

Appleby Fair

Public Meeting in Kirkby Stephen

June 26, 2018

19:00

Kirkby Stephen Grammar School

Meeting called by the Multi Agency Strategic Coordination Group

Facilitator: Councillor Phil Dew

Attendees: Mark Pannone, Cumbria Constabulary, Superintendent,
Roderick Mackay, Cumbria Constabulary, Chief Inspector
Matthew Neal, Eden District Council, Deputy Chief Executive
Nigel Butcher Highways Network Manager, Cumbria County Council
Kevin Crawley, Traffic Management Team Leader, Cumbria County Council
Billy Welsh, Gypsy and Traveller representative
Bill Lloyd, Gypsy and Traveller representative

Notetakers: Nick Wright, Eden Area Manager, Cumbria County Council
Dawn Hurton, Community Development Officer, Cumbria County Council

There were approximately 250 attendees at the meeting.

Phil Dew introduced the meeting and outlined the purpose of it was for participants to explain their experiences and express any concerns with a view to finding constructive solutions so that there will be a better outcome next time.

The Appleby Fair is overseen by the Multi Agency Strategic Coordination Group (MASCg). Matthew Neal is Chair of MASCg and he will speak about the strategy this year. Mark Pannone will talk about policing. Nigel Butcher is from Cumbria Highways who are responsible for the posts.

Matthew Neal

MN took over the role of Chair after the fair in 2017 when Robin Hooper left the Authority. EDC is involved primarily through Licensing and Environmental Health and there are representatives from Cumbria County Council through Highways, Fire & Rescue and Eden Area Team, Cumbria Constabulary, NW Ambulance Service, RSPCA, G&T representatives, Environment Agency, Highways England.

The aim of MASCg is to make the fair as safe as possible for all. While it was previously considered that there was no demand for an outlying meeting in Kirkby Stephen, it is obviously important this year to consult with this community. Planning for this year's fair started after the 2017 event and already commenced with the gypsy and travellers and settled communities for the 2019 fair.

People have been travelling to the fair for hundreds of years; it is not organized or run by any organization. MASCG does not organize the event but co-ordinates the responses to it with the aim of ensuring the safety of travellers, visitors and the settled communities. It is a unique event where there is a need to balance and respect the interests of gypsy and travellers with the safety of people in Appleby and the outlying areas where there will be an impact but MASCG aims to minimize disruption to daily life. Feedback is vital to inform the planning.

Messages are sent out pre-fair to encourage people not to come early, there is an encampment protocol which prioritizes the removal of encampments causing hazards in the interests of public safety.

The horse fair presents different challenges each year and this year the significant concern is around what happened in Kirkby Stephen and South Lakeland. In Kirkby Stephen MASCG has identified concern surrounding the following issues:

- Tension around the cancellation of the horse auctions.
- The road traffic accident to which an immediate statement in response was put out by the gypsy and traveller representatives condemning the behavior of those involved in what happened afterwards.
- Disorder and drinking on the streets which is dealt with by community policing. A charter is signed by licensees in Appleby which involves them employing the services of security staff throughout the duration of the gathering in Appleby.
- MASCG met every day throughout the fair to make decisions about unauthorized encampments so need to review what happened in Kirkby Stephen.
- 7 licensed camp sites opened early on 6 June in the interests of public safety.
- During a tour of the encampments on the eve of the fair it was noted that Cote Moor was deserted – this could have taken some of the pressure off KS.
- The MASCG strategy will be reviewed for next year.

Superintendent Mark Pannone

Mark has been Appleby Horse Fair Gold Command for the past 3 years and has much experience connected with it. In 2017 very few people turned up at the post fair meeting in Appleby because the feeling generally is that things have improved a lot since the MASCG has been involved. It is important to understand why so many people in Kirkby Stephen have turned up for this meeting and Cumbria Constabulary are committed to finding out what happened. Focusing on safety is the number one priority for the MASCG. The policing of Appleby Fair is the largest event for Cumbria Constabulary and it is planned throughout the year. Each year is different.

