



JOINT COMMITTEE OF BEAMISH MUSEUM – 11th March 2011

Report on the Management of Woodland for Biomass Heating

Report of the Museum Director – Richard Evans

1. The Museum has been looking at ways to utilise the woodlands that surround Beamish to enhance the sustainability of the site and reduce energy consumption/costs; whilst at the same time developing how the Museum is able to demonstrate period/traditional woodland management to visitors.

2. The review feeds into the development of the Museum's 2012 – 2025 forward plan that is currently being prepared, relating to in particular:
 - The development of typical working farms in the region from the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods; enhancing the way Beamish works with and displays its regional agricultural collection.
 - The ongoing improvement of Beamish's rural life team activities to engage with visitors.
 - The removal of oil and LPG fired heating boilers in the Town and Entrance Buildings; and their phased replacement with new wood-fuelled biomass boilers for heating, starting first with the entrance building boiler.
 - The development of the supply chain of wood chip sourced from woodlands managed by the Museum, using thinnings/arising from woodland management, which is designed to enhance public access, habitat and biodiversity in the woodlands.
 - The potential development of the use of land for education and training, looking for example at the Forest Schools programme and the teaching of traditional woodland craft skills.

- The potential for using the site to harness renewable energy including the generation of electricity from wood fuels; micro-hydro generation plant using the former mill sites; and PV cells on the Regional Resource Centre.
3. Beamish currently has a ring of woodland under its management, which provides both a valuable natural habitat and a shelter belt around the Museum site. The land is owned as a freehold by Durham County Council and then leased to Sunderland City Council acting as the lead authority on behalf of the Joint Committee. The woods are shown shaded orange on the plan attached as appendix A. Beamish Museum Ltd has authority to manage the woodland by virtue of its sub-lease from Sunderland City Council to the charitable company.
 4. The woodlands will provide a valuable source of timber for the proposed biomass development in future years. There is already a need to begin to improve management of the woods and harvest thinnings in order to create a usable biomass fuel in 12 months time.
 5. It is already clear that the Museum will need a greater area of woodland to support its ambitious biomass proposals. These proposals include replacing LPG and oil boilers with a renewable wood fuel heating systems and to also explore electricity generation from wood fuel.
 6. With this in mind, the Museum has been in touch with colleagues at Durham County Council, who have responded very favourably to the suggestion that Beamish might be able to take on the management of a number of woods in the local area. From the officer's point of view, Beamish Museum has the potential to become an exemplar in terms of its use of renewable energy, and at the same time there is an opportunity to improve how woodland is managed for local residents.
 7. The woods that have been under discussion in the local area are marked green on the attached plan in appendix A.
 8. It is not proposed to transfer these woodlands without an assessment of their potential to support the Museum's forward plan and also a review of their liabilities/risks. Any transfer will also be subject to further approval from the Joint Committee.
 9. Subject to approval from the Joint Committee, it is proposed to commission a survey of the woods marked green on the plan attached as appendix A. This

will help Durham County Council officers and Museum staff assess the potential of each wood for biomass fuel, wildlife habitat, biodiversity and community/educational use. The survey will be used identify woodlands that have the most potential and to prioritise the woodland for eventual transfer to the Museum, subject to further approval from the Joint Committee at the appropriate time.

10. Subject to approval in principle to proceed from the Joint Committee on 11th March, it is proposed to liaise with officers at Durham County Council on an ongoing basis regarding the prioritisation of woodland and how best to take their management forward.
11. It is currently felt that ownership of the woodland will be retained by Durham County Council but that the day to day management of the woodland will transfer to the Museum via the Joint Committee's lease. It may be possible for the woodland to be transferred by Durham County Council to the existing lease, which is signed by Sunderland City Council on behalf of the Joint Committee. If not, a separate legal document will need to be prepared.
12. Officers in Durham County Council have indicated that they welcome this initiative, as they think it will improve the management of local woodland for biodiversity and at the same time encourage greater public access.

Approval sought

The Joint Committee is asked to approve the strategy outlined in the above report in principle, including the commissioning of a survey of the woodland owned by Durham County Council marked green in the attached plan, to inform the potential future transfer of the land to the Joint Committee.

