

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Keats House Consultative Committee	22 June 2016
Subject: Keats House Progress Report 2015/16	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries Report author: Frankie Kubicki, Senior Curator, Keats House	For Information

Summary

This report summarises achievements and developments at Keats House since the last Consultative Committee meeting in September 2015 and provides end of year statistics for the financial year 2015/16. The figures show steady growth across footfall and retail for the House, while grants and awards continue to demonstrate the high regard in which it is held by audiences, stakeholders and sector more generally.

Recommendation(s)

The Consultative Committee is asked to:

- Note the contents of this report

Main Report

Keats House has continued to go from strength to strength since the last Committee meeting, increasing engagement through visits, events and the education programme. Key achievements are summarised below.

Visitor figures

1. Total visitor numbers (including the garden) for April 2015 to March 2016 were 32,641 compared with 26,430 for the previous financial year. This represents an increase of 23% which may be attributed in part to an improvement in the method for counting garden visitors and improved signage indicating that the garden is open to the public.
2. Total visitor numbers (excluding the garden) for the financial year 2015/16 were 20,662. This compares with 18,683 for the same period last year (an increase of 10%), and shows a growing popularity for the House amongst London's visitors.

3. Keats House is now a member of the London Pass scheme. This offers free entry to pass holders with the House being reimbursed £3.25 for every adult visitor.

Visitor experience

4. The reinterpretation of Keats House, (made possible by a grant from Arts Council England and reported at your last meeting), has resulted in a marked improvement in the visitor experience according to the annual visitor survey.
5. Of 100 people surveyed, 100% rated their visit good or very good (80% very good; 20% good).
6. The House's "net promoter score" has increased from 52% in 2014 to 73% in 2015, indicating that more visitors would recommend Keats House to a friend.
7. Picture lighting has been installed on five key paintings, funded by the Patrons and Members Scheme.
8. An exhibition hanging system and adjustable lighting has been installed in the 'Gallery' space on the first floor to enable it to be used for temporary exhibitions.

Events

9. The events programme continues to attract a large and diverse audience. From April 2015 to March 2016, over 4700 people attended 103 events equating to an increase in audience figures of 21% year-on-year.
10. Highlights since September have included the Keats House Poets series, supported by the Keats Foundation; a family show by Michael Rosen; a Tagore recital for the Bangla Music festival; and a high-profile event with Professor Germaine Greer celebrating Shakespeare's sonnets.

Poet in residence

11. Michael Rosen's workshops for school teachers have been well attended and a performance of work by participating schools is planned for June.
12. Michael has also begun working with students from Guildhall School of Music & Drama on creating a new poetry and jazz cycle based on Michael's time as the Poet in Residence. The performance is scheduled for the 18 June 2016.

Staff changes

13. Vicky Carroll will be on secondment from January to November 2016, working at the Guildhall Art Gallery whilst the Head of the Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre is on maternity leave. She will continue to work 0.5 days per week at Keats House.
14. Frankie Kubicki has been promoted to the role of Senior Curator during Vicky's absence and will take over many of her responsibilities over the period.
15. A fixed-term Information Officer has been recruited to support the team during this time.

Learning

16. School figures continue to increase. For 2015/16, 2,009 school students/teachers visited compared with 1256 last year, an increase of almost 60%. The increase is in part thanks to a grant from the Clore Foundation.

Retail

17. Retail performance continues to improve; profit for 2015/16 was £16,700 compared with £8,220 from the previous year. This shows growth of 103% and is a direct result of a concerted push by the team to promote the shop and increase sales.

Venue hire

18. Income from venue hire has increased. From April 2015 to March 2016 Keats House raised £12,283 from venue hire compared with £11,000 for the previous year, an increase of 12%. Without a licence to sell alcohol, it is not anticipated that this figure can be increased any further.

Awards and endorsements

19. Keats House won a *Time Out Love London* Award, voted for by local residents, plus a Hudsons Heritage Award in the Best Hidden Gem Category (Highly Commended).
20. The House has also received some good publicity in the local press and on national television, with Vicky Carroll appearing in *Celebrity Antiques Road Trip*.

Grants

21. Keats House has been awarded a grant of £500 by the Museum Development Fund to purchase conservation materials and UV film for the window in the new exhibition space.
22. The HLF have awarded Keats House a grant of £41,300 for a young roots project in partnership with Jackson's Lane. The grant will be used to fund *OMG Keats!* An exciting new project led by youth groups in north London which enables young people to interpret the historic home of the Romantic poet through a series of creative activities running from June 2016 to March 2017.

Fundraising

23. Our fundraising programme with local residents has raised £13,860 to date. An event for patrons hosted by Melvyn Bragg, Chair of the Patrons, was well received.

Building maintenance

24. Repairs to the conservatory were completed in January 2016.
25. Issues with the Keats House boilers meant that there was no heating during January and February 2016. One boiler was replaced, and the second was fixed in March.

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