

## **Appleby Horse Fair 2022 Public Meeting**

### **7 July 2022**

Councillor Andy Connell, chaired the meeting and welcomed all.

Opening statements were made by members of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group for Appleby Horse Fair, followed by a question and answer session with members of the public.

#### **Councillor Andy Connell, Cumbria County Council Elected Member for Appleby**

We will be hearing reports from Les Clark, Chair of MASCAG, and Matthew Kennerley, Police Gold Commander. We also have EDC and CCC officers in attendance to deal with queries as they arise.

Appleby Fair is a unique event like no other. Some aspects can be found in other places, for example right now thousands of Glaswegians will be descending on Blackpool as they usually do in July, and police are on alert as they will be in Carlisle on Botchergate this time tomorrow when the road is pedestrianised overnight to accommodate the noisy Friday crowd of pub goers. But these aren't exact parallels. Appleby Fair is distinctive because of its ethnic character, the big disparity in numbers, with local residents far outnumbered by fair goers – and, of course, the horses.

This can create tensions. Fair goers don't always understand the disruption their brief influx temporarily brings to residents' daily routines. Residents don't always understand that what they are witnessing is a people who have for generations been marginalised and discriminated against, and who at Appleby Fair for a few days have the rare experience of dominating space.

The Media will always tend to simplify reporting of the Fair into a conflict of 'us and them'. In 2019 ruthless editing reduced hundreds of hours of film and interviews by Channel 5 to a crude story of gypsies and locals that don't get on with each other. 25 years earlier BBC 2 did the same.

The reality is a spectrum of behaviours, attitudes and responses. The Fair will never be all sweetness and light but understanding should always come before anger.

#### **Les Clark, Chairman of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group for Appleby Horse Fair**

Before I begin a short update on the operational aspects of the Fair, I want to address a key issue from the pre-Fair meeting. There was some discussion at the meeting around the ongoing question about whether the Fair could be an organised event. Some information was presented in the annual report which was challenged, and we are looking into this. I don't think this question will go away until it is independently addressed. EDC have approval to commission an independent review to look into the legalities and practicalities of the Fair becoming an organised, ticketed event. Information gathering will take place including all organisations involved in the Fair and local communities. The work will be commissioned soon and we will hopefully have an outcome in the coming months. EDC are also getting independent experts to look into the adequacy of and the potential need for stopping places for traveling to the Fair. We think we will all benefit by having someone with the appropriate equipment and expertise to look into these questions.

On to the overview. Operationally the consensus was that it went pretty well in terms of organisation and the authorities response to issues. There were a number of changes that were put in place this year that appeared to work better and reduce some of the issues from previous years. Increased toilets seems to have reduced some of the anti-social behaviour. The numbers traveling to the Fair were only marginally up from last year in terms of encampments.

We had some flexibility in opening and closing of The Sands to hopefully give people more space to congregate for longer. We had a more flexible approach which we feel has helped to address some of the anti-social behaviour which seemed to be more prevalent last year.

Clean up went well. There was lots of positive feedback from the community on clean up, so thank you for that.

We are looking at the practical figures and finances and are aiming to get the annual report to confirm and clarify figures by September when all organisations have fed in relevant information.

**Superintendent Matthew Kennerley, Appleby Horse Fair Gold Command:**

Data sets were completed after the fair however these may differ slightly to the final figures published in the annual report.

- 2022 was the biggest fair since 2015
- Daily counts showed later arrival numbers than 2019
- **CCR Headlines:**
- 2820 calls into 999/101 during phase 2
- 93% of 101 calls answered within 5 minutes
- Webchat and online reporting also recorded an additional 630 digital contacts

CallOrigin	Appleby (J) Dispatch	CMR Incidents	North	South	Total
	66	1	5		72
101	41		1	5	47
999	16		5		21
Email	11	1	1		13
Web Chat	1		1		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>155</b>

The vast majority of contacts relate to road and highway disruption, specifically in relation to encampments. Contacts also include RTC's and obstructions, which haven't generated many crimes.

There were also a number of incidents to assist RSPCA with seizure of animals and reports of animal welfare concerns and missing person reports.

