

Appleby Horse Fair: Pre-Fair Public Meeting

Appleby Public Hall

15 May 2024, 7pm

Councillor Graham Simpkins, Westmorland and Furness Council Elected Member for Appleby and Brough.

Councillor Simpkins welcomed members of the public, and outlined the purpose of the meeting, which is to provide an update on the MASCG strategic arrangement for Appleby Horse Fair 2024, and provide an opportunity for the public to ask any questions directly to the MASCG.

Cllr Andy Connell, Westmorland and Furness Council Elected Member of Appleby and Brough who usually Chairs the meeting was unable to attend due to illness. Westmorland and Furness Council Officers and Members of the MASCG wished Cllr Connell well.

Steph Cordon, Chairperson of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group for Appleby Horse Fair

Chairperson of the MASCG Steph Cordon, thanked the public for attending the meeting, and for the suggestions put forward to improving the safety of the fair. An overview of the lessons learnt report was provided, together with the measures and improvements that have been implemented for this year, as a result of the report outcomes and additional funding secured through the Implementation and Improvement Fund;

1. Community engagement and communication – a series of drop-in sessions with elected members have been arranged in Appleby and Kirkby Stephen through the year.
2. Website improvements - Westmorland and Furness Council have taken the website in house. Focus has been on getting messages out earlier. Messaging via social media channels has also increased.
3. Improvement to community feedback forms – the addition of follow-up options for enquiries has been included. MASCG Representatives have been working on town and parish council engagement.
4. Education and enforcement – Police have been looking at measures to reduce ASB and working with partners to resolve locality issues.
5. Signage and stopping places – Changes have been made to improve safety and traffic management.
6. Temporary restrictor at Appleby Leisure Centre – implemented to reduce caravans and vans parking overnight. A height restrictor is also proposed for Christian Head Car Park at Kirkby Stephen.
7. Traffic calming measures – implemented on Battle Barrow to reduce speeding of sulkies and horses.
8. Flashing Lane footpath and temporary pedestrian guardrail – installed to mitigate risk to pedestrians and separate horses and pedestrians on Flashing Lane.
9. Waste – a total of 39 bins will be provided for the fair this year, an increase to reduce litter. Sweeping teams will be on schedules throughout the fair for Appleby Town and surrounding villages. Schedules will be available on applebyfair.org .
10. Mobile Toilets - 47 porta loos will be available during the fair at various locations.
11. Highway restrictions in Appleby – amendments to Traffic Management Plan with details of parking restrictions.
12. Travelling Man Festival – the festival will be reinstated this year on a smaller scale, final safety needs to be confirmed.
13. Mobile bar – this year the bar will be moved slightly to reduce impact on residents and will close at 9pm.

14. Trading Standards – Officers will be working with owner of market field to ensure items sold are safe.
15. Animal welfare – RSPCA and Animal Rescue will be in force throughout.
16. Stopping places - Over 80 stopping places in Cumbria. Work to identify additional sites is ongoing. A request to landowners with potential sites for stopping places was put forward.
17. A685 Traffic Management - Ditching and bunding pilot implemented to improve road safety due to the lack of clear visibility for motorists on the bend when encampments form in already restricted areas.
18. MASCG AHF Plan – Development of a comprehensive multi agency plan for the fair equipped to deal with any issues.
19. Operational Hub – Enhancements implemented at Appleby Library to create a hub for community resilience, training, and development, with additional kit and facilities available year-round. This will be utilised during AHF 2024.
20. Long term strategy for Appleby Fair – ORS Report from consultancy commissioned has not provided outcomes. MASCG will seek professional advice as to what can and can't be done to improve the management of Appleby Horse Fair and mitigate the impact of the fair on the Eden Community.
21. Encampments – a review of the encampment zone perimeter will be carried out for AHF 2024, to identify additional transit sites.

Steph Cordon thanked all officers involved in the planning for Appleby Fair.

Detective Superintendent Daniel St Quintin, Appleby Horse Fair Gold Command

Det. Supt Daniel St Quintin Gold Commander for Appleby Horse Fair introduced himself to members of the public, and shared information on his experience of policing arrangements for other large-scale gatherings, similar to the horse fair.

An overview of the focus for policing, including early intervention, protecting life and property, preserving order and public safety was shared.

Cumbria Constabulary will not have a dedicated option on 101 for Appleby Horse Fair queries 2024. Studies have shown this takes longer to get calls through. All officers working on the call centre have specific training in relation to the fair, and understand the complexity of queries, and will be able to respond and filter calls as quickly as possible.

Cumbria Fire and Northwest Ambulance Service will be co-located at Appleby Police Station for AHF 2024, to enable a more effective multi agency response to incidents.

CCTV and other devices have been installed and linked to other policing technology. This infrastructure enables Police and other agencies to see what is happening across Appleby and the surrounding areas, providing early insight into the movements of Appleby Fair and arrivals.