- PHASE 1 is the ingress into Appleby and the police work across the country and with the Garda and police in Northern Ireland to gather intelligence to keep elements away from Appleby Fair. The aim is to keep the impact of ingress low for residents by eliminating issues before they can occur.
The locations of encampments change from year to year and no-one knows where people will stop, MASCG doesn't want any single area to take too much impact

- PHASE 2 is the gathering of people when they have arrived. There were big numbers this year with the weather being good although there was also a big downpour which required a pub evacuation and the event required all types of police functions.
- PHASE 3 was the exodus starting on Sunday evening.

MASCG met every day before the fair and the policing strategy responds to the information that comes in. The number of caravans was 17% higher than in 2017, however, in Kirkby Stephen there was an increase of 42%, this was not anticipated. Numbers go up and down each year and in Kirkby Lonsdale and Sedbergh the numbers were up.

Calls lead to police responses and the police need information to know where they should react. If there are problems, people should call 101; if a crime is being committed they should call 999. Given the numbers attending the event, there were very few arrests with only 8 in Appleby this year. There were also 15 people arrested coming in to the fair on Saturday and this helped to prevent problems.

Crime and disorder has gone down over the past few years and the police want to engage and find out more from the people of Kirkby Stephen, it is acknowledged that Kirkby Stephen has more need and the police are already looking at options for next year.

There is a Licensing Charter which works well in Appleby and MASCG will be looking to see whether it would help to extend this to Kirkby Stephen. Police will also be looking at encampments on the A685, there is a matrix for responding to encampments and this focuses on safety and not inconvenience, with this in mind the police will review and determine how to manage it next year.

The Police do not want communities adversely affected by the fair and they would welcome a single organiser who they could work with but no-one has ever come forward to offer this.

Nigel Butcher

The Highways Act and Traffic Management Act are used to formulate a traffic management plan. The Design Manual is also used to measure forward visibility, determine parking obstructions etc. Since 2011, Cumbria County Council has used Traffic Regulation Orders to maintain road safety and the movement of traffic and these are in place from 1 April to 30 June. The A685 is a popular encampment area and signs and posts are used to help enforce parking issues

In 2016, 6000 posts were used and this year it was down to 2,500. The County Council looks to improve the Traffic Management Plan wherever possible.

Bill Lloyd

Bill wanted to highlight the fact that the assault was a public outrage and that within 5 minutes of it happening, the gypsy and traveller representatives issued a complete condemnation which they stand by. The actions were inexcusable and no good parent puts a child on the highway and the people who carried out that assault should be locked up.

A public event of this size with no organiser used to happen when 20,000 people from Lancashire and Glasgow used to go to Morecambe each year for a holiday. There are arguments about the Royal Charter but whether it is valid or not, this is a free country and because of that we get the worst but also the very best of people coming to Appleby. Not all of them are gypsies and since the market field opened there have been attempts to stop the event getting bigger. The event attracts people from all over the country and I would rather it was as it was 20 years ago.

Mark Bromfield, Deputy Head, Kirkby Stephen Grammar School

The school started planning for the fair early; it limited bookings and shut the gate ready for the arrival which usually happens the Friday before the fair. This year the sale at the mart was cancelled and the gates were kept locked, there was one vehicle on the car park plus there was some trouble with people accessing water and this caused a relatively low amount of damage but the problem was at 3:30pm when children were going home and the town was full of lots of people spilling out of the pubs. The main concern for the schools was pupils getting to and from school safely.

Supt. Mark Pannone

There was a police presence of 18 officers from 29 May to 4 June and this was throughout North Cumbria from Kirkby Stephen to Brough. The officers need to be deployed to the right areas for policing which involves walking and speaking to people. Police also need to respond to calls and the police need information so that they can deal with things themselves and pass them on to other agencies.

