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| Committee | Dated: |
| Keats House Consultative Committee | October 2018 |
| Subject: Keats House Update Report | Public |
| Report of: Superintendent of Hampstead Heath | For Discussion |
| Report author: Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House), Open Spaces Department | |

Summary

This report summarises achievement and developments at Keats House, including Ten Keats Grove, since the last Consultative Committee meeting in May 2018.

Visits to, and engagement with, Keats House and its exhibition and events programme continues to grow at a rate in line with performance indicator targets set for the year.

Work is continuing to deliver the planned major projects for 2018-19, including the Keats200 bicentenary programme, the Camden Community Infrastructure Levy funded project to improve access for visitor to Keats House, as well as a programme of facilities management projects at the property.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the contents of this report.
- Share their thoughts on how the service could further improve, specifically with regard to performance against strategic objectives and the schedule of fees.
- Indicate their approval for spending against the charitable reserves to support development and delivery of the Keats200 programme.

Main Report

Progress Update:

Visitor numbers

1. 16,411 people visited Keats House and garden or took part in our events programme from 1 April to 31 August 2018. This represents a 2% increase on the same period in 2017 (when 16,097 people visited). Visits to the House itself increased by 20%, with particularly strong growth (+51% from 486 to 736 people) in the number of visitors using a National Art Pass to visit the property for free.
2. The same period also saw an increase in income, largely attributable to admissions and shop sales
3. A breakdown of visits to Keats House by month and type, is provided at Appendix 1.

Exhibitions and Events

4. The *Keats and Milton: Paradise Lost* exhibition has been extended to November 2018. This is to allow for the opening of the *Keats at Wentworth Place* exhibition to act as the launch of the Keats200 programme.
5. Our April – August 2018 event programme attracted 1,764 people to 35 events.
6. Regular programming consists of our monthly family days, poetry readings by the Keats House Poetry Ambassadors, tours of the House as well as walking tours of Hampstead and the City.
7. The programme for September – November 2018 has been finalised and distributed. Highlights include involvement in Open House London on the weekend of 22/23 September, a special Keats House Poets event during Black History Month, a *Frankenstein* themed Late Night Keats event on the poet's 223rd birthday and a commemorative event on Saturday 11 November 2018, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Armistice.
8. The programme of workshops and open mic performances supported by a grant from The Keats Foundation continues. In the period from September to March 2019, four Keats House Poets will deliver three workshops and three performances, on specific themes and featuring invited headliners.
9. The exhibition programme for 2018-20 will form a major part of the overall Keats200 programme. Following *Keats at Wentworth Place* (Dec 2018 – April '19), plans are in place for an exhibition focussing on *Keats 1819* and negotiations have begun for a multi-venue exhibition to take place in London, Rome and, potentially, New York to mark the entire bicentenary.
10. Planning is underway for the winter / spring 2019 events programme. This period will mark the launch of the Keats200 programme which will commence with a

special event on Saturday 1 December, marking the two hundredth anniversary of Keats's arrival at the House.

Formal learning programmes

11. The Education Officer continues to co-ordinate and deliver group visits to Keats House and gardens for a range of educational organisations. In the spring term, 24 sessions were delivered between April and July 2018, attended by 242 primary school students and 198 secondary school students.
12. The 2018 Summer School saw 36 students from seven schools take part in a four-day programme of creative writing workshops and activities, including meeting published poets, at Keats House. This resulted in a total of 123 instances of engagement with the arts for young people, with very positive feedback received from participants including the five class teachers who also attended during the week.

Staffing

13. The Principal Curator successfully completed his probationary period in September 2018 and is now confirmed in post. One of the two part-time Information Officers decided not to return to work following a twelve-month maternity leave and the fixed-term cover for this individual moved to another position outside the City of London.
14. The Keats House Team therefore currently consists of 7 individuals (c. 5fte) operating in 4 professional roles: Principal Curator (1fte); Interpretation Officer (2.4fte); Information Officer (0.3fte) and a Customer Service Apprentice (1fte). One part-time (0.3fte) Information Officer role is currently vacant.
15. Keats House have been successful in an application to join the 'New Museum School' programme, delivered by Culture& and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The programme aims to diversify entry routes into the cultural sector and therefore supports the values and strategic objectives of the City of London's Cultural Strategy. In October 2018, Keats House will host a full-time trainee for a 12-month period. Sixteen cultural venues will be hosting trainees, with Keats House and the Museum of London representing the City of London's cultural portfolio.
16. Keats House continues to support and benefit from a variety of volunteer roles. In addition to our Front of House / Customer Service and House tour guides, volunteers support our events, educational programme and conservation work. In turn, these roles provide valuable skills for people wishing to gain work experience, particularly in the cultural sector, as well as contributing to social and wellbeing outcomes.
17. Keats House will be holding two volunteer open days in September and October, to enable current and prospective volunteers to meet with Officers from across the Open Spaces Department as a way of providing recognition, support and advice with their volunteering.

