

Committee(s): Keats House Consultative Committee	Date(s): 22 September 2015
Subject: Keats House Progress Report	Public
Report of: Principal Curator, Keats House	For Information
<p>Summary</p> <p>This report summarises achievements and developments at Keats House since the last Consultative Committee meeting in February 2015</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to note the report.</p>	

Main Report

Interpretation project

- A major highlight of this year has been the completion of a project to reinterpret Keats House and improve the visitor experience, funded by Arts Council England.
- More original items from the museum collection are on display and new interpretation has been introduced to bring the house to life through text, audio, film and interactive exhibits.
- The new displays were launched by Hampstead resident and Keats enthusiast, Nancy Dell'Olio in May 2015, gaining significant press and media coverage. Evaluation and visitor tracking are still ongoing. However anecdotal feedback from visitors has been excellent.

Visitor figures

- Total visitor numbers including the garden for January – July 2015 were 19,803 compared with 16,223 for the same period in 2014, an increase of 22%. Some of this increase is likely due to an improvement in the method for counting garden visitors, along with improved signage indicating that the garden is open to the public.

- Total visitor numbers excluding the garden in January – July 2015 were 12,258 compared with 12,124 for the same period in 2014, an increase of 1%.
- General visitors to the house/museum in January – July 2015 were 6,600 compared with 6,858 for the same period in 2014, a decrease of 3.8%. This was offset by more people coming for education and private events.
- Keats House withdrew from the National Trust Partnership scheme in January 2015. It was anticipated that this would lead to a reduction in the number of general visitors, but it was hoped that income from admissions would increase. The Principal Curator intends to monitor this situation closely to be able to make an informed decision as to whether to return to the NT scheme in January 2017.
- The Principal Curator is in correspondence with the London Pass and hopes to negotiate membership of the scheme, which will target a new tourist audience. Other members include Tower Bridge, Charles Dickens Museum, Handel House Museum and Benjamin Franklin House.
- As requested by the Committee, visitor figures for other historic and literary houses are presented below. These have been obtained through the Literary Houses Group and London Shh.

Property	Period	Visitors
Dr Johnson's House, London	Apr 14 – Mar 15	16,061
Benjamin Franklin House, London	Apr 14 – Mar 15	11,912
John Wesley's House and Museum	Jan 14 – Dec 14	15,000
Charles Dickens Museum, London	Jan 14 – Dec 14	42,709
Brantwood, Cumbria	Jan 14 – Dec 14	23,000
2 Willow Road (seasonal opening)	March – Oct 14	10,442
Freud Museum, Hampstead	Not specified	28,094
Samuel Johnson Birthplace, Lichfield	Jan 14 – Dec 14	17,229
Fenton House	2014 approx	22,000
Burgh House	Approx. per week	900
The Red House, Suffolk	Jan 14 – Dec 14	4,690
Roald Dahl Museum, Bucks	Apr 14 – Mar 15	72,114
Shakespeare's Birthplace, Stratford	Jan 14 – Dec 14	403,911
Cowper and Newton Museum, Buckinghamshire	Jan 14 – Dec 14	3,015
Jane Austen House Museum, Hampshire	Apr 14 – Mar 15	40,705

Events

- The events programme continues to attract a large and diverse audience. From January – July 2015 over 2500 people attended 62 events.
- Highlights have included a reading by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Paul Muldoon, a new series of Indian poetry events in partnership with Vatayan:

Poetry on South Bank, and a number of events held in partnership with Poet in the City, including a popular Beat Poets film night.

- The Keats Foundation is generously supporting another year of the Keats House Poets programme, which continues to attract a diverse audience of adults and young people.

Poet in residence

- Michael Rosen started as poet in residence in June 2015. His events so far have been popular, booking up quickly. He is planning to create new work inspired by the residency and hopes to work with a jazz group from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama on a poetry and jazz cycle for the 2016 Keats festival. He is also running family events and a series of workshops for school teachers.

Staff changes

- Camille Poole has joined the team as a part time Information Officer, mainly acting as a weekend duty manager.
- Frankie Kubicki has been promoted to Interpretation Officer whilst Sofie Davis is on maternity leave.

Learning

- School figures continue to increase. For January to July 1349 school students/teachers visited, compared with 1016 last year, an increase of 33%. It should be noted that additional funding from the Clore Foundation enabled the part-time Education Officer to work some extra hours during the early part of 2015.

Shop

- The shop performance continues to improve. From January- July 2015 it has taken £12,833 compared with £11,618 for the same period last year.
- New branded merchandise featuring Keats quotes and icons has been designed and produced. New lines include mugs, notebooks, notecards, postcards and a new bag were introduced into the shop in May. This appears to be having a positive effect on sales: souvenir sales for May to July 2015 were £5467 compared with £3413 the previous year.

Venue hire

- Over the past year the team has focused more attention on promoting and facilitating venue hire and this is paying off. During the financial year 2014-15 the house raised £11,900 from private hire.

- The lack of a premises licence and a catering service continue to be obstacles to fully developing the private hire business.

Grants

- Keats House has been awarded a grant of £500 by Share London to provide performance training to volunteer tour guides and poetry ambassadors.

Fundraising

- Our fundraising programme with local residents has earned £8,900 to date, thanks to the intense dedication of the team. We now have 10 Patrons, 7 Champions and 16 Supporters.

Building maintenance

- Major repairs to the Library roof were completed in August 2015.
- Repairs to the conservatory have been approved by the City Surveyor's team and are booked for October 2015.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Visitor Figures

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