Additional policing and enforcement implemented in Kirkby Stephen during phase one, as well as increased monitoring of tolerated sites.

Insp. Mo Bibby, Bronze Commander for Communities, will be operating a drop-in centre for communities at venues around Kirkby Stephen and Appleby, to pick-up concerns for police and other agencies. Date and locations for drop-in to be confirmed. Drop-ins will be posted on Applebyfair.org.

Questions/Comments:

Q: Issues last year in Church Brough with encampments on the turning circle, where overnight camping is prohibited. This is the main pick-up and drop-off point for children.

Police: Encampments will be visited and assessed; encampments will be moved on if necessary.

Q: Concern over lack of pedestrian walkway through ditching and bunding measures on A685.

Highways: The ditching and bunding pilot is alongside to a fast speed road where pedestrians would be at risk. There are other safer walking paths away from the A685 linking Kirkby Stephen and Winton. The measure is to address encampments.

C: A suggestion for the area to be reviewed to identify if there are sufficient gaps to enable pedestrian access beyond the bunding at start and end points throughout the length for those pedestrians which have no other alternative but to use the route.

Q: Request from Long Marton residents for more police concentration near the village green and monitoring of Powis Lane main access to village which was blocked by encampments last year.

Police: This will be monitored during the fair and matters dealt with.

Q: What size will the additional bins be? They need to be bigger to ensure they don't fill up too quickly.

Environmental Health: Additional waste provision includes larger bins.

Q: Roman Road in Appleby is blocked with Wednesday caravan arrivals queueing on both sides of the road until the field is open. If emergency access is required for properties, this would not be possible.

Police: Roman Road congestions has police focus this year. Please call in with any issues.

Highways: Provided an explanation on the new safety barrier and footway installed on Flashing Lane. Its purpose during the fair is focused on improving safety, separating pedestrians and horses.

Q: The mobile home that is delivered on Thursday morning to the Market Field causes congestions during fair arrivals, could this be delivered on the Wednesday to reduce congestion?

Environmental Health: Will speak to the owner and request the delivery is changed to Wednesday.

C: Raised a concern around people being blocked from the public toilets east side of The Sands.

Q: Requested details of when the ramp for horses to access the river will be installed.

Environmental Health: Final checks are being carried out on the ramp, installation will be after the bank holiday, on the Tuesday or Wednesday.

Q: What has been put in place to mitigate a repeated traffic accident from last year.

Police: Road safety is a key part of Gold Strategy for AHF 2024. Police Officers will be in force challenging people on road safety issues, other agencies will be involved in assisting police with enforcing road safety. Some drivers are not aware people have jumped on the back of a vehicle. It is part of gold strategy this year.

In response to requests for providing accurate cost against the fair, Westmorland and Furness Council advised that it is not possible to measure the true cost of the fair including all officer time.

Q: School representatives requested the same presence from the Police for opening and closing times of schools in Appleby during the fair.

Police: The same police presence will be prioritised during the fair to mitigate any disruption for GCSE Students, ensuring children can travel safely to and from school. This also applies to Kirkby Stephen Grammar.

Q: Great Asby Parish is non-tolerated, and the pub will remain open this year. What policing will be in force to monitor people travelling to the pub, and any issues that may arise?

Police: There will be additional policing overall and patrols around areas of focus for people coming to the fair. Please call 101 if priority and 999 if it is an emergency, there will be plenty of patrols in the area.

Q: What powers of enforcement do Police have to keep horses out of the town?

Police: Legislation applies to mechanically propelled vehicles in towns not horse drawn. All officers are briefed on safety of horses, enforcement will depend on the situation as it arises. If a horse is on the pavement that would be classed as an obstruction.

Q: Which pubs will be open this year?

Licensing: A full list of licenced premises open for this year will be on Applebyfair.org website.

C: Kirkby Stephen Town Council raised an issue on early arrivals, which have been camped on the A685 a month early.

GRT: As representatives for MASCG, messages appealing to the GRT community not to come to the area too soon go out well in advance of the fair. Some still choose to come to the area.

Police: Patrols start for Appleby Horse Fair on 23 May however we respond to encampments year-round.

Environmental Health: Contact has been made and welfare and safety checks carried out with all encampments so far.

Q: During AHF 2023 there was an issue with litter on The Sands being blown into the River Eden. Please can we extend cleaning schedules to continue after visitors have left and ensure all rubbish is picked up and not blown into the river.

Environmental Health: A meeting with waste contractors has taken place, the river was discussed and areas that need attention to stop rubbish getting into the river will be monitored.

Cllr John Murray, Westmorland and Furness Elected Member for Kirkby Stephen and Tebay praised Officers for the work they contribute to year-round to ensure the fair runs as smoothly as possible.

Cllr Graham Simpkins thanked all members of the public, MASCG representatives and officer for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.