Arrests

	D and D	Section 4/5 /POA	violent disorder	ABH	Other
<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June</b>					1 x bladed article
<b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	3				2 x OPL 1 x Disqual 1 x Police assault
<b>Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June</b>	1				1 x Police Assault
<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June</b>	3		2		3 x OPL

<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>9</b>
				<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>18</b>

10 additional arrests were made over the Jubilee Weekend – linked to the Fair but not within these figures – for direct Phase 2 comparison only.

Investigation ongoing into violent disorder with identification of various suspects made and further arrests planned. Investigation and specific operation in place.

### Comparison on Previous Years

	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Arrests</b>	<b>18</b>	13	8	8	11	10	11	28
<b>Crimes</b>	<b>27</b>	25	21	17	11	11	24	9
<b>FPN/ TOR</b>	<b>139 confirmed (likely over 200)</b>	58	51	22	8	30	71	93
<b>Stop Search</b>	<b>42</b>	9	3	1	3	-	-	-
<b>Section 60</b>	<b>79</b>	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Dispersals Section 35</b>	<b>28</b>	6	4	12	4	77	8	22
<b>Vehicle uplifts</b>	<b>25</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Incidents</b>	<b>81</b>	86	103	115	71	65	61	61

This year there was an increase in policing interventions in response to community feedback.

### **Question and Answer Session with members of the public:**

**Q:** Two basic groups come to visit Appleby – welcome guests who visit in their caravans, and visitors who come to look at those who come with their caravans. Do you have any attendance figures that distinguish between these groups?

**A:** The short answer is no, there is no effective way of doing this.

**Q:** I have a question about the commissioning work you are putting together and how much it would cost. Would it not make sense to speak to the agricultural shows to see how they organise and ticket events every year rather than spend thousands of pounds?

**A:** Properly qualified people will be conducting the review and will be speaking to a number of event organisers and visitors as well as local residents. This piece of work cannot be done with just conversations. We need someone with expertise to conduct an objective and effective review. I think this is money well spent as it will provide an expert review to allow us to effectively review some long-standing questions.

**Q:** It is imperative that it is organised as an event. There is nothing that is comparable to this gathering. In 2018 a lady was killed in Padstone at a Hobby Horse Festival, which is a spontaneous gathering. The coroner's report stated that the numbers attending meant it could not be a spontaneous gathering anymore and someone needed to be responsible, as there were no risk

assessments the emergency services could not get to her in time. Given some of the other major incidents that have happened, this kind of thing needs to stop. With the number of people attending, it needs to be done. With this review being done, will we be given details so that we can all feed into the work, or will it be a select few?

**A:** We are doing this piece of work to answer these questions. The officers will be engaging with all communities and will actively engage with people who have a contribution to make.

**Q:** When next year's Fair is back to its normal dates, can police assure us that they will not be allowed to do what they did on Tuesday this year? The schools knew nothing about what was going on. School children were released and couldn't get across the road at Sands. Can this please not happen again before the fair starts. The Fair has got to be Thursday to Thursday.

**A:** Police have no specific powers to stop people coming into Appleby. We are aware of the issue raised. We can put more resources into Appleby earlier next year if necessary.

**Q:** I would like to know who is paying for this review, who is going to select them, what qualifications do they have and what makes them qualified for the job? Will this be shown at a public meeting for review? In terms of costs, we already pay a lot for this Fair without any return to residents.

**A:** EDC will pay for the piece of work to be done and will ensure we are procuring experts and we will let the community know who those experts are and what qualifications they have. The Report will be made public and if there is a desire to hear the outcomes of the report in a public meeting, we will make this clear in the procurement process.

**A: Cllr Phil Dew:** I am the chair of the financial scrutiny board at EDC. EDC have reserves, after March these funds will be combined for the new Westmorland & Furness authority. There will be no additional request from taxpayers.

**Q:** I would like to raise the health and safety issues of what happened on Wednesday evening. There were two lines of stationary traffic heading towards Fair Hill. Nothing moved for 1 and a half to 2 hours. Had anyone needed an emergency service they would not have been able to attend. Where was the risk assessment for this? How can you ensure this will not happen again? It took some of our guests 45 minutes to travel 300 yards.

