



JOINT COMMITTEE OF BEAMISH MUSEUM – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2011

MUSEUM UPDATE: REPORT OF THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR

1. Performance for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 (2 months)

Beamish Museum Ltd

	Actual YTD 2011/12	Budget YTD 2011/12	Previous Year 2010/11
Visitor numbers	33,139	24,000	29,403
Variance (%)		38%	13%
Income Beamish Museum Ltd & Beamish Museum Trading Ltd income (excluding grants and donations)	£274,458	£323,658	£254,329
Variance (%)		-15%	8%

- 1.1 The Museum ran a very successful 'Children's Strike' event in February half term, linking with schools and community groups in Washington. 10,308 attended the event over the 7 days of half term. Beamish attracted 15,625 visitors in February 2011 – the best result the Museum has ever had. The budget for the month was 10,000, and the Museum attracted 12,689 in the same period last year.
- 1.2 Boosted by favourable early spring weather, visitor numbers during March have also been encouraging. The Museum welcomed 17,514 visitors in the period 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March, compared with 16,714 in the same period last year. The budget forecast for the month of March was 14,000.
- 1.3 Overall, across both BML and BMTL income to the end of March is 8% up on last year but 15% down on budget. This discrepancy is due to an error in the calculation of the admission budget for February and March 2011. When the original budgets were prepared in October 2010, it had been assumed that the all year round Beamish Unlimited ticketing scheme would commence on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011, when in fact it came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. The error only applies to the two month period to the end of March 2011. The budget forecast for 2011/12 has been reviewed and it is felt that the shortfall will be made up in the coming

months. The estimate for the 12 month period to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012 remains accurate at this stage.

1.4 Visitor numbers in April have continued to be very encouraging. The Museum held a very successful event from 14 – 17 April, the Great North Steam Fair. 12,796 visitors attended the event over the four days, enjoying a spectacular variety of working steam engines around the site.

## **2. Request for additional funding for Coal Fired Fish and Chip Shop from the Capital Development Reserve**

2.1 The Joint Committee is requested to approve additional funding totalling £40,000 from the Museum's Capital Development Reserve to assist with the cost of reconstructing the coal fired fish and chip shop in the Pit Village.

2.2 The project risks, current commitments and anticipated future fit-out costs were reviewed in March 2011. Following this review the cost of the project has increased to a revised total of £310,000 as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, as a result of a number of unforeseen variations taking into account additional building works and internal fit out costs, to ensure the Museum creates a high quality period experience. This building now features a gas engine chipper and three ranges. Works are nearing completion and the building will be handed over to the Engagement team on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to prepare for operation this summer.

2.3 The Museum Treasurer has been consulted and the Capital Development Reserve currently has unrestricted funds totalling £137,029 available for investment in the Museum. Additional funding of £40,000 would reduce this reserve to a revised total of £97,029

## **3. Priorities for April/May 2011**

- Continue to monitor performance weekly against targets.
- Complete the new audio visual introductory exhibition in the Entrance Building
- Complete tea room refurbishment and entrance building re-modelling, including external works
- Complete the coal fired fish and chip shop and prepare for opening in June/July 2011
- Confirm workshops around the region to support the development of a long term development plan.
- Prepare briefs for external consultants to support the long term business and development plan where and when needed, including market research and business planning.

**Richard Evans**  
Director

18<sup>th</sup> April 2011