



**JOINT COMMITTEE OF BEAMISH
THE NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM – 18TH NOVEMBER 2011**

**UPDATE ON MUSEUM'S BUSINESS
REPORT OF THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR: RICHARD EVANS**

1. Performance for the period 1st February to 31st October 2011 (9 months)

	Actual YTD 2011/12	Revised Budget YTD 2011/12	Previous YTD 2010/11
Visitor numbers	422,003	409,842	384,804
Variance (%)		3%	10%
Beamish Museum Ltd & Beamish Museum Trading Ltd income (excluding grants and donations)	£5,158,936	£5,114,804	£5,016,644
Variance (%)		0%	3%

- 1.1 Beamish has continued to experience higher than expected visitor numbers in the period 1st February to 31st October 2011. The museum welcomed 47,413 visitors in September and a further 47,161 in October, with successful autumn Transport, Agricultural and Halloween events helping to maintain an overall increase in visitor numbers of 10% on the previous year.
- 1.2 The Board of Beamish Museum Ltd revised the revenue budget forecast for the year at their meeting in August. The museum now expects to welcome at least 454,270 visitors in 2011/12, rather than the 366,000 originally forecast.
- 1.3 The Museum continues to see a marked increase in local and repeat visitors, due to the popularity of the Beamish Unlimited ticket offer. New attractions such as the fish and chip shop, major events and other seasonal activities continue to be important drivers in this respect. A detailed programme of market research has been underway over the 2011 season and will conclude later in the autumn, to help inform future planning. This will provide us with a new method of segmenting visitors to Beamish, and examine in some detail different motivations for visiting.
- 1.4 As a result of the increase in the proportion of repeat visitors, admissions income for the period to 31st October is 1% down on last year. However, overall income

has increased by 3% on last year due to an increase in income from the Fish and Chip Shop, Fairground and Gift Aid (up 13% on 2010/11). Performance in September and October 2011 has also remained ahead of the revised forecast agreed by the Board of Beamish Museum Ltd in August.

Approval sought

- Note the progress report above including an update on the museum's key performance indicators.

2. Museum update

2.1 Beamish won the Gold Large Visitor Attraction of the Year Award at the 2011 North East Tourism Awards and will now go on to represent the North East region at the national awards in London.

2.2 The Board of Beamish Museum Ltd reviewed progress achieved with the delivery of the Museum's Business and Operational Improvement Plan at their meeting in October. The business plan was extended to cover the period to 31st January 2013, and a new action plan outlining the next year's priorities was agreed. In terms of capital projects underway at the Museum, the following points are highlighted for approval by the Joint Committee:

- The Edwardian Fairground project has been completed and income is ahead of budget forecast.
- The main contract works for the entrance building refurbishment have been completed. Works to finish the landscape scheme are underway and there are snagging items still to complete. The café is being refurbished from BML's revenue budget for repairs and maintenance. It is intended to refurbish the toilets in February 2012.
- The Town Tea Rooms refurbishment has been completed, subject to snagging. The Cookson Room has been refurbished incorporating seating from Rossi's Ice Cream Parlour, Consett.
- Works in connection with the Rowley Station development are ongoing. The contract for the boiler repairs to the locomotive *Dunrobin* is being tendered following a pre-qualification questionnaire. The Beamish Development Trust has received a donation of £270,000 towards the cost of creating new workshops to support the museum's growing transport operations and a training centre for heritage engineering skills. Engine sheds and services to support the Rowley operations are being designed and tendered.
- The rebuilding of the Hetton Band Hall is on hold, awaiting further funding. An application is being considered by the Clore Duffield Trust and the Museum may be able to commit funds to the project itself from the 2011/12 operating surplus, once the outturn for 2011/12 has been confirmed early next year.

- The structural repairs to the Bakery building in the town are progressing well. There will be a need to commit additional budget to this project in order to complete the internal refurbishments, and a report on this will be brought forward early in 2012 for further consideration.
- The reconstruction of Eston Church in the Georgian area of the site is progressing well and the building is taking shape. The works are expected to stop over the winter, as the lime mortar requires relatively warm temperatures. Works will recommence in the spring. It will be necessary to commit additional budget to the project to complete the internal works and the external landscaping scheme/graveyard.

2.3 A separate capital budget review has been prepared for the Joint Committee at this meeting. A full capital project progress report will be presented to the Committee in January, once the outturn for BML in 2011/12 is known and a decision can be taken on releasing further funds to support the ongoing capital programme.

Approval sought

- For the progress report above including an update on the capital projects underway at the Museum in 2011/12

RICHARD EVANS
Director
8th November, 2011