to edge of airport, M55 junction and existing green belt?
- 1 large open space not possible?
- consolidation existing employment areas
- quadrants / hybrid urban extension

Legend:

- Residential
- Primary School
- Open Space
- Industrial
- Green Corridor

The recently adopted Central Lancashire and Blackpool Growth Point scheme which Fylde Council has supported and which aims to generate money from development in Fylde which will then be used to regenerate the run down areas of central Blackpool could have a big effect on the area.

It was likely that large areas of housing would be proposed for land on either side of the M55 motorway and in the areas around Whitehills industrial estate.

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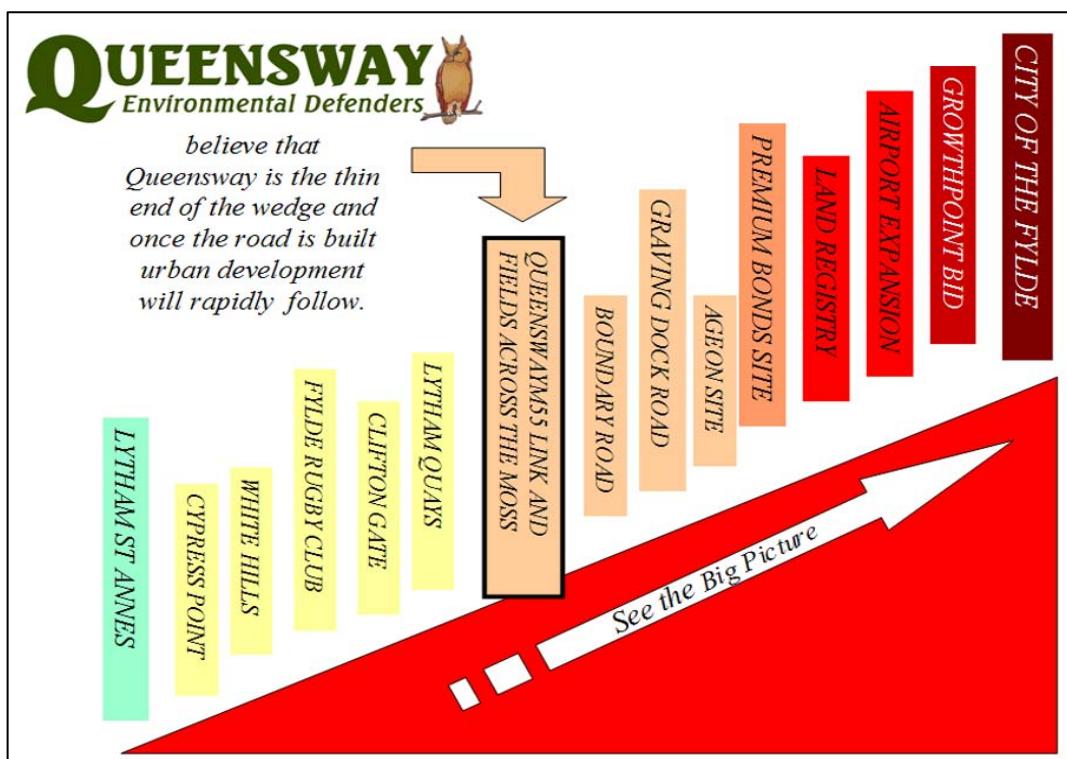
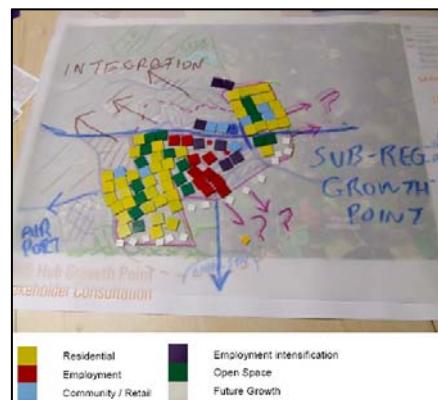
website: [www.queensway.org.uk](http://www.queensway.org.uk)

She explained that much of this was going on behind closed doors and referred to the "Stakeholder Consultation" held by David Lock Associates where people with no planning experience had been invited to a meeting, broken up into groups, given squares of sticky-back coloured paper representing either residential, industrial, open space, or primary school developments and asked to stick them where they thought best around the M55 hub.

She said understood there had been no discussion about "do we need it at all" or whether it was appropriate, only where the developments should be located.

She believed this was the thin end of a long wedge.

The concluding slide in her presentation was a thought provoking continuum showing QED's concerns that begin when Cypress Point started to change the area and ends with the 'City of the Fylde' becoming a reality through imperceptible but incremental steps. She concluded with a call for more people to Join QED and help with fundraising and publicising the issues.



# FYLDE CIVIC AWARENESS GROUP



*What's going on?  
Who's making decisions?  
Can you make a difference?*

## ***What's it all about?***



## ***We help people understand....***

- ◆ What Local Government is all about
- ◆ How priorities are decided
- ◆ What your money is spent on

## ***We work with local groups....***

- ◆ To encourage participation and foster co-operation
- ◆ To provide tactical and strategic support
- ◆ To share information and ideas, encourage alliances where appropriate, and
- ◆ To provide support and experience without loss of autonomy

Individuals can register for news and information about public events.  
Groups with an interest or influence in Fylde can become members and join our Delegate Assembly

**WWW.FYLDE.BIZ    0845 456 6122**

Fylde Civic Awareness Group is an independent, non party political, not for profit community organisation

supported by :

Chairman: Barbara Mackenzie Vice Chairman: Bob Plant Treasurer: Barbara Moor

Clerk: Fred Moor c/o 18 Sandhurst Avenue, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire. FY8 2DA

Please contact the Clerk or visit the website for more details.

