



**JOINT COMMITTEE OF BEAMISH, THE NORTH OF ENGLAND OPEN AIR MUSEUM
15th NOVEMBER 2013**

MUSEUM UPDATE - REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR

1. Performance for the period 1st February 2012 to 31st September 2013 (8 months)

	Actual YTD 2013/14	Revised Budget Forecast 2013/14	Previous Year 2012/13
Visitor numbers	447,916	410,767	383,417
Variance (%)		9%	17%
Admissions income	£3,061,759	£2,847,850	£2,660,605
Variance (%)		8%	15%
Catering income	£838,362	£760,795	£729,903
Variance (%)		10%	15%
Fish & Chip Shop income	£295,168	£267,133	£230,685
Variance (%)		10%	28%
Retail income	£464,019	£453,187	£426,940
Variance (%)		2%	9%
Total earned income¹	£5,247,061	£4,905,081	£4,546,861
Variance (%)		7%	15%

1.1 Beamish's performance in the period to the end of September 2013 has continued to be excellent. A total of 54,454 visitors came to Beamish in September, up from 45,617 last year. The main contributory factor seems to have been the successful operation of the Festival of Agriculture, held over the entire month with a series of themed events.

1.2 Attendances during October have continued to be very good, despite relatively poor weather during the month. The museum welcomed 47,338 visitors in October, 3%

¹ Includes income from admissions, gift aid, education, catering, retail and guide books net of VAT. Excludes income from commissions, donations, grants and funding from EU, Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund.

ahead of budget (46,000) and 13% up on last year (41,769). Tickets for the three Halloween evening events sold out in advance, with 6,338 people attending over three nights.

- 1.3 On Saturday 2nd November the museum passed the milestone of 500,000 visitors in the 2013/14 year. Looking ahead into November and the Christmas at Beamish season, Beamish is on track to achieve a record year, attracting more visitors to the museum than has ever been achieved before. Tickets for the Bonfire Nights in November have sold out with 3,500 people attending over the two nights. Two of the three Christmas evenings in December have also sold out, with the remaining night expected to sell out early in November. By the end of January 2014, we expect to have welcomed more than 550,000 people in the financial year.
- 1.4 In terms of Beamish's retail performance, the results to the end of September 2013 show an encouraging upturn on the same period in 2012, with an increase in sales combined with consistent margins. Beamish's catering performance also shows encouraging growth, with a healthy increase in profits on last year (+41%). The performance in the 1900 Town Tea Room has been particularly strong, with less impressive results in the Home Farm and Pit Village outlets.
- 1.5 A review of the Bakery operation is planned in November 2014 after 3 months trading, exploring areas for improvement and training leading up to Christmas and then the 2014 season. A review of staffing, product lines and themes/merchandising is planned across the site led by the Head of Catering, with a particular focus on the World War II Home Farm outlet. A new engagement plan and menu is planned for the 'Sinker's Bait Cabin' to be located in the Pit Village (replacing the current offer, the Pitman's Pantry, from spring 2014).

Approval sought

- **Beamish's key performance indicators for the 8 month period to September 2013.**

2. 2014 opening times and events list

Main Season

Saturday, 5th April to Sunday, 2nd November 2014. All areas of the Museum are open, 7 days a week, 10am to 5pm.

Winter Season including Christmas at Beamish

Winter season Monday, 3rd November 2014 to Friday, 27th March 2015, opening from 10am to 4pm. Beamish will be closed on Mondays and Fridays, but will open at weekends as well as Tuesday – Thursday. The whole museum will open at weekends with full price admission. During midweek, only the Town, Pit Village and Tramway will open and admission will be half price. Christmas at Beamish will operate from 15th November to Sunday, 29th December.

Appendix A includes an events list for 2014 for future reference.

3. Update on personnel and staffing issues

- 3.1 An Investors in People Review of Beamish was carried out between 11th & 18th October 2013. The IiP Specialists spent a total of 3 days on site and interviewed 44 people - approximately 7% of the people who contribute to Beamish (managers, employees and volunteers) and equating to 14% of monthly and weekly-paid employees. Some people were seen in small groups. The IiP Specialists found that there was sufficient evidence relating to the Investors in People Indicators to show that Beamish meets the 39 evidence requirements of the Standard.
- 3.2 The Assistant Director of Resources has reviewed the Museum's policy and management practice regarding the operation of 0-37 hr permanent contracts at Beamish. The contracts have been introduced after Board approval in 2011 and provide a number of benefits both to the Museum and its employees. These include the capacity to respond flexibly to meet rising demand out of the main season (March to October); increasing employee retention and providing opportunities for progression to further training and full time employment; providing more jobs during the winter season (Nov – March); enhancing job security and reducing a previous reliance on temporary seasonal workers. Beamish does not insist that staff employed on 0-37hr contracts only work at the museum. Two control measures are critical for the successful management of these contracts. Firstly, Beamish has made a commitment to identifying progression routes for staff wishing to develop their careers, and will not overuse 0-37 hr contracts when permanent jobs can be offered. Secondly, a management policy to share out hours evenly and fairly between team members has been adopted.

4. Review of governance – update from Regional Stakeholder Group meeting

- 4.1 The final drafts of the new lease from Durham County Council and the revised memorandum/articles of association for Beamish Museum are awaiting approval by

core Local Authority partners at Durham County Council, Sunderland City Council, Gateshead Council, South Tyneside Council and North Tyneside Council. VAT advice is being finalised with the support of specialists from Price Waterhouse Coopers and will be issued to partners as soon as it is available. An analysis of the Board skills and potential gaps to be filled during the recruitment process has also been completed.

4.2 The first meeting of the Regional Stakeholder Group was held in October 2013. A report from the meeting is attached as appendix B. It is proposed to hold the next meeting in February/March 2014. The focus going forward into 2014/15 will be to identify deliverable projects across the agreed priorities that RSG partners can work on together. Specific actions discussed at the first meeting and recommended to be taken forward now by museum staff are:

- **Museum Education.** Working together to develop learning programmes for schools in 2014, working in partnership across several museums, using limited resource from the current MPM and HLF programmes to extend reach, helping to identify need/demand for future funded programmes.
- **Older People.** Working with commissioners to help develop a model at Beamish for sessions with people living with dementia. Starting with commissioning groups in Durham County.
- **Marketing.** Forming a group of interested museums/heritage sites to explore joint promotion/regional marketing initiatives including customer relationship management systems. Sending an invitation out to key cultural attractions to gauge interest and define need/opportunity.
- **Cultural Tourism.** Helping ANEC make the case to the NELEP regarding investment in the sector to help create growth, with support from the new EU programme from 2015. Holding a conference/meeting in November/December to build a case.

Priorities for next period

- Approval of new governing documents
- Submit HLF Funding Bid for the 'Remaking Living Museum 1820-1950' project
- Secure LA guarantee for funding shortfall
- Annual review of DEP delivery in 2013/14
- Ongoing delivery of externally funded programmes (ACE MPM and HLF Celebrating Community Heritage)
- Submission of ACE Creative People and Places Business Plan (Nov 2013)
- Preparation of Major Partner Museum bid with Bowes Museum (Jan 2014)

RICHARD EVANS

Director, 5th November 2013

Appendices:

A: 2014 Events List

B: Notes from RSG meeting October 2013