



Keats House Consultative Committee

Date: THURSDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2016

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: AT KEATS HOUSE

Members: Vivienne Littlechild (Chairman)
Graham Packham (Deputy Chairman)
Steven Bobasch, Keats Community Library
Jim Burge, Heath Hurst Road Residents' Association
Dennis Cotgrove, Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood Committee
Harriet Cullen, Keats-Shelley Memorial Association
Bob Hall, Keats Foundation

Martin Humphery, Hampstead Conservation Area Advisory Committee
David Kitchen, South End Green Association
Barbara Newman, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
Ann Pembroke, Culture, Heritage and Libraries committee
Jeremy Simons, Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
Nigel Steward, Heath and Hampstead Society

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John Barradell
Town Clerk and Chief Executive

AGENDA

Part 1 - Public Agenda

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**
3. **MINUTES**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2016.

For Decision
(Pages 1 - 6)
4. **KEATS HOUSE PROGRESS REPORT 2016/17**
Report of the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

For Information
(Pages 7 - 12)
5. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**
6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held at Guildhall on Wednesday, 22 June 2016 at 11.30 am

Present

Members:

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

In Attendance

Mrs Ann Pembroke - Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee

Officers:

Nick Bodger - Head of Cultural and Visitor Development
Vicky Carroll - Culture, Heritage and Libraries
Frankie Kubicki - Culture, Heritage and Libraries
Julie Mayer - Town Clerk's Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Dennis Cotgrove.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Meeting held on 22 September 2015 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising

- Since the last meeting, Keats House had joined London Pass.
- In respect of the ceiling damage in the library, the Chairman advised that this was not a matter for the Keats House Consultative Committee. However, the Senior Curator advised that an appointment had been made to assess the works later today.
- Also since the last meeting, the first floor landing had been fitted out as a temporary exhibition space and was currently exhibiting a display about Keats travels in Scotland.

4. **KEATS HOUSE PROGRESS REPORT 2015/16**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries which set out steady growth across footfall and retail, while grants and awards continued to demonstrate the high regard in which the house is held by the cultural sector.

Members noted that, whilst the Service Based Review (SBR) options were being reviewed (item 5 on the agenda), events had been scaled back slightly but the summer months were set to pick up again.

Since the publication of this agenda, the Michael Rosen performance with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama had taken place and was very successful. The Chairman, who is also a Member of the Board of Governors of the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, offered to provide feedback to the Board. Members suggested that similar, future events be recorded.

The Principal Curator thanked Mrs Pembroke for her assistance in resolving the issue with the conservatory, which was now water-tight and had a new storage cupboard. Members noted that there had been some problems with the new boiler but they were being resolved.

In respect of the current staffing position, the Principal Curator advised that whilst she was working at the Guildhall Art Gallery to cover maternity leave, the Senior Curator, also in attendance at this meeting, was acting up into her role. Members noted that an additional member of staff had been appointed, on a short term contract, to cover for the Curator acting up into the Senior Curator's role. This arrangement was working well. Furthermore, Members noted that the Head of Cultural and Visitor Development was also overseeing Keats House and this provided further opportunities for joint working.

In respect of private event bookings, Members noted that the house was generally used for book launches, children's parties and toddler/children music classes. The Senior Curator advised that there had been some interest in private dinner parties but Members noted that such opportunities would be more viable with the use of dedicated caterers, who would be able to promote the house and cover the licensing aspects. The Senior Curator advised that the House applied for Temporary Event Notices from time to time. Two members of the Licensing Committee were in attendance and explained the provisions and objectives of the 2003 Licensing Act.

In respect of organised tours, the Senior Curator advised that they would need to be priced at £100, at least, or were likely to run at a loss. Members noted that the opening times had been extended and, in October 2016, V&A Members had booked 2 tours of 25 people. Members suggested that a Ward Club could be a potential future client.

In response to a question about the slight decline in general visitor numbers, the Senior Curator advised that Keats had opted out of the National Trust Partnership Scheme as, previously, some National Trust members were paying as little as £1.75 for admission. However, the Curators had met with the National Trust yesterday and they would be opting back in, with effect from January 2017, with a revised entry fee of £3.25 for members.

Members commended the number of awards received by the House and noted that a certificate in respect of Hudson Heritage Hidden Gem award was being displayed and shown in email signatures.

5. **KEATS HOUSE: SERVICE BASED REVIEW FINDINGS**

The Head of Cultural and Visitor Services was heard in respect of the Service Based Review savings targets of the City of London Corporation and, given that Keats House received £262,000 pa funding from the City, this had come under some scrutiny. Members were reminded that their recent meeting had been postponed while a series of options had been worked through with consultants, as follows:

- a. Arts Council of England (ACE)
- b. British Association for Romantic Studies (BARS)
- c. Continuum (UK commercial visitor attractions provider)
- d. English Heritage / Historic England
- e. Harvard Libraries, US
- f. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
- g. Keats Community Library (KCL)
- h. Keats-Shelley Association of America, US
- i. Keats-Shelley House, Rome, Italy
- j. Keats-Shelley Memorial Association (KSMA)
- k. Kings College London
- l. Landmark Trust
- m. National Trust
- n. Newcastle University
- o. NYC Romanticism Group, US
- p. Team Tourism Consulting
- q. University College London

As a result of the consultation, a number of alternative business models had been explored; none of which were found to be viable.

Members were pleased to note that a decision had been taken, by the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee that, for now, funding would continue, with a caveat that various options for income generation be considered and these options would be explored further in the next agenda item.

6. **IDEAS FOR INCREASING REVENUES AT KEATS HOUSE**

The Principal Curator of Keats House was heard in respect of ideas for income generation and the following matters were discussed and noted:

- The gift shop's stock was being continually reviewed; ideas for further additions included small romantic gifts and a replica of Fanny Brawne's engagement ring; and officers advised they were exploring the opportunity of using a TV shopping channel to produce/develop this.
- Use of the house and grounds for wedding and engagement photography.
- The expansion of events to include dinners and wine and cheese evenings, accompanied by tours.
- Members noted that the Germaine Greer event had sold out but such events were reliant on the goodwill of the speaker.
- Plans for a Summer School in partnership with universities.
- A remarketed Patrons and Supporters' Scheme. The Senior Curator offered to provide Members with exact numbers. Whilst noting that the numbers were fairly low, Members noted their benefits in developing relationships and building a supportive community.
- The Curator offered to seek advice from the City Solicitor in respect of Legacy giving, which had proved very successful for some other cultural institutions.
- A stand-alone website was likely to be very effective but Members noted that this would have a cost associated with it.
- Filming was effective when the house was promoted as part of the film, but credits often go unnoticed. The Senior Curator agreed to investigate using YouTube