

# Draft Appleby Fair Strategy 2019-2022



## Introduction

The Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group (MASCG) has adopted the Strategy outlined in this document as a way of working for the 2019-2022 Appleby Horse Fairs. The aim of this strategy is to make Appleby Horse Fair as safe as possible for all concerned.

This strategy underpins the operational planning of MASCG. The Voluntary Licensing Charter and the Encampment Protocol for temporary stopping places are important building blocks for this Strategy (both published online at [www.applebyfair.org](http://www.applebyfair.org)).

MASCG has considered the feedback from the 2018 Fair to enable it to evaluate its current strategy, operational planning and the roles and resources of each MASCG partner.

MASCG has consulted on this with stakeholders and published the final version on the dedicated website [www.applebyfair.org](http://www.applebyfair.org) where the minutes of MASCG meetings are published along with its terms of reference.

The underlining principle of this strategy is one of public safety being the paramount concern. The unique nature of this traditional event means the needs of residents, Gypsies and Travellers and visitors to the Fair must all be respected if the Fair is to be successful.

MASCG works every year to review its strategy and operational planning, taking into account feedback received from local communities, Gypsies and Travellers and visitors. MASCG can then use this strategy to set out a framework to enable the Fair to be regulated and controlled to make it safer and more enjoyable for all.

Work will be done to encourage Gypsies and Travellers especially in motorised caravans not to arrive too soon for the Fair. Early arrivals have a significant impact on rural communities, they reduce the space for grazing for bowtops on roadside verges and can cause road safety issues by parking unsafely at road endings reducing the visibility for motorists at junctions.

The number of early arrivals has reduced and Gypsies and Travellers are encouraged to only come to the authorised sites during the Fair. If they arrive early, they should use the tolerated sites which are published online at [www.applebyfair.org](http://www.applebyfair.org)

Litter can also be an issue at the Fair, both in and around Appleby town centre and in the outlying areas when temporary stopping places are located. We encourage all those attending the Fair to use the litter bins provided by MASCG or to please take their rubbish home with them and dispose of it responsibly.

This Strategy's aim is to establish a clear direction that everyone can support and allow the Fair to continue to develop and flourish.

Matthew Neal

Chairman of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group for Appleby Horse Fair

## **Context**

- Appleby Fair is a historic gathering of Gypsies and Travellers. It is the largest Horse Fair in Europe attracting up to 10,000 Gypsy and Travellers and over 20,000 visitors each year.
- Appleby Fair is held annually from the first Thursday in June for a week. However, the main days are Thursday to Sunday.
- The Fair is not an 'organised' event run or licensed by one organisation. The Gypsy and Travellers, RSPCA and public agencies, under the banner of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group (MASCAG) meet to discuss issues and co-ordinate activities across the agencies. MASCAG does not own or run the Fair.
- There is an impact of the event beyond Appleby during and outside of the "week" which has caused some complaints from residents and farmers. This has been scoped and actions identified within Operational Plans to mitigate the impact of the movement of the large numbers to and from the event across the county, particularly in Eden and South Lakeland.
- This approach has evolved and Operational Plans have been amended in light of experience.
- The key agreed outcomes have been achieved within the resources available.

## **Vision**

The vision for the Strategy is as follows:

"Appleby Fair will be an event that the Gypsy and Travellers and local communities are proud of and is the best in the country".

## **Strategic Aims**

"To work in partnership with the Gypsy and Traveller community, all local agencies, communities and groups to develop effective advice and support arrangements in a cost effective and sustainable way, that ensures Appleby Fair creates economic and social benefit for Cumbrian communities and creates improved community cohesion with the settled and Traveller communities".

## **Objectives**

The overriding objectives of this Strategy is to deliver a safe and enjoyable Appleby Horse Fair for local residents, Gypsies and Travellers and visitors.

In order to achieve this overriding objective MASCAG will

1. Devise and implement operational plans to enable the public agencies which form MASCAG to create a safe, secure environment which support the Horse Fair and the migration movements to and from the event, including horse drawn bowtops encamped outside of it.
2. Seek to ensure those participating in the event have a minimal impact on the normal pattern of community life across Cumbria.
3. Balance the needs of resident communities and Gypsy and Travellers and other visitors in the implementation of the Strategy.
4. Discourage people from coming early to the Appleby Horse Fair and parking on roadside verges or in villages within Eden and South Lakeland.

5. Encourage land owners, local communities and Parish Councils to plan ahead to manage their areas as they would wish and not have undue reliance on public agencies.

These objectives build on the work that has been undertaken since the inception of MASCG in 2008. They will be challenging for all the partner organisations and will not be achieved unless all concerned work together to help achieve them.

A key to this is for agencies and representatives of the Gypsy and Traveller community to work together and broaden the involvement of all sectors of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

This does not seek to change their traditional leadership roles, but merely seeks to increase participation in the planning and implementation phase.

## **Priorities**

Four main areas of work have been identified. These are:

Priority 1 - To discourage people coming to Eden and South Lakeland early and parking motorised caravans on roadside verges and in villages before the Appleby Horse Fair.

Priority 2 - Further development of Operational Event Plans. This is to enhance the Plans to ensure they are responsive to current needs, effective in delivering a safe and secure environment within the reducing resources available.

Priority 3 - Further development of the support arrangements for the migrational movement of the large numbers going to and from the event across the County, particularly in the Eden and South Lakeland areas and management of the encampments outside of Appleby during the Fair which are to be discouraged.

Priority 4 - To create a balance between the rights and needs of the resident communities and those of the Gypsies and Travellers. This will include:

- Greater involvement in the planning and development of the Operational Plan from all sections of the Gypsy and Traveller community by encouraging representation on various groups.
- Increase community liaison with local communities on operational planning.

## **Encampment Protocol**

MASCG has an Encampment Protocol which has the aim of effectively monitoring encampments which occur immediately prior to and after the Fair in a manner which is lawful and proportionate, taking into account the concerns and rights of landowners, the local community as well as the needs, rights and traditions of the Gypsy and Travellers involved.

For up to two weeks prior to the start of the Fair, there will be Silver Command telephone conferences of MASCG Officers to discuss the progress of Phase 1 and consideration will be given at these meetings to enforcement action in relation to 'high risk' encampments.

During Phase 2, daily Silver Command meetings will take place to discuss operational matters and unauthorised encampments. At the end of Phase 2 and into the start of Phase 3, a decision will be made about the cessation of such daily meetings.

## **Conclusion**

This Strategy aims to continue to develop work previously undertaken and tackle the 'difficult issues' to enable further development of community relationships as the agreement to common objectives and outcomes.

The Strategy does not provide the answers to these issues, but provides the framework for these issues to be addressed and encourages local communities to find their own workable solutions wherever possible in light of ever reducing availability of public sector resources.