

<b>Committee(s):</b> Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	<b>Date(s):</b> 13 July 2020
<b>Subject:</b> End of Year Update Report for Keats House Charity, 2019/20	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Superintendent of Hampstead Heath	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Rob Shakespeare, Principal Curator (Keats House), Open Spaces Department	

### Summary

At the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held on 18 March 2019, Members supported the proposal to use the Annual Report on Activities at Keats House, as the basis for updating Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee on achievements and progress at Keats House.

Presented at Appendix 1 for information is the Annual Report on Activities at Keats House for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Members are asked to note the projects and programmes being delivered at the House, including the Keats200 bicentenary programme, and the extent to which they deliver the objectives of the Charity and contribute to Corporate and Departmental outcomes.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents of this report and performance towards meeting the objectives of the Keats House Charity, aligned with the priorities, aims and objectives outlined within the Corporate Plan 2018-23, the City Corporation's Cultural Strategy and the Departmental Business Plan, 2019/20.

### Main Report

#### Background

1. Keats House is a registered charity (number 1053381) with the City Corporation acting as sole trustee.
2. As a registered charity it is required to submit an annual report and financial statement, detailing its activities and to ensure compliance with the Charities Act 2011. The draft report included at Appendix 1, forms the basis of this report for the 12 months from April 2019 to March 2020.

## **Current Position**

3. Keats House is currently focussed on delivering the Keats200 bicentenary programme through to February 2021 and beyond. In the past 12 months it has also supported the external maintenance project for Keats House and progressed the LB Camden Community Infrastructure Levy funded project to improve access to Keats House and garden.
4. The Keats200 bicentenary is growing in momentum and gaining interest and partners, although is yet to deliver the long-term outcomes in terms of audience growth or increased and diversified income streams.
5. The major project to address the poor external condition of Keats House was delivered by City Surveyors between October 2019 and March 2020.

## **Proposals**

6. The Principal Curator recommends that the following revised priorities for April 2020 onwards are included in the Plans for Future Periods section of the annual report once submitted in spring 2020:

The proposed overarching priorities, which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2020, are:

- Deliver access and building maintenance projects at Keats House
- Deliver Keats200 bicentenary programme
- Implement Keats House Activities Plan for 2020/21
- Consult on, finalise and implement the Keats House Management Plan, 2020 - 23

## **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

7. The projects and activities outlined in this update contribute to the outcomes of the City of London's Corporate Plan:

### **Contribute to a flourishing society**

(3) People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.

(4) Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need.

### **Support a thriving economy**

(7) We are a global hub for innovation in finance and professional services, commerce and culture.

(8) We have access to the skills and talent we need.

### **Shape outstanding environments**

(9) we are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive.

(10) we inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration.

(12) our spaces are secure, resilient and well-connected.

8. The activities contribute to the outcomes of the Open Spaces Department Business Plan 2019/20 under three top line objectives: A. Open spaces and

historic sites are thriving and accessible; B. Spaces enrich people's lives; and C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

## **Conclusion**

9. The operation and programming of Keats House is going through a period of change as it delivers the Keats200 programme through to February 2021 and beyond. Simultaneously, its infrastructure, medium-term plan, policies and procedures need to be reviewed, revised and invested in to ensure the future sustainability of the museum and its continued Accredited status.
10. The major building maintenance project to repair and redecorate the exterior of the building underlines the City Corporation's investment in Keats House as a key heritage asset, although it has limited the audience growth estimates and income achieved for the year 2019/20.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2019/20
- Appendix 2 – Keats House Activities Plan, 2020/21.

## **Rob Shakespeare**

Principal Curator (Keats House), Open Spaces Department

T: 020 7332 1818

E: [rob.shakespeare@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:rob.shakespeare@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

## **Appendix 1 – Annual Report on Activities at Keats House 2019/20**

### **1 Objectives and Activities**

#### **The Charity's origin**

In 1921, a body called the Keats Memorial House Committee appealed to the public for funds to purchase the property and archive from the then private owners to save it from being destroyed or dissipated, and in order to preserve John Keats' former home in which most of the poet's finest work was written. The public appeal was successful, and the property was acquired and vested in the, then, Corporation of Hampstead "as a permanent trust to be restored and equipped with relics of the poet and to be maintained in perpetuity as a Keats Museum and a live memorial to his genius, a shrine of pilgrimage for his worldwide admirers and a literary meeting place and centre". Camden Borough Council became the successors of the former Corporation of Hampstead on 1 April 1965, pursuant to the London Government Act 1963.

