



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

*A not-for-profit community group defending the natural environment
and the local community from the threat of inappropriate development*

St Annes Town Council Objects to Queensway Development

The Saint Anne's on the Sea Town Council has now considered the Queensway planning application and registered its objection.

The Town Mayor, Cllr Mrs Barbara Mackenzie and the Clerk, Philip Jackson both thanked QED and other objectors for the information they had provided for the Town Council to consider.

Five of the Town Councillors, Mrs Barbara Mackenzie, Mrs Jill Sumner and Mrs Angela Jacques, together with Tony Ford and Arnold Sumner sat together with a public gallery of about twenty-five people at St Margaret's Church Hall.

Cllr Mrs Mackenzie chaired the meeting and said she recognised a great deal of public interest in the matter. She said she was going to allow anyone present to have a say on the matter before the Town Councillors debated it.

The Clerk said the Town Council was a consultee in this matter and they were considering the application in order to pass a view to Fylde Borough Council who would make the decision. Cllr Mrs Mackenzie said if they objected it would mean that FBC officers could not take the decision on their own, it would have to be considered by the Borough Council's Development Control Committee.

The first speaker said thank you for holding the debate in public and for allowing people to speak on the matter first. He said he would like to make two points. Firstly, the plan was an outline application, and the plans accompanying it were only for illustration. He said they were fictitious and showed what the developer wanted people to believe - for example they showed a section of the link road going through the developer's site when in fact it does not. He urged the Council to consider it as an outline application. Secondly he asked them to consider the bigger picture, how the moss road associated with this development could easily become the start of a link road all the way through Warton and to the Freckleton By-Pass and a consequential crescent of housing between the existing settlements and the line of a new road.

Speaker 2 said he lived 200 yards from the boundary of this land and he already had a lot of problems with the water table. He was very concerned

that the pressure on the land caused by building new houses would make the flooding much worse on his property.

Speaker 3 said when Frobisher Drive was built, he lived nearby and after it was built the water sometimes came up under his floorboards almost 12 inches deep.

Speaker 4 said He also was concerned about the flooding - the land has been so wet that the farmers have had to harvest them with tank track vehicles. Ordinary tractors were just sinking. He said this was a consequence of allowing Cypress Point to be built.

Speaker 5 said they had notices that Kensington's plan was that the moss road would not have to be built until 900 houses were occupied. That meant the existing infrastructure would have to cope with 899 extra houses.

Speaker 6 said if the development stops at 900 houses, the new road might never be built. He also said he was an amateur ecologist and he had spoken to lots of people about Kensington's environmental assessment and it was flawed. He said this area was far more important than they had suggested.

Speaker 7 said he agreed completely with speaker 6.

Speaker 8 said he didn't understand why we needed the link road at all. It would create a barrier, a dam, across the moss. He said the whole area was a soakaway, and every development from Church Road inland was an encroachment on the Moss. Parts of the area now built on are in effect rafts, and all this development will do is make things worse. He went on to complain that by leaving the fences in a poor state of repair, Kensington had allowed the existing bungalow to become derelict then when a Barn Owl had used it for nesting, they demolished the bungalow.

Speaker 9 said Saint Anne's had been designed to be accessed from the sea side - from Clifton Drive North - on a grid system with roads big and strong enough to carry juggernauts, but the new road would bring them down Kilnhouse Lane and Heyhouses which were not designed to take lorries of that scale.

Speaker 10 said he was offered a job by Faircloughs when they built the houses that subsided so much they had to be demolished, near to Stanley Park. He said the same people who did that also built Cypress Point and now want to build on more sinking land, and he didn't trust the accuracy of their statements.

Speaker 11 said he was worried the scheme would move the focus away from St Anne's town centre, and the road would take people away from the shops in St Anne's.

Speaker 12 agreed, saying Cypress Point has not added one jot to the vitality of St Anne's town centre. He added that the former GRE farms

manager had told him that you couldn't farm the land with a horse, let alone a tractor after Cypress Point had been built.

Speaker 13 said the fields were adjacent to his house, and since Cypress Point had been built, they hadn't been easy to farm because for the wetness of the ground. He said tractors sank up to their axels on the land and the water is backing up at the outfall onto Jubilee Way, and officials from Fylde Council and the Water Company had been to inspect it last week. He added that the horse field on Wildings Lane was constantly flooded now and he wanted to know what was going to be done to alleviate that NOW before any new development was considered. The problem was because all the new houses had hard surfaces and rainwater backed up quickly in the drains.

Speaker 14 said he had read the objection from the Environment Agency and they said there was an increased risk of flooding as a result of this development, and that the run-off strategy will only reduce, not ELIMINATE the increased flood risk. He also asked if this was the right development to meet the housing provisions when places like Pontins and Moorland Road Government Buildings were likely to change in the near future.

Speaker 15 said it was wrong to ask people to live in the flight path because of fuel dumping and the increased risk of accidents.

At this point Cllr Arnold Sumner asked a member of the public who has spoken to clarify a point. He said did I hear you right that you live next to the site, and when you dig down one metre the water is seawater and affected by the tide. This was confirmed. The man said he had some engineers working in his garden and they had brought a pump to keep the hole dry but couldn't do it when the tide was in.

Speaker 17 said several companies now refused to insure houses in the area for flooding.

At this point the public session close and the Town Council began their debate about what comments to pass on to the Borough Council.

The Clerk said he was grateful for the comments that had been provided by the Queensway Environmental Defenders group which the Town Council has used as a basis for their consideration, along with copies of the objections that had also been forwarded to them by QED. Cllr Mrs Mackenzie specifically mentioned the objection from Fylde Bird Club and the Scouts. From these he had made a summary of the objections for the Town Council to consider.

Two additional ones were that if the Borough Council was minded to approve the application they should ask for it to be called in by Government because of the previous call in and refusal. Secondly he drew attention to the applicant's Environmental evidence saying he thought it was suspect and it conflicted with evidence from other objectors.

These matters were discussed at length and some of the draft objections modified, others accepted and few discarded for one reason or another, but eventually a summary of the possible objections was produced, and members were asked to vote on the matter.

The vote went as follows;

- **Cllr Tony Ford** (*Ashton Ward*) - Object to the development on the grounds stated
- **Cllr Mrs Barbara Mackenzie** (*Central Ward*) - Object to the development on the grounds stated
- **Cllr Arnold Sumner** (*Park Ward*) - Object to the development on the grounds stated
- **Cllr Mrs Angela Jacques** (*St Leonards Ward*) - Reserve judgement. There are always two sides to and there are things that need to be looked at. They need to provide houses, but there are other sites like Pontins that could be taken into account
- **Cllr Mrs Jill Sumner** (*Heyhouses Ward*) - Thoroughly support the objections on the grounds stated

That gave four in favour and one abstention. Assuming the next full Town Council meeting confirms this decision of its Planning Sub Committee (which it will if the Councillors vote the same way again there), this means that St Anne's Town Council will forward its objection to the application to Fylde Borough Council who will have to take account of their arguments when they consider and perhaps decide the matter.

We say perhaps, because there is always the possibility of Government taking this decision out of FBC's hands with a process known as Call-in. Given that the Town Council will raise this matter in their objection, it could have some impact.

So what happens now?

Well, after Christmas, and probably sometime in January or February, Fylde Council's Development Control Committee is expected to consider and debate the matter to a decision.

We did hear talk of them arranging a public meeting, but so far nothing has materialised.

We are also considering doing the same thing, so one way or another we expect there will be more chances for people to make their views known to Councillors.

14 December 2008