

PR 4472

For Immediate Release

07 June 2011

## **Success for Appleby Horse Fair as wind-down begins**

**++Sent on behalf of the Multi-Agency Strategic  
Co-ordinating Group for Appleby Horse Fair++**

The 2011 Appleby Fair has been hailed as a more enjoyable and better co-ordinated event than ever before.

This year's Fair ends tomorrow (June 8), with the final remaining Gypsies and Travellers set to leave the licensed campsites north of the town.

Although numbers at the Fair this year were the highest for a number of years, the actual number of caravans and bowtops counted in Eden on Saturday, 4 June, was five percent lower than last year - 1325 compared to 1394.

This number comes despite the pre-Fair Wednesday count of caravans and bowtops being up by 25 per cent.

The largest annual policing operation in Cumbria also worked well. A total of 48 people were arrested at the event during the whole week, significantly lower than the 2010 figure of 62 and 2009's figure of 110.

The number of market stalls operating at the Fair increased this year, up from 216 in 2010 to 259 this year. No unlicensed street traders were found during visits by Eden District Council licensing staff attending the Fair.

Eleven Trading Standards officers from Cumbria were joined by four brand holders from the Anti-Counterfeiting Group to target traders selling counterfeit goods at the Fair. During the operation they seized counterfeit goods worth around £50,000 including a Swarovski crystal washing up bowl, a Christian Dior washbasket and a set of Chanel and Christian Dior potties.

The clean-up operation around the Fair has also been working well. An additional 31 temporary toilets were set out within Appleby for those attending the Fair to use and the town centre of Appleby was cleaned every day of the Fair.

Road side verges outside Appleby are also being cleared. The clean-up of transit and caravan sites is the responsibility of the land owners and not Eden District Council, but the clean-up of licensed camp sites will be monitored in accordance with the site licensing conditions.

This year also saw the launch of a daily forum for 12 representatives from local communities and Gypsy and Traveller sites where they provided feedback to the Multi-Agency Group about the Fair.

The MASCG was able to pick up positive feedback on what was working well and make some slight changes to our plans to try and ensure both local residents and visitors were happy.

The traffic management plan in the town worked well again and provided the right balance between pedestrian safety and the need to be able get around. Some disruption during the Fair is inevitable, but agencies worked to keep this to a minimum.

Portable electronic warning signs were deployed along the A66 by the Highways Agency to warn drivers about slow horse-drawn vehicles and traffic flows were also monitored by additional mounted cameras.

Robin Hooper, Chief Executive of Eden District Council and Chair of the Appleby Fair MASCG, said: "We'll have a full debrief later this month but initial feedback for the 2011 Fair is very positive, that all our hard work and planning has paid off and that the operations put in place have worked well.

"There have been a couple of notable incidents that are completely unacceptable but on the whole we must realise that to have just 48 arrests with upwards of 50,000 people here is a successful operation and I'd like to thank all agencies involved, local residents and the Gypsies and Travellers for their co-operations with us in making these arrangements work.

"People can leave feedback on this year's fair via the official fair website [www.applebyfair.org](http://www.applebyfair.org) or by writing to me at Eden District Council."

Assistant Chief Constable Jerry Graham, who was in charge of the policing operation at this year's Fair, said: "From a police point of view, Appleby Fair 2011 has been one of the safest and enjoyable that we've seen for many years. Despite a few isolated incidents of violence that are being investigated, the vast majority of those who attended behaved impeccably and really enjoyed themselves.

"The number of arrests made this year is significantly lower compared to previous years which is a great achievement - especially when Appleby welcomed between 50,000 to 60,000 people over the weekend.

"Police, as part of the MASCG, introduced a new daily forum this year for members of the settled and Gypsy and Traveller communities to meet, ask questions and highlight things that were working well or they felt needed to change. This worked well and members of the group were happy to see their views taken on board and how quickly the minor issues they raised were rectified.

"We have worked closely with representatives from Gypsies and Travellers and local communities and the initial feedback we have received has all been positive. As we do every year, we will now review our operation in detail and welcome the views of all

communities so that we can continue to improve the safety and experience of the event for everyone.”

Billy Welch, Gypsy and Traveller representative on the MASCG, said: "It's been a great Fair, one of the best of recent years. To have so many more people in the town while having fewer arrests says a lot, not just about the police but about my fellow Gypsies and Travellers and I'm proud of what we've achieved this year.