Joan Johnstone, Chair Kirkby Stephen Town Council

The community felt under siege with the main road through Kirkby Stephen full of people drinking and the road blocked with horses and traps running up and down freely with no-one stopping them. There was a Wild West feel on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and there is a perception that the police treat people at the fair in a different way to how they treat locals. We have been told that this doesn't happen but it is causing unrest and the police need to do something about this.

Supt. Mark Pannone

It is unrealistic when there are so many different people arriving to continue to police as they would in normal circumstances. The police must balance the needs of gypsies and travellers with those of locals and they have to police it differently; it is a different environment. Also, there were 15 calls beforehand and if there are not any calls the police can't respond.

Member of the Public

People have given up; my wife was in a road traffic accident last year and she has written the police off because it wasn't dealt with effectively. We experienced chaos and intimidation this year.

Supt. Mark Pannone

What can be done to regain police confidence?

Member of the Public

Treat all people the same – the majority (of gypsies and travellers) have no respect for others but the minority have to sort the majority out.

Member of the Public

There is a potential conflict here in managing safety and upholding the law. Safety requires you to modify what you do?

Supt. Mark Pannone

The role has changed over the years to come to the focus on safety/vulnerability and those who cause most harm are dealt with first. Police have to choose between safety issues or minor infringements.

Member of the Public

I went to the ATM but didn't feel safe in the street so went to the CO-OP to take some money out. Someone was urinating in the bus stop. A Police Officer spoke to the man but he was not booked, why wasn't he booked? I took the details of the Police Officer.

Supt. Mark Pannone

Agreed, this was an offence but I wasn't there so I can't say any more than that. If the details can be provided I will look in to it.

Member of the Public

Press coverage indicated that the overall numbers were up by 30% this year; with this volume of people descending on small communities what can the agencies do?

Supt. Mark Pannone

The police do not manage the event, caravans were up by 17% and there seemed to be many more horses, it is a challenge to stop people coming without an organiser.

Member of the Public

People were using the street as a toilet; this is a criminal offence (though not arrestable), if it is not reported are the police saying that there were no offences? This is not the normal crime situation.

Bill Lloyd

I have if from the Chief Constable that the average waiting time for a call to 101 is less than 4 minutes. The police can only act on information that they have so do not give up. If there is an allegation of mass breakdown in law and order then the police need specific information. The

police question the numbers each day of the fair and the numbers of reported incidents were low so the fair seemed relatively trouble free.

Don't give up; you must ring 101 or 999 for a crime. There is also a 101 email but these can't work unless you report the information with dates and times. The police can't be everywhere and they plan and deploy resources depending on where the information tells them they need to be. They can only use the resources they have available and their response depends on reporting so they can only better their management of the fair and make improvements in the policing of it if they have this information. The police review the calls each day, If people are fearful they should ring the police and explain why

Member of the Public

Do the police need to be told when to do their job? There should be on the spot fines for taking posts out or parking in the wrong place etc. The encampments should be localised because then it works. There were 60 people in the pub and there was good interaction and trust between the locals and travellers. When the same people come each year, people get to know each other.

Supt. Mark Pannone

There seems to be a theme about the police not doing their job but prevention is better than cure and the police cannot do it on their own. They can prevent an adverse impact but need community support to do so.

Member of the Public

Why didn't the police know what was happening? They should have known that there were a lot of people on the way and that there were going to be high numbers. The police knew people were coming in and they definitely know when they have arrived. They should focus on the criminals and prevent them coming to Appleby so that they can keep people safe.

Member of the Public

Travellers think they can act as they see fit this isn't a need which is above those of Kirkby Stephen representatives.

Member of the Public

The fear is that it went to well for people at Kirkby Stephen that they will come back and do it again next year.

Cllr Phil Dew

We need the police to do what we need them to do; collectively Kirkby Stephen has lost confidence in policing.

Supt. Mark Pannone

It's not completely appropriate to state that on behalf of the whole of Kirkby Stephen. This is a serious concern to the police, other communities have different views and we want to work with you next year to make it better as it is elsewhere.

