

MARTON MOSS NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM - SUPPORTING STATEMENT

We (the prospective Neighbourhood Forum) are making this application for designation in response to the opportunity offered by Blackpool Council to pursue a neighbourhood planning approach for the Marton Moss Area within the Borough. We agree with the Council and the public consultation outcome that the Area lends itself to neighbourhood planning and wish to put in place suitable policies and proposals for the Area through a Neighbourhood Plan.

We have submitted our application based around our following understanding of the Moss:

Marton Moss was for many years used predominantly as a market gardening area occupied by smallholding horticultural plots typically comprising a main residence, greenhouses and open cultivated land. The area therefore largely comprised development built at a low density with extensive areas of open land. Due to reductions in the profitability of small-scale market gardening many of the horticultural plots have either fallen in to disuse or have become used in other ways, although some remain in cultivation. Certain of the newer uses retain open land, such as horse stabling and riding. However increasingly, suburban style housing development has been built and there is the prospect of more occurring that without proper guidance could adversely affect the character of the area. Recent increases in development without improvements in highway infrastructure is causing road traffic congestion and heavy vehicles on local routes. Similarly, the reduction in market gardening and the implementation of, mainly housing, development schemes are reducing the effectiveness of surface water and ground drainage systems. The overall environment of the area is also suffering with unkempt road-side verges and overgrown footpath routes that discourage walking as an alternative to motor vehicle use.

We comprise a group of people who are committed to forming an effective Neighbourhood Forum and we believe there is no other group intent on becoming a Forum for the Area.

We have sought to publicise our intentions in various ways including through social media, St Nicholas School and house-to-house personal visits with the aim of explaining our intentions, listening to the views of local people and recruiting potential Forum members from a wide cross-section of the local community.

Repeated efforts have been made to open talks with the traveller community. On four occasions we have sought to meet with them but to no avail. We remain fully open to their involvement in this process.

We have the support of both Stanley Ward Borough Councillors.

We are already organising ourselves to take on the role of a Forum and have been holding regular, well attended meetings to consider the issues faced by the Area and how best to tackle them.

We have drafted a formal constitution that is appended to the application and are already abiding by its principles. We have also opened a bank account.

We are committed to working with all other relevant agencies and local organisations who have interests in or pursue activities that affect the Moss.

We appreciate that we will need help to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan and to this end we will apply for appropriate funding and use awarded grants to appoint specialist advisors.

We understand that we cannot stop change happening in the Area but wish to influence how the Moss develops over time and aim to achieve a balance between providing for local development needs and safeguarding the local character.

We are already using that approach to respond appropriately to planning applications we are consulted on.

To help understand local people's perceptions of the issues and opportunities facing the Moss we have engaged with prospective Forum members in a structured way using the Place Standard approach. Starting off in this way shows we were committed to producing a properly evidenced and prepared Neighbourhood Plan.