



JOINT COMMITTEE OF BEAMISH MUSEUM – 11th March 2011

REPORT OF THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR: RICHARD EVANS

1. Performance for the period 1st February 2010 to 31st January 2011

	Actual Year 2010/11	Revised Budget 2010/11	Previous Year 2009/10
Visitor numbers	422,603	411,175	384,716
Variance (%)		3%	10%
Beamish Museum Ltd & Beamish Museum Trading Ltd income (excluding grants and donations)	£5,342,506	£5,302,045	£5,132,021
Variance (%)		1%	4%

- 1.1 Despite the wintry conditions in November and December, which undoubtedly affected visitor numbers to the Christmas at Beamish event, the Museum has exceeded its revised revenue budget forecast for the 2010/11 year.
- 1.2 The Museum welcomed 422,603 visitors in the 2010/11 year, against a revised budget of 411,175 and the result of 384,716 in 2009/10. It is also worth noting that the original budget for the 2010/11 year was set at 331,000 visitors.
- 1.3 The result for January 2011 was particularly pleasing – with 9,008 visitors against a budget of 2,000. The latest attraction of an ice rink in the Pit Village has proved to be very popular, and it is now planned to extend its operation in 2011 with the rink running from October half-term through to the end of February.

2. Beamish Museum Ltd provisional outturn for financial year 2010/11

- 2.1 A provisional outturn for the financial year to the 31st January 2011 has been produced, taking on board the additional income referred to above, together with all revenue costs incurred by both Beamish Museum Ltd and Beamish Museum Trading Ltd in the 2011/12 financial year.
- 2.2 As a result of an increase in visitor numbers and growth income from catering, Beamish Museum Ltd is expected to generate an operating surplus of **£712,789** in the 2010/11 financial year. It has already been decided to allocate £500,000 of this surplus to the ongoing capital development programme in the Museum. The remainder will be retained in Beamish Museum Ltd's revenue reserves.

3. Renaissance Support 2011+

3.1 The Renaissance business plan for Beamish submitted to the MLA in January 2011 has been approved, which means Beamish has been allocated funding of £364,256 for the year 1st April 2011 to 31st March 2012. The revenue grant will support staffing costs in the Curatorial, Development and Engagement teams. It is anticipated that staffing costs in the learning and access team previously supported by Renaissance will be financed by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund from 2011/12.

Project	Programme Area	Renaissance Funding
Beamish - Celebrating Community Heritage - Supporting schools and community group activities and visit Beamish	Learning & Skills (LS)	52,150
Beamish Communications - Developing digital communications and support for publications	Audience Development (AD)	110,575
Beamish - Business Development - Support for long term planning	Systems Development (SD)	102,081
Beamish - Effective Collections - Support for Curatorial staff		99,450
Totals		364,256

3.2 Two 12 month fixed term posts supported by Renaissance funding in 2011/12 are being advertised in February/March 2011. A Skills Development Officer will help the Museum develop the feasibility of using Beamish as a venue for skills training, including apprentice programmes, partnership with local colleges and the potential for running fee-paying short courses in heritage/traditional skills. A Food Development Officer will support the Head of Engagement and help them develop the local supply chain and the preparation of period and local food and drink across the site, including both period areas and catering outlets.

3.3 The North East Museums Hub will be phased out from June/July 2011, and the functions of the MLA will transfer to the Arts Council (ACE) from 1st April 2012. The future of the Renaissance programme remains uncertain and the funding stream has yet to be confirmed beyond 2011/12. The museums sector is nervous that ACE will not necessarily value or continue to support regional museums as the MLA has previously done. Renaissance funding has already been cut by 15% in 2011/12. It is currently suggested that a new 'challenge fund' will be created from 1st April 2012, using the funding that DCMS previously used to support Renaissance. There may be a risk that this fund could be used to support all cultural organisations in the future and not just museums. Such a change would probably have the effect of dramatically reducing the level of revenue funding that Beamish receives in the future.

3.4 Beamish has been asked to participate in the new 'Cultural Partnership' that Durham County Council is forming to help shape the cultural strategy for the county, and potentially help allocate and channel ACE funding into the area. The Museum is also working with officers responsible for managing the 'Luminere' festival planned for November 2011 and the Durham Book Festival.

Approval sought

The Joint Committee is asked to note the report including the Renaissance business plan for 2011/12 and participation in Durham County Council's Cultural Partnership.

4. Priorities for the next period

- Update the Museum's risk register including its capital programme.
- Complete a review of the capital works programme and cost plan, preparing a progress report for the next BML Board and Joint Committee meeting.
- Continue to monitor performance weekly to maximise income.
- Complete evaluation of Christmas at Beamish and agree budgets/programme for 2011 events.
- Continue to develop catering and retail operational plans for the season ahead.
- Recruit staff for 2011 season, following recommendations from the BML Board.
- Complete new introductory exhibition in the Entrance, including filming and selection of a 'narrator'.
- Organise workshops around the region to support the development of a long term development plan.
- Identify suitable consultants to support the long term plan where and when needed, including finalising research and business planning briefs.
- Manage Entrance Building, Tea Room/Kitchen, access ramp; Fish and Chip shop, Eston Church & Hetton Band Hall dismantling construction projects.

Richard Evans
Director

20th February 2011