

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Monday, 18 March 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held at Committee Room, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Monday, 18 March 2019 at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Graham Packham, Chairman, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	Graeme Harrower, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
Deputy Wendy Hyde, Deputy Chairman, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	Jeremy Simons, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
Stephen Ainger, Chair, Downshire Hill Residents Association	

In Attendance

Officers:

Chloe Rew	- Town Clerk's Department
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Rob Shakespeare	- Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Open Spaces

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Steven Bobasch (represented by Nigel Steward), Karina Dostalova, Andrew Dutton-Parish and Vivienne Littlechild.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the previous meeting held 3 October 2018 be agreed as a correct record, subject to an amendment to the spelling of Nigel Steward's surname, who represented Keats Community Library in the place of Steven Bobasch.

Matters Arising:

Licensing arrangements: The Principal Curator, Keats House, advised that licensing arrangements are progressing. Neighbourhood consultation is complete, and the license application will be submitted to Camden Council shortly. Neighbours have requested notification regarding any changes, however the Chairman requested that legal advice be sought before this is confirmed with neighbours.

Objections are expected from police, as this is standard practice for police to submit objections, however the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath advised he would work with police to resolve any objections.

The Superintendent advised there would be approximately 20 events per year which would require a license, plus any additional private hire events.

Heat Pumps:

Members were advised that all options were considered including heat pumps when the central heating at Ten Keats Grove was replaced, and the Department of Open Spaces is aware of the restrictions on digging at a heritage site.

Livery Companies:

The Superintendent will continue to contact Livery Companies regarding using Keats House as an event venue, in order to promote potential revenue from livery companies.

Private Hire:

Members were informed that delays to major works on the house have prevented confirming future event hire at a Keats House. Structural works to the roof and windows will take six to eight weeks and will require a two-week closure.

Low staff capacity also puts restrictions on events, as casual staff cannot be responsible for the security of Keats House. Members suggested employing City of London Corporation employees for events, as they are security-vetted.

Internet at the Library:

Keats House Community Library has purchased a broadband service from a third-party supplier leading to an improved on-line service.

CIL Project to Improve the Entrance to the House:

The application for planning and listed building consent has been submitted to the London Borough of Camden. The new layout and lights will provide a notable improvement. Some objections may be received due to the Grade I listed status of Keats House and its residential setting.

4. DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT FOR KEATS HOUSE CHARITY 2018/19

Members received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath relative to the Draft Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2018/19. The report presented the draft annual report on activities at Keats House for the year ending 31 March 2019 and proposed to change the timing of Keats House Consultative Committee meetings to better align with the City of London Corporation's reporting cycle. The following discussion ensued:

By reorganising the meeting schedule to May and October, the information in the May report can also be used for the statutory charities report eliminating unnecessary effort. The information in the November report (such as revenue and visitor numbers) will contain actual half year data and will help inform the planning for the following financial year. The Consultative Committee supported this proposal.

Regarding the wording of 'The Charity's Origin' in the Draft Annual Report, the Bridge House Estate (BHE) contact in the Chamberlain's Department is being consulted to reword the section without losing meaning.

The Keats House business plan is informed by the City's Corporate Plan, and the achievement of key priorities relates to the departmental vision and priorities. The Chairman noted that cultural objectives should also be recognised, and Keats House should not be seen solely as an Open Spaces initiative.

Members were informed that the Keats200 Programme has been successfully launched. The programme was brought forward from 2021 to 2018. At the launch in December 2018, 230 visitors attended, and although entrance was free on that day, Keats House made more revenue from gift shop sales than ticket and shop sales combined for the same day the previous year. The event demonstrated a clear link between history, location and connections with the Heath. The over-all events programme is strong, with Keats200 being promoted throughout the programme.

Members were informed of other successful Keats House Programmes, including the Poetry Ambassadors, Poet In-Residence, Open House London and Late-Night Keats.

Members emphasised the importance of thanking volunteers, including Heath Hands. The recent reception for volunteers organised by the Chief Commoner at Guildhall was appreciated by attendees.

Public engagements have been positive and demonstrated increased involvement with the public. At the Hampstead Art Fair, Keats House representatives engaged positively with approximately 100 people.

External Members' expressed concern that Keats House does not bring a profit for the City and there is a risk that the City may no longer support Keats House due to the financial loss. The Chairman stated that although Keats House does not bring a profit, there is no desire in the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee to release Keats House from the care of the City.

In response to questions regarding Keats Foundation, the Principal Curator stated that Keats Foundation supports the Poets Programme, private hire for the annual conference carries the Keats House logo, and was the first to sign up to the Keats200 programme.

Overall, Keats House's primary goal is to increase visitor numbers through Keats200 programming and its legacy, which will result in increased revenue.

RESOLVED – That Members:

1. note the contents of the report;
2. indicate support for fixing the timing of the Keats House Consultative Committee meetings to better fit the annual reporting cycle;
3. the views of the Keats House Consultative Committee be conveyed to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee at their meeting on 13 May 2019.

5. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no other questions.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date and time of the next meeting will be rescheduled by the Committee Clerk to reflect the change in schedule as discussed in Item 4. The Committee Clerk will inform Members and Officers when the date is confirmed.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm

Chairman

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