Member of the Public

I live in the last house out of Kirkby Stephen and people come and get water and this is not a problem. However, the police are dealing with and protecting all of the community but they treat locals differently to how they treat Gypsy and Travellers. If there are only 8 arrests at Appleby Fair this year, how many travelers were arrested for beating up a man? Police Officers are scared of travelers.

Supt. Mark Pannone

There were 8 arrests in Appleby and 15 outside which is only 23 arrestable offences. The police work within the law and have to prioritise. Most Gypsies and travellers did not commit arrestable offences but if they do commit inappropriate unlawful behavior then they are arrested. It is simply not the case that the police are scared.

Member of the Public

I live on the High Street and wondered how it is policed at night when there are galloping gigs until 1, 2 or 3 in the morning? There is a curfew for residents from 11pm and the place is trashed at night, the crime on cars and other vehicles is profound and petrol is siphoned but if I was to ring the police who would respond?

Supt. Mark Pannone

Noise constitutes a nuisance but a horse fair will get horses and riding a horse at 1am is not an offence. The impact is a concern however, so tell us when things happen.

Member of the Public

There was a 10 year old going up and down the main street on a horse. Can't horses be banned in town like in Appleby? There are no organisers to control the numbers. It is just for a week and it should be brought in to the Twenty First Century, there should be an organiser who should make people pay.

Member of the Public

How many people have been arrested for the assault?

Supt. Mark Pannone

The assault is the subject of an ongoing police investigation and can't be discussed. To arrest people there must always be specific defendants who have committed offences and that requires sufficient evidence but no comments can be made about the specific case.

Member of the Public

A horse drawn vehicle stopped in the town centre and was left with the horse standing in the middle of the road while the owner went shopping, there were horses in the road on the way to Brough and the state of some of the animals was despicable. Something needs to be done.

Bill Lloyd

The RSPCA is always in attendance but has limited resources. I cannot guarantee that they will patrol in Kirkby Stephen next year, but I will do what I can to persuade them.

Member of the Public

There were 250 people here; they cause intimidation and friction when the posts are taken out. A local farmer had the road blocked and was 'in fear of his life'. It would be a good idea to have a central email system, if not 101, somewhere local to report problems. With £25k spent on posts and £250k paid to MASCG why are they not enforcing the encampments when the policy is to prevent them?

Matthew Neal

The costs are presented in the annual report each July and this includes the costs of the posts and encampment patrols. The cost of the 2017 fair was £230k. Managing unauthorised encampments is a high priority and there is an encampment protocol which determines whether an encampment is a low, medium or high priority. Decisions are made to move high risk camps on by MASCG and that can be affected very quickly.

Nigel Butcher

We have reduced the number of posts. It costs £10k for the posts and the removal of them. Since 2015 they have been used as a method of enforcing and restricting roadside parking.

Joan Johnstone, Chair Kirkby Stephen Town Council

The A685 is not a suitable place for an encampment, if the A66 had been closed for any reason and traffic was diverted through Kirkby Stephen it would have been carnage.

Member of the Public

How many posts do you get back – it seems that most of them are used as firewood? Also, there was a PCSO stationed in Kirkby Stephen in previous years, why not this year?

Cllr Phil Dew

1000 out of the 2,500 come back in but most of the cost is for the labour that is required to put them in and take them out.

Supt. Mark Pannone

The PSO will return next year

Member of the Public

We need to look forward; it seems that we cannot stop the ingress, even with intelligence and MASCG costs too much. Billy Welsh and Bill Lloyd as self-appointed leaders of the community,

have the responsibility to put this right. I would say that this is your community and the age profile has changed, what we are getting is 'drinking kids'.

Billy Welsh

Thanks for the opportunity to speak, I have been listening and as a gypsy I come from old stock. My family has been coming for centuries. I recognize the problems and we can't be complacent. There was a big influx which led to panic and people were overwhelmed. The gypsy and travellers have the same concerns, Appleby Fair is getting too big and the wrong people are coming in high numbers. I have been predicting this for 20 years.

