

# Appleby Fair 2024 Learning Lessons Report and Action Plan



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# **1. Introduction and foreword from the Chair of MASCG**

As Chair of the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordination Group (MASCG) for Appleby Horse Fair, I'd like to thank all of the agencies for their significant contribution to the 2024 Fair. Staff worked incredibly hard in delivering their statutory and regulatory responsibilities effectively, which helped to make the Fair as safe and enjoyable as it could be for everyone.

I'd also like to thank the Town and Parish Councils and our animal welfare organisations who work tirelessly alongside public agencies to champion the voices of communities and support in mitigating some of the more negative aspects of Appleby Horse Fair. The work that goes into Appleby Horse Fair is a year round effort, a lot of which probably goes unnoticed and I just wanted to highlight how dedicated those that support the Fair are.

Every year is different and I am pleased to say that the safety improvements to Flashing Lane worked well and were positively welcomed by all. The bunding works on the A585, a safety measure introduced to prevent people stopping at that location, was also a success.

However, we did see a larger number of people with caravans, bow tops and vehicles converging on Appleby and surrounding areas more quickly in 2024. I know that we all worked together to minimise any negative impacts, but this is the point of this report. We want to listen to how it was for everyone involved and work alongside you all to make any changes that we are able to.

Our pro-active approach to policing, particularly the emphasis on road safety, was another success in 2024 and all communities were united in the message that criminal behaviour is not welcome at the Fair. Sadly, not everyone attending the Fair ensured their animal's welfare, but our RSPCA and Police colleagues took swift action where necessary and our communities collectively condemned all neglectful and abusive animal owners for their actions.

Although the market is very popular, Trading Standards did seize a large quantity of unsafe counterfeit goods on sale at the 2024 Fair. This is not what we want to see and Trading Standards, working with Police colleagues, will be taking enforcement action against any offending traders again at the 2025 Fair.

Notwithstanding that, Appleby Horse Fair, and the run up to it, is of huge cultural significance to communities. It's an absolute privilege to be the Chair of MASCG to see people having a great time and catching up with friends and families. Let's all work together to make 2025 Fair as safe and enjoyable as we can for all.

Steph Cordon

Chair of Appleby Horse Fair MASCG and Director of Thriving Communities

Westmorland and Furness W&F Council

## 2. Aims and Objectives of this report

The purpose of the Learning Lessons Report and Action Plan is to learn from what went well at Appleby Fair 2024 and what didn't go so well, in order to inform the planning for 2025 and beyond. The Report is based on feedback from public agencies as well as members of MACSG and communities.

The Action Plan is not an operational plan for agencies for all their normal business as usual activity. It is picking up lessons learnt to inform future approaches and defining specific actions that will be considered cross agency. The Operational Working Group for MACSG will ensure that these actions are delivered and lead by the appropriate agency.

## 3. General Recommendations

MASCG's long-term strategic vision is to:

- Ensure that public authorities can carry out their statutory and regulatory duties effectively;
- Protect and celebrate the historic and cultural significance of the Fair and its heritage;
- Minimise and mitigate where possible any negative impacts of the Fair on communities.

**The following are some key general recommendations that have come out through the various debriefs from agencies and from listening to communities.**

- **Community Engagement and Communication:** Further engagement with communities to be promoted and delivered through:
  - Increased drop in sessions led by W&F Council Ward members in surrounding areas to Appleby itself to enable people to feed in views and ideas for Appleby Horse Fair to MACSG.
  - Increase engagement with the Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities to ensure that we get the reach out of key messages around safety at the Fair and appropriate stopping places.
  - Further information to be placed on the MASCG Appleby Fair website to share more information.
  - Community Action Group (CAG) Forms to be renamed Appleby Horse Fair (AHF) Tell Us Forms, with the ability to add images and information as attachments. We will ensure that the person who submits the form is also informed of the actions taken which is an improvement in the process.
- **Education, Engagement and Enforcement:** To ensure that people are safe and have an enjoyable experience of the Fair and that people and places are treated with respect by all and areas kept clean and tidy.

