

## **Appleby Horse Fair 2023: Post-Fair Public Meeting**

### **Appleby Public Hall**

**5 July 2023, 7pm**

#### **Councillor Andy Connell, Westmorland & Furness Council Member for Appleby**

Cllr Andy Connell, as Chair of the meeting, welcomed all attendees and introduced representatives from the MASCG which included the Chair, Gold Commander for Cumbria Police and key officers from Westmorland and Furness Council. All were in attendance to provide an update on the arrangements for the 2023 Appleby Horse Fair and respond to questions and comments from the public.

#### **Steph Cordon, Chair Person of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group for Appleby Horse Fair**

Steph Cordon set out the objective of MASCG which was to ensure that the event is safe and enjoyable and highlighted that MASCG is not responsible for the fair. Steph emphasised the report of Appleby Fair should be a true reflection of what has worked and what hasn't and the need for a collective long-term focus and shared vision, which builds on the lessons learnt from this year. This should also focus on creating a fair that people enjoy coming to and that doesn't have a significant negative impact on the town and areas outside of Appleby. The long-term vision will lead the review of the fair strategy and though not everything can be achieved now, this is a good place start. MASCG need to focus on key priorities for next year which give hope and positivity. The top three priorities should be:

1. Improving communications and engagement on what is happening throughout the year, to inform settled and gypsy and traveller communities and ensure they are listened to and kept informed.
2. Work on the feasibility of more transit sites especially around the A685, to create a safer environment and be consistent in our approach to stopping places across the area.
3. Look at effective education, engagement and enforcement measures and review the Eden Public Spaces Protection Order to ensure that people are safe and people's quality of life is improved.

#### Highlights from Appleby Horse Fair 2023:

Engagement through CAGs online reporting saw an increase in requests, these were considered by MASCG every day. Communities and businesses were encouraged to speak to their elected members, as they are their voice on the MASCG. Communities are encouraged to come forward throughout the year with views. The content of the Appleby Horse Fair website will be reviewed to ensure information held is up to date, as the operational planning is developed.

The Chair of MASCG also provided an update on the social media reach through the fair period of 2023:

- 94 posts over the phases of the Fair to the MASCG Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Reach and impressions on Facebook and Twitter posts achieved 459,426
- Shares and retweets achieved 1,103
- Likes on posts and tweets achieved 1,017

The effective partnership between agencies working collaboratively together had been highlighted as the best year yet. Overall, staff worked incredibly hard and were really committed to the MASG's objective. Thanks were expressed for the amazing effort of all staff.

The temporary bars on the field had a slow take up at first, but proved popular and reduced the footfall into the town. This is seen as a success by MASCG as the objective for the settled communities was for the fair gathering to be more on the hill. A debrief on this is planned for 18 July to discuss what went well and what can be improved. If there are any questions or feedback relating to this people were encouraged to have their say so that it can be included in the debrief session.

Numbers of caravans are similar to last year at around 1,100, 30 down on the year before. This year saw quicker movement across Westmorland and Furness area into the former Eden area. The Researchers conducting the consultancy work have been asking people why they moved on faster this year, to build this into the planning for next year. Areas on route to Appleby experienced some issues including fly grazing, MASCG will be exploring what can be done to reduce this moving forward.

Stopping on the A685 was less of an issue this year thanks to the farmers field provided for caravans. Consideration will also be taken for impact of the coast to coast for Kirby Stephen.

The clean-up operation was a great success thanks to the team and community volunteers. The additional toilets provided through a grant secured by Bill Lloyd were very much welcomed, these will be available for the next three years. Thanks were expressed to Bill Lloyd for the efforts in securing the grant to minimise the impact on the town.

The number of stalls on the market field was down this year and no consumer complaints were received about goods bought from the market. MASCG want to ensure the market traders sell safe products and focus on a 'traditional feel' to the fair, this is part of the long term plans around engagement, education and enforcement.

The traffic management plan from Highways worked well this year. Responding to the pre fair meeting request, a parking enforcement team was present in the town. 124 tickets were issued across the area over the fair period. The number of enforcement officers for next year will hopefully increase.

Westmorland and Furness Council Public Spaces Protection Order is up for review in May 2024. It is important the PSPO reflects the needs of a place.

Steph handed over to Chief Superintendent Matthew Kennerley to provide an update from Cumbria Constabulary on Appleby Fair 2023, and reminded the community of other representatives present at the meeting available to respond to questions.

