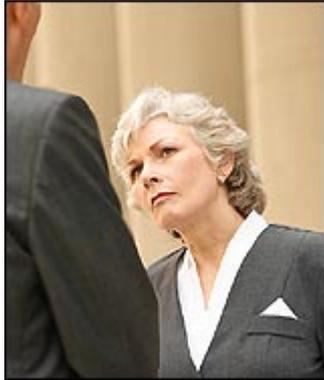


FYLDE CIVIC AWARENESS GROUP



FYLDE REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

For Immediate Use

2. April 2014

Campaigning for Committees

Following its successful petition, the Fylde Civic Awareness Group today launches its referendum campaign to change the way Fylde Council conducts its business - away from the Leader and Cabinet system - where seven of the councillors take most of the day-to-day decisions, - back to the tried and tested Committee System where all the councillors can speak and vote on behalf of their electorate.

FCAG's Clerk, Fred Moor, said *"In 2008, and again in 2013 we asked Fylde residents if they wanted their council to change back to the more democratic Committee system, and last year 4,600 people signed a petition to say they did."*

Fylde was the first UK council to receive a petition and have a local governance referendum - a power enshrined in the new Localism Act. But in March, residents of Canterbury in Kent also began a campaign and petition to change their Council back to the Committee system.

More locally, Conservative controlled Ribble Valley Council has never changed away from using the Committee system, and the Conservative group on Lancashire County Council is promoting a return to the Committee system at the County Hall. But at Fylde, the majority Conservative group have said they will oppose the return of the Committee system.

FCAG Chairman John Harrison said *"The key difference is that a return to the Committee System means the councillor you elect can once again speak up and vote on your behalf in all decisions. They are prevented from doing this under the present Leader and Cabinet system."*

The Civic Awareness Group's move is backed by almost half of Fylde's Councillors, and a vigorous campaign is expected from both sides.

Civic Awareness Vice Chairman John Bainbridge said *"We are very disappointed that Fylde Council decided not to produce an impartial leaflet to explain the pros and cons of each system to residents, so we have published information on our website, and are offering free presentations to local groups."*

People can find more details of the campaign and the issues at www.fylde.biz

Release ends

Information for Editors

- *FCAG is a not-for-profit community group run exclusively by volunteers*
- *We are not a party political organisation.*
- *We aim to help people understand how local government works, how decisions are made, and how their money is spent.*
- *Our 'Localism in Action Project' began in a public meeting in 2008, was inspired and enabled by the Localism Act of 2011, and is supported by the Big Lottery Fund.*
- The Conservative party's pre-election promise to support localism, and the Coalition's subsequent 'Localism Act' empowers either councils or local people to decide which operating system their Council will use. The Government recognised that Labour's the Leader and Cabinet system introduced in 2005 at Fylde had not been universally well received and enabled changes to be made.
- Details of the Canterbury campaign are at <http://www.campaign-dcd.org/>

