

Appleby Fair Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group – 2024 Debrief

24 June 2024 at 1.00pm

Voreda House – Penrith/Microsoft Teams (Hybrid)

Minutes

Attendance: Steph Cordon, Westmorland & Furness Council (Chair);
Daniel StQuintin, Cumbria Constabulary;
Nick Wright, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Neil Buck, Westmorland & Furness Council;
John Everingham, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Emma Brass, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Laura McClellan, Westmorland & Furness Council Highways;
Sue Warner, Westmorland and Furness Council;
Amanda Atkinson, Westmorland and Furness Council;
Cllr Phil Dew, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Cllr John Murray, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Cllr Graham Simpkins, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Lee Skelton, Cumbria Constabulary;
Neil Graham, Cumbria Constabulary;
Leanne Plumtree, RSPCA;
Sue Gilbertson, Appleby Town Council;
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy & Traveller Representative;
Peter Kavanagh, Cumbria Fire and Rescue;
Neil Aitken, Cumbria Fire & Rescue;
Caroline Stuart, North West Ambulance Service;
Nicolas Griggs, North West Ambulance Service;
Richard Batham, Highways England
Alec Swatton, Westmorland & Furness Council.

1. Apologies

Rob Melloy, RSPCA (Due to Technical Difficulties);
Kellie Bradburn-Sims, Westmorland & Furness Council;
Cllr Ian Mitchell, Westmorland and Furness Council;
John Banks, Westmorland and Furness Council
Amanda Cruddas, Environment Agency;
Billy Welch, Gypsy & Traveller Representative;
Sophie Tinnon-Davies, Cumbria Constabulary;
Mo Bibby, Cumbria Constabulary;
Katie Callon, Cumbria Constabulary;
Steve Hunter, Cumbria Constabulary;
Ross Woods, Cumbria Constabulary;
Katie Jones, Cumbria Constabulary;
Eleanor Chiverton, Environment Agency;
Paul Goddard, North West Ambulance Service;

2. **Appleby Fair Learning Lessons Report 2023 – Final Version** (attached)

A final version of the 2023 Learning Lessons Report, which included an updated version of Appendix A (Action Plan), was agreed. The website would be updated accordingly, with ongoing carried forward into the 2024 Learning Lessons report.

3. **Purpose of the session**

To enable agencies to participate in a debrief of Appleby Fair 2024 and to identify any actions or improvements to implement for future Fairs.

4. **Scene Setting**

Initial scene setting was provided to set context for the debrief. The majority of points raised related specifically to the 2024 Fair and included the following:

- There was an earlier arrival into Westmorland and Furness, which in Phase 1, impacted on Kirby Lonsdale and Sedbergh. The pro-active approach from the Police, in line with the Gold Strategy, and ability to apply new legislation, mitigated the impact. Particular example include the swift engagement related to an inappropriate encampment at Settlebeck School.
- Kirkby Stephen saw a significant reduction in people arriving. This could be the media attention, the perception of the bunding pilot, preventing people from stopping along the A685, or the Pennine Pub not being open. The communities in Kirkby Stephen reported an overall impression that the Fair had not had the negative impact that may have been felt in the prior year.
- Increased numbers of both bowtops, caravans and vehicles had moved earlier in Appleby this year. Encampments of Burrells and Powis were particularly congested. Residents and businesses in Appleby reported large numbers of people and horses.
- Positive feedback had been received regarding the improvements at Flashing Lane, the barrier at the Leisure Centre car park, and the traffic calming measures implemented throughout the Fair.
- There was a visible and proactive police presence, with intelligence led operations targeting the minority of people who cause problems and commit crimes. These operations were well received by all communities.
- Community drop in sessions had worked well. 145 CAG forms had also been received and answered.
- 102 arrests were made in the run up too, and during the Fair, compared to 42 the year before, with an emphasis was on road safety this year.
- There had been proactive enforcement by the Trading Standards Team, which resulted in over £500k worth of goods being seized at the privately owned market field.

- Two horses had died of exhaustion during the 2024 Fair. All communities/stakeholders had condemned these deaths, but there had also been numerous awards given out for healthy and well cared for horses.

