

Notes of the Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group held on Monday 19 June 2017

Attendance: Robin Hooper, Eden District Council (Chair)
Neil Buck, Eden District Council
Mark Pannone, Cumbria Constabulary
Kevin Crawley, Cumbria County Council
Barry Cooper, Eden District Council
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary
Billy Welch, Gypsy and Traveller Representative
Simon Rowley, South Lakeland District Council
Emma Brass, Eden District Council
Andy Millburn, Cumbria Constabulary
Trevor Marsh, Environment Agency
Kevin Johnston, Cumbria Fire & Rescue
Sarah Griffiths, Eden District Council
Nick Wright, Cumbria County Council
Adrian Medcalf Highways England
Rob Melloy, RSPCA
Roly Earl, Cumbria Constabulary
Ben Swinson, Cumbria Constabulary
Oliver Shimell, Eden District Council
Erich Thoele, Cumbria Constabulary

Apologies: Robert Docherty, Eden District Council
Matthew Neal, Eden District Council
Daniel Evans, Cumbria County Council
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy and Traveller Representative

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 22 May 2017

These were agreed as a true record.

2. Minutes of the Meetings held during the Fair

A variety of meetings of MASCAG had taken place prior to and during the Fair. The minutes were circulated to MASCAG for information. Rob Melloy said that reference to the RSPCA divers should be changed to say Water Rescue Technicians. Apart from this minor amendment, the minutes were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Feedback from Agencies in relation to the Fair

a) Police

Mark Pannone reported that from a Police perspective, it was considered to be relatively quiet which may have been impacted upon due to the inclement weather and also a reduction in visitor numbers. The visitor number issue may have been something which was reflected on by the start date being 8 June and some Gypsy and Travellers had believed it was the 1 June and therefore had arrived early.

In relation to the number of incidents, there was a reduction of 20% from those of 2016. In relation to the actual numbers on the days they were as follows:

Wednesday – 13 incidents

Thursday – 11 incidents

Friday – 25 incidents

Saturday – 22 incidents

Sunday – 18 incidents

In relation to the incidents of note, they reflected the following general areas of activity; driving of vehicles, public order issues, Police Officer assaulted by a young girl who had mental health issues.

There had been some damage to property in one or two places and there had been some anti-social behaviour order issues which needed to be dealt with. There was a technical weapon incident which was also dealt with. It was considered that the CCTV had worked well and had provided good intelligence during the Fair in order to assist in mitigating issues as well as preventing any potential issues arising.

In relation to the closure of The Sands from the Friday night, that was a separate matter to be considered later in the meeting. The wet weather plan had worked well. Likewise, the entry into the Fair and leaving the Fair, namely phases 1 and 3 had worked well and there were no issues reported from the election.

It was considered that matters connected to the encampment strategy would need to be reviewed for 2018 and that should be an item to be included on the MASCG agenda for September.

It was noted that there had been fourteen arrests in 2017 compared with eleven in 2016. As a consequence of the learning from the 2017 Fair, a few matters would be reviewed but generally the policing plan would be the same for the future.

b) Cumbria Fire and Rescue

It was reported that it had been quiet in 2017 and there had only been one small fire which needed to be dealt with. It was acknowledged that the staff time required to attend MASCG meetings had been high although it was considered beneficial for the outcomes which had arisen through the joint working between the various agencies.

c) Cumbria County Council

Kevin Crawley reported that it had been somewhat hectic on the Thursday with the various issues which were being dealt with. All the matters which had been raised had been dealt with satisfactorily. Robin Hooper complimented the work of the Highways Team in relation to the speedy production of signs for Jubilee Fjord and also Salt Tip Corner and also the provision of the street cleaning vehicle each morning of the Fair in order to help clean the mud and other excrement from the roads.

Nick Wright confirmed that the post-Fair meeting would be held on 17 July.

d) South Lakeland District Council

It was noted that the numbers had increased in 2017 from 2016, but it had been quiet. There had been some incursions into the local area around Sedbergh but no issues had generally arisen from that. Scrogg Banks field was closed due to water logged fields.

e) RSPCA

Rob Melloy reported that it had generally been quiet although there had been 168 incidents which needed to be dealt with. Of those incidents, twelve warnings had been given, one was going to be the subject of a summons, one pony had been put to sleep and either were presently being looked after. Billy Welch confirmed that he had those that he had spoken to from the Gypsy and Traveller community were delighted with the work of the RSPCA and wished to extend their thanks and appreciation to everyone involved during the Fair.

f) Environment Agency

Trevor Marsh reported that the Agency had been slightly busier this year with the weather conditions and the need to respond more regularly at various times of each of the Fair days to update on weather conditions. As a consequence of the input this year and the telemetry readings, it was considered that perhaps a revision to the heights at which action should be taken should be considered. Also, it was noted that during the Fair the flood height within Appleby was on the telemetry reading and forecasting within a close margin of possibly happening which may need to be more closely monitored for the future just in case that event ever arose.

g) Eden District Council

Neil Buck reported that he and Emma Brass had worked well together in Emma's first year following the retirement of Elaine Lomas. The sweeper system operated between the District Council and the County Council had likewise worked well. Emma Brass reported that up until the Monday prior to the Fair, there were higher numbers than in previous years which may have been due to the confusion over the start date of the Fair. The numbers then dropped off after that date which reflects that particular point. Some issues had arisen at Melmerby, Alston and Long Marton which would need to be considered as part of the planning for 2018. Emma Brass also reported that some field owners had reported that they may not open their fields in 2018. This would also need to be reviewed to see what the impact of that might be. Emma would report back to MASCG in due course. Emma Brass reported that two children's playing fields outside of Appleby had been used and concerns were raised in relation to that.