- A revised Public Spaces Protection Order for Westmorland and Furness area to replace existing orders. The outcomes of this will shape W&F Council's in particular response to community safety and reducing anti-social behaviour during all phases of Appleby Fair.
- Renewed focus on the need for additional stopping points/transit sites in appropriate locations.
- Retain the focus on addressing the sale of unsafe counterfeit goods for sale at the market field. Work collaboratively with the landowner of the market field to assess whether a permit system could be introduced.
- **Plans** - Develop a comprehensive multi-agency plan for Appleby Fair, which covers emergency preparedness and contingency planning.
- **Continue to develop a new long-term strategy for Appleby Fair** – To develop a long-term strategic approach for Appleby Fair, which sets out incremental steps to ensure that the Fair is a celebration of rich heritage and tradition that is safe and enjoyable.
- **Consider the outcomes of any W&F Council commissioned specialist legal advice around whether the Fair could be a ticketed and organised event.**



## 4. Appleby Fair in 2024

The following isn't a detailed account of phases of the Fair. It is setting out some key highlights of the Fair to demonstrate what happened in 2024. The Actions contained in Appendix A set out what MASCG agencies will consider to improve safety for people pre and during the Fair. The final statistical numbers are detailed in Appendix 2.

### 4.1 Phase One

This year saw an earlier than usual arrival into the W&F area from the GTR community and a fairly rapid migration as close to Appleby as possible. Although, it is quite difficult to evidence why it was different from last year, we did see some negative media coverage around Kirkby Stephen, which may have played a part in making the GTR community feel unwelcome, as the year before there were fairly large numbers staying on the A685. Equally, a bunding pilot along a short stretch of this road, which was designed to prevent both horse drawn and motorised vehicles staying there, was undertaken for the safety of all.

There were also some misleading social media posts which implied that the entire area was now not available for stopping due to bunding. This was not the case, although as agencies, we have expressed concerns about people and animal safety staying on the side of a busy road. The local pub was also closed, which was a popular meeting point for the GTR community. As a consequence, Kirkby Stephen saw very few people staying and had a fairly positive experience in Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Fair. The previous year had seen community concerns around anti-social behaviour.

These may have been factors that meant that people were concerned about finding a place to stop and exacerbated the haste to get as close to Appleby as possible.

Police took a pro-active stance and were actively prepared to issue Section 61 Orders to caravans and motor vehicles, in particular, intending to stop on private land. This was particularly evident in the Sedbergh area, which had been subject to encampments in the previous year.

People were swiftly moved on to more appropriate stopping places and close liaison was had with the local ward members, along with Town and Parish Councillors, to keep them updated. Scroggs Bank, which is now under new ownership, was one of the sites that people were directed towards. However, take up on the site was limited, the weather was a factor in that the site entrance was waterlogged, but mitigation measures were put into place rapidly to enable vehicles to get on and off.

At the end of May, MASCG saw increasing numbers of vehicles getting closer to Appleby. On 29 May there were 19 caravans, 15 vehicles and 1 horse drawn on Powis Lane. By 1 June, 99 vehicles were in the Eden area, there were 46 vehicles at the same time in 2023, and 21 vehicles in 2022.

Church Brough turning circle continued to be an issue for local residents with people staying there and blocking access. The police worked with local Members and the Parish Council to move people away from the primary school, towards the end of the village. This was kept under review with daily visits by the Police and was identified as low risk, whilst appreciating community feeling about the presence.

In Appleby itself, multiple calls to the police were made around horses tethered outside the library whilst people were in the pub opposite. This occurred much earlier than normal, but there were 167 vehicles in Eden and Burrells was now full on both sides.

By 3 June nearly all vehicles in the Westmorland and Furness area were congregated around and within Appleby. Areas such as Alston and Melmerby had seen an earlier migration than normal and Scroggs Bank was practically empty. Warcop were making frequent calls to police to express community concerns which were dealt with by the police.



*Kirkby Stephen Town Council Temporary Barrier Works.*



## 4.2 Phase Two

Although Phase 2 is predominantly the Fair itself, in Appleby, residents and businesses frequently said that the Monday onwards had begun to feel like the Thursday, which normally signals arrivals and the first day of the Fair. Agencies such as Westmorland and Furness Council had contracts in place with suppliers, which involved set up in Appleby for toilets, bins, street cleaning for later in the week. This had a knock on effect on the initial cleanliness of the town and services wherever possible were brought forward to mitigate the impact around cleanliness.

This also affected the stopping sites where water and toilets are provided at the same time, but people arrived earlier than planned. MASCg will not provide facilities earlier, as they are very clear that the key messages are about not arriving too soon. This applies for future years.

By 4 June, 380 vehicles were in the Eden area. Key locations were Powis Lane, Melmerby, Cotemoor, Bowber Head, and a field off Station Road and Burrells. Burrells remained the most problematic and was heavily congested. Police maintained patrols and static presence where required.