Visitor Experience Surveys

18. The 2018 visitor survey was conducted in August and September, which aims to obtain feedback from 100 visitors at the end of their visit to Keats House. The results are currently being collated and the outcome of the 'net approver' rating, which constitutes one of our Key Performance Indicators, will be reported at the next planned meeting.
19. Keats House received a quality assessment visit in September, as part of Visit England's Quality Assured Visitor Attraction Scheme. The Principal Curator will table the initial feedback and any recommendations arising at the meeting.

The Garden

20. Heath Hands volunteers continue to support the maintenance of the garden at Keats House. A group of circa six, regular volunteers attend the garden each week between March and September. They are co-ordinated and supervised by the Open Spaces Volunteer Manager and Golders Hill Park team who also provide their expertise to ensure the garden remains a much-loved aspect of any visit to the House. Since April there have been 23 sessions, contributing 270 volunteer hours and 108 instances of participation.
21. On the weekend of 9/10 June, Heath Hands volunteers also delivered well attended and popular tours of the garden as part of Open Garden Squares Weekend. Keats House was also entered for the first time into London in Bloom (Walled Garden category). As a result, we have been awarded 'Silver Gilt', meaning that the garden scored 70 – 84% of the points available. This is a fantastic achievement in our first year of participation and our congratulations and appreciation goes to the Golders Hill Park team, our Heaths Hands volunteers and everyone who supported our entry this year.

Ten Keats Grove

22. The license for Keats Community Library (KCL) to continue operating from Ten Keats Grove has been issued, guaranteeing occupation until April 2020. A 'letter of comfort' providing assurances for the longer-term has been requested by the current license holders. Invoices have now been raised by CoL for 2017-18 as well as the year to date according to the agreed schedule.
23. Keats House staff and KCL Trustees have been proactive in identifying and reporting a number of reactive maintenance issues, which have now been resolved (e.g. improvements to the public paths, lighting and gates). This has resulted in improvements to safety for our respective workforces as well as visitors to the premises.
24. A fully automatic defibrillator has been purchased for use at Keats House and Ten Keats Grove. This is currently located in an easily accessible staff area at Ten Keats Grove, both to ensure its security and due to the Library's longer public open hours per week. Instructions have been issued to all staff regarding

its use. Training is due to be delivered for staff and volunteers as required in October and November 2018 and its permanent location and appropriate signage will also be reviewed during this period.

Premises licence and event management contract

25. The application to Camden Council for a premises licence for Keats House and Ten Keats Grove has not been formally submitted as yet, pending a proper consideration of the business and operational needs as well as the outcome of further engagement with neighbours on our final proposals. Keats House and Ten Keats Grove continue to apply for, and secure, temporary event licences required for specific events and these form a useful evidence base for the eventual full licence application.

Property maintenance projects

26. The City Surveyor's Department have now completed a range of general and specifically commissioned survey reports to establish the condition of Keats House and Ten Keats Grove. They are currently establishing a proposed programme of works for the period 2018 – 21 to maximise efficiencies and minimise disruption to the visitor experience. Client liaison meetings are held regularly with the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood, Keats House and Queen's Park Division and Members will be kept updated and consulted on key projects as the findings and proposed works schedule develops.
27. Due to the likely scale and timing of these works, it is proposed that the capital investment projects at Keats House are scheduled for after September 2020. This timing will allow for, and form a legacy within, the Keats200 programme as well as demonstrating the City of London's commitment to ensuring the sustainability of the House towards and beyond the anniversary of its establishment as a museum in 1925.
28. The Principal Curator is working closely with colleagues in the City Surveyors team, to plan, schedule and deliver three important maintenance projects at Ten Keats Grove during autumn 2018: conversion of a staff toilet facility into secure storage for use by the licence holders; replacement of a glass canopy over the staff entrance; and upgrading the building's heating to improve energy efficiency and reduce maintenance call-outs & energy costs.

