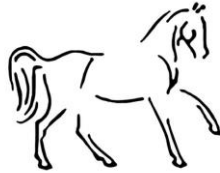


Appleby
Horse Fair

Appleby Horse Fair - Learning Lessons Report 2025

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Foreword

As Chair of the Multi Agency Strategic Coordinating Group (MASC), I am pleased to introduce the Learning Lessons Report for Appleby Horse Fair 2025.

The Fair remains of cultural significance, with attendance levels in 2025 high. This brought both opportunity and challenge, and reinforced the importance of strong, coordinated partnership working.

The work of MASC is rooted in effective collaboration between agencies to meet our shared priorities: ensuring public safety, enabling statutory duties to be fulfilled and minimising impacts on local communities. In 2025, partners worked proactively and in a more coordinated way than ever before. This included strengthened policing operations, effective traffic management and earlier deployment of services to reduce community impact where appropriate.

Feedback from residents and stakeholders shows that improved engagement and communication were positively received, and initiatives such as targeted enforcement and the Travelling Man Festival helped to reduce pressures and improve the overall safety of the event.

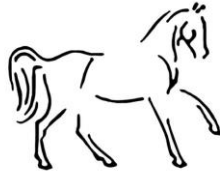
However, we recognise there is more to do. Concerns raised by communities in specific areas, alongside ongoing challenges relating to anti-social behaviour and post-Fair impacts, will remain key priorities for MASC as we plan for 2026.

This report reflects our commitment to continuous learning and improvement. By working together, sharing insight, and responding to feedback, we will continue to strengthen the safe and effective response to Appleby Horse Fair.

I would like to thank all partners, communities and those who contribute to the Fair for their continued support and cooperation.

Steph Cordon

Former Chair, Multi Agency Strategic Coordinating Group (MASC)



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Purpose:

The purpose of the Learning Lessons Report is to learn what went well at Appleby Fair 2025 and not so well in order to inform the response for the 2026 Fair.

Context:

1,307 bowtops and caravans were recorded at the 2025 fair, close to the recorded high from 2014 of 1,318.

The 2025 figures saw a drop in the number of traditional bowtops to 95, down from 112 in 2024. There were 1,152 caravans, up from 1,078 in 2024, 46 tents and a further six vans, or wagons used as accommodation.

There was a drop in the number of stalls at the 2025 Fair. Overall stall numbers were at 231, including 25 food stalls, which was down on the 268 recorded in 2024 and well below the 2016 record high of 276.

The report takes into account feedback from communities, agencies and MASCG members.

The Multi Agency Strategic Coordinating Group meets throughout the year to prepare for responding to Appleby Horse Fair. We are committed to listening and engaging with communities in the run up to Appleby Horse Fair and post fair through elected Member led drop-in sessions and channels available for communities to provide feedback.

MASCG's strategic vision is to:

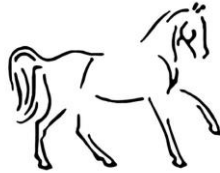
- Ensure that public authorities can carry out their statutory and regulatory duties effectively
- Protect and celebrate the historic and cultural significance of the Fair and its heritage
- Minimise and mitigate where possible any negative impacts of the Fair on communities

Lessons:

Community engagement formats were received well, and this learning will be taken into the 2026 Fair.

Improvements were made following feedback from residents including:

- Maintaining the barriers on the leisure centre car park to provide dedicated parking spaces for residents and town centre businesses, temporary traffic calming measures and improved signage
- 62 additional litterbins, an increase of 10 on last year and 75 temporary toilets and two multi-use urinals, an increase of nine and one, respectively on the provision in 2024
- 21 Penalty Charge Notices between the Monday and Wednesday before the Fair and a further 53 during the four main days of the Fair by our parking enforcement team



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- The Traffic Management Plan applied by our Highways team, which implemented temporary speed restrictions, road closures and one-way restrictions to maintain traffic flow through the town and minimise the risk to pedestrians.

