

Notes of the Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group held on 18 June 2018

Attendance: Matthew Neal, Eden District Council (Chair)
Nick Wright, Cumbria County Council
Barry Cooper, Eden District Council
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary
Damian Lavictoire, Cumbria Constabulary
Roly Earl, Cumbria Constabulary
Emma Brass, Eden District Council
Charlotte Lory, Cumbria Constabulary
Nick Griggs, North West Ambulance Service
Erich Thoele, Cumbria Constabulary
Sarah Griffiths, Eden District Council
Simon Rowley, South Lakeland District Council
Rob Melloy, RSPCA
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Billy Welch, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Ben Swinson, Cumbria Constabulary
Mark Pannone, Cumbria Constabulary
Trevor Marsh, Environment Agency
Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Council Highways
Kevin Crawley, Cumbria County Council Highways

Apologies: Neil Buck, Eden District Council
Steve Minnikin, Cumbria Constabulary
Robert Docherty, Eden District Council

1. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 21 May 2018

These were agreed as an accurate record

2. Feedback from each Agency in relation to the Fair

Matthew Neal gave an overview of his perception of how the Fair had proceeded.

He considered that the telephone conferences on the Friday before the Fair up to the 6 June worked well. There had been certain sites which had been escalated to MASCG for consideration of moving encampments on. Two had been outside the 1.5 mile zone and had been the subject of decisions and two had been within the 1.5 mile zone and it was noted that decisions were made very quickly in particular in one instance in which a decision would have been made within 17 minutes of the report of the encampment.

Matthew Neal stated that the operation of the encampment protocol had operated slightly differently to how he had expected and that ultimately MASCG was given the information that it required to make a decision albeit this year there had been less joint visits between the Police and Emma Brass before escalating the matter to MASCG.

Matthew Neal went on to refer to the fact that there had been a heightening of tensions at Kirkby Stephen due to the cancellation of the horse auction there and the attendance of Gypsy and Travellers regardless with a view to buying and selling horses. There had been incidents in Kirkby Stephen including some disorder arising from the Sports and Social Club. MASCG did resolve to bring in a different

approach to policing and enforcement of licensing for 24 hours in order to prevent a repeat on 6 June and this was successful.

Matthew Neal did indicate that his perception was that Appleby during the Fair was very busy but there was generally a very positive spirit within the settled community and the Gypsy and Traveller community during the Fair. There had been some incidents which had been reported in the national press most noticeably a woman who was knocked unconscious by a horse on the flashing lane. This had obtained significant national coverage yet an accident involving a Gypsy/Traveller boy who was knocked unconscious gained little publicity.

Matthew Neal reported back on emails and feedback he had received before, during and after the Fair. He stated that he had received upwards of 17 representations in respect of Appleby, 6 in respect of Kirkby Stephen, 2 in respect of Long Marton, 1 was in respect of Barton and 1 in respect of Muker in the Yorkshire Dales.

He stated that in general the representations related to the perception amongst the population of Kirkby Stephen that there had been a Kirkby Stephen horse fair earlier in the week prior to Appleby Fair and that there were various assertions made about the town being overrun and residents feeling intimidated. Concerns were also raised about the large number of caravans along the A685 between Kirkby Stephen and Brough. He also stated that some of the representations made were offensive and inappropriate.

Matthew Neal also stated that he had received a letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner and from Councillor Orchard. The letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner requested that there should be further engagement from the public in Kirkby Stephen and in South Lakeland. The letter from Councillor Orchard referred to allegations of criminal damage and anti-social behaviour in Melmerby.

There was negative sentiment and adverse representations made by certain people from the settled community.

Mark Pannone stated that MASCG may need to look somewhat different in order to respond to the consensus of the people. He stated that albeit the number of arrests was low, there had been people arrested prior to the Fair which was not widely reported but had led to the Fair being far less eventful than it would have otherwise been.

