

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Thursday, 4 May 2017

Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held at Guildhall on Thursday, 4 May 2017 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

Vivienne Littlechild (Chairman)
Graham Packham (Deputy Chairman)
Martin Humphery
Nigel Steward
Jeremy Simons
Bob Hall
Steven Bobasch

In Attendance

Officers:

Julie Mayer	-	Town Clerk's
Vicky Carroll	-	Culture, Heritage and Libraries
Bob Warnock	-	Superintendent of Hampstead Heath
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1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Barbara Newman.

The Chairman thanked previous Members Ann Pembroke, who was not returned in the 2017 City Election and Dennis Cotgrove who stood down from the Court of Common Council this year.

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

There were no items.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2016 were approved.

Matters arising:

Damage to the Keats House finger post

The Superintendent of Hampstead Heath would ensure that Camden Council was contacted for an update in respect of a repair or replacement.

Licence Application and 200 Year Anniversary of Keats' Death

To be covered later in this agenda.

Keats House Web site

The Deputy Chairman challenged the current position in respect of a stand-alone web site for Keats House and offered his support in any subsequent business case submissions. This support was endorsed by the other Members of the Consultative Committee. Whilst accepting that on-line ticketing facilities could be complex, Members suggested that a simple marketing site, respectful of corporate branding should be possible, with the additional benefit of providing job enrichment for officers, as well as boosting ticket sales. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman offered to raise this matter at the next meeting of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, which receives the draft minutes of the Keats House Consultative Committee.

4. KEATS HOUSE PROGRESS, PERFORMANCE AND FUTURE PLANS

Members received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath which provided an update on progress, performance and future plans for Hampstead Heath.

During the discussion, the following points were highlighted and discussed:

1. Whilst events and private hires were increasing, there had been some decline in 'walk-in' sales. Officers advised that additional marketing capacity would be beneficial, even if part-time. Members noted that the Department of Open Spaces had a new Marketing Officer, with some capacity, and the Principal Curator had submitted a funding bid for a dedicated resource.
2. The restructure of the former Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department was working well and Keats House staff were very pleased with the geographical arrangements; ie the visibility of the Hampstead Heath Constabulary, who had been assisting duty managers at the House. Whilst welcoming visits from Open Spaces staff, Members representing Keats Community Library asked if they could be given notice where possible and asked if staff could wear name badges.
3. The Superintendent was working with the City Surveyor's Department to raise the profile of building maintenance and had seen some improved prioritisation for Keats House. Furthermore, Keats House had been transferred to the Facilities Management team, which has responsibility for the Heath, and the Assistant Property Facilities Manager been on site regularly with contractors. Members noted that the new City of London's Corporate Contractors would be on site in July this year for an inspection. The water damage in the Library was still outstanding and the Superintendent had ensured that this had been captured in the Facilities Manager's issues log for Keats House.

4. The HR arrangements had not changed, in order to provide continuity.
5. Garden visits were still being estimated by volunteers checking the garden periodically and entering the figures in the new till system. There were notices on the till and frequent reminders for volunteers to remember to count garden users. In the future, staff would like to install a digital counting system similar to those used on the Heath, at the site entrance, should funding become available.
6. The events programme had been particularly successful, with some 200 visitors to a recent Easter Family Day. A Member suggested introducing a collection box to the Poetry Ambassador events, as used at the family days.
7. School figures were up and the part-time Education Officer had been working on an HLF-funded project to engage young people with the heritage of Keats House, in partnership with Jacksons Lane.
8. The Ham & High were keen to use local stories and a Member of the Consultative Committee (also a Member of the Ham and High Association) offered to raise this at their next meeting.
9. 'OMG Keats!' had concluded, following a very successful partnership project with Jacksons Lane in Highgate. Members would be sent links to You Tube for the video and 'Chocolate films' and the Chairman offered to pass the film link to the two City of London Corporation Members who are in the film industry. Members noted that there would be an evaluation report from the Project Manager and there had been excellent feedback from parents. The Chairman was aware of a perception of some parts of London and the City being 'closed off' and was pleased that this, and similar Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee initiatives sought to break down such barriers.
10. Members agreed that the current private hire pricing structure was very competitive and suggested they explore the possibility of fixed term bookings, rather than hourly rates.
11. Keats House Library members had supported the recent successful Keats House bid for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and the Chairman and Deputy Chairman thanked them for their support. The funding would improve access to the grounds and toilets.
12. Staff would be at a full complement by the end of May this year; i.e. 4.5 FTEs, supported by approximately 50 volunteers. The Library Members asked for a list of staff and asked if they could please wear name badges. An induction loop was in place in the Library and this facility could be shared with the house. Some of the furniture in the Library had also been replaced.

13. The Library had made a successful bid to obtain a defibrillator and would seek advice, from the British Heart Foundation, as to the best place to locate it and then advertise its availability. All staff would be trained in its use and Members noted that one of the Hampstead Health Lifeguards was a qualified trainer.
14. The boilers were now working satisfactorily but some condensation issues were unresolved. Members noted that the new City of London Corporation contract would change the onus so that adequate operation and maintenance would fall within the contractor's remit.
15. In respect of the forthcoming Licensing Application, Members were supportive of the application and suggested, that Officers:
- look carefully at event pricing and aim to generate higher margins with fewer events.
 - seek advice from the City of London Corporation's Licensing Team but to be mindful that Camden's Licensing Policy would be different.
 - seek advice from specialist event companies who work with similar venues.
16. In respect of a potential future 'Poets in Residence' event, Members suggested the BBC radio website might provide possibilities. The use of 'Rap Poets' was also suggested, given its appeal to younger patrons.
17. The 200th Anniversary of Keats death in 2021 was at an early planning and research stage. Members suggested that the Apothecaries Company, the British Library and universities in the UK and overseas might be approached to get involved or provide support. The Keats Foundation was planning to commemorate the anniversary. Members suggested that a Working Party be set up and advice sought from officers in the former Culture, Heritage and Libraries Department, in light of the success of the Shakespeare and Great Fire Commemorations last year. Members agreed this presented an excellent opportunity for the House.

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

There were no further questions.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no items.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm

Chairman

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