Keats House was registered as a charity in March 1996. The City of London Corporation acquired ownership of the land and buildings and responsibility for the administration and management of Keats House with effect from 1 January 1997.

The object of the Charity is:

‘to preserve and maintain and restore for the education and benefit of the public the land with the buildings known as Keats House as a museum and live memorial to John Keats and as a literary meeting place and centre.’

The Charity shall first defray out of the income of the Charity the cost of maintaining the property (including the repair and insurance of any buildings thereon) and all other charges and outgoings payable in respect thereof and all the proper costs, charges and expenses of and incidental to the administration and management of the Charity.

#### **Explanation of Aims and objectives for the year including the changes or differences it seeks to make through its activities**

The activities of the Keats House charity are guided by its Charitable Object as stated above and developed within the framework of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan and the Open Spaces Department's Business Plan. Our activities also support the City Corporations' Cultural Strategy and the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 – 28, as well as the wider aims of heritage sector organisations such as Arts Council England, The National Lottery Heritage Fund and The National Archives.

The City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018 – 23 states that:

Our vision

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London with a globally-successful UK.

We aim to...

- Contribute to a flourishing society
- Support a thriving economy
- Shape outstanding environments

The Open Spaces Department's overarching vision is that:

'We enrich people's lives by providing access to ecologically diverse green spaces and outstanding heritage assets'.

The provision of a wide range of services at Keats House helps the Department achieve its three strategic objectives:

- A. Open Spaces and historic sites are thriving and accessible
- B. Spaces enrich people's lives
- C. Business practices are responsible and sustainable.

and nine of the twelve outcomes, in particular:

- Our open spaces, heritage and cultural assets are protected, conserved and enhanced.
- Nature, heritage and place are valued and understood
- People feel welcome and included
- People discover, learn and develop
- Our staff and volunteers are motivated, empowered, engaged and supported

The contribution which Keats House makes towards these is detailed below.

## **2 Achievements and Performance**

**Achievement to date against the key priorities for 2019/20 were:**

### **1. Progress access improvements at Keats House**

In 2018/19 plans were progressed to put in place a sustainable cyclical works programme to preserve and maintain Keats House (Grade I listed) and Ten Keats Grove (Grade II listed). These arose from the overall condition survey of Keats House and Ten Keats Grove conducted in 2017/18. As a result a number of projects have been scheduled to ensure Keats House and Ten Keats Grove can continue to be accessed and enjoyed by future generations.

In April 2019, the City Surveyor's Department led a project to redecorate the internal, common circulation areas on the ground and first floors of the House.

This necessitated that the House was closed to the public from 23 – 30 April 2019. A major project to repair and redecorate the exterior of the House took place from 21 October 2019 through to March 2020. This has resolved a number of long-standing issues with the external fabric and appearance of the House, while maintaining public access throughout this period.

Following the application for funding from London Borough of Camden's Community Infrastructure Levy grants programme, plans were submitted for the required planning consents in March 2019. Subsequently a number of meetings were held between LB Camden and City Corporation Officers and their appointed contractors to discuss outstanding areas of concern at this Grade I listed site. In November 2019, LB Camden Planning Officers approved the application subject to a Section 106 Agreement between LB Camden and the City Corporation, which is awaiting legal sign-off at the time of writing.

The gardens, which form an essential and much-loved aspect of the heritage site, are maintained and enhanced by volunteers from Heath Hands, supported by the Head Gardener from Golders Hill Park. This year the gardens were entered into the 'Heritage Park / Garden' category of London in Bloom and were awarded 'Silver Gilt' at the presentation ceremony in September. In March 2020, a new border containing heritage variety fruit trees was planted in the north-east corner of the garden at the rear of the house, near to the site of the former kitchen garden.

## **2. Deliver Keats200 bicentenary programme**

The Keats200 programme, which launched on 1 December 2018, has continued in 2019/20 with events celebrating specific events in Keats life as well as projects which support the wider outcomes of the programme.

From April 2019, our temporary exhibition gallery was refreshed to reflect the significant anniversary of the Brawne family moving into the Wentworth Place in April 1819. The 'Keats and the Bawnes at Wentworth Place' exhibition opened on Wednesday 3 April, with a special private view event re-creating a 'claret evening' held at the House in 1819. A new Fanny Brawne character was developed for this and subsequent events, along with new sound installations indicating the presence of the Brawne children in the House.

