# Local tensions rise as early arrivals spark surge in crime ahead of Appleby Horse Fair



As the annual Appleby Horse Fair approaches, the picturesque villages around Appleby are already bracing for an influx of visitors. Known as Europe's largest gathering of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community, the fair is anticipated to attract around 30,000 attendees, 10,000 of whom are expected to belong to the travelling community. However, this year, the chaos appears to have started earlier than usual, generating anxiety among local residents in Kirkby Lonsdale and surrounding areas.

Long accustomed to the disruption that accompanies the fair, locals are witnessing heightened tensions, sparked by an early arrival of travellers ahead of the fair’s start date of June 5th. Reports indicate that law enforcement has had to contend with a series of offences, including burglary, criminal damage, and threats of violence. In a particularly alarming incident, officers handcuffed a 10-year-old boy as part of their efforts to maintain order in an environment already charged with frustration. This incident, captured on video by the child's mother, has raised concerns about police conduct, leading to accusations of excessive force when no weapon was ultimately found.

While the figures for crime and disorder associated with the fair have fluctuated in recent years, data shows a substantial increase in both arrests and animal welfare incidents during the 2023 event. With 42 arrests reported—up from 18 in 2022—a trend towards proactive policing has emerged, where officers have been deployed in greater numbers to address potential violence and ensure the safety of both residents and fair attendees. A Cumbria Police spokesperson acknowledged the challenges presented by the influx and the community's concerns, asserting that the aim is to create a safe environment for all involved.

Reports of vandalism have marred the lead-up to the fair, with local landmarks such as the Kirkby Lonsdale Cricket Club suffering significant damage. The pavilion, a key facility within the community, has been left in ruins after a series of break-ins and attacks. The cricket club's spokesperson expressed heartbreak over the destruction, noting that many had worked tirelessly to make the venue a welcoming space for all. Complaints have also emerged regarding racially charged incidents, further escalating community tensions.

Amidst these challenges, the situation has prompted local business owners and residents to take measures to deter travellers from setting up in their communities. Initiatives have included blocking entrances to car parks with shipping containers, and local farmers have expressed frustration over previous incidents where horses grazed in their fields, damaging crops. As a reflection of their sentiments, signage and barricades have been erected in hopes of dissuading caravans from parking in sensitive areas.

This year’s fair also heralds a discussion on potential changes, including the consideration of a ticketed system to help cover policing costs—an idea that has divided local opinion. Proponents argue that it could enhance order, while detractors caution it may not address the underlying issues plaguing the event.

The Appleby Horse Fair, steeped in over 250 years of tradition, is a cultural landmark for many within the GRT community. The event allows families to come together, purchasing and trading horses and sharing in a cultural heritage that includes age-old rituals such as washing horses in the River Eden. Despite the challenges faced annually, many in the travelling community perceive the fair as a significant gathering, likening it to a familial reunion far greater than just a market event.