The pro-active stance of the police to addressing road safety continued and enforcement activity was very successful. By 6 June, 132 Community Action Group Forms had been reported and dealt with. All agency resources were now at full capacity to deal with any issues at the Fair. Unfortunately, there was a horse fatality at Jubilee Bridge. The RSPCA, working with the police, swiftly put out a call for information and the actions of the individual were roundly condemned by all.

The closure of the Sands for cleaning during the Fair was described as having a cordial atmosphere and there were no significant disorder issues on the Sands for the duration of the Fair. The new traffic calming measures for people using sulkies down into town worked well were very clearly structured and organised. The previous year's concerns about the noise from the Mobile Bar at Clickham had now





been resolved and this was also working well. The Travelling Man Festival was busy with over 300 people using its facilities and with very few complaints.

By 9 June, the RSPCA had over 131 interactions with animal owners resulting in 3 warnings and 3 investigations, which may lead to prosecutions. The weather was very unpredictable with heavy rain and sunny intervals. MASCG received reports of a potential stabbing incident on Fair Hill and arrests were made. This later turned out to be a glass related injury, but it had already attracted media and community attention. The police addressed factual inaccuracies to provide reassurance on the nature of the injury. Just over 100 arrests had been made for predominantly road safety offences. There was a collision on Flashing Lane, which saw someone being taken to hospital with a broken leg. North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) did not see any significant injuries at the Fair.

The market field had 268 stalls in 2024, which was the largest number since 2016. This included 22 food stalls, which was down in numbers, but all received good hygiene scores from Westmorland and Furness Council's Environmental health team. Trading Standards, working with the police, successfully seized a large quantity of unsafe counterfeit goods. This was in response to community concerns regarding the goods on sale at the market field and the feeling that it was moving away from its traditional stalls.

The new temporary barriers at Flashing Lane, that were installed for this year, and the new pavement proved a success and was well received by all. Equally, the barrier at the Leisure Centre car park, which enabled residents to be able to park was also a success.

The new website for MASCG was well used and there was positive social media contact with over 650,000 impressions and 6,000 engagements.



### 4.3 Phase Three

On 9 June people were starting to pack up and leave and the clean-up began. Within a few days the cleaning crews had done their usual brilliant job in cleaning up the areas that were not privately owned. Resources from a GTR Charity directly contributed towards the clean-up costs, along with the provision of additional toilets and bins in the town. MASCG was very grateful for this support. Private land owners used their own methods to clear up their own areas.



This year, 14 Freedom of Information Requests were received and over 211 complaints were received with 201 from one generic form. One was referred to the Information Commissioner, but was not upheld. MASCG want local residents who are impacted by the Fair, want to understand anything, or to talk about things that worry them to come to either the drop in sessions, the public meetings or to speak to one of the Council's community development team. MASCG is keen to encourage open and honest conversations about doing things differently that are within the public agencies powers to do. The information that can be put in the public domain is on the MASCG website. If there is something missing, please let us know and we will try to resolve this.



#### **4.4 Appleby Fair as an Organised and Ticketed Event**

Another key element to inform the long-term strategic direction of the Fair is being clear on MASCG's stance on the recurrent proposition from some members of the public that the Fair could be an organised event with ticketed admission. Thereby funds would be raised to cover the costs of policing and street cleansing, for example.

MASCG has received the ORS Report which was commissioned by Eden District Council and the report does not provide a definitive response to the issue. It recommends that further legal advice is sought, which was already underway prior to receiving the report, as the report was overdue.

The key findings from the ORS report are;

- Discussions between ORS and the Association of Independent Festival (AIF), which has over 200 organisers of events from 500-80,000 people including Notting Hill Carnival, have concluded that none of the AIF members considered the AHF to be an event that they would consider taking on.
- That there would need to be a carefully considered view of what legislation affects festivals and other large regulated events, which a ticketed event would need to be compared to. This included as examples, health and safety, insurance, licensing, etc.

MASCG has always stated that the ORS Report is a document that will be publically available. It is very important not to mislead people though and whilst MASCG consider the ORS Report to be useful, it does not reach a formal conclusion.

Therefore, Westmorland and Furness Council are seeking legal advice and this is what will be used to inform any future decisions, working with partners in MASCG.



## Appendix A – Action Plan

This action plan will set out key actions arising from this year’s Fair, and will included intended outcomes, key timelines and the lead agency, which will deliver these actions in 2024/25 and beyond.

### Communications and Engagement

Further work needs to be undertaken to engage and inform communities in the run up to Appleby Fair so that their voices can be heard by MASCG and suggested ideas actioned where possible. This will recognise the impact of Appleby Fair on a range of communities and places.