On 11 April, we re-created the famous meeting between Keats and Coleridge in 1819. Our live interpreters led four walks from Coleridge's House in Highgate, across Hampstead Heath, talking of 'a thousand things' as we walked. A core audience of 44 people took part in the walks, which also attracted much positive attention from Heath visitors, many of whom were previously unaware of Keats House or the Keats200 programme.

May 2019 marked the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the writing of 'Ode to a Nightingale', one of Keats's six great Odes of 1819 and perhaps the one most closely associated with Wentworth Place. The original manuscript is now cared for in the collections of the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge

and was loaned to Keats House for display in Keats's Parlour over the bank holiday weekend. A new, writing desk style, display case was specially designed and built to display this loan and will continue to display changing displays of material from our own and other collections. A total of 252 people visited the House from Friday 3 – Monday 6 May when the manuscript was on display to the public.

We continued to benefit from the support of Keats Foundation through an annual Keats Bicentenary Conference which is held at Keats House, individual talks notably by their Chair Professor Nicholas Roe on 6 June 2019, and their overall support for the Keats200 bicentenary programme. Over the summer, Keats House supported the Keats Foundation to film Keats's six odes of 1819, performed by our Keats character developed with Andrew Ashmore & Associates and played by the actor Matthew Coulton. These videos have now been posted online and are being promoted as one of the key outputs of the Keats200 bicentenary partnership. Keats Foundation's Conference was hosted at Keats House for 3 days in May 2019, when an audience of 100 - 120 listened to experts from around the world delivered papers relating to the latest Keats research.

During the bicentenary, short term residences are being offered to our Keats House Poets, who have been associated with the work of the charity since 2011. Anthony Hett became Poet in Residence from June to August 2019, visiting Keats House on a weekly basis to draw inspiration for his writing and running 'drop in' poetry writing sessions and a final celebratory performance. Simon Mole, used his residency, which ran from September to November 2019, to engage young people with the theme of climate change and, from February to April 2020, Dean Atta delivered poetry writing workshops and readings to engage with LGBTQ+ audiences in particular.

Throughout the Keats200 Bicentenary Keats House have been working with Chickenshed Theatre to develop a performance piece produced for and by young people. A 'Summer Scratch' programme day on 30 July 2019 saw approximately 40 young people aged 12 – 17 years old, take part in a session inspired by Keats's life story and poetry. Following on from this a group of over twenty individuals aged 14 – 19, attended a programme of 18 sessions led by members of Chickenshed Young Company, who worked collaboratively to develop a theatre piece, 'Writ in Water', for performance at Keats House and other venues. The public performances were due to take place in March and April 2020 but had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 emergency.

August 2019 marked the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of what became known as 'the Peterloo Massacre'. Keats House commemorated this significant event with a talk at the House along with a recreation of 'A life in the day of Keats' on 13 September, when he recorded witnessing the subsequent events on the streets around Mansion House in 1819. A special event to mark Keats's birthday was also held at St Botolph without Bishopsgate, where Keats was baptised, featuring readings by invited guests and the Keats House Poetry Ambassadors.

Our 'Keats and Consumption' exhibition opened to the public on Wednesday 5 February 2020, to mark the bicentenary of Keats realising that he was suffering from this deadly disease and the impact it had on his life and work.

Throughout the year, the Keats200 partnership organisations (Keats House, the Keats Foundation and The Keats-Shelley Memorial Association), have continued to liaise on a range of programmes and initiatives celebrating the life, works and legacy of Keats, during the bicentenary of his time living at Wentworth Place, the period leading up to his death in Rome in 1821 and beyond.

### **3. Implement Keats House Activities Plan for 2019/20**

Keats House continues to be open to the public Wednesday – Sunday, 11am to 5pm. In 2019/21 the house was closed to the public for one week in April for building works (as noted above) and on Sunday 9 February due to Storm Ciara. The house remained open to the public throughout the programme of external maintenance from October 2019 – March 2020.

In April 2019, a special ticket price of £2 for residents of the London Borough of Camden and the City of London was introduced with the aim of increasing the number of local people accessing the House. In 2019/20, 323 people visited the House using this scheme which has proved popular with those that have used it and acts as a useful promotional offer when talking to people at offsite events. We also offer free entry to young people aged 18 and under and Art Fund Members, half price entry to National Trust Members, as well as reduced rate entry to seniors and concessions.

