

Notes of the Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group held on 26 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
Emma Brass, Eden District Council
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Billy Welch, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary
Neil Buck, Eden District Council
Steve Minnikin, Cumbria Constabulary
Steve Wilde, Eden District Council
Damian Lavictoire, Cumbria Constabulary
Dan McAulay, Eden District Council
Matthew Kennerley, Cumbria Constabulary
Matthew Pearman, Cumbria Constabulary
Rob Melloy, RSPCA
Robert Docherty, Eden District Council
Nick Wright, Cumbria County Council
Richard Batham, Highways England
Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Highways
Nick Griggs, North West Ambulance Service
Karen Lowthrop, Appleby Town Council
Kellie Bradburn-Sims, Cumbria County Council
Sue Warner, South Lakeland District Council
Colin Cox, Cumbria County Council Director of Public Health
Laura McClellan, Cumbria County Highways
Katie Callon

Apologies: Councillor Suzie Pye, South Lakeland District Council

Before the meeting started, LC said he could like change the order of the agenda and bring forward Item 12 on communication and engagement to be discussed after the notes were agreed.

1. Notes of the Previous Meeting held on 20 April 2021

These were agreed as a true record.

2. Communication and Engagement

It was noted that there had been a lot of reaction to the announcement. It seemed the official message had been leaked before it had been announced. LC reminded the group that when comms were agreed to go out at certain times, that the group kept it embargoed until that time. LC said that he had received a number of contacts from the public which had been shared with comms colleagues. A more structured approach on how to deal with comms etc was needed - FAQ's would provide a uniformed approach. He asked the group to feedback on any contacts they had received.

BL had received numerous phone calls and had had some social media engagement.

KG said that this was the most vital issues for MASCG to discuss today. She had been inundated with phone calls/emails from residents who were mortified at the

position they found themselves in. The delay of the press release had been a disaster as no-one knew what was happening. She had also attended Appleby Town Council and answered questions. There needed to be a consistent comms strategy to deal with this including how the decision was arrived at/what powers MASCG do/don't have. Her position on the group as an elected representative was to voice the concerns of the community and the main objective of the group as a whole was to deliver a safe and enjoyable Fair. She also said that the pre and post Fair meetings with the community would be very important and that press releases needed to be regular and informative.

KL gave an update on the phone calls etc that she had received. Appleby residents are extremely disappointed with the decision and a cohort of businesses who would usually welcome the Fair may not open due to having to provide extra security etc.

BW said that he understood the anxiety of the settled community. By August there should be a clearer picture of where we are at with Covid. If things did take a turn for the worse in relation to infections etc, the Fair would be cancelled.

PD said that elected member representatives couldn't simply refer to the official comms when reporting to councillors at parish and town council meetings. They would expect a full and frank account similar to that contained in the notes of the meeting which is a public document and available online. This is why the notes have to be a detailed and accurate record. PD considered that that local residents and businesses had every reason to feel disgruntled given that the August date coincided with the peak tourist season which is why the September date should have been chosen as the compromise.

EB had also taken calls/emails from people who had felt that they weren't represented. Jimmy Winter had taken hundreds of calls and had also been receiving flack due to Appleby Show being cancelled.

BL said that MASCG needed to agree a consistent statement going forward. This would be the biggest tourist event in Cumbria and if MASCG didn't have the power to stop the event, all agencies should make sure it is a safe one. If accommodation is full, then people won't be able to come.

PD agreed that local accommodation is self-limiting but pointed out that the majority of Gypsy/Traveller visitors are camping/caravanning. Phase 1 of the Fair is of particular concern because of the lack of temporary stopping places meaning that Gypsy/Traveller visitors have no alternative other than camping on the side of the A685 which is the most significant and immediate public health risk not Covid.

Summing up, LC said that two things needed to happen:

- 1) LC/DM/NG would meet to put together a statement on how MASCG came to the decision and put together some FAQs to share with the group.
- 2) A sub-group should be established to put together a comms strategy. Anyone who wanted to be part of this is to contact LB so that meeting could be arranged.

3. Covid Protection and Public Health

This item was brought forward as CC was due to attend another meeting. CC gave an update on the rationale around the vaccination process. By the end of July, those eligible for the vaccine would have been invited for the first dose. It usually takes a couple of weeks to provide protection, so by 12 August there would be a reduction in the risk of transmission. There were other things that could be done to

support and enhance the programme in and around Appleby and make sure those coming take up the vaccinations.

BW asked if it would be possible to undertake vaccinations/testing at the Fair. CC said that testing could be done. In relation to vaccines this was something that he would have to pick up with NHS colleagues, but that it would be better to encourage people to get vaccinated before attending rather than making vaccination available at the event. BW said that the take up of the vaccine in the Gypsy and Traveller community had been good as they realised the importance of it.

KG said that the number of vaccinated people in north Cumbria was approx 181,000 and thought it would be a good idea to get this information across to the community. CC said that by then, there would be herd immunity and that information from the Primary Care Trust specifically Appleby could be provided.

EB said that there would be more relevant information in relation to large events/gathering from Government from the 14 June which would help going forward.

4. Encampments

EB gave an update on recent conversations she had had. Herself. PA/AMC/PD had met with the owner of Watty Yat who preferred the site was not used for encampments. She also said that Great Asby did not want the village green used as a temporary stopping point either.

She would be meeting with a land owner near Nenthead who had a field which they would make available. Otherwise, it was noted that there will be less stopping place available.

In relation to Phase 1 of the encampment protocol, it was still the intention to discourage early arrivals. EB would need to look at the agreement for Cotemoor which prohibits camping apart from Appleby Fair to see if it mentioned specific dates.

SW mentioned a change to the planning permission dates for Scroggs Field and the TRO in that area. RL was aware that it needs replaced and would be looking at this.

PD said that it was a forlorn hope to discourage early arrivals – they will turn up regardless. Given that fact EDC has a moral responsibility to provide temporary stopping places rather than simply resort to using the A685 or Cote Moor – by default. The legal liability for landowners allowing encampments needs to be clarified as a matter of urgency as does the policing of zero tolerance zones on the A685.

PD also asked whether the New Fair or the Cumbria Joint Agency protocol would be used when dealing with illegal encampments as this would have a bearing on the response of local agencies. EB/LC would have a discussion on what needs to be done.

MP said that he understood the challenges in relation to the A685 and aimed to police it in the same way as previous.

BL asked about the objection to the closure of the common at Mallerstang and whether a decision had been made. PD was not aware of a decision to object at Court.

5. Accommodation Situation

This had already been touched on previously. As far as the group was aware, there as not much, if any, accommodation available.

It was suggested that portaloos would be in high demand and would be lucky if any could be sourced. EB said that the supplier she uses doesn't have available the number they would normally have. Further information was needed as covid risk assessments/enhanced cleaning all needed to be taken into account. NB would be looking into this with the contractor that ne used.

6. Licensing of Private Land for Camping

KG said the issue had come up from locals questioning the size of land of the seven licensed sites. The feeling locally was that they were too big and she would like an explanation to understand the role of EDC when licensing the sites. EB said that areas used for camping within the 1.5 mile radius of Appleby were different. It depended on the density of caravans based on campable area. This all fell under the planning permission. EB/KG would discuss this further.

LC suggested that an additional meeting be arranged for two weeks' time. LB would send meeting appointment to the group