**A:** Police experience of that was not over the same time scale. Yes, it does raise some concerns around the traffic management plan that will be addressed. In terms of static traffic, we found this to be lower than previous years. This issue will be fed into the traffic management plan. A large influx of traffic into a small area at one time is hard to manage.

**Q:** I would like to know if you have any reported incidents around demands with menaces? And what should we do if it happens again? If travellers are from elsewhere, how do you do anything about it?

**A:** We don't have a breakdown of incidents now. Advice is always to report as it is happening so that we can act and deal with issues appropriately. If arrests are made, we will identify the individual and research where they are from and look into any other offences. We will seek early charges to prevent people from escaping.

**Q:** Going back to the commission of the review. How long will this process take? To be able to move forward and have a time frame on this would be helpful. It would be nice to know as a community that these organisations are coming together and working towards a better outcome before next year's Fair.

**A:** We won't know until we put the commission out and get a response from whoever is commissioned. It will take as long as is necessary to make it a proper and meaningful piece of work. We have not done anything like this before so we are not sure, so I cannot make a commitment at this time. We can share time frames and engagement plans once they are available.

**A: Cllr Phil Dew:** It is following on from comments that were made at a public meeting from a local expert that we are looking into this query. We will draw on the reviews and comments from the local community. I can assure you we are doing this in good faith.

**Q:** I agree with the comments about traffic. It was an absolute disgrace. There were horses everywhere and many caravans. The Cemetery was a disgrace. Our business lost out because we took less customers than usual because of what goes on in the town.

**Q:** We drove through the town at the start of the Fair there was horses and sulkies (quite a few) in the town. There are signs in the town stating no horses are allowed in the town. We had to beep our horn to try and get someone to move. I received verbal abuse because of this. I resent being abused by visitors and being called a racist. If I speak up against something it is because it is wrong.

**Q:** To Matthew, thank you for quickly dispersing the issue on Battlebarrow. A lot of people were frightened but felt supported by police. I feel sorry for the police officers who had to deal with it with little equipment. If the police were frightened, how do you think public felt when we were engulfed in that situation. Fair enough you cannot stop people coming to the area, but you can stop people breaking the law. There were lots of people camped by the zebra crossing which is not safe. People were intimidated. I spoke to several officers, and nothing was done. We cannot stop people coming to the area but we need to have a positive response to make the Fair positive for the community and we need to stop crime being committed.

**A:** I fundamentally agree. We will be stepping up resources for earlier in the week next year and will intervene where we can.

**Q:** Last year Appleby Community Enterprises did a survey of 38 business in Appleby to get an idea of opinions. Only 3 out of 38 businesses saw a benefit from the Fair period. Losses from the other 35 business come to around £60k. Can we once and for all dispel the myth that Appleby makes money from the Fair. Over 90% of businesses feel substantial change is needed for the Fair to return to its original values. What are you planning to do to make the Fair benefit the town and not be the financial drain that it is now?

**A:** This is very useful information, please can you send that information to us to assess. Any information like this is useful. The impact on businesses is something that we will weave into the piece of work being commissioned.

**Q:** Can you make sure that no representatives of MASCg are pedalling lies about how much Appleby makes from the fair.

**A:** I have not heard that being expressed around the MASCg board.

**A: Cllr Phil Dew:** All business conducted by MASCG is noted by Democratic Services and I do not recall that being noted. We planned to conduct an economic survey in 2018 and were set up to do it, it was only not done due to Covid. All this kind of feedback is very useful. No one is under the illusion that the Fair is of benefit to the majority, we know that it is a nuisance to many.

**Q:** I would like to reiterate this. My business was affected. Delivery trucks refuse to come to the area because they cannot do as many deliveries in a day if they are stuck in traffic in the Appleby. In terms of police, you report something to officers, and they laugh at you, they have no respect for residents. We're told year after year you are working on it, but when are we going to see some actual change? This should be an event that is good for the local area, we need to find a way of stopping the unwanted stuff. More severe policing is needed.