“All the agencies have put a lot of work into co-ordinating the Fair this year and that hard work has really paid off. The overwhelming feedback that I'm getting is that the police have been extremely professional and this has helped people have had a wonderful time.”

Eden District Council's licensing officer John Bell, said: "I'm pleased with the number of pubs which decided to open this year and the way they have operated under the pressure of the Fair.

“The feedback so far from licensees, customers, the police and security contractor Safe & Sound of Carlisle - which provided some licensees with additional support when needed - has been very positive.”

Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service attended just one minor incident throughout the fair and Appleby fire station hosted an open day on Thursday with more than 50 people attending.

Appleby firefighters were also involved in a joint road safety operation with the police on the Thursday night to educate young drivers in a bid to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the county's roads.

Fire and police officers pulled in vehicles to speak to their drivers and passengers about the importance of road safety and offered them the opportunity to view the fire service road safety videos as an alternative to enforcement. In total 15 people were dealt with and 12 hard-hitting videos were shown to motorists throughout the evening which highlighted the importance of being a responsible driver.

The RSPCA had more than 30 officers working during the Fair to keep watch on the treatment of animals issued fewer verbal warnings for the second year in a row.

Inspectors have issued 17 verbal warnings, mostly for over-working of horses and over-use of the whip. Last year the figure was 23 and in 2009 the figure was 25. The number of incidents, where advice was given, was again considerably higher at 346 though, also for the second year in a row.

From Friday to Monday, North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) received 89 calls for incidents in Appleby compared with 53 over the same period last year.

Although the majority of incidents were minor such as hand and leg injuries, scalds and blisters on feet, there were more serious incidents such as knife wounds, a suspected heart attack, head injuries from falls but in most cases the casualties were treated at the scene and not taken to hospital.

The Education on the Hoof cultural events programme, which gave locals, visitors and Gypsies and Travellers attending the Fair the opportunity to learn and share information, was once again a big success. This year the exhibitions, films and youth activities at Centre 67 were brought together by the Gypsy Council including discussion sessions and a workshop with local MP Rory Stewart giving visitors an opportunity to learn more about Gypsy, Roma, Irish and Traveller cultures and lifestyles and particularly how Gypsy women are challenged to fit in to modern society.

New for this year was an exhibition at the library on Irish Traveller history in the UK from their Liverpool roots. The Information Hub and Children's Centre at Saltpit Corner proved very popular with advice and activities from NHS Cumbria, the Equestrian Society, the county council's children's services team, as well as AWAZ Cumbria doing low key consultation work with the Travelling community. In addition to the marquee the well-known Travellers' Truck provided support.

The most popular activities included an afternoon rap session for the Traveller young people led by the teenage lads, a gig at Centre 67 on Friday evening with well-known traditional musicians Bill Lloyd and Tommy McCarthy sharing the bill, and a dance session on the Saturday afternoon led by the Traveller teenage girls. (APPROVED)

NHS Cumbria distributed leaflets providing advice and information on childhood immunisation and swine flu to fairgoers. Public health teams were also on hand to provide health advice.

### **Notes for editors**

Background to Appleby Horse Fair:

Appleby Fair was first held in 1685. It is the largest horse fair in Britain and amongst the oldest in Europe. By far the busiest days are from the Friday to the Sunday. The event attracts around 10,000 Gypsies and travellers and over 30,000 other visitors to Appleby. It transforms the town of Appleby for the week, as it normally has a population of around 2,500.

The Fair has its primary connection with Fair Hill, which is in the ownership of Appleby Town Council. The Town Council leases the field for a fee to travellers during fair week for use as a caravan site and as a tethering ground for their horses.

The Multi Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group (MASCG): In October 2007, the MASCG was set up to bring together and co-ordinate the work of the key public agencies that have a regulatory role at the fair to make the fair a safer and more enjoyable event for residents, Gypsies and Travellers and visitors.

The MASCG consists of representatives from Eden District Council, Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria County Council, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, Cumbria NHS, North West Ambulance Service, RSPCA, Environment Agency, South Lakeland District Council, Highways Agency and HMRC.

### **ENDS**

**Media enquiries to Media Officer Chris Little on 01228 226335.**