

**JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
OPEN-AIR MUSEUM**

At a Meeting of the **Beamish Joint Committee** held in the Collections Study Room, Beamish Museum, Beamish on **Friday 6 May 2011** at **11.00 a.m.**

Present:

Councillor D Marshall in the Chair

Councillors Bailey, Boyes, Carr, Gittins, Iveson, Shuttleworth, Thomson, Wilkinson and J Wilson (Durham County Council) and Councillor Bell (Sunderland City Council)

Apologies were received from Councillors May, Naylor, Stoker, Todd and Wright (Durham County Council) Goldsworthy and Green (Gateshead MBC), Mortimer (North Tyneside MBC), Foster (Sunderland City Council), and Mrs Stewart (Development Trust) and Mr Ashburner and Mr Dix (Friends).

As the meeting was not quorate the Secretary advised that the meeting could only proceed on the basis that any decisions taken would be ratified at the next meeting. In the event of urgent decisions being required it was agreed to write to those councils not in attendance to obtain an indication whether they would support the proposal or not. All decisions taken at this meeting were carried out by a unanimous vote of those members present.

1. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 January 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2011 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. Changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations

The Joint Committee received a report from the Treasurer explaining the impact of changes to Accounts and Audit Regulations following a consultation by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:-

That the implications of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, be noted.

3. Museum Update

The Joint Committee received a report from the Museum Director which provided an update on Museum business (for copy see file of Minutes).

Performance – The Museum Director reported an amazing start to the year with over 60,000 visitors in April compared to a budget of 38,000 and 46,000 on the previous year to date. A successful steam event was held over a four day period including one of the busiest days since 1995. A children's event based on the Washington Children's Strike boosted numbers in February. Overall visitor numbers were up 20% on last year and up 50% on budget.

Request for Additional Funding – The Museum Director requested additional funding of £40,000 for the completion of the Coal Fired Fish and Chip Shop from the Capital Development Reserve.

Resolved:-

That additional funding totalling £40,000 from the Capital Development Reserve to assist with the cost of reconstructing the coal fired fish and chip shop in the Pit Village, be approved.

4. Acquisition of Lighthouse Slip from Hollycombe Steam Collection

The Joint Committee received a report of the Museum Director and Museum Treasurer about the acquisition of a Lighthouse Slip from the Hollycombe Steam Collection in Hampshire (for copy see file of Minutes).

Hollycombe Steam Collection received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 1998 and conditions were placed on the Slip, including to keep it to a reasonable standard of repair. The transfer has been agreed in principle and a tripartite deed has been drafted. The Secretary is seeking agreement to amend the deed so that Beamish Museum will not be liable for any breach of condition by the company occurring prior to the date of the agreement.

The Secretary of the Joint Committee from Durham County Council would write to all constituent authorities to seek their agreement for him to sign the legal deed on their behalf.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the transfer of a Lighthouse Slip from Hollycombe Working Steam Museum Limited to Beamish, The North of England Open Air Museum be approved, and
- (ii) That the Secretary of the Joint Committee from Durham County Council be authorised to sign the legal deed on behalf of all constituent authorities, subject to agreement from all constituent authorities.

5. Presentation on School Groups

The Joint Committee received a presentation from Simon Wooley, Head of Learning and Access on the projects covered for school groups and local communities, including:-

Stanley Pit Disaster
Consett Steel Works
Steam Farms, Northumberland
Washington Banner and Children's Strike

All of these topics help children and the local community link the past with the present, generating an interest in what has happened and bringing it back to life.

Funding has been received from HLF to help with school trips and from Greggs to provide picnic hampers.

Looking ahead the Museum will be involved in projects such as the 60th anniversary of the Easington Pit Disaster and the history and restoration of the Spennymoor Chip Van.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wooley for a very informative presentation and suggested that he talk to individual councillors to give consideration for certain projects that they may be able to make a small donation towards.

6. Any Other Business

Members discussed the timings of future meetings and the Chairman suggested that a report be prepared for the AGM together with a list of suggested dates of the Joint Committee meeting for 2011/12.

7. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:-

That under Section 100 A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

8. Business and Operational Improvement Plan Capital Project Progress Report No. 6

The Joint Committee received a report from the Museum Director that provided an update on the variations and funding for Capital Projects (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:-

That the report be noted.