# Appleby Horse Fair 2023 sees record turnout amid heightened policing and welfare concerns



As the 2023 Appleby Horse Fair unfolds in Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, the vibrant gathering continues to draw an impressive turnout from the Gypsy and Traveller communities, alongside thousands of visitors. With about 10,000 participants from various backgrounds converging on the event, this prominent festival stands as Europe's largest traditional Gypsy fair, celebrated for its rich historical significance and unique cultural traditions.

The atmosphere at the fair is electric, with families showcasing their horses on the renowned 'Flashing Lane,' where spirited races and exhibitions take place. Spectators lined the streets over the weekend, enthralled by children and adults alike speeding through the narrow lanes in horse-drawn carriages. However, safety concerns have arisen; the organisers issued reminders on social media urging attendees to remain vigilant around fast-moving horses, particularly in densely populated areas. The fair’s excitement, however, comes amid a backdrop of challenges, including a fire incident that saw a Ford Transit van engulfed in flames. Fortunately, local authorities confirmed no injuries occurred and the cause of the blaze is not deemed suspicious.

While festivities flourished, the presence of law enforcement was notably heightened this year, with proactive policing strategies implemented to maintain order amid the throngs of people. Reports indicate that there were 42 arrests made during the fair, an increase attributed to both the larger crowd and the efficacy of Operation Tramline, aimed at ensuring safety across the event. In addition, law enforcement, in conjunction with local Trading Standards, conducted inspections at various stalls to combat the sale of counterfeit goods—a significant issue noted in previous iterations of the fair, which saw over £500,000 worth of fake merchandise confiscated last year.

Complicating matters was the weather; while the rain drizzled down, it did little to dampen spirits. Attendees braved the elements, opting for both practical and stylish attire as they enjoyed the festivities. The historical essence of the fair is palpable, with roots tracing back to sheep and cattle drovers in the 18th century, evolving over time into a major gathering for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

On the welfare front, the fair organisers have focused on the wellbeing of the horses, especially amid hot weather conditions that accompanied this year's event. Collaborations with animal welfare charities ensured that horses were provided with adequate water, shade, and care throughout the fair. This concerted effort comes at a time when animal welfare incidents have reportedly reached their highest levels since 2015, raising concerns among organisers and attendees alike about the treatment of the horses during the busy event.

As the Appleby Horse Fair continues, it remains a celebration steeped in tradition, reinforcing community ties while also facing contemporary challenges. The festival, with its remarkable history, reinforces the enduring significance of culture and heritage, transforming the small town of Appleby into a thriving hub of activity and celebration each year.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14791909/Travellers-charge-streets-death-defying-speed-carriages-Appleby-Horse-Fair.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://applebyfair.org/news-0/2023/warm-weather-sees-another-high-turnout-2023-appleby-horse-fair)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14791909/Travellers-charge-streets-death-defying-speed-carriages-Appleby-Horse-Fair.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://applebyfair.org/news-0/2023/warm-weather-sees-another-high-turnout-2023-appleby-horse-fair), [[5]](https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/23583743.42-arrests-appleby-horse-fair-2023-20-vehicles-seized/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.itv.com/news/border/2023-06-12/appleby-horse-fair-arrests-more-than-double-in-2023), [[6]](https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://applebyfair.org/news-0/2023/horse-welfare-extra-precautions-advised-hot-weather-forecast-appleby-horse-fair-2023), [[6]](https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14791909/Travellers-charge-streets-death-defying-speed-carriages-Appleby-Horse-Fair.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://applebyfair.org/news-0/2023/warm-weather-sees-another-high-turnout-2023-appleby-horse-fair), [[7]](https://www.redwings.org.uk/news-and-features/eighteen-awards-best-at-appleby-2023)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14791909/Travellers-charge-streets-death-defying-speed-carriages-Appleby-Horse-Fair.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://applebyfair.org/news-0/2023/warm-weather-sees-another-high-turnout-2023-appleby-horse-fair> - The 2023 Appleby Horse Fair experienced high turnout, with 1,197 bowtops and caravans recorded. The sunny weather attracted large numbers of visitors, leading to significant challenges. The event saw proactive policing measures, including Operation Tramline, resulting in 42 arrests and over 200 traffic offence reports. The 'Travelling Man' bar, introduced to alleviate town centre congestion, was well-received, with around 2,000 attendees on Saturday night. The fair's success was attributed to the collaborative efforts of various agencies and the positive atmosphere on the ground.
3. <https://www.itv.com/news/border/2023-06-12/appleby-horse-fair-arrests-more-than-double-in-2023> - The 2023 Appleby Horse Fair saw a significant increase in arrests, more than doubling compared to the previous year. The fair attracted large numbers of visitors, leading to challenges in managing the event. Proactive policing measures, including Operation Tramline, resulted in 42 arrests and over 200 traffic offence reports. The 'Travelling Man' bar, introduced to alleviate town centre congestion, was well-received, with around 2,000 attendees on Saturday night. The event's success was attributed to the collaborative efforts of various agencies and the positive atmosphere on the ground.
4. <https://applebyfair.org/news-0/2023/horse-welfare-extra-precautions-advised-hot-weather-forecast-appleby-horse-fair-2023> - In anticipation of hot weather during the 2023 Appleby Horse Fair, extra precautions were advised for horse welfare. Nine animal welfare charities collaborated to support the protection and wellbeing of horses at the event. The RSPCA emphasized the importance of regular access to water and shade for horses, especially during hot conditions. Owners were encouraged to avoid overworking their horses and to exercise patience if horses were reluctant to drink in overstimulating environments. The fair's organizers also advised against bringing dogs to the event due to potential heat-related risks.
5. <https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/23583743.42-arrests-appleby-horse-fair-2023-20-vehicles-seized/> - The 2023 Appleby Horse Fair resulted in 42 arrests and 20 vehicles seized. The fair attracted a large number of visitors, leading to challenges in managing the event. Proactive policing measures, including Operation Tramline, resulted in 42 arrests and over 200 traffic offence reports. The 'Travelling Man' bar, introduced to alleviate town centre congestion, was well-received, with around 2,000 attendees on Saturday night. The event's success was attributed to the collaborative efforts of various agencies and the positive atmosphere on the ground.
6. <https://www.newsandstar.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/> - The 2023 Appleby Horse Fair saw the highest number of arrests and animal welfare incidents since 2015, partly attributed to hot temperatures and a higher presence of authorities. The fair attracted approximately 20,000 people on its busiest day, with 288 reported incidents of animal welfare. The increase in incidents was attributed to the greater presence of animal welfare organizations and hotter weather. The fair's organizers emphasized the importance of animal welfare and highlighted the love and care that goes into looking after horses.
7. <https://www.redwings.org.uk/news-and-features/eighteen-awards-best-at-appleby-2023> - Eighteen awards were given out at the 2023 Appleby Horse Fair to celebrate the best horse health, happiness, and horsemanship. The annual Gypsy Roma and Traveller gathering took place between 8th and 12th June in Appleby-in-Westmorland. Nine animal charities collaborated to support the protection and wellbeing of horses at the event. The awards recognized outstanding examples of equine health, happiness, and horsemanship, highlighting the dedication and care of horse owners and handlers at the fair.