

**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 11 March 2011 at 11.00 a.m.

Present:

Councillor D A Marshall (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors C Marshall, P May, Wilkinson and Wright (Durham County Council), Callender and Goldsworthy (Gateshead MBC), Mortimer (North Tyneside MBC), Stephenson (South Tyneside MBC) and Bell, Foster and Richardson (Sunderland City Council)

Co-opted Members:

Friends – Mr A Ashburner and Mr M Dix

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bailey, Blakey, Boyes, Carr, Farry, Gittins, Iveson, Naylor, Shuttleworth, Stoker, Thomson, Todd, Wilson (Durham County Council) Green (Gateshead MBC), Dixon, Kerr, Maxwell (South Tyneside MBC), Errington, Kelly, J B Scott, J Scott, Speding, Walker and Wilson (Sunderland City Council), and Mrs Stewart, Mr Gray and Mrs Hunter (Development Trust)

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 and signed by the Chairman.

2. 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 that although the Museum had been affected by inclement weather at the close of 2010, the revised revenue budget forecast for the financial year had actually been exceeded. Furthermore, there had been a significant increase in visitor numbers compared to the same period for the previous year. This was attributed in part to the ice rink which had featured in the Pit Village which was regarded as a great success.

Beamish MuseumLtd provisional outturn for 2010/11 – It was reported that the provisional outturn for the year 2010/11 indicated an operating surplus of over £700,000. The Museum Director advised of a quite dramatic increase in catering income, although retail income had not displayed such an increase, a probable result of the current economic situation. £500,000 of the surplus would be

allocated to the capital development programme with the remainder to be held in the Museum's reserves.

Resolved:-

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

3. Revenue Budget Review 2010/11 and Draft Revenue Budget 2011/12

The Joint Committee received a report of the Museum Director and Museum Treasurer the purpose of which was to review the Revenue Budget for 2010/2011 to reflect developments which had occurred since the revised budget had been approved and also to approve the Draft Revenue Budget for 2011/2012 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Joint Committee were advised on how the loan arrangement would work, taken on to fund the capital cost of the Edwardian Fairground. Attention was also drawn to the confirmed contributions which would be received from the five constituent authorities.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the revised Revenue Budget for the Joint Committee for 2010/2011 shown at Appendix A be approved.
- (ii) That the Draft Revenue Budget for the Joint Committee for 2011/2012 shown at Appendix A be approved.

4. Disposal of Collections

The Joint Committee considered a report from the Special Projects Manager and the Museum Director which formally requested the de-accessioning or transfer of items currently in the Museum collections (for copy see file of Minutes).

J Rees, Special Projects Manager, advised that it was periodically necessary for a museum to review its holdings and deaccession, transfer or dispose of any such holdings which were duplicated in the collection, in a poor state or simply no longer of use to Beamish Museum. He went on to explain that disposal seldom meant destruction and items would be offered to registered Museums, charities, trusts and public bodies, however there was a possibility that some items would have to be disposed of or scrapped. Any monies raised from disposals were legally required to be spent for the benefit of the Museum's wider collections.

Resolved:-

That the deaccessioning and transfer or disposal of the items listed in the report be approved.

5. Management of Woodland for Biomass Heating

The Joint Committee considered a report from the Museum Director regarding proposals to utilise the woodlands which surrounded Beamish with a view to enhancing the sustainability of the site whilst reducing energy costs and consumption (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Museum Director advised that following initial discussions with Durham County Council it had been suggested that Beamish could take on management of a number of woods in the area. As such it was proposed that those areas should be subject to a survey in order to ascertain the potential of each wood for biomass fuel, wildlife habitat, biodiversity and community/educational use.

Resolved:-

That the strategy outlined in the report in principle, including the commissioning of a survey of the woodland owned by Durham County Council in order to inform the potential transfer of the land to the Joint Committee, be approved.

6. Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2011/12

Consideration was given to a report of the Treasurer which detailed the proposed Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2011/2012 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Resolved:-

That the Internal Audit Operational Plan for 2011/2012 be noted

7. Presentation on the New Museum Website

A presentation of the updated museum website was delivered to the Joint Committee by the Museum's Development Manager (for copy see file of Minutes).

Attention was drawn to new features on the website such as the inclusion of a News Alert banner and a new calendar based booking system. A demonstration of the Peoples Collection search page was also provided.

8. 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.

9. Feedback from the Joint Committee's Long-term Planning Workshop, held on 14 January 2011

The Joint Committee received a report from the Museum Director which provided an unedited summary from the workshop held with members on 14 January 2011 (for copy see file of Minutes).