Civic engagement initiatives

29. Keats House is represented and playing an active role in the Culture Mile Learning initiative and is currently mapping data and performance measures against the Cultural Strategy outcomes. Members view on where Keats House does and could contribute are welcomed to inform our medium-term planning.
30. As part of its support for, and engagement with, the wider work of the Corporation, Keats House hosted a networking event for the City's Apprentice

cohort on 27 July 2018. 18 Apprentices and 4 Officers from the Department of Community and Children's Services experienced a tour of the House delivered by our own Apprentice, a creative writing workshop with our Learning Officer, before departing on a tour of Hampstead, led by our experienced City of London Guide.

31. Keats House also played a role in hosting the visit of the Lord Mayor, Lady Mayoress and American Ambassador to Hampstead Heath on 7 September 2018. Following a tour of the Heath the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queen's Park Committee hosted a reception in the garden and the Principal Curator gave a short introduction to the history of the House and its role in the City of London's cultural offer.
32. The recommendation by Members to better promote Keats House to Livery Companies and Ward Clubs is being followed-up with the support of the Town Clerk's Department.

Major Projects and Programmes:

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funded Access Improvement Project

33. In 2017, Keats House applied for and was awarded a total of £58,500 from the Camden Local CIL fund. This was awarded to develop designs and secure Planning Permission as required for the improvement of the entrance & pathways, lighting and public toilet facilities in Phase 1 and, in Phase 2, deliver the designs once approved.
34. The project is progressing but to a longer timescale than initially planned when the application was made. This is due in part to the change in Principal Curator, as the Officer responsible for leading the project, and also due to the Grade I listed nature of the property.
35. Paul Vick Architects were appointed to draw up plans under Phase 1 of this project. City of London Officers have held meetings with Camden's Planning and Conservation Officers and, more recently on 22 August, Historic England as part of the pre-planning application process. The latter meeting has led to a fully supportive letter which has been forwarded to Camden as part of the pre-planning advisory stage. A public engagement session was held over the weekend of Open House London, when Paul Vick presented his initial designs and gathered responses. The display panels from this event will be available for Members to inspect at the meeting.
36. During Phase 1 client liaison meetings, indicative costings for known aspects of the project have been obtained to inform Phase 2 when required. These indicate that the CIL funding allocation will be sufficient to meet the costs of the newly proposed pathways, including soakaway and approved lighting. As originally planned, the City of London will fund the refurbishment of the public toilet via the identified cyclical works programme budget. The designs for the

new gateway, to act as a suitable entrance to this historic site and asset, are outside the scope of the project budget. As these constitute a fitting enhancement to the visitor experience and support the charitable objectives of Keats House, it is proposed that permission is sought from the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee to defray the cost of this aspect of the design from the charitable reserves. The indicative quotes received for these works range from c.£15 - £35k (NET) or 11 – 25% of the currently available reserves.

37. Members are asked to indicate their support for the proposal to fund the enhancement of the gateway, as the principal entrance to this important heritage site, from the Keats House Charity's reserves.
38. After an initial response from Camden in July, we are now waiting on a full response from their Planning Officers, outlining their support for the project as planned or detailing outstanding issues for us to consider.
39. Once submitted there will be a minimum 8-week statutory period for planning determination, which we hope to receive by December 2018. The delivery of the project (Phase 2) has now been scheduled for spring 2019 and Members will be kept informed as the project progresses.
40. The Chair of the Hampstead Neighbourhood Forum and the Camden Council Member who sponsored the project were provided with an update by email on 18 July and will be kept informed as required.

