

**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 10 September 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

Councillor D Marshall in the Chair

Members of the Joint Committee

Councillors Shuttleworth, Stoker, L Thomson, Todd and Wilkinson (Durham County Council) Callender, Green and B Goldsworthy (Gateshead MBC) Mortimer (North Tyneside MBC) Gibson (South Tyneside MBC) and R Bell, Errington, Kelly, Martin, Richardson, Walker and Wilson (Sunderland City Council)

Co-opted Members (Non-Voting)

Friends – Mr A Ashburner and Mr M Dix
Beamish Development Trust – Mrs Hunter

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bailey, Blakey, Boyes, Carr, Farry, Iveson, C Marshall, May, Naylor, Wilson and Wright (Durham County Council), Gibson (South Tyneside MBC) Richardson, Walker and Wilson (Sunderland City Council) and Mrs Stewart (Beamish Development Trust)

A1 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 7 May 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A2 Audited Statement of Accounts 2009/10

The Joint Committee considered joint reports of the Treasurer and Museum Director regarding:

- (i) Letter of Representation
 - (ii) Audit Commission Annual Governance Report 2009/10
 - (iii) Statement of Accounts 2009/10
- (for copies see file of Minutes).

The Treasurer informed Members that all issues raised have been addressed to the auditor's satisfaction.

Resolved:

- (i) That the letter of representation be approved.
- (ii) That the contents of the Audit Commission Annual Governance Report for 2009/10 be noted.
- (iii) That the Statement of Accounts for 2009/10 be approved.

A3 Progress Report

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

Results continued to be pleasing and ahead of budget. The 4 day steam event had been very popular and gave a good start to the September period. Income from catering continued to excel and retail performance was on budget.

The Museum Director then provided progress on the Business and Operational Improvement Plan which covered the following projects and included revisions to the cost plan in some cases:-

- Fairground
- Tea Rooms
- Entrance Building
- Fish and Chip Shop
- Rowley Station
- Photographers Studio
- Town Bakery

In addition members received a presentation about the development of:-

Eston Church – although the future of the Church depends on funding it is necessary to prepare the site and sort/palletise the stones salvaged from the derelict building before the winter period to minimise damage.

Hetton Band Hall – this red brick derelict building has been offered to the Museum and can be dismantled and brought back to the Museum for £45,000. It is proposed to erect in the small field at the Colliery Bank and would replace previous proposals to construct a Navy Mission Hall Building.

Members were updated on the activities of fundraising for the Museum including information on successful and outstanding funding bids.

A tour of the site would be included on November's agenda.

Resolved:-

- (i) That the changes and variations to projects in the Business and Operational Improvement Plan Capital Programme summarised in Section 2.3 of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Executive Summary detailed in Section 2.5 of the report be noted.
- (iii) That the current cost plan and funding profile detailed in Section 2.6 of the report be noted.
- (iv) That the fundraising report and the work of the Fundraising Officer, supported by the Beamish Development Trust be noted.

A4 Development of an Ice Skating Rink

The Joint Committee considered a report of the Museum Director about the potential to develop a real Ice Skating Rink at Beamish over the Winter period 2010 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The rink would be built in the Pit Village at a total cost of £94, 000. Members welcomed this proposal and felt it would be a welcome addition to the Museum.

Resolved:-

- (i) That to proceed with the development of an Ice Skating Rink with total costs of £94,000 funded from the Capital Development Reserve be approved.

A5 Presentation of Overseas Visits

The Museum Director informed Members that a number of visits to open air Museums overseas had been carried out by the Management Team to learn and develop new ideas and skills used.

Richard Evans – the Museum Director, Rhiannon Hyles – Head of Engagement, Jim Rees – Special Projects Manager and Simon Wooley – Head of Learning and Access gave detailed presentations to members on their observations made at:-
Sovereign Hill, Australia
Williamsburg, USA

Susannah Place, Australia
Jamtli, Sweden
Skansen, Sweden

Their observations included how to engage with the visitor, how to develop retail, how to use local people and local history, how to bring money into the Museum and the Region through accommodation, transport, catering and retail, how to develop tours of the site and potential out of hours opening.

Members thanked the Management team for their presentations and hoped that some of the ideas gained could be developed and introduced at Beamish in the future.