A total of 11,755 people visited the house during 2019/20, a 16% decrease on the previous year's equivalent figure of 13,982. The period October 2019 to March 2020 (when the building works were in progress and the final two weeks of business were lost to COVID-19 related closure) saw a 27% decrease in the number of people visiting the house.

An annual income target of £34,000 is set against Admissions with income of £33,711 achieved prior to the house closing to the public due to the COVID-19 emergency measures from Wednesday 18 March 2020. This represents a 24% reduction in income from Admissions achieved in 2018/19.

Our increasing use of social media helps us form new connections and networks and promote the House and Keats's work. As at April 2020, @keatshouse had over 6,000 followers on Twitter (a c.18% increase since April 2019). Facebook followers increased from 3,600 to c.3,792 (+5.3% over a similar period) and our Instagram channel has grown from c. 1000 in April 2019 to over 1,800 followers (+80%) by April 2020. Much of this increase can be attributed to increased social media output and linking / sharing activity undertaken by the Cultural Heritage Trainees during their placements at Keats House, although all officers play a role in engaging with our audiences online, particularly since the recent closure of the house due to COVID-19.

Between April 2019 and March 2020, Keats House delivered 86 public events



which were attended by 2,178 people. Our regular programme continues to include monthly, themed poetry readings by the Keats House Poetry Ambassadors, walking tours of locations in Hampstead and the City which have a connection to Keats, and free family workshops targeted at families with children aged five to eleven.

Highlights of the summer programme included a pop-up exhibition, 'William Blake's Mystic Map of London' by contemporary artist Louisa Albani and the appearance of our Keats and Fanny Brawne characters at Hampstead Art Fair in June 2019. Drama Impact's performance of William Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing' on Saturday 6 July, was enjoyed by over 100 people in the garden of Keats House. In July, Keats House staff contributed to the work of the National Citizen Service (NCS), which seeks to connect young people (15-17 year olds) to their local community and social action, delivering a tour of the House and also working offsite with c.60 young people to gain their views on the Keats200 programme and our marketing approach.

A part time Education Officer continues to co-ordinate, deliver and support taught sessions and group visits to Keats House and Gardens for a range of educational organisations. Between April 2019 and March 2020, 60 sessions were delivered to 44 different establishments. This resulted in 719 primary school students, 509 secondary school students and 205 teachers & assistants, taking part in the formal learning programme at Keats House.

In addition, the annual Summer School programme in July 2019, saw 32 students aged 16 – 19 years old from seven different schools, take part in a four day programme of creative writing workshops and activities, including meeting published poets, at Keats House.

Keats House continues to contribute to CultureMile Learning, one of the City Corporation's key initiatives to improve social mobility and support the development of fusion skills for young people. We are specifically involved in supporting the Young City Poets programme and working with London Metropolitan Archives to develop a 'dual site visit' offer for schools studying life in 19<sup>th</sup> century London.

In July 2019, a Year 12 student from the London Academy of Excellence in Stratford undertook a week-long work experience placement at Keats House as part of The Arts Scholars Cultural Scholarship Scheme. This scheme aims to extend young people's experience of working in arts and heritage organisations, and to inspire them to consider the range of roles available in these sectors.

Keats House are one of 16 cultural organisations across London, including London Metropolitan Archives and the Museum of London, who are offering a 'New Museum School' trainee placement. This initiative is being led by Culture& who have received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to work with sector organisations to diversify the heritage sector workforce. Our first trainee of this three-year programme, completed her traineeship ahead of schedule in August 2019, gaining a Level 3 Diploma in Cultural Heritage. A second trainee joined the team in October 2019 and is leading on

diversifying access to our collections and services, particularly through digital engagement.

In a new initiative, Keats House is supporting two Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) consortiums in London and the south-east, with the aim of enriching the experience of post-grad students and engaging them with the research potential of the collections. In 2019/20, we have hosted two 'writer's retreat' days and one careers development day organised by the London Arts and Humanities Partnership (LAHP). We have also worked with Roehampton University to develop and recruit to a fully funded, three-year doctoral research student placement. This has now received approval through the Techne DTP (which includes Roehampton, Royal Holloway, Kingston, Brunel and Brighton Universities) and the successful candidate will begin their research in October 2020.

