

**JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THE NORTH OF ENGLAND
OPEN-AIR MUSEUM**

At a Meeting of the Joint Committee for the North of England Open-Air Museum held in the Collections Study Room, Regional Resource Centre, Beamish Museum on Friday 12 November 2010 at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor D Marshall in the Chair

Members of the Joint Committee

Councillors Blakey, Boyes, Carr, Iveson, C Marshall, Shuttleworth, Thomson, Todd and Wilkinson (Durham County Council) Callender (Gateshead MBC) Mortimer (North Tyneside MBC) Gibson (South Tyneside MBC) and Foster, Richardson and J Scott (Sunderland City Council)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Friends – Mr M Dix

Beamish Development Trust – Mrs Hunter

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bailey, May, Naylor, Stoker, Wilson and Wright (Durham County Council), Goldsworthy (Gateshead MBC) Kerr (South Tyneside MBC) Bell, Kelly and Walker (Sunderland City Council) Mr A Ashburner (Friends) and Mrs Stewart (Beamish Development Trust)

A1 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 September 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Museum Update

The Joint Committee received a report from the Museum Director giving an update on Museum business (for copy see file of Minutes).

Performance – The Museum continued to perform well in October with actual visitor numbers for the year to date reaching 384,804 against a budget of 298,000, 29% up on budget. The Halloween event had

been very popular and had attracted 3765 visitors. The Museum is preparing for the start of the Christmas event on 20 November 2010 when the ice skating rink will be opened. The Town would portray a typical Edwardian Market Town during Christmas and gifts would be sold in the Co-op. The Pit Village would also be open, also set in the Edwardian period. The waggonway would be home to the Grotto at weekends only, with several Father Christmas areas available to avoid queues. The gallopers would also be moved to this area. At weekends the Home Farm would be open, portraying a traditional Victorian Christmas. The event would run from 20 November to 2 January 2010. There would be two evening events in addition to the daytime events, on Fridays 10 and 17 December, when in addition to the Town and Grotto areas, Pockerley Old Hall would also be open demonstrating a traditional Georgian 12th night.

Admission Policy for 2011/12 – BML Board has approved a change to the admissions policy with effect from 1 April 2011 following consultations with staff and visits to comparative sites. The Director hoped to develop the visitor experience by having four seasons at the Museum incorporating activities and events throughout the year. Gift Aid income was projected to increase due to selling all visitors an Unlimited Ticket.

MLA/Renaissance – the level of funding would reduce heavily as the programme would cease after March 2012. A small number of core Museums would be funded however as Beamish was not a core Museum it would have to bid for challenge funding. A 20% cut is expected in year 1 rather than the 15% cut over three years originally forecast. This has been included in the revenue budget.

Long term business planning – an event would take place in each local authority area involving stakeholders from each area to seek their view on the future of the Museum. A report would be available at a later date showing the responses received to developments.

Resolved:-

That the report be noted.

A3 Retirement of Treasurer

The Committee noted a report about the retirement of Mr George Blyth, Treasurer to the Museum in January 2011. Following a senior management structure at Sunderland City Council a new post of Executive Director of Commercial and Corporate Services was created and Mr Malcolm Page has been appointed with effect from 4 January 2011.

The Committee thanked Mr Blyth for his service and contribution to the Museum and wished him a long and happy retirement.

The Chairman thanked Mr Blyth for his invaluable contribution to the Museum and appreciated the work carried out over a number of years.

The Museum Director thanked Mr Blyth personally for his support over the few years and thanked him for managing often difficult situations.

Mr Blyth said that it had been pleasing working with the Museum especially with the recent positive changes over the last couple of years. He was thrilled that the Museum was thriving and wished everyone involved luck and good fortune for the future and hoped performance goes from strength to strength.

Resolved:-

That the Joint Committee place on record their thanks to Mr George Blyth and that Mr Malcolm Page be appointed as Treasurer from 4 January 2011.

A4 Cycle of Meetings 2011

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Secretary outlining the dates of Joint Committee meetings for 2011 (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was suggested that the time of meetings should be changed to 11.00 a.m. and that the November 2011 meeting be changed to 18 November subject to constituent authorities agreement.

Resolved:

That the cycle of meetings be approved with the time of meetings being changed to 11.00 a.m. and that subject to agreement the November 2011 meeting being changed to 18 November 2011.

A5 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.

B6 Business and Operational Improvement Plan Capital Project Progress Report

The Committee received a report of the Museum Director detailing variations and changes to the Capital Programme of the Business and Operational Improvement Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members were updated on the executive summary, capital cost plan, funding profile and summary of the capital development programme.

Resolved

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.

B7 Prioritisation of Capital Projects on 2011/12 and 2012/13

The Committee received a report of the Museum Director recommending to add two additional projects to the capital development project to be delivered over the next two years (for copy see file of Minutes).

Members were updated on capital developments underway, funding for capital development, prioritisation of capital projects and a revised cost plan and funding profile.

Resolved

That the recommendations contained in the report be approved.