Steph thanked members of the public for attending the meeting and taking the time to listen to the updates.

### **Chief Superintendent Matthew Kennerley, Appleby Horse Fair Gold Command**

Introduced his role; Gold Commander for Appleby Horse Fair 2023 and BCU Commander for Cumbria Constabulary in Westmorland and Furness.

Mr Kennerley stated this year set a new standard for a difficult operating environment with a high number of visitors on Saturday and the heat. Officers were working long shifts in difficult conditions.

Phase one saw several minor incidents including low level theft and anti-social behaviour in the Kirkby Stephen area. A number of offences were detected and those responsible identified.

Prior to the fair on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, an operation on the A685 stopped several vehicles, this was in partnership with DVSA. Approximately 120 vehicles were stopped, and tickets issued. In addition, Operation Tramline ran from 5 – 9 June, working in partnership with National Highways on the A66. More than 280 actions were taken over the week.

Phase one concluded with an unexploded ordnance found in the river during a morning safety check. The EOD Team from Catterick attended swiftly to deal with the ordnance, which was no longer live. Thank you to everyone for their patience.

Overall phase one and two contacts included 239 calls on 101, 213 were answered in 5 minutes and 26 in over 5, the vast majority within in 10 minutes. The dedicated 101 line operators receive additional training relevant to the fair. Police recorded 391 incident logs. At the fair the police made 40 arrests, recorded 35 crimes, issued 220 Fixed Penalty Notices, actioned 127 stop searches, 19 dispersal and 24 vehicle uplifts.

Police approach was based on dealing with things at the earliest opportunity and stop a small minority spoiling things for the vast majority. Therefore it was a policing choice to increase enforcement, in order to prevent more serious incidents.

Unfortunately, there was a more serious issue of a fatal road collision involving a 15-year-old. A significant investigation is ongoing, no further information can be shared.

Chief Superintendent Matt Kennerley handed back to the Chair.

**CLlr Andy Connell as Chair opened the meeting up for questions of comments from the public;**

A question was raised around sexual assaults dealt with at the fair. It was proposed this is discussed outside of the meeting due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the incident.

Q; This year has been very good, people have witnessed more police presence in the town. However, carers and old people going about their day still feel intimidated. We need to make sure carers can get around safely during the fair.

Q; The issues are before and after the fair. There should be more CCTV around the town.

Q; There were a number of traveller in the turning circle in Church Brough, the lock on the gates to the football field was cut to allow horses in to graze. The horses were then moved on to an area where trees were planted for queens green canopy. The field was also used as a toilet.

A; The challenge with encampments is around the powers we do or don't have, significant disruption is the issue. With regards to fly grazing police have little powers in this regard and requires specialist advice in relation to horses. In terms of response to this issue, Police attended and did their best to apply powers.

Q; Westmorland and Furness Council pay for a sign to prohibit parking but this is completely ignored. In addition the Police had to attend Brough Primary School each morning to allow parents to drop children off safely because the turning circle is completely blocked off.

A; MASCG will be looking at how infrastructure can be improved to make it more sustainable for the fair moving forward, this will be considered.

A; We will also be targeting groups who come to the fair and cause issues.

Q; On behalf of Royal Mail for Appleby, we serve the local communities and are speaking on their behalf about the challenges we face making deliveries in town and surrounding area, which is compromised during the fair. We have a 6 hour window to get mail delivered. The vans keep mail safe and are our offices while we are on deliveries. This year we were stopped by police while doing our job and were also moved on. It is an offence to obstruct Royal Mail deliveries. We feel police should support us in our role during the fair. Female employees feel vulnerable, some people miss out on essential mail including hospital appointments, cards and letter if we cannot make their delivery. We are asking police to support us and give us respect during the fair period.

A; We will support and build into briefings moving forward support for royal mail and include this in the planning phase, and ensure allowance are made to enable Royal Mail to do their job.

Q; This needs to be extended to all delivery companies. People shouldn't go without because of the fair.

Q; Supermarkets will not deliver to homes in Appleby during the fair.

Q; What is the cost of the plastic barriers on the sands and what purpose do they serve?

A; In previous years, we have hired these at a cost of £5000 per year. This year all barriers required for the fair were purchased at a cost of £15,000. They are used for other events through the year. The purpose is to close the Sands. They are moved by the police during the closure of the fair.

Q; The questions is relating to the barriers along the footpath.