5. Outcomes of Appleby Horse Fair 2024 – Overall Impressions

Further comments were provided in addition to those in scene setting:

- There had been a number of crowded encampments this year, for example, at Burrels, the top of Brough and Powis Lane.
- In the main, Kirkby Stephen was content with how the Fair was handled this year, especially in regards to the clean-up operation and the communication with local residents/businesses by various agencies.
- There was a huge amount of work undertaken by officers, with the sheer effort by staff being recognised.
- A Phase 4 of the Fair was required because officer's workload after the Fair did not return to normal. This was due to the Fair's aftermath generating a lot of follow-up work. This element of the Fair needed to be managed more effectively going forward, with a co-ordinated multi-agency approach.

6. Communications and Engagement

- What went well overall and in each of the phases of the Fair?*
- What didn't go so well?*
- What would we do differently, or do more of next year? Defined actions and timeframes.*
- What would we not do again?*

A discussion ensued regarding the Communications and Engagement relating to the Fair. Notable points included:

- The Communication responses during the Fair to different events were efficient, clear and strong.
- The Community Action Group (CAG) Forms, worked well. People were appreciative that they received responses, if they left contact details. It was noted that it would be useful if there was a way for people to upload images via the CAG Forms, something that was not currently possible.
- Member drop-ins had proved useful, and were another dynamic for conversations to be had, and these types of sessions would be explored in the South Lakeland Area, especially in regards to the Sedbergh area.
- MASCG's Social Media throughout the Fair had reached approximately 650k impressions and 6k engagements (likes/comments/sharing, etc.),

and added some positive messaging around the Fair, along with as informational messages.

- The co-location of the Police, NWS and Cumbria Fire and Rescue at Appleby Police Station was seen as a success and enabled agencies to work more collaboratively together. This was echoed by the Council, which had successfully used Appleby Library as a base throughout the Fair.
- Internal Communication regarding Trading Standards' operations on Market Field could have been improved.
- Better coverage for mobile phones and communications. Cumbria Police had agreed to look at options and bring back options back to MASCG.
- There needed to be a broader community engagement piece around the Fair and its cultural significance.

7. Education, Engagement and Enforcement

- a. What went well overall and in each of the phases of the Fair?*
- b. What didn't go so well?*
- c. What would we do differently, or do more of next year? Defined actions and timeframes.*
- d. What would we not do again?*

Notable points included:

- The RSPCA were grateful that the Council delegated powers to them under the Animal Welfare Act. The RSCPA took in 8 animals by utilising these powers, which was 8 times that police resources did not have to be utilised.
- An unauthorised encampment sites remained a big issue, with the 1.5-mile exclusion zone around Appleby needing to be reviewed. How to deal with unauthorised encampments on a consistent basis was an issue, and this was key action for the long-term direction of the fair.
- More work was needed in order to liaise with and re-assure local businesses during the Fair.
- The Travelling Man Festival continued to be a good addition; however, security could have been more cooperative with the Police.
- Exploration as to whether more engagement with local education facilities would be helpful.
- The clean-up operation was very successful and supported by the provision of bigger bins this year.
- NWS noted that they would like to be involved in further planning around traffic management to ensure that if there was any incidents requiring NWS assistance that they were able to respond effectively.

8. Long Term Strategic Direction for the Fair Discussion

MASCG agreed that the following points would inform the long-term strategic direction for the Fair:

- Mitigating any negative impact on local settled communities;
- Listen and engage with local communities, parishes, businesses and stakeholders involved with the Fair;
- Explore how to raise awareness of the cultural significance of the Fair to the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community;
- Ensure that the Fair is safe and enjoyable for all where possible, and for MASCG and its component organisations.
- Review the 1.5 exclusion zone around Appleby.
- Explore opportunities for more stopping places on the way too and around Appleby;
- Earlier mobilisation or planning of street cleaning;
- Continuation of pro-active police Gold strategy;
- Further contingency planning of scenarios requiring a multi-agency response;
- Exploration of further drop in sessions for engagement throughout the year.

9. Appleby Fair Post-Fair Public Meeting – 26 June 2024

MASCG discussed possible improvements to future Public Meetings, including an option to make the meeting a more informal “drop in” for the public.

10. Any Other Business

There was no further business discussed.

11. Confirm Date of next meeting

It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 22 July 2024, Via Teams.