**A:** I will pick up a conversation with you after this meeting.

**Q:** I would like to raise an issue on Wednesday evening. Am I correct in thinking the Wednesday evening is when the bow tops are meant to arrive on Fair hill? In the huge queue of traffic, I could not see one bow top in 400 yards. What were all these vehicles doing there? They should not have been travelling to Appleby early.

**A:** I don't know why they were there at that point. Police operations monitor traffic. We are keen to keep traffic clear, as soon as we realised it was causing problems in the town, we approached the licencing team to see if we could open Fair Hill early to alleviate the traffic.

**Q:** Many people here tonight don't know many of the of the panel, please could you introduce everyone. Suggestion that members and officers on the top table have name places and job titles so we know where to direct our questions.

**A:** Cllr Phil Dew – Kirkby Stephen CCC & EDC, Emma Brass – EDC Environmental Health Officer, Matthew Kennerley – Cumbria Police AHF Gold Commander, Les Clark – Chair of MASCG, Cllr Andy Connell – Appleby CCC & EDC, Sue Gilbertson – Appleby Town Clerk, Laura McClellan – CCC Traffic Management Officer, Steve Wilde – EDC Licencing Officer.

**Q:** When long standing residents were growing up, they had good interaction with the traveller community and local people when they visited, shops were open, everyone welcomed it. Why can't we look to make it a little bit smaller and stop the car boot sales. We need to look at this so that the whole town can enjoy and accept what is going on.

**A:** One of the issues that exists now is that the field the market takes place in has planning permission and it is allowed to take place. Issues have been raised about its size and what goes on. We need to work within the legal and statutory frameworks we have. We are looking into the market and speaking to the planning team about what we can do.

**Q:** Market Field causes issues. A lot of them aren't travellers. There are some legalities around what is sold at the market. Counterfeit goods are being sold. Something should be done about this. Appleby is inundated with traffic wardens the week before the Fair, but none during the week of the Fair. Is this because they are frightened because you cannot police their safety? If employees feel that way, how do you think we feel?

**A:** Issue of counterfeit goods is dealt with by trading standards at CCC. They had officers on the ground this year. There was a request for traffic wardens to attend to deal with issues in the town. They were in the town on Thursday and Friday morning because it was requested.

**Q:** Before it comes to the next Fair, are the residents going to get a vote or are you just going to crack on with it again?

**A:** We will not be taking a vote at this meeting as it is not the appropriate forum to do so. Appleby Town Council are holding a Parish Meeting in the parish hall to allow residents to raise queries. If we do carry out a parish poll, they are not legally enforceable, but any feedback will be considered and the proper processes need to be followed. At the meeting, anyone can attend but only residents of Appleby parish will be eligible to vote, other parishes may hold their own meetings.

**Q:** It has been mentioned that there could be designated stopping places to ease traffic issues, are these for white van men or bow tops? There was a van camping in the area for around 3 days from Carlisle, they do not need a stopping place. Will there be a charge for stopping places? I'm all for stopping places for bow tops, but vehicles should not be using them. I would like to see the Fair go back to what it was. It used to be a nice Fair, a family day out, I would not dare to bring family down now. Police did step up this year, we personally had no problems and that we are grateful for, we saw some good policing. I would like to applaud the police for their handling of the Battlebarrow incident, credit where credit is due.

**A:** One of the issues we have is that we are not able to say you can stop and you can not stop. That is not how stopping places are allowed to work. Horses are allowed to stop where they need to for welfare reasons, a lot of the TRO and signage does not apply to bow tops for this reason. We do not have a lot of bow tops who travel on their own, they are usually accompanied by others who want to stay with them. Bow tops are allowed on Fair Hill for this reason, welfare for the horses. We will not be allowed to say that stopping places are for horses and not vehicles. There is not any charge for a council run stopping place. Other stopping places run by parish councils/committees ask for a donation. We don't have legal power to decide who can stay in a stopping place.

**A: Cllr Phil Dew:** We have a duty of care to visitors. I think we should provide safe parking places to allow people to travel to the fair safely.

**Q:** Why can't bunding that is used in other areas be put in place? It is permanent and can stop vehicles parking where they shouldn't. The current posts just get taken out and burned.