A; These are there to keep pedestrians safe.

BL; The decision for the barriers along the footpath was to separate horses from pedestrians. If they are getting separated, we can look securing them. They are serving a purpose of protection.

Bill Lloyd agreed to take a look at the area and issues to look for improvements.

Q; Thank you to all for clearing up so well. Please could the big industrial wheely bins be located on the selling fields not just at the exit so more rubbish can be collected?

A; We will be discussing additional provision for bins with the landowner and town council.

Q; Will the person who runs the market field be paying for this as opposed to residents. This was confirmed.

Q; Though clear up after fair was good, during the fair it was inadequate. Volunteers had to clear up each night on either side of the river. Professional cleaners should stay later and clean up to prevent rubbish getting into river.

Q; Resident of Colby Lane, I received a parking ticket on a no waiting area. Cones and signs were not consistent. I would like to suggest putting a note through door of residents to explain what no waiting means. There were people camping opposite our house for three nights that were not moved on, a message was sent into the CAG but no response received. Could residents of Appleby be given a permit for the fair period so we can park during restrictions?

Q; There is an obstruction on Colby lane, a trailer in the layby which has been there for three years. For children walking to school this presents a safety issue and obstructs the view for residents and vehicles.

A: There are legal difficulties regarding its removal. Together with Police and Highways there are other powers around abandoned vehicles. We will look at this issue as a council and respond after the meeting.

Q; I understand consultants have been commissioned to complete an overview of the fair, when will the report be available?

A: Consultants were commissioned to look at the viability of the fair becoming an event and also to look improving transit sites. The researchers attended the fair and we are expecting a draft report in next couple of weeks. Once completed it will help to shape the strategy for the fair moving forward. The report will be made public when it is completed.

Q; Who grants permission for the swimming pool car park to be used for camping? On the Saturday there were lots of transit vans parked in the car park.

A; No one gives permission, it is not a council owned car park with no overnight parking restrictions. As the car park is not closed off we have been unable to stop overnight camping during the fair.

A: This is an area that needs to be looked at for improvements next year.

Q; With regards to parking between Brough and Kirkby Stephen, why don't you use Fair Hill, it's a designated site for a fair gathering in September.

A; The site belongs to MOD and only has a charter granted for use of the September Fair gathering. We can ask the MOD again if this can be used for Appleby Fair.

An incident involving breaking into a farmer's field and urinating in the town was raised.

A; For an offense to be proven it needs to be witnessed. With regards to public spaces protection order we can build in bespoke issues to deal with problems relating to the fair.

Q; Kirkby Stephen, Brough, Hawes and Sedbergh have a completely different experience of the fair to Appleby, we would like a separate meeting for Kirkby Stephen.

A; We will be looking at involving the communities in Kirkby Stephen and surrounding area and want to work with them to improve things for next year.

C; It has been reported as a good fair which it has in some ways. The people of Appleby would like to pass on their condolences to the family of the boy who lost his life.

Q; Rising Sun raised a few points for next year; The single portaloos on side of road for the police was not emptied and was overflowing, staff were offered our facilities. More safety barriers are required at the end of flashing lane. There were only two toilets for public to use, both were overflowing by the Thursday. The wooden railing to protect public are now rotten and not suitable. There is no water at this end for horses, many are tied to railings, this was raised with RSPCA. Horses are not stopped for breaks from racing out and are exhausted. We have put water out but couldn't meet need of horses. There are no bins on flashing lane, people buy on field and walk along flashing lane and dump rubbish, so need extra bins in this area. The big bar was great though not sure there is a need for two, it could all be

condensed into one field. We felt there wasn't enough policing for the smaller bar at croft end. Overall the fair was really well done this year.

Q; The Wannasee bar was good but residents were unhappy with the way in which they were given a licence. Residents didn't have enough information or notification.

A; All requirements of the notification process as per the licence act for the bar licence, was followed. It was advertised in the newspaper and on site.

Q; What is the plan moving forward, will the bar happen next year?

A; The sole purpose of the bar is to meet a temporary increase in demand. It is not intended to ever be a festival. Now we understand the potential foot fall and busy periods, the plan can be adjusted.

Q: How busy was it, what was your security?

A; 32 security staff and 6 dogs, at peak times 2400 people at the bar. A full risk assessment was completed for this bar.

No further comments or questions were asked from the public.

Cllr Andy Connell closed the meeting.