

Notes of the Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group held on Monday 27 September 2021

Attendance: Les Clark, Eden District Council (Chair)
Louise Biggs, Eden District Council
Matt Kennerley, Cumbria Constabulary
Councillor Karen Greenwood, Eden District Council
Councillor Phil Dew, Cumbria County Council
Councillor Suzie Pye, South Lakeland District Council
Emma Brass, Eden District Council
Karen Lowthrop, Appleby Town Council
Laura McClellan, Cumbria County Highways
Steve Wilde, Eden District Council
Richard Batham, Highways England
Kellie Bradburn-Sims, Cumbria County Council
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Nick Wright, Cumbria County Council
Neil Buck, Eden District Council
Robert Docherty, Eden District Council
Damian Lavictoire, Cumbria Constabulary
Billy Welch, Gypsy & Traveller Representative
Richard Kemp, Cumbria Constabulary
Trevor Marsh, Environment Agency
Rob Lewis, Cumbria County Council Highways
John Banks, Cumbria County Council Highways
Nick Griggs, North West Ambulance Service

Apologies: Amanda McKirdy, Cumbria Constabulary
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary

1. Notes of the Previous Meeting held on 4 August 2021

These were agreed as a true record.

2. Feedback from Public Meeting

a) Review Proposals for Event Management

There had been lots of debate at the public meeting regarding the shape and nature of the Fair going forward. MASCG needed to consider if and how it moved from being a gathering to a formally managed and controlled event. There was general misconception from the public as to what responsibilities MASCG actually have in relation to the Fair. Any work undertaken on this would be significant.

BL referred to two documents which had been produced by the Appleby Community for a Peoples New Fair which covered the majority of the issues raised at the public meeting. It was noted at one point, Appleby Town Council had been a partner in the management of the facilities/Fair Hill.

PD suggested that as there were a lot of detailed issues to take into account and that a specific group be set up to feedback to MASCG.

EB said more information was needed as to what was anticipated/expected that would change the event. She was concerned that it would give the impression any organised event would be curtailed to certain areas/field instead of being allowed to go all over Appleby.

PD said that the issue couldn't be resolved at this meeting and the sub-group could look at the issues in more detail. He also felt the People New Fair group needed to be taken seriously and take the time to respond to their documents.

BW said that the issue of looking for an events management company had been looked into in the past. No-one was willing to take it on as it was a lot more complicated to take on than it seemed.

The Peoples New Fair document had originally been sent to KG as an elected member and she was currently dealing with it. KG/PD had spoken with the group and had left it that they would communicate with them on any issues. There was desire amongst the local community to see an organised Fair led by Appleby Town Council.

KG felt that if the FAQs had been placed on the Appleby Fair website, some of the issues experienced may have been cleared up in relation to how MASCG co-ordinates a response to the Fair, powers, limitations on law etc. It was agreed that the FAQs would be reviewed to make sure they were up to date and would be published on the website.

KL said that the Peoples New Fair had attended an Appleby Town Council meeting the previous week and had asked questions which the Town Council were considering and were happy to engage in the process.

MK said there needed to be clear outcomes on what they group were seeking to achieve to help manage public expectations and needed to have buy-in from both communities. Any group would adopt the risk and would need specific legal advice. He was also concerned around the potential discriminatory nature of some of the comments in the document.

LC said it was incumbent on MASCG to come to an objective conclusion on this issue. The right people who understood the history, law, communities and practical restrictions of the event needed to be involved with the sub-group. The group were asked to send any nominations to LB to arrange a meeting before the next MASCG in October.

b) Date for 2022 Fair

MASCG had been asked to consider the date of the 2022 Fair as it overlapped with the Queens Jubilee extended Bank Holiday weekend. It had been suggested that the Fair moves back a week or so to allow community celebrations to take place in Appleby and the surrounding areas.

BW/BL had come up with an idea for this and wanted to run it past AC/MK before coming back to present to MASCG for a decision. LC said it was not appropriate for him to attend as Chair of MASCG as he needed to keep an open mind.

PD made it clear that he was wholly against any decision being made outside of any MASCG meeting. It was important that the settled community/businesses are made aware of a date as soon as possible for hospitality/tourism purposes. LC said the decision needed to be a collective one by MASCG but any technical issues could be discussed outside.

It was agreed that BL/BW would speak to AC/MK on their proposals and a one off special meeting of MASCG would be convened the following week (7 October) to hear the proposals. BW/BL were asked to provide in writing, an outline of the proposals in advance of the special meeting so that it could be circulated to the group beforehand.

3. Community Group Representation on MASCG

The People New Fair had requested a representative from their group to join MASCG. KG described the position so far in that it had been agreed with members of the Peoples New Fair that they would continue dialogue with the elected representatives on MASCG to raise any issues etc.

BL/KL agreed they should stick to the current process but felt that there was a barrier to how MASCG works.

SP mentioned that the Respect meetings may be a better forum for strengthening better connections with the settled communities.

PD said it was important that the views of the settled community are represented but this should be done by the elected councillors.

Everyone in attendance agreed to the current process going forward.

4. Communications and Engagement

A message would be circulated regarding the special MASCG meeting in October.

Feedback would be given to the comms group on the updating of the FAQs to be published on the Appleby Fair website.

EB asked about the comms lead for 2022 - it had been agreed that EDC would take the lead.

The evaluation report was in the process of being collated. A draft would be circulated to the group before publication. If anyone has any issues they would like reflected in the report, please let LC know.

5. Operational Working Group Updates

a) Highways

Nothing to report.

b) Parish Engagement

Powis Lane field issue –The landowner has again this year opened fields which are not a tolerated stopping place, they have no facilities, he took payment and allowed two fields to be used after saying he would not do so. This is a matter that needs to be discussed further, and may need planning input. A decision needs to be made about the Powis Lane area as stopping places are needed. There is an issue with the close location of restricted sites in the 1.5mile radius of fair hill.

Contact Info – KBS asked if we can have updated contact info for those who sit on MASCG and subgroups, what work areas they cover and a contact telephone number and email.

c) Licensing

Nothing to report.

d) South Lakeland

Nothing to report.

6. Any Other Business

Near Fatal Drowning: As RM was not on the call, this would be discussed at the next meeting.

KG raised the issue of the size of the Fair this year and would like to discuss going forward the licensing of the seven sites and the planning permission that goes with them to see if the size could be reduced lawfully. LC said this could be an option for the sub-group to explore.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that a meeting would be arranged for October – has been arranged for 25 October at 2.00pm.