Policing:

- The policing of Appleby Horse Fair built on the proactive model of recent years, including targeting stolen vehicles being brought to the event and a robust road safety policing operation.
- This proactive approach to policing resulted in the number of arrests rising once again. During the Fair itself, the Constabulary made 80 arrests (74 arrests were made in 2024, 42 arrests were made in 2023 and 18 in 2022).
- However, the Appleby Horse Fair policing operation as a whole - which begins in the weeks leading to the Fair - brought the total provisional arrest figure to 123 arrests. Of the 123 arrests made, 80 were for drink or drug driving.
- Officers also issued more than 370 tickets (Traffic Offence Reports), whilst more than 120 vehicles were seized including those suspected of being stolen, being suspected of having been used in a crime, causing an obstruction and driving without insurance.
- Several people approached Cumbria Police to raise issues around Croft Ends, Dufton, Burrells and Powis Lane, all of which are being considered within the policing plan for next year's Horse Fair.

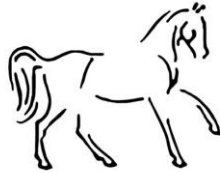
Animal welfare:

- The RSPCA made 372 interventions at this year's Fair
- Issued 18 warnings
- Removed, treated and returned 14 equines to their owners; have two ongoing investigations
- Are caring for six horses who were abandoned or are subject to investigations and removed one wild caught bird
- On veterinary advice and with the permission of their owners. Two horses were put to sleep because they were ill.

The Animal Welfare Partnership with Westmorland and Furness Council won the Withnall Partnership Award at the RSPCA PawPrints Awards in November 2025. Recognising the work to bring together multiple partners to safeguard the welfare of animals.

Post Fair clean up:

- Clean up crew particularly praised from the 2025 fair
- Some areas thought to need additional cleaning, such as areas around Dufton. Areas in question identified as private land and we will work with partners and local charities to review additional options to support these areas.[Subject]
- Additional post fair cleanse on the footway from The Grapes to the Station Road junction was requested and actioned in 2025 – we will continue this action annually.



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Location specific:

- MASCG and its members were made aware of the impact felt by residents in the Burrells and Ormside area during the periods both before and during the fair. This will be raised as a key issue for MASCG and there will be numerous agencies exploring the powers and legislation available to improve the situation for next year's fair.
- Horse tethering at the library reduced horse tethering problems at the cloisters and market square but reduced the disabled parking available.



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Appendix 1

Interventions and outcomes

Agency	2025
South Lakeland Area – W&F Council	
Number of temporary toilets	9
Number of skips provided	2
Tonnes of waste collected	10 (estimate)
Eden District Area – W&F Council	
Total caravans and bow tops in Eden area	1307
Number of bow tops included in the total figure	95
Number of market stalls (market fields)	231
Number of unlicensed street traders	0
Number of licensed street traders	4
Number of litter bins	62
Number of temporary toilet facilities	75
Cumbria Constabulary	
Arrests	123
Crimes	68
Drug Offences	75 (inc. 58 drug driving)
Stop searches (person)	177
Stop searches (vehicle)	122
Incidents	21
Fixed penalty offences	377
Dispersal orders	1
RSPCA	
Incidents where owners of animals were given advice or assistance	375
Verbal warnings	18
Investigations (with police assists)	9 (+2 assists)
Cases reported for summons	1
Animals referred for vet treatment	130
Equines put to sleep	2
Equines transported away from the fair (returned to owner)	7 (6)
Stray dogs taken in by W&F Council	3
Other animals taken in by RSPCA	6



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Appendix 2

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 costs include additional staff time not normal working hours.

The breakdown of external costs for the 2025 Fair is as follows:

Organisation	2025 (£)	2024 (£)	2023 (£)	2022 (£)	2021 (£)	2019 (£)	2018 (£)	2017 (£)	2016 (£)
Westmorland and Furness Council	107,393	91,771	72,447	66,132	78,531	85,721	78,708	95,052	75,659
Cumbria Constabulary	207,050	186,000	164,014	167,597	344,464	115,000	81,003	78,440	74,400
North West Ambulance Service	13,909	13,666	13,851	13,093	11,604	11,653	13,681	16,000	14,159
Cumbria Fire and Rescue	1,188	609	620	500	800	800	300	1,238	814
RSPCA	56,921	55,249	52,639	50,954	51,129	39,932	37,851	35,760	14,479
Environment Agency	1,275	1,680	1,680	1,182	966	1,500	1,200	2,100	1,200
Other	0	0	0	6,238	9,041	944	1,200	1,500	1,200
Total Costs	387,736	348,975	305,251	305,696	496,535	255,550	213,943	230,090	181,911