However, in confronting these emerging tensions and heightened incidents, the event may continue to evolve as police and community leaders listen to the concerns of locals while still working to honour the traditions of the fair. The coming days will be critical as all parties prepare for the mix of heritage and modern challenge that the Appleby Horse Fair undoubtedly brings.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14767513/cricket-pavilion-knife-threats-Locals-lock-Europe-gypsy-gathering.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/border/2024-06-10/appleby-horse-fair-clean-up-begins-as-over-100-arrests-made-at-event)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14767513/cricket-pavilion-knife-threats-Locals-lock-Europe-gypsy-gathering.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-58213988), [[4]](https://cwherald.com/news/42-arrests-and-20-vehicles-seized-during-appleby-horse-fair/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14767513/cricket-pavilion-knife-threats-Locals-lock-Europe-gypsy-gathering.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://cwherald.com/news/firmer-line-by-police-leads-to-38-per-cent-rise-in-arrests-at-2022-appleby-horse-fair/), [[7]](https://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/19699408.father-sons-sentenced-appleby-horse-fair-violence/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/), [[4]](https://cwherald.com/news/42-arrests-and-20-vehicles-seized-during-appleby-horse-fair/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-58213988), [[5]](https://www.itv.com/news/border/2024-06-10/appleby-horse-fair-clean-up-begins-as-over-100-arrests-made-at-event)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14767513/cricket-pavilion-knife-threats-Locals-lock-Europe-gypsy-gathering.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/> - In 2023, Appleby Horse Fair experienced the highest number of arrests and animal welfare incidents since 2015. The fair attracted approximately 20,000 people and hundreds of horses, with 288 reported incidents of animal welfare, leading to the seizure of nine horses, two dogs, thirteen puppies, and two chickens. The increase in arrests, totaling 42 compared to 18 in 2022, was attributed to proactive policing measures. The Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group (MASCG) is considering making the fair a ticketed event to cover policing and street cleansing costs. Suggestions for improvement include earlier clean-up of horse manure, increased policing, better communication with residents, and measures to reduce congestion in the town centre. ([nwemail.co.uk](https://www.nwemail.co.uk/news/24245400.incident-levels-highest-since-2015-appleby-horse-fair/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-58213988> - Ahead of the annual Appleby Horse Fair, Cumbria Constabulary implemented a Section 60 order, allowing stop and search without 'reasonable grounds', due to information about individuals intent on causing serious violence as part of feuds between different groups. The order applied within a defined area during a specific time period, with armed police present to respond swiftly to potential situations. The police emphasized that those seeking to act violently were 'no friend' to the residents and the Gypsy and Traveller communities who wish for the fair to be an enjoyable and safe environment for all. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cumbria-58213988?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://cwherald.com/news/42-arrests-and-20-vehicles-seized-during-appleby-horse-fair/> - During the 2023 Appleby Horse Fair, 42 arrests were made and 20 vehicles were seized. The fair was one of the busiest in recent years, with almost 1,200 bowtops and caravans converging on the Cumbrian town. Despite the number of arrests, there were no significant issues with public disorder. Chief Superintendent Matt Kennerley stated that the majority of arrests were the result of proactive actions by officers, such as driving offences, rather than public order incidents. The event was controlled by a significant police resource throughout. ([cwherald.com](https://cwherald.com/news/42-arrests-and-20-vehicles-seized-during-appleby-horse-fair/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.itv.com/news/border/2024-06-10/appleby-horse-fair-clean-up-begins-as-over-100-arrests-made-at-event> - The clean-up from the 248th edition of the Appleby Horse Fair is underway as over 100 arrests were made at the event. Despite the arrests, police stated that things ran smoothly. Bill Welch, the gypsy and traveller community spokesperson, emphasized the fair's significance, describing it as 'sacred' and more important than Christmas. The event also brought economic benefits to local businesses, with some experiencing their busiest periods. Detective Superintendent Dan St Quintin noted that the arrests were for various offences, including road safety, drink, and drug driving. ([itv.com](https://www.itv.com/news/border/2024-06-10/appleby-horse-fair-clean-up-begins-as-over-100-arrests-made-at-event?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://cwherald.com/news/firmer-line-by-police-leads-to-38-per-cent-rise-in-arrests-at-2022-appleby-horse-fair/> - A firmer line taken by Cumbria police led to a 38 per cent rise in the number of arrests at the 2022 Appleby Horse Fair. The evaluation report for the 2022 fair indicates that there were 18 arrests, compared to 13 in 2021. Recorded crime was also up 12 per cent from the previous year, with 28 reports compared to 25. The most significant change was in respect of dispersal orders, which rose from six in 2021 to 28 in 2022. The increases in arrests and dispersals were a direct response to concerns raised by both settled and gypsy and traveller communities regarding anti-social behaviour and violent crime. ([cwherald.com](https://cwherald.com/news/firmer-line-by-police-leads-to-38-per-cent-rise-in-arrests-at-2022-appleby-horse-fair/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/19699408.father-sons-sentenced-appleby-horse-fair-violence/> - A father and his two sons were sentenced for their involvement in a violent disturbance at the 2022 Appleby Horse Fair. The incident occurred on August 13, when Bernard McGinley, aged 44, joined in the violence after seeing his two sons fighting with another man and his 14-year-old son in Appleby town centre. The altercation resulted in injuries to the victims, leading to the sentencing of the McGinley family members. The court proceedings highlighted the impact of the violence on the victims, with one father expressing anxiety and nightmares following the incident. ([whitehavennews.co.uk](https://www.whitehavennews.co.uk/news/19699408.father-sons-sentenced-appleby-horse-fair-violence/?utm_source=openai))