

Notes of the Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group held on 12 May 2021

Attendance: Les Clark, Eden District Council (Chair)
Louise Biggs, Eden District Council
Councillor Andrew Connell, Eden District Council
Councillor Phil Dew, Cumbria County Council
Emma Brass, Eden District Council
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Billy Welch, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Steve Minnikin, Cumbria Constabulary
Damian Lavictoire, Cumbria Constabulary
Matthew Kennerley, Cumbria Constabulary
Rob Melloy, RSPCA
Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Highways
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
Peter Aiston, Cumbria Constabulary
Neil Aitken, Cumbria Fire & Rescue
Mike Clusker, Cumbria Fire & Rescue
John Everingham, Eden District Council
Amanda McKirdy, Cumbria Constabulary

Apologies: Councillor Karen Greenwood, Eden District Council
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary
Neil Buck, Eden District Council
Steve Wilde, Eden District Council
Robert Docherty, Eden District Council
Nick Wright, Cumbria County Council
Laura McClellan, Cumbria County Highways

1. Notes of the Previous Meeting held on 26 April 2021

These were agreed as a true record.

2. Communications and Engagement

NG, JE and DM had put together a set of FAQs which had been circulated to the group for information/comment and to ensure that there was a consistent approach from everyone. This would be a live working document and if anyone had anything to add to contact NG/JE. At the last meeting it had been agreed that a Comms Sub-Group would be set up but on reflection it was felt it better for comms to join the Operational Working Group.

PD said that the FAQs sheet was a very subjective view of the Fair and he had sent an alternative view to LC which he hoped would be taken into consideration because the document had to bear public scrutiny. LC said that he would share PD's comments with the comms team for a position and then share with MASCG if it felt a change was required. It was a difficult job for comms as it was a collective with differing views.

It was also noted that a review of the Communications Plan was also being undertaken to make it more adaptive and responsive.

3. Flashing Lane

This would be covered under the operational group update.

4. RSPCA Presence

PD said that Kirkby Stephen residents valued the RSPCA presence and felt that it could be compromised in August due to staffing. RM said that Phase 1 was currently being worked on. Accommodation was still an issue and there wouldn't be the usual number of vets or horse transporters.

5. Police Numbers

Reassurance had been given on Police numbers at the previous meeting.

6. Operational Working Group Update

PD drew attention to the key risks section of the Operational Sub Group report and in particular the reference to conflicting events. Brough Show was due to take place on 19 August but was now unlikely to go ahead because of concerns about access from the A685 and security. LC suggested that a schedule of events taking place either side of the Fair should be put together. EB said that this did already exist and that local authorities fed into it and it was also looked at by the Operational Sub-Group. It was felt that the majority of the caravans will have moved on by 19 August, PD reminded everyone that this was not a normal year, it would still be the holiday period and schools would still be on holiday so we can't assume that the Gypsy/Travellers will do that this year.

KBS said that not all events choose to register on the list. RL suggested to filter the list for events taking place in Eden/SLDC for August and bring back to the group for the next meeting. This was agreed.

In relation to community tension, MK said that we consider adding the strategic objective of 'reducing community tension' to the media strategy.

In relation to the community meetings, the proposed date of 21 July was agreed but LC asked that the August date be pushed back into the first week of September. KBS would liaise with KL regarding the venue. There was potential to apply for Contain Outbreak Management Funding as a potential resource for this. CC said to let him know the details and he will look at the process.

a) Highways

Proposed Variations to TRO etc

RL said that the Traffic Management Plan was currently being updated by the Operations Group and would come to a future MASCG meeting.

The new TRO was identical to the previous one. The issues introduced in 2019 banning horses over the zebra crossing would carry on for 2021. PD said that the Bridge Street issue was controversial and the flashing lane had not been resolved. RL said that the restriction on Bridge Street would be in place during the Fair Thurs-Sun. In relation to the flashing lane, repairs would be carried out to the barriers but would not be replaced as a whole.

In relation to the zebra crossing, BW said that it would be safer for pedestrians if horses were turned back before they reach the crossing. RL said that signage could be placed before they get to that point.

AC made the point that comms needed to make clear the times in the TRO were permissive only for a short period. This would be added to the FAQs.

A66 Roadworks

As there was no representative from Highways England at the meeting, RL would get an update for the next meeting. He will also get an update on the position/impacts of access to Appleby from the westbound resurfacing that would be taking place at the date of the Fair which was raised by PD.

b) Parish Engagement

KL gave an update from the Appleby TC meeting at which KG had spoken very well on the views of the Town Council and MASCG. A decision had been made to close the top gate on Fair Hill in June (the original Fair dates) so stop anyone camping. She also mention that the Moot Hall would be undergoing major repairs around the time of the Fair in August so Market Place would be busy with contractors.

PD asked for clarification on encampments at Watty Yat and Cotemoor and what the legal position was for landowners.

EB had made contact with the landowner at Cotemoor with a meeting to take place early June to which PD would be invited. It was also noted that the order on Cotemoor was similar to the planning permissions for the other sites in that it was for the period of the Fair, not specific dates. In relation to Watty Yat, a further meeting will be arranged to find out what the new landowners position would be as they had yet to confirm.

AMcK had attended meetings with Kirkby Stephen TC and Great Asby. EB would be making contact with the owner of Melmerby Village Green to find out what the position would be for this year's Fair.

PD asked for further clarification on which Encampment Protocol would be used during the Fair and what the legal liability is for landowners who allow temporary encampments on their property. EB said that the protocols have always operated the same way. For encampments during the 11 months outside of the Fair the Cumbria protocol was used and during the Fair, the New Fair protocol. In relation to the legal position of landowners, the legal advice was that it would be case by case, would depend on the scenario and what action landowners had taken with regard to issues on their land.

c) Licensing

BL said that a couple of pubs in Appleby had indicated that they would open if suitable arrangements were in place. KL mentioned that the license for supermarkets meant that they cannot sell alcohol after 12 noon. SW would be asked to confirm this.

PA said that offers were visiting pubs to get thoughts on whether they would be opening. It was difficult for licensees to make any decision as they don't know what restrictions will be in place.

d) South Lakeland

SW said she had submitted the planning application for Scroggs Field to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. She had also received notification that there may be a shortage of portaloos so would be looking to get something sorted as soon as possible.

7. Any Other Business

Public Health Update

CC gave an update on the current position in Cumbria saying that at present the position is good with low infection rates. The Government were carrying on with the roadmap with the expectation it will follow through as it currently stands from 21 June. The concern at the moment was in relation to the Indian variant in other parts of the country which was spreading through communities. At the moment it was not known whether this would turn into a third wave or balance out. There was still a lot of uncertainty and would continue planning for the Fair as we currently are.

The key measures for the Fair would be the same as any large festival; hygiene facilities, hand washing and lateral flow testing could be done. Pilot schemes had been taking place and would wait to see what the results from those were. It would be best to wait and see what Government guidance would be as this is not a ticketed event.

EB said that discussion had been taking place at the Operational Sub-Group relating to contact tracing/QR codes – if still in place it will have huge implications for the Fair on both caravan sites and hospitality venues. Multiple/staggered arrivals was going to be a very difficult issue to sort – some sort of system would need to be in place on how the licensed caravan sites recorded details etc. CC suggested that this issue was discussed offline and would look at putting together a sub-group to look at these issues. Anyone who wished to volunteer for this, is to contact LB.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 24 May at 2.00pm