Oliver Shimell and Sarah Griffiths reported that the licensing issues had generally gone well. There had been an issue which had arisen at the Masons Arms on the Friday night about the drinking area outside not being fully complied with under the licensed conditions. This had been dealt with at the time. Likewise, issues had arisen about people in the Kings Head, Appleby using different doors to access and egress the building seeking to cause confusion which likewise had been dealt with by the way in which the doors were then being managed.

Andy Millburn said in relation to feedback from post-Fair visits, there had been some questions raised over the operation of the SIA staff and whether or not they had been fully briefed on the work that they needed to undertake. For a licensing perspective, Sarah Griffiths said that she would look at this for 2018 and put in place appropriate additional guidance and advice to be given to them as to how they should operate in the future.

h) Highways England

Nothing to report. All had been quiet.

i) Communication Issues

Barry Cooper and Neil Graham reported that they had worked well together during the Fair over the provision of communications generally and they had considered that everything had operated in a smooth way in order that information that was needed to be given out could be. Barry Cooper reported that only one matter had been reported in the media about posts in the Murton area. This was something that would be dealt with outside of the meeting.

j) Gypsy and Traveller Community

Billy Welch reported that everything had gone well and everyone who had attended who he had spoken to, had said that they had enjoyed the Fair. He considered that the introduction of CCTV in the various areas had likewise been appreciated and he wished to thank all involved with the work that they had done for the Fair.

4. Opening of The Sands – Impact and Implications on other Areas

There was a general discussion about managing the opening of The Sands at 6.00pm on each day and the impact that this had on the first day on the migration from The Sands to the Royal Oak which had generated concerns and problems generally in that area. The covering of railings and the use of a rope around the Royal Oak had proved a good initiative and had worked well with managing horses in that area.

There was however some need to review the road opening tactics which the Police had put in place in order to improve the way in which matters would be dealt with not only during the Fair for 2017, but something also to be looked at for the future. Billy Welch confirmed that from a Gypsy and Traveller perspective, there was a full understanding of why things had happened in the way in which they had and he appreciated the work of the Police in seeking to mitigate what might otherwise have been issues arising in that area.

It was considered that MASCG should review the closing times of The Sands and in particular, have regard to the activities which are going on in The Sands which might be impacted upon by the weather conditions on a day by day basis in the future. The importance of showing consistency yet understanding the importance likewise of flexibility was something to be addressed as part of future discussions in relation to this.

5. Learning Points

Rob Melloy said that one of the learning points would be to review the telemetry readings and whether or not in future 0.5m was the appropriate level or whether or not that should be amended to a higher level having regard not only to the height of the river, but also to the velocity of the water, colour of the water and the debris in the water at that time. It was considered that the policy which had been produced by MASCG in the past should be reviewed and this would be reviewed by Rob Melloy, Trevor Marsh and Roly Earl and reported back to MASCG later in the year.

Neil Graham reported that the management of publicity was something that needed to be reviewed to ensure that there was an understanding that sometimes information might be given which due to weather conditions, could actually change by the time that the information had actually been published. Robin Hooper

confirmed that this had certainly been the case in relation to the proposed closure of the river on the Thursday and a learning point in the future would be to give clarity only at the time when actions were undertaken rather than necessary forecasting.

Andy Millburn reported that there was value in looking at the way in which car parks were managed and in particular, the stickers/tokens which were being issued to those people who had attended the various car parks. The reason for this is that some cars were travelling between car parks seeking to imply that because they had bought one car park ticket they were able to go to another site. Billy Welch said that this was something that he supported to ensure that if someone went to one car, they should only stay on that car park and if they did wish to go somewhere else then they should pay separately for that as each of the car parks were being managed independently of each other.

Reference was made to the management of parking on fields which in effect was a private matter for the field owners. A question had been raised about whether Police support would be available to support the operators and this was something which Mark Pannone said may need to be looked at in more detail as to the implications of how that could operate and when it was appropriate for the Police to get involved.

6. Evaluation Report

Robin Hooper reported that the draft Evaluation Report would be circulated by Louise Fawcett with any comments back to her by 10 July in order for a revised report to be considered at the next MASCG meeting in July. It was noted that Barry Cooper would be finalising the draft Evaluation Report in light of any comments which may be received.

7. Reports from the Community Advisory Group

Ben Swinson reported that the feedback from the Community Advisory Group had generally been quiet and the same issues were being raised on a day to day basis which were general issues relating to highway activity, management of horses etc. The general views of the work of MASCG and the Fair was positive.

The meeting ended at 2.35pm.