

Rufford Parish Council October 2024

Response to Westminster's National Planning Policy Framework reforms which for Westlancs means 605 houses built per year. This is a massive increase on past years.

I recently attended a flooding meeting in Scarisbrick when Ashley Dalton was at the top table.

Ashley expressed concerns about food security but that subject was not debated in any great depth.

10 years ago, this country produced food until August and now it is until June which is a very worrying trend. The question is should we be using up our grade 1 and 2 agricultural land for house building on the scale proposed by Westminster.

Greenbelt looks good on a map but when you break down our green belt a different picture emerges-

To the North of the Borough reclaimed marsh land protected by a dike from the sea.

Scarisbrick, Burscough and Rufford surround what was once the biggest lake in England, Martin Mere which was believed to have a circumference of 16 Miles.

From Crossens to the Alt including the lake bed we have pumped drainage. With pumped drainage The EA are very careful to maintain a high-water table and not to over pump as there are land shrinkage issues with pumped drainage.

Douglas Catchment- We know what happened in 2015-2016 –The highlights being approximately 100 houses flooded in Parbold when the river Douglas overtopped. The Ellerbrook breached in Burscough and knocked out Rufford Pumps this flooded about 130 acres of farmland and fortunately no houses were affected. The Douglas also Breached opposite Rufford Old Hall and fortunately for our Borough and Rufford in particular it was on the Chorley side and Mawdesley moss Croston Moss and Bretherton Eyes flooded very quickly knocking out Mawdesley Pumps and Croston pumps.

Moss Roads – our Borough has 70% of all Lancashire's moss roads which are more expensive to build and more expensive to maintain. It would seem

unlikely any treasury official would be keen to sign off on any new roads to service the proposed extra house building.

I attended a Northern Parishes flood group meeting last month and 2 of our WLBC officers were attending- The subject of imported water came up and our officers explained that this was a Utility issue and unfortunately the Utility companies had in the past been very slow to enact Westminster legislation and the example being --1980s legislation just being implemented by the utilities now.

Our green belt works well as grade 1 and 2 farmland -helping with food security. Our green belt also has many areas of scientific interests and schemes to reduce carbon emissions, excessive house building would compromise these worthy goals.

I would ask our MPs who cover the Borough to take these concerns to Westminster.

John Gordon

Chairman Rufford Parish Council