Between April 2019 and March 2020, approximately 27 individual volunteers gave a total of 963 hours of their expertise and time to support the work of the Charity. The main roles in which volunteers continue to support and add value to our activities are Front of House, Tour Guides, Poetry Ambassadors, Event Support and Collections Care.

The shop offers a small but attractive range of merchandise, including Keats House branded souvenir products. The income target for the shop is £15,000 which is calculated at year end to allow for stock held. Shop sales for the 2019/20 trading year amounted to c. £21,595, representing an 18% reduction on sales in 2018/19. Sales in the third and fourth quarter were weaker, coinciding with the period of building works and reduced visitor numbers.

Private hire offer continues to generate an additional source of income to the charity, with £15,007 earned against an income target of £17,000 in 2020/21. In addition, the annual licence for Keats Community Library to occupy Ten Keats Grove also contributes towards our income, along with charges for taught sessions for schools and some events, although income from the latter two income streams has been less in 2020/21 as charges were reduced or events run free during the Keats200 bicentenary.

At a hearing of the London Borough of Camden's Licencing Sub-Committee, held on 12 September 2019, a decision was made to approve a premises licence for 10 Keats Grove. In response to representations made by local Societies, Associations and residents, a number of conditions were agreed to ensure that the licensing objectives were upheld, particularly with regard to the prevention of public nuisance. It was also agreed that the Keats House Consultative Committee would receive a twice-yearly report of licensable events held at the House, to ensure that the operating schedule and conditions were being upheld. To date, no activities involving the sale of alcohol have taken place. One planned 'Late Night Keats' event, which was due to take place in February had to be cancelled due to low ticket sales.

Since Wednesday 18 March 2020, Keats House, including Ten Keats Grove / Keats Community Library, has been closed to the public due to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All officers have been working from home since

that date, using virtual meetings to communicate and collaborate on our continuing priorities.

The security of our site and safety of our collections on display are being monitored through daily external inspections conducted by colleagues from the Hampstead Heath team. Keats House officers visit the site each week to ensure that key building safety, security and environmental monitoring tasks are being conducted as required.

Officers from the Hampstead Heath team have also resumed weekly tasks in the garden and this contributes to our security monitoring as well as ensuring this beautiful space is maintained ready for reopening in due course.

Keats House officers are focusing on how they can continue to celebrate the Keats200 bicentenary and engage with our audiences online through the City Corporation's #OurCityTogether (formerly #VisitTheCityFromHome) initiative. We have maintained regular contact with our casual and volunteer workforce through updates and content sharing and many have expressed their appreciation to the City Corporation for the way we have engaged with and supported them through this period.

We will continue to be guided by the UK Government, City Corporation and sector bodies in our preparations for the eventual reopening of our public facilities, whenever this is approved and safe to progress.

#### **4. Draft the Keats House Management Plan, 2020-23**

An Activities Plan for 2020/21 was in the process of being consulted on when the COVID-19 emergency measures were introduced. The uncertainties caused by the pandemic will impact on all areas of the charity's activities over the next 12 months and beyond, although it is hoped that our overarching priorities can continue to be progressed, albeit in different ways. The formative consultation for a medium term Management Plan will now be undertaken once the future operating environment becomes clearer.

As a result of the above activities, the Trustee has had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when setting objectives and planning activities.

#### **Plans for Future Periods**

The proposed overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2020 are:

- Deliver access and building maintenance projects at Keats House
- Deliver Keats200 bicentenary programme
- Implement Keats House Activities Plan for 2020/21
- Consult on, finalise and implement the Keats House Management Plan, 2020 - 23

## KPIs for 2019/20

1. To increase visitor numbers to Keats House by 3%. [1/4/2018 – 31/3/2019 = 13,982 visits to House +3% = target of 14,401 for 2019/20. **2019/20 outturn: 11,755 (-16%)** {n.b. closed for one week in April and major building programme from October 2019 – March 2020, followed by closure of house from Wednesday 18 March 2020}.
2. Improve Visit England Annual Quality Attraction Assessment Scheme score at Keats House. [2018/19 score = 81%] **2019/20 score: 82%**
3. Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Keats House Charity. **End of year budget position was 94% of local risk budget.** {98% of planned expenditure (including employees, premises and supplies & services) was achieved, which was offset by 80% of total income target being achieved}