Kevin Crawley on behalf of the County Council Highways stated that the traffic management plan had gone well and traffic had moved through Appleby relatively successfully. He did state that in terms of flashing lane, there had been observations carried out and a survey of the barriers in place at the location. His provisional view was that the barriers on the flashing lane should be removed as they constituted an ongoing hazard throughout the year. He stated that he would bring a report to the September meeting of MASCG.

Mark Pannone was concerned that removal of the barriers would need to be an informed decision as MASCG would not want to remove one hazard whilst creating another hazard namely unvetted potential contact between horse drawn vehicles and members of the public.

The update from Sarah Griffiths on behalf of the Licensing Team was that they had been taken by surprise by events at Kirkby Stephen. In view of the high numbers of Gypsy and Travellers in Kirkby Stephen, an amendment to the licensees charter will have to be considered which would result in licensees being required to use

security. She stated that on Tuesday and Wednesday, Kirkby Stephen felt it was very busy in terms of the number of people using the licensed premises. A problem at one of the licensed premises was that the designated outdoor drinking area was not being used thereby causing problems of drinkers moving out into the street. The more relaxed approach to licensing on 7 June worked well and there were not anymore flash points.

Sarah Griffiths stated that Appleby had been surprisingly busy. The Bridge End News had caused some issues in terms of people drinking on the street next to a zebra crossing and also next to a place where horses were accessing the river. As a result of the good business that the Bridge End News did during the Fair, a number of other establishments have stated that they would wish to put in a temporary event notice. The issue with a temporary event notice is that there is no necessity for the Charter to be signed or for security to be put in and there was no facility for conditions to be imposed.

Mark Pannone stated that there will be a presumption that temporary event notices will be objected to by the Police on the grounds of nuisance and public safety. It may be preferable for all to be heard together, say in April 2019, so that cumulative impact could be considered.

Matthew Neal stated that one option would be to review temporary event notices with a view to enabling potential applicants to apply for a licence which of course can be subject to all necessary conditions.

Simon Rowley updated that there had been only five calls to South Lakeland District Council regarding the Fair. There was however a perception that there were significant issues in Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh when, save for an alleged assault of a young boy and some ASB, matters had gone off quietly.

Emma Brass updated that there were three unauthorised encampments reported to EDC. All the tolerated sites were used. There had been no complaints about those advertised during the Fair only afterwards.

Emma Brass stated that the publicity that had been given about Alston worked well. There were alternative arrangements at Blagill and seven caravans had camped there. Other potential encampments had been discouraged in that location.

Emma Brass did state that there was some unusual things happening such a food stall arising on the A685. She also stated that there had been caravans and tents on Salt Tip Corner. There had been 38 food stalls all together on the market fields which the Food Safety Team had inspected.

Emma Brass did indicated that she had concerns about the robustness of some of the figures provided by patrols in terms of the numbers of encampments. There were clear discrepancies between the figures given by different patrols and this would need to be looked at and made more robust in the future.

She also said that the clean-up had gone well in outlying areas but it was clear to her that rubbish had been put out by the settled community after encampments had been cleared.

She did indicated that in terms of encampments at Kirkby Stephen, Warcop and Soulby, which had been the subject of decisions at MASCG, she had not been in contact in advance and in previous years she would have been expected to attend such sites with relevant Police Officers before a decision was made.

Emma Brass indicated that the Long Marton Parish Chairman stated there were some minor issues at Long Marton but nothing significant and there was some flashing of horses at Long Marton.

She indicated that the Chairman of Great Asby Parish Council was happy with the clean-up as was the Clerk to Brough Parish Council, there were still some Parish contacts to be carried out

Emma indicated that there had been an increase in the number of encampments on the A685 but there had been no major issues reported to Environmental Health.

