

## Notes from the Multi Agency Strategic Coordinating Group Sub group which met on Monday 18 October 2021

Attendance:

- Councillor Karen Greenwood EDC
- Councillor Phil Dew CCC
- Councillor Andrew Connell EDC
- Bill Lloyd Gypsy and Traveller Representative
- Billy Welch Gypsy and Traveller Representative
- Charlotte Lory Cumbria Police
- Laura McClellan Cumbria Highways
- Karen Lowthrop Clerk Appleby Town Council
- Emma Brass joined the meeting at 2pm due to a diary clash.

Apologies Damian Lavictoire, Cumbria Police

After a delayed beginning, due to some clarification and further information being sought, it was proposed and agreed that Karen Lowthrop Chair the meeting.

There was some discussion about the Terms of Reference for this group. It was agreed that it would focus on the main issue, which was to discuss the assertion, and desire of the public at the Post Horse Fair Meeting, that MASCG consider how Appleby Horse Fair could move from being a gathering to a formally managed and controlled, ticketed, self-funded event.

Part of this discussion included understanding how the Planning permissions and Licenses for the seven sites affect the Fair. It was agreed that to help our understanding we need advice from a Planning Officer and our Senior Environmental Health Officer. (Emma joined the meeting later)

There was some discussion about Appleby Town Councils forthcoming public statement as to the reasons as to why it is unable to take over the organising and running of the Fair (see Appleby Town Council website) There are issues of legal liability, and insurance, officer capacity and cost to the parish precept.

The question was raised what would you be selling tickets for? There is no programme of events, it is a Gathering. The 2015 Ombudsman ruling against Manchester City Council declared that cutting off public open space or refusing entry to pedestrians in the town centre would be unlawful.

Other happenings in Gloucestershire such as the cheese rolling, were referred to as events which have looked at these same issues and remain as unmanaged events. Glastonbury is different as it is on private land.

Fair Hill itself is public open space, and cannot be closed off to the public, (or ticketed) because of the terms under which it was gifted to the Town Council.

Ideas for an alternative business model were sought, and the suggestion that an Event Management Company could be engaged to run the Fair was discussed. CL outlined the procedures for Cumbria Police to work with the event companies who run local events such as Kendal Calling and WannaSee.

The Ballinasloe Horse Fair was discussed and the challenges of organising that Fair were mentioned.

The meeting was reminded that due to the liability that would be due to any company that accepted responsibility for the Fair, it was highly unlikely that any of the local event companies would agree to run Horse Fair. (see *Glaister v Appleby* in Westmorland Town Council)

It was mentioned by the Chair that she had informal discussions with three Event Management Companies (local and international) who had experience of large events/and or Horse events, to take on Appleby Horse Fair, but was unable to obtain any interest from them at all.

It was suggested that over the last twenty years there have been many attempts to identify ways to turn Horse Fair into an organised controlled managed ticketed self funded event and that despite peoples best intentions, and called in expertise, these best efforts have not met with success.

It was agreed that a document be produced showing the reports and evidence over the years of the work on this that has been done so that people understand that this is a long held ambition, but that the issues are far more complex than at first sight.

Members of the group needed to leave at 2pm, just when the issue of the recent rise of Anti-social behaviour, discrimination and racism in our communities was discussed, and how this affects the nature of the Horse Fair for all concerned. Some members discussed this with Emma Brass who asked "What is the change that you want to see by making it an organised and ticketed event?"

It was agreed that the meeting would reconvene at a later date for further discussion, and size of the Fair, and the licensing and planning permissions which affect the seven sites.

End of Report

Recommended statement from Committee to Full Council to be Resolved at

**FULL COUNCIL MEETING 20 OCTOBER 2021 7PM THE PUBLIC HALL APPLEBY**

The following is a statement from ATC responding to a question posed by The People's Fair at the Full Council meeting 22 September 2021

**“Will Appleby Town Council take control of Fair Hill and take ownership of the Horse Fair?”**

The Council considered this request at a meeting of its Planning and General-Purpose Committee meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021

The Committee decided to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the proposal be declined, for the following reasons.

A major issue for the Council is that “the Fair” is not a legally defined event, nor is it run by any recognised body. There is therefore no legal mechanism for the Council to take on the running of the Fair and the issues involved are much more complex than the question anticipates.

Furthermore, Appleby Town Council is a parish council and does not have the resources or expertise to “run” Appleby Horse Fair, which is a gathering involving an influx of thousands of people into the town, over multiple sites and over a period of weeks. This requires operational and planning expertise and financial resources that are significantly beyond the capacity and limited means of Appleby Town Council.

In the circumstances, it would be both highly inadvisable (legally) and financially imprudent for the Council to commit to “running” the Fair, as suggested.

This is why the Committee declined to make the recommendation proposed.

Nevertheless, the Council wishes to engage proactively with those community groups who have expressed an interest in improving the Fair and its impact on the town, in particular by listening to ideas as to how the Fair Hill might be placed on a more commercial footing. To this end, the Council has suggested that its current ‘Fair Hill Committee’ be expanded to 5 members (4 councillors and the Town Clerk), with the immediate remit of meeting with representatives of the Peoples Fair Group at the earliest opportunity to discuss their ideas.

Dr Gareth Hayes

Mayor of Appleby

12 October 2021