Communications and Engagement							
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead	Remarks	Timetable and progress	RAG	Progress
1.1	Elected W&F Councillor drop in sessions to be held throughout the year and widened to areas such as Sedbergh.	Increased opportunities for engagement with the community.	Westmorland and Furness W&F Council.	Feedback added into MASCG.	Bi-monthly	↑	Completed
1.2	Community Action Forms Renamed as Tell Us Forms to be fed back to the originator and added to the website.	Improved communication.	Police and Westmorland and Furness W&F Council.	Feedback completed where name provided to originator of actions.	Target within day of receipt.	↑	Completed

Key	Direction of Travel	RAG rating
↑	Rating is increasing and the current RAG Rating is expected to increase in the near future.	Successful delivery highly likely.
→	Performance is stable and the current RAG Rating is expected to remain the same in the near future.	Successful delivery appears to be possible
↓	Rating is declining and the current RAG Rating is expected to reduce in the near future.	Successful delivery appears to be unachievable.

## Education, Engagement and Enforcement

To ensure that people are safe and have an enjoyable experience of the Fair and that people and places are treated with respect by all and areas kept clean and tidy.

Education, Engagement and Enforcement							
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead	Remarks	Timetable and progress	RAG	
2.1	To produce a Community Impact Statement	To mitigate significant impact on communities and increase confidence in public authorities	MASCG with police lead	Produced.	July 2024	↑	Completed
2.2	Consideration of whether further bunding at A685 or other locations. Linked to the search for additional stopping places/transit sites.	Increased safety by prevention of stopping in dangerous places.	W&F Council	W&F Council implemented pilot as part of Traffic Management Plan of unsafe area.	January 2025	↑	Completed
2.3	Opportunities for additional transit sites to be assessed along the A685, in particular.	Improved access to additional places to stay.	W&F Council, MASCG	W&F Council working to identify suitable transit sites but dependent on willing land owners.	Ongoing	→	Ongoing

2.4	Development of new Public Spaces Protection Order for Westmorland and Furness Area and impact for AHF.	Improved enforcement capacity.	W&F Council, Police and MASCG	Actioned – new PSPO approved at a meeting of W&F Cabinet on 5 November 2024 and consideration being given to provide support to police regarding FPN's.	Completed	↑	Completed
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Key	Direction of Travel		RAG rating
↑	Rating is increasing and the current RAG Rating is expected to increase in the near future.		Successful delivery highly likely.
→	Performance is stable and the current RAG Rating is expected to remain the same in the near future.		Successful delivery appears to be possible
↓	Rating is declining and the current RAG Rating is expected to reduce in the near future.		Successful delivery appears to be unachievable.



## Development of a Multi-Agency Response Plan

To develop plans for multi-agency response to a Major Incident and a Contingency Plan.

Develop a Multi-Agency Response Plan							
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead	Remarks	Timetable and progress	RAG	
3.1	Emergency Plan and Contingency Plan developed for Appleby Fair to prepare for, and respond to, a major incident.	To ensure that statutory duties are met under the Civil Contingency Act 2004.	MASCG	Local Resilience Forum lead a table top exercise to inform response	May 2025	↑	Ongoing

Key	Direction of Travel	RAG rating
↑	Rating is increasing and the current RAG Rating is expected to increase in the near future.	Successful delivery highly likely.
→	Performance is stable and the current RAG Rating is expected to remain the same in the near future.	Successful delivery appears to be possible
↓	Rating is declining and the current RAG Rating is expected to reduce in the near future.	Successful delivery appears to be unachievable.

## Development of a long-term strategy for Appleby Fair (2024-2030)

To develop a long-term strategic approach for Appleby Fair, which sets out incremental steps to ensure that the Fair remains a celebration of rich heritage and tradition that is safe and enjoyable.

The recommended actions in all sections of the Action Plan contribute towards the development of a long-term strategic direction for Appleby Fair.