Billy Welch raised concerns about the number of racist and offensive comments that he had received directly and indirectly. In terms of complaints by members of the public about the removal of posts, he indicated that a lot of landowners had put their own posts down and in many cases the Gypsy and Travellers had no choice to but remove such posts in order to camp in places which were available to them. The underlying issue is that the Gypsy and Traveller community can't tell which posts are official and which posts are not and therefore this has undoubtedly led to posts being removed and encampments taking place.

Bill Lloyd indicated that horse trading had been up this year and there had been some excellent trading. His view was that the teleconference worked very well. In terms of complaints from members of the public, he suggested that such people should be asked to be specific about what time, when and by whom did certain incidents happen and when were they reported.

Billy Welch stated that in terms of the number of arrests showed that press statement and social media that MASCG had co-ordinated had mitigated the effect of the Police and Crime Commissioner's comments. The interviews given by Mark Pannone had also assisted. He was aware of a Facebook page which posed the question should Appleby Fair be banned? As stated, this Facebook page had been closed and was only accessible permission. He stated that there was a lot of social media on road safety and there had been 3,000 hits on Facebook.

Matthew Neal stated that an option would be to set up a consultative body consisting of representatives of the County Council, District Council and the Parish Councils. A debate ensued as to whether representatives of the settled community should also be on that group. It was agreed that any such group should not be part of MASCG but sit alongside it and its findings should be reported to MASCG. The concern of the Police and the District Council was that it could not take political direction in terms of carrying out statutory functions.

It was agreed that the basis of such consultation would be the subject of a report to the next meeting of MASCG.

Trevor Marsh reported that river levels had been generally low. There had been some localised downpours which had caused some flash flooding. It had not significantly affected the river levels. In terms of the posts within the river, all of the posts had been removed but the one within the river had a cone placed over it and was fairly well secured. There had been removed by some young boys who had been using it to enable diving into the river but had been replaced. Therefore, it was a very different year to the previous year which had concerns over the high level of the river.

Action:

1. that the updates of the various agencies be noted;

2. that a report be brought by Matthew Neal to the next meeting of MASCG setting out ideas for consulting with local elected members; and
3. that a report be brought to the September 2018 meeting of MASCG regarding barriers and highway infrastructure at Flashing Lane by Kevin Crawley.

4. Site Conditions/Opening Times of the Seven Licensed Sites

Matthew Neal indicated that the sites had opened early in accordance with a formal MASCG decision made on the 6 June. Emma Brass stated that whilst this was a slight improvement over the previous year, she had some concerns about some opening of the sites earlier than even the relaxed opening times authorised by MASCG.

Action: That consideration of the matter would be deferred to the July MASCG meeting with Emma Brass to provide a report setting out her views on a potential relaxation or amendment of the licensing conditions on the sites.

5. Reports from the Community Advisory Group

Ben Swinson updated the meeting about the Community Advisory Group. He stated the input from all the CAGs had been positive. Certain groups feel that they are not listened to and this needs to be built upon in terms of the feedback on the Fair and the build up to the next Fair.

Bill Lloyd mentioned that Cotemoor had been barely used this year due to the fact that there was no licensed premises and no Wi-Fi. He suggested that whilst the Fat Lamb Inn had been closed, there could be a facility for a temporary event notice to be issued for next year's Fair to enable drinking outside the premises and for some temporary Wi-Fi to be installed. That would undoubtedly increase numbers at Cotemoor and reduce numbers elsewhere proportionately.

Action: That the update be noted.

6. Post Fair Community Debriefs

Nick Wright indicated that he had booked the Sedbergh Victoria Hall for 5-7pm on 25 June. He had arranged a meeting in Kirkby Stephen Grammar School chaired by Councillor Phil Dew on 26 June and he had arranged for the Appleby Fair community debrief to take place on 16 July from 7-9pm.

Action: That the update be noted.

7. Sub-Group Reports

There were no reports as all matters had been attended to in relation to the above agenda items.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 23 July 2018 at 2.00pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Penrith.