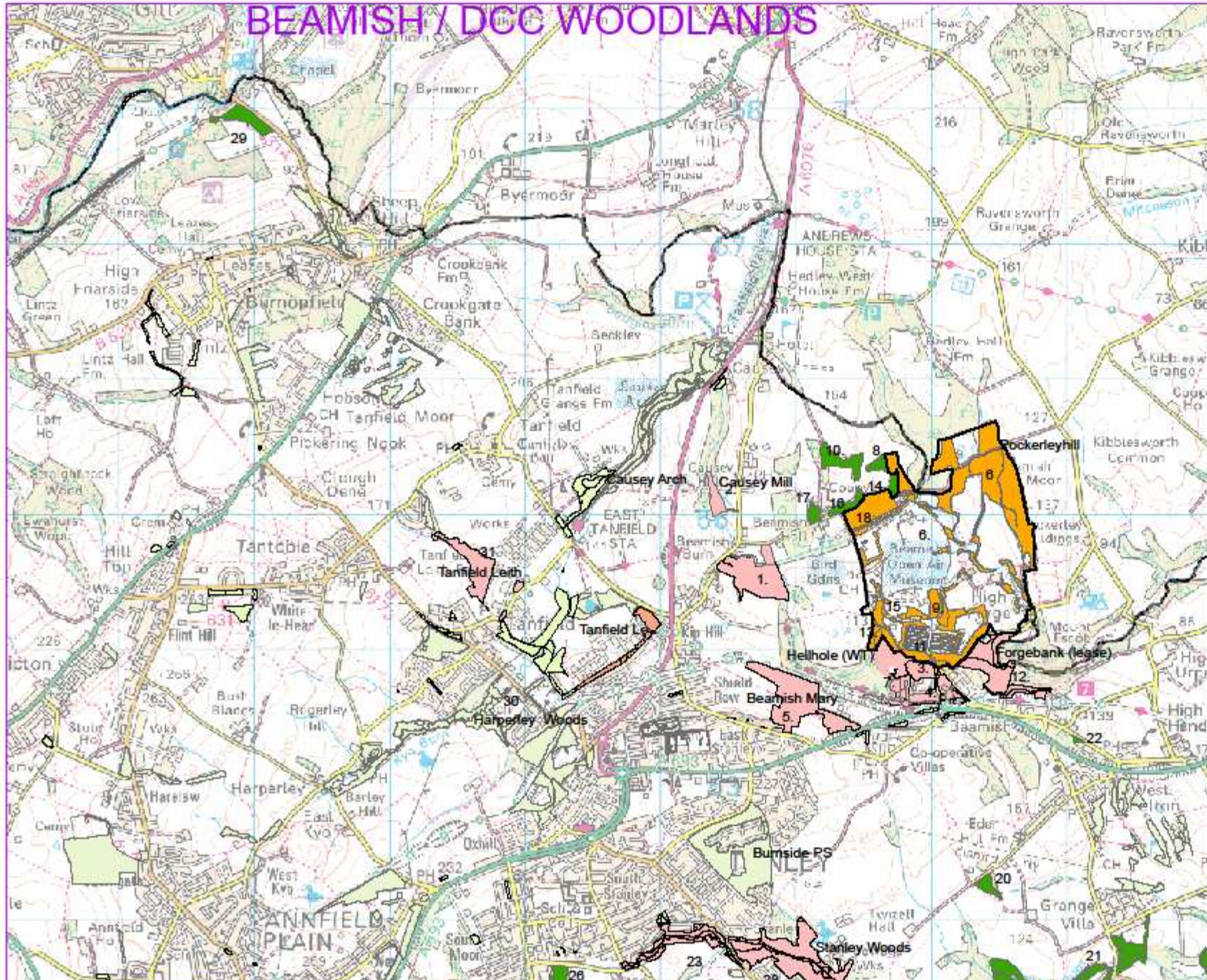
Richard Evans

Museum Director

3rd March

Appendix A – Map of woodland in local area

BEAMISH / DCC WOODLANDS



- Legend**
- Beamish DCC Woods**
- <all other values>
- Site Name**
- 1. BEAMISH BURN PICNIC AREA
 - 2. CAUSEY MILL / CAUSEY ARCH
 - 3. FORGE BANK WOOD
 - 4. BEAMISH LINK ROAD
 - 5. BEAMISH MARY, EAST STANLEY
 - 6. BEAMISH OPEN AIR MUSEUM
 - 7. SECOND PIT RECLM & EDEN
 - 8. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - ASH
 - 9. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - BIRC
 - 10. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - CO
 - 11. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - FO
 - 12. FORGEBANK PLANTATION S
 - 13. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - HE
 - 14. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - HO
 - 15. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - LET
 - 16. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - NE
 - 17. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - PE
 - 18. BEAMISH WOODLANDS - STA
 - 19. SOUTH PELAW COLL RECLA
 - 20. TWIZELL WOODS RECLAMA
 - 21. GRANGE VILLAALMA PIT
 - 22. HIGH HANDENHOLD COLLIE
 - 23. STANLEY WOODS, SOUTH S
 - 24. NEWFIELD VILLAGE FOREST
 - 25. NEWFIELD VILLAGE
 - 26. SOUTH MOOR COLLIERY
 - 27. SOUTH MOOR STANLEY MIN
 - 28. STANLEY WOOD
 - 29. TANFIELD BARCUS CLOSE, a
 - 30. HARPERLEY PEA WOODS,
 - 31. TANFIELD LEITH WOODS