Development of a long-term strategy for Appleby Fair (2024-2030)							
No.	Action	Outcome	Lead	Remarks	Timetable and progress	RAG	
4.1	Specialist legal advice commissioned to determine whether AHF could be a ticketed and organised report.	To feedback the outcomes where the information is not subject to legally privilege to the public.	W&F Council on behalf of MASCG	ORS Report does not address the question and recommends further advice is sought.	March 2025		Ongoing
4.2	Publish the Independent Report on MASCG website into whether Appleby Fair could become a licenced and ticketed event, along with the identification of transit site provision.	MASCG has commissioned specialist legal advice on receipt of this report. It recognises that no festival/event organiser is willing to take this on.	ORS Consultants.	No further action needed and report is now closed.	Complete. Publish Date February 2025.		Closed

Key	Direction of Travel	RAG rating
↑	Rating is increasing and the current RAG Rating is expected to increase in the near future.	Successful delivery highly likely.
→	Performance is stable and the current RAG Rating is expected to remain the same in the near future.	Successful delivery appears to be possible

↓	Rating is declining and the current RAG Rating is expected to reduce in the near future.	Successful delivery appears to be unachievable.
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## Appendix B – Interventions and Outcomes

Agency	2024	2023	2022	2021	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
<b>South Lakeland Area – Westmorland and Furness Council</b>									
Number of temporary toilets	9	9	9	9	57	55	57	31	31
Number of skips provided	2	2	2	2	2	4	4	4	4
Tonnes of waste collected	2.54	5	5	1.3	2.14	4.5	5	5.94	5.5
<b>Eden District Area – Westmorland and Furness Council</b>									
Total caravans and bow tops in Eden area	1,287	1,097	1,231	1,210	1,172	1,191	991	1,103	1,297
Number of bow tops included in the total figure	112	131	137	137	171	172	176	153	202
Number of outlying encampment caravans and bow tops included in total figure	291	234	232	235	246	179	269	281	262
Number of market stalls (market fields)	268	244	221	223	237	250	243	276	241
Number of unlicensed street traders	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of licensed street traders	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Tonnes of waste removed including litter	29.88	29.84	27.98	27.5	26	27	25	33	29
Number of skip loads from outlying stopping places (from 2018)	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-
Number of litter bins	52	41	41	40	41	43	43	41	41
Number of temporary toilet facilities	68	68	68	58	57	55	57	31	31
<b>Cumbria Constabulary</b>									
Arrests	102	42	18	13	8	8	17	10	11
Crimes	69	32	28	25	21	17	12	11	24
Drug Offences	20	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Stop Searches (Person)	221								
Stop Searches (Vehicle)	91								
Incidents	490	171	82	86	103	115	76	65	61
Fixed Penalty Offences	528	220	139	58	51	22	18	30	71
Dispersal Orders	18	19	28	6	4	12	4	77	8

<b>Agency</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>RSPCA</b>									
Incidents where owners of animals were given advice or assistance	355	288	193	174	131	198	168	274	151
Verbal warnings	8	14	8	11	5	14	12	13	10
Police cautions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RSPCA adult written caution	No longer recorded	No longer recorded	No longer recorded	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cases reported for summons	4	9	1	2	3	2	1	2	4
Animals referred for vet treatment	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	0	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	0	0
Equines put to sleep	2	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	2
Puppies put to sleep	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equines transported away from the Fair	8	9	6	6	10	9	8	6	9
Stray dogs taken in by Westmorland and Furness Council (Previously Eden District Council)	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2
Dogs/Puppies taken in by RSPCA	2	15	8	29	0	0	1	0	0
<b>North West Ambulance Service</b>									
Recorded injuries	29	29	41	44	23	34	42	96	59

## Appendix C – Financial Information

The external costs of the various activities undertaken as part of the operational plan have been met by the relevant agency. A number of services were provided in partnership. The cost includes additional staff time not normal working hours.

The breakdown of external costs for the 2024 Fair are as follows:

Organisation	2024 (£)	2023 (£)	2022 (£)	2021 (£)	2019 (£)	2018 (£)	2017 (£)	2016 (£)
Westmorland and Furness Council (includes legacy council costs pre 2023)	91,771	72,447	66,132	78,531	85,721	78,708	95,052	75,659
Cumbria Constabulary	186,000	164,014	167,597	344,464	115,000	81,003	78,440	74,400
North West Ambulance Service	13,666	13,851	13,093	11,604	11,653	13,681	16,000	14,159
Cumbria Fire and Rescue	609	620	500	800	800	300	1,238	814
RSPCA	55,249	52,639	50,954	51,129	39,932	37,851	35,760	14,479
Environment Agency	1,680	1,680	1,182	966	1,500	1,200	2,100	1,200
Other	-	-	6,238	9,041	944	1,200	1,500	1,200
<b>Total</b>	<b>348,975</b>	<b>305,251</b>	<b>305,696</b>	<b>496,535</b>	<b>255,550</b>	<b>213,943</b>	<b>230,090</b>	<b>181,911</b>