

Notes of the Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group held on 20 April 2021

Attendance: Les Clark, Eden District Council (Chair)
Louise Biggs, Eden District Council
Councillor Karen Greenwood, Eden District Council
Councillor Phil Dew, Cumbria County Council
Councillor Suzie Pye, South Lakeland District Council
Emma Brass, Eden District Council
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Billy Welch, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary
Beth Clements, RSPCA
Neil Buck, Eden District Council
Steve Minnikin, Cumbria Constabulary
Peter Aiston, Cumbria Constabulary
Steve Wilde, Eden District Council
Damian Lavictoire, Cumbria Constabulary
John Everingham, Eden District Council
Stephen Vickers, Cumbria Constabulary
Mike Clusker, Cumbria Fire & Rescue
Matthew Kennerley, Cumbria Constabulary
Matthew Pearman, Cumbria Constabulary
Nick Wright, Cumbria County Council
Richard Batham, Highways England
Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Highways
Nick Griggs, North West Ambulance Service
Sophie Tinnion-Davies, Cumbria Constabulary
Charlotte Lory, Cumbria Constabulary
Karen Lowthrop, Appleby Town Council
Kellie Bradburn-Sims, Cumbria County Council
Laura Millburn, Cumbria Constabulary
Sue Warner, South Lakeland District Council
Katie Callon

Apologies: Rob Melloy, RSPCA
Robert Docherty, Eden District Council

1. Notes of the Previous Meeting held on 14 April 2021

These were agreed as a true record.

2. Discussion on 2021 Fair

LC gave a recap of the previous meeting when everyone was asked to feedback to him their thoughts on the new date of 12-15 August and also a date towards the end of September and how this would impact their agencies. He had taken the time to look over the Terms of Reference for MASCG and the main objective of the group was to provide a safe and enjoyable event for all. The main bodies consulted had been the Gypsy and Travellers, the settled community, supporting agencies, land owners and public health. Their comments were summarised as follows:

Gypsy/Traveller Community – Strong preference for the Fair to go ahead in July but would consider an August date. The sooner the Fair happened BW/BL felt they

would perhaps have more influence to ask people to stick to the date and reduce the risk of smaller gatherings happening.

Settled Community - There was strong feeling for the Fair not to happen at all this year. If it did, the later September dates was preferred.

Supporting Agencies - Anytime during the summer was not a good time due to resourcing issues. The Police would prefer an earlier date and EDC the later date. Whilst timing is not great and it would be difficult and challenging for all involved there was commitment to support the Fair.

Land Owners - Appleby Town Council preferred the September date but could accommodate the August date. Jimmy Winter had stated that the September date would be difficult due to TB testing of cattle and also the fields wouldn't have time to recover for winter. He could do a July or August date,

Public Health - Colin Cox had responded to say that whilst a later date would be better, August was a compromise. If the timetable for vaccinations was met by the end of July everyone eligible should have been offered the vaccine and people would have built immunity by mid-August.

LC said that seeing it was evident that there was no consensus across the agencies, the compromise seems to be the August date as it falls between the others suggested.

MK said that everyone was well aware of the Police preference of the earlier date (July) but did understand how the August date was seen as a viable compromise. However, it would be a significant challenge for policing as Phase 1 would overlap with other events such as Kendal Calling.

PD said that the group were not obliged to make any compromise to hold the Fair. Any alternative date was a concession. The aim was to provide for a safe Fair and avoid ad-hoc gatherings but he felt whatever decision was made there would be problems and no-one could guarantee that the Gypsy and Travellers would abide. He stressed that he was speaking on behalf of the local community and felt that this year's Fair should either be cancelled or held in September outside the peak tourist season.

MK asked PD if he was proposing that the fair should not be allowed and if so under what grounds/legislation did he think this could be done?

KL said that Appleby Town Council's view was that the Fair shouldn't be on until next year but will facilitate any compromise date. She reminded MASCG that Fair Hill didn't revolve around Jimmy Winter. She also said that there had been contamination of land at Fair Hill the previous day and she was working with agencies to get this resolved. The Town Council were keen to work with agencies to help deliver a safe Fair.

KG said that the views of the settled community was that the horse Fair date was in June and wouldn't expect it to take place again until 2022. She went on to say that all points of view were correct and we needed to navigate through it. The August date was a compromise. The impact on agencies would be massive on top of everything else and was asking a lot from officers. There would be additional costs for the TRO, Ambulance/Police services and the local community will need to meet these extra costs one way or another.

There was a worry that this would set a precedent for future years for different dates and it needed to be made clear that this was a one off due to the extraordinary circumstances the pandemic had brought.

BC said the RSPCA would support this although the animal welfare provision would be reduced with fewer vets/staff.

EB said that she had spoken to Jimmy Winter, his preference was for the July date but could do August. From an environmental health point of view, we were still in a pandemic and making everything more Covid secure would mean a lot more work for everyone.

SW reminded the group that other events such as Kendal Calling etc were operating within their usual dates. He had spoken with the licensed premises who had made it clear that they would not be opening in the town. The pubs in the rural areas would be taking the same stance.

BW said that next year the Fair would take place at the proper time and this year was a one off. If the virus spikes again then the Fair would be cancelled.

KG said that this was the biggest event in Cumbria in a normal year. This year on top of everything else would make it more difficult to manage due to an even bigger influx of visitors expected this summer. PD agreed with everything KG had said and reiterated that opposition to this year's Fair is not motivated by prejudice but genuine concern about the overwhelming number of people involved at an already very busy time.

LC said that examples of operational problems was the licensed premises and stopping off places not being available. This would be a challenge for the organisations and won't be what it would be in normal circumstances. Agencies needed to ensure the Fair was safe and enjoyable and is more likely to be safer if supported by MASCG.

BL said that people were more likely to come on a date knowing that support will be provided from agencies. LC then asked all agencies for their thoughts on the compromise date of 12-15 August.

Police - Will be incredibly difficult but would support the August date.

CCC - Highways work is approved by the Eden Local Committee. As chair of that meeting, PD said that all agencies have an obligation to make sure the Fair is safe and for that reason will support the provision of traffic management measures for the August date.

SLDC - SP said that the information from Colin Cox was the most compelling and they were happy to support.

RSPCA - Team will be smaller as previously report but would support.

EDC - Have statutory responsibilities that need to be fulfilled so will support.

Appleby Town Council – Would support even though it would be challenging.

NWAS - Will be challenging and agreed with the public health position but will support.

Cumbria Fire - Will support August date.

As all agencies said they could support the August date, LC said it was important that comms was put together and circulated to the group asap to be published the

following day. He also said it was vitally important that we keep this to ourselves in the meantime before the official comms was circulated.

BL asked about the public health work that would be needed eg face masks, hand sanitiser etc. BW also mentioned having a vaccination test/testing tent at the Fair. This was something that would be looked at via public health.

EB said that more information on events was expected after the 14 June so would know more then.

PD thanked everyone for doing their best in difficult circumstances and reiterated his view that the Fair should either be cancelled or held in September. He requested that the minutes were detailed. It was agreed that draft minutes would be circulated to the group for any changes etc.

LC thanked everyone for their contributions. The next meeting was due to be held on 26 April and would go ahead as normal.