There are too many fields in Appleby for caravans and the numbers are expanding. People are coming who would not have been allowed and I will work with the police and MASCG to help resolve concerns. We can persuade people from the gypsy and traveller community but 70% of the horse drawn caravans are settled people who don't know the laws which are unwritten. The same families come each year and cause problems and it isn't fair on the town.

Member of the Public

What have you done to stop the expansion?

Billy Welch

The problem has been ignored by the authorities. I manage Fair Hill and this is restricted.

Matthew Neal

There are 7 licensed sites and we do take account of comments when granting licenses. I can give no undertaking to change the number of licensed sites but MASCG will review the licensing of the 7 licensed sites.

Bill Lloyd

Problems have been raised each year and it is difficult to do anything. There is a policy of equality and diversity in granting licenses and the process is strictly regulated. MASCG can't stop some people from opening fields while allowing others.

Supt. Mark Pannone

The key things seem to be that there is a lack of respect from people who are coming and what can be done to prevent that lack of respect which is manifested in defecation, stolen posts etc.

Billy Welsh

I come from an ancient culture with its own language and people don't behave in that way. My people have been in the country for over 500 years but 70% of the people who come to the fair don't follow our ways. In 2010 I organized a peaceful protest of silence and thousands of people didn't speak for one hour so I can influence my people but I can't influence the others. Settled people are opening fields and they do all this but we get the blame. My people stay in the same places each time and come to camp on Fair Hill.

Cllr Phil Dew

I will hold MASCG responsible for future plans

Member of the Public

There was too much provision for alcohol and the event is too big, licensing must be brought under control. 70% who come just do anything and there is this saying 'when we're in town, we're in charge'.

Member of the Public

I have worked out what happens when people defecate on the streets, along with the horse manure, it is washed down the drains by EDC and ultimately it goes into the River Eden as raw sewerage. If they defecate on the grass it goes into the water table and pollutes the water supply. It is a health risk and makes Kirkby Stephen like the refugee camps in the 3rd World. It can spread diseases.

Member of the Public

Could site stewards work with the police and the gypsy and traveler reps can encourage people to behave better through communications. Fair Hill is stewarded so could stewards be added to other sites?

Also, would it be possible for Phil Dew and a representative of Kirkby Stephen Town Council to be involved in future discussions? There should be some local Member involvement.

Cllr. Phil Dew

There are no elected members and they need to be included

Matthew Neal

MASCG has recently discussed the means of engaging further with elected members and is considering the setting of a member forum with representation at County, District and Parish level. Such forum could feed into the work of MASCG.

Member of the Public

There hasn't been any encampment here (Cote Moor) for a couple of years but when there was walls were knocked over, they lost stock and that kind of thing and the police didn't listen. What will the police do if the encampment is moved back to Cote Moor – will it still be the same?

Mark Pannone

I don't know what will happen, we need a different style of policing:

- You need to tell us
- We need to respond
- If there is a designated site we need assurance that it will be run properly

Member of the Public

People come with motor homes and stay for the whole week in Kirkby Stephen while they commute in to the fair.

Mark Panonne

We need to look at how we can respond differently

Member of the Public

Can the fair be Monday to Monday on Fair Hill and can't people be asked to pay so that it covers its costs? Visitors can pay for car parking, it should be monetized.

Bill Lloyd

The Fair used to be Thursday to Thursday but it changed when the market field was opened. With the market field the idea was that visitors would come on a Saturday to see the horse washing, get their fortune told etc. and Appleby Town Council was keen to have an intense period and then move people on. People pay to camp on Fair Hill, there are stewards, toilets etc. and that aspect of the fair is organized.

Billy Welsh

Fair Hill has toilets, skips, stewards etc. and there is a full clean-up and a contribution is made to Appleby Town Council for the running of the Fair.

Cllr. Phil Dew

Read out a statement from Councillor Valerie Kendall and thanked all for attending