

What is happening to the ground under the Fylde, and who is responsible for finding out?

What you may have already noticed

If you live in the Fylde you may have noticed roads that get patched and sink again. Pavements that crack along their length. Drains that back up or discharge where they did not before. Garden walls that have started to lean. Sinkholes appearing in streets.

Most people assume these things have a simple local explanation. A burst pipe. An old drain. The sandy soil. Winter frost.

But when the same types of change appear across many locations at the same time, and keep coming back after repair, a single local explanation becomes harder to sustain.

Something may be changing in the ground beneath the Fylde. This document explains what has been observed, what it may mean, and why the question of what is causing it has not yet been properly answered.

What has been documented

Over the last decade, an independent researcher has been recording changes in ground and water behaviour across the Fylde coastal plain. The work uses ground photography, aerial imagery, and publicly available elevation data from government surveys.

What has been recorded is not one or two isolated features. It is a pattern.

Across farmland, drainage corridors, roadside verges and residential areas, the same types of surface behaviour keep appearing in the same kinds of locations. Small depressions that persist and return. Mounds of disturbed soil that were not there before. Water emerging from the ground in places it did not previously reach the surface. Sediment staining along drainage channels. Bank erosion that does not stabilise.

Elevation data comparing government surveys from 2018 and 2022 shows measurable changes in ground level across parts of the Fylde. These changes follow a corridor that runs between the Ribble and the Wyre. The pattern is not random. It follows the landscape in a way that suggests something is reorganising how water moves through the ground beneath it.

These observations have been compiled into formal reports and submitted to the Environment Agency, the British Geological Survey, and other relevant bodies. The material is publicly available.

Where this may have started

The Preston New Road well site near Blackpool was the location of the most recent hydraulic fracturing operation carried out in the UK. Operations took place between 2018 and 2019 and were halted after a series of induced seismic events, including one of magnitude 2.9. The government subsequently introduced a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing.

During those operations, pressurised groundwater was encountered at shallow depth during early drilling, before any fracturing took place. This was managed as an engineering problem and operations continued. The assumptions underpinning the original planning approval were not formally revisited as a result.

The ground deformation and surface water changes documented in this project begin in the period following those operations and are spatially organised along corridors consistent with the regional geology of the Fylde basin.

This document does not assert that drilling or fracking caused what is being observed. It records that the timing and location of the changes are consistent with that possibility, and that no formal investigation has been carried out to either confirm or rule it out.

That is the problem.

What has happened when this was reported

The observations described in this document have been formally reported to the relevant authorities on multiple occasions over several years.

The Environment Agency was notified of seepage activity at Carr Bridge Residential Park in January 2026. An officer attended and assessed the seepage as natural. The feature has continued to develop and has not been formally classified.

The British Geological Survey was contacted in 2026 and provided with the observational reports. They confirmed they had carried out ground deformation work in the Fylde between 2016 and 2020 but said they were unable to review the documents or comment on them due to resource constraints. No assessment of the substance was provided.

Local councillors have been made aware. Journalists have been contacted. A public notice has been issued to local community groups.

To date no professional body has said the observations are wrong. None has said they are right. None has committed to investigating whether the pattern of ground and water change documented here represents a risk to residents.

The question of what is happening beneath the Fylde remains formally unanswered.

What you can do

You do not need specialist knowledge to contribute to this.

If you live in the Fylde and have noticed changes in ground condition, water behaviour, or structural symptoms in your street or property, those observations have value. A photograph with a date and location is enough. You do not need to interpret what you are seeing.

The things worth recording are the ones that persist, return after repair, or appear in places where they were not before. A road dip that keeps coming back. Water pooling where it never used to. A crack that was not there last year.

Observations can be shared at groundtruthgovernance@proton.me and will be added to the independent record. You can do this anonymously if you prefer.

If you believe there is an immediate risk to safety, contact the emergency services.

If you want to report concerns to official bodies, the Environment Agency handles water and flooding concerns and the British Geological Survey accepts ground observation reports from the public. Your local council planning and environmental departments are also a point of contact.

The most important thing is that observations are recorded and dated somewhere, by someone. A pattern only becomes visible when enough people notice the same thing in enough places.

If something looks wrong and keeps looking wrong, it probably deserves an answer.