**A:** We are looking into other options. The problem that we have is highway verges are used as service strips for utilities.

**Q:** Statements have been made to protect traveller safety, no statements have been made to protect residents.

**A: Cllr Phil Dew:** I think these go hand in hand. If we provide safe parking places for earlier arrivals, it will clear the roads and protect the safety of both traveller and residents.

**Q:** When we came into Appleby, there is a sign that says no horses in town centre. We walked into town and there were 6 rigs parked in the town centre and they were there all day. I approached a

policeman and they said can do nothing about it. The following day 2 horses and carriages were driving dangerously. I asked a police officer what they were going to do, and they said they can't do nothing. Unless we start enforcing the rules and regulations put in place this will carry on. People want the Fair to return to a safe Fair that benefits everyone. We need to stop people blatantly breaking the law and ignoring the rules and regulations that the rest of us must follow. Horses in the town causes a health and safety issue.

**A:** We are committed to levelling up enforcement, we have almost doubled the enforcement. In terms of the signage in the town, the signage went up too early so this sent a mixed message.

**Q:** There are an equal number of people on licenced sites and on unlicenced sites. I just want to make sure that the people who were running unlicenced sites will not be given a licence next year to make it legal. We need to do something to bring the numbers down, not allow it to expand.

**A:** For someone to apply for a caravan site licence they will need to apply for planning permission, this would be consulted on with the public. We cannot give a site a licence without planning permission.

**Q:** With regards to ditching and bunding, yes there are some utilities in the verges but they have been put in place in other areas and caused no issues.

**Q:** We went to the parish meeting in Kirkby Stephen on Tuesday which we all agreed that another parking place is not the way forward as it will invite more guests and we want to bring numbers down. After they were due to be on Fair Hill there were still a large number in Kirkby Stephen. This makes it very intimidating for residents. I don't think giving more stopping places and parking is the answer. After I reported a number of hangers on, were told they were having difficulty moving them on and they should have been on Fair Hill. Nothing was done. I thought wild camping was illegal, why are they allowed to just pull up and stay anywhere. I used to enjoy the Fair, but I won't attend anymore because of the feeling of it. We need to build repour back with the traveller community. There needs to be a cap or revoking of licences where they are not sticking to limits.

**Q:** Thinking about market fields and how this has allowed the fair to expand. There was a beer tent allowed this year which has increased problems. Are we now stuck with that, or can we remove it next year?

**A:** For this year we had a particular problem because a number of premises refused to open so the decision was to look at somewhere else to relieve the pressure on those premises that opened, the beer tent is not a permanent arrangement.

**Q:** I made a phone call when the beer tent was put up. It's not just the flashing lane that gets all the horses and sulkies. There are a lot of single ladies who live up near the beer tent. I understand that there are processed that you have to inform residents when a licence is put in place, we didn't know until it was put up.

**A:** The people who can object to temporary licences are the police and environmental protection. We went to the houses closest to the junction to where the tent was erected and visited residents and spoke to them. We went to residents on each day to ensure everything was okay. There was an ask for a generator to be moved and we did that to reduce noise.



**Q:** With regards to parking in the area. If we go away in a caravan, we hook up to power and pay our way. Why can't this be done when travellers visit Appleby? Why can't they use existing sites?

**A: Billy Welch, Traveller Rep:** This is a very good idea. A lot of existing sites won't let us on. A lot of us would like to be camped up somewhere nice and safe but we are not allowed.

**Q:** I think we have just hit the nail on the head. If the pubs in the town are closing, it's because they don't want the hassle. So why is MASCG then providing a licence and somewhere for them to drink.

**A:** The temporary event notice was put in place by a member of the public who has the relevant permission to do so. It was not organised by MASCG. The licence was considered due to a temporary event notice.

**Q:** On the issue of licence, at the pre-Fair meeting it was stated that MASCG had not been approached for licences. In the notes of 25 April MASCG meeting, it stated that a licence had been issued. I would like to know what the case is. Either it was issued before 25 April, or it hadn't been issued by May.

**A:** A licence had not been applied for at the pre-Fair meeting in May. The minutes of the April meeting must be incorrect.

**Meeting close 8.30pm**