Keats200

41. At the previous meeting in May 2018, Members agreed with the proposal to bring forward the bicentenary celebrations of John Keats's life at Keats House, as a significant opportunity to ensure that Keats's life, works and legacy are understood and enjoyed by a new generation of visitors.
42. Since then, development of ideas for Keats200 branding have been developed and productive partnership building meetings have been held with The Keats Foundation, The Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, Kings College London, Chickenshed Theatre and individual performers / practitioners.
43. The Keats200 programme will begin with a special launch event on Saturday 1 December 2018 and continue through until February 2021, with a planned legacy to carry through to the 100th anniversary of the opening of the museum (1925), branch library (1931) and beyond. It should be noted that there will be a shift in the focus and tone of the programme from September 2020, which marks the time when Keats left the House to travel to Rome and also the inclusion of Shelley as a significant individual for our partner organisations.
44. An outline programme for the Keats200 programme will be presented at the meeting and members are invited to share their views on the scope and desired outcomes of the programme.

45. The programme as planned will require significant resource to develop and deliver. It is proposed to develop a Keats200 Project Co-ordinator role, as a fixed-term contract for a two-year period. The main purpose of the role will be to develop and help deliver an ambitious and creative programme for the Keats200 bicentenary and secure funding required for identified projects within the overall programme. The role is currently being written and will be submitted for Job Evaluation as soon as practicable. It is estimated that funding this role would cost c. 55% of the current available reserves.
46. Members are asked to show their support for such a role to be developed and funded from the Keats House Charity's reserves, subject to approval by the appropriate Committee(s).

Fees and charges review:

47. The fees and charges at Keats House largely relate to admission, school visits and private hire charges. Other charges (e.g. image reproduction fees) adopt or track those charged by our partners i.e. London Metropolitan Archives.
48. One of the main aims of Keats200 is to increase visitor numbers and diversify audiences and entry prices could be one way of facilitating this, while acknowledging the need to maintain the proportion of our budget derived from income.
49. The current admission fees at Keats House have not been changed in the last two years and, historically, have tended to be lower than our peer organisations. The full price ticket is lower than similar peer organisations and it would be desirable to have a consistent approach to 'Seniors' and 'Concessions' across the Division.
50. Free entry for children is currently defined as '17 and under' which is problematic, especially for self-led college and sixth form groups. The current charge for school workshops is £3 / student. Keats200 is an opportunity to ensure that more schools visit the House and also reflect the change to the new compulsory education / training age. A £2 (or two hundred pence) fee would also have marketing opportunities as well as delivering strategic objectives.
51. We currently advertise Private Hire rates for the Chester Room, whole House and the Nightingale Room. In practice, hires of the whole House and Chester Room are problematic because it impacts on the visitor experience if within business hours or incurs additional expense in terms of staff costs and time capacity if out of hours. The Nightingale Room can be opened independently of the House and is a larger, less historically sensitive space, suitable for a range of hires. The Principal Curator recommends that the Chester Room is reserved for Private Hires which support the purpose and aims of the House and that fees are determined on application, while the fees for the Nightingale Room are revised to match the local market and fully recover the costs of administering, co-ordinating and staffing these events.

52. Keats House would like to take the opportunity of Keats200 to:

ensure that the full price ticket reflects the quality of our offer and is in line with our peer organisations;

bring concession rates in line with Departmental / Divisional practice to ensure consistency and transparency for our visitors;

undertake a trial of a lower priced ticket (of £2) for local residents, similar to the scheme being piloted at Tower Bridge;

increase the age limit for free entry to 18 years and under and lower the fee for school sessions to £2 / head;

reserve the hire Chester Room for purposes which reflect the aims and objectives of Keats House and revise advertised fees for the Nightingale Room in line with market conditions and full cost recovery principals.

53. The Principal Curator would welcome members views on these matters, to ensure a sensible detailed proposal is submitted to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee, which reflects the vision and objectives of the House and the Keats200 programme.

Conclusion

54. The spring / summer season has been a period of continued steady growth and quality programming at Keats House. Visits to the House and, consequently, income achieved continue to grow and new strategic partnerships have been forged. With an engaging events programme in place for autumn 2018 and the launch of the Keats200 programme in December 2018, the next six months are an opportunity to develop a medium-term improvement plan for Keats House to ensure that it delivers key outcomes for the City of London, its partners, stakeholders and audiences.

55. The Keats200 programme, which will celebrate the bicentenary of Keats living at the House and some of his most productive years as a poet, is an exciting opportunity to ensure that Keats House has a sustainable future and continues to grow its reputation for developing and delivering innovative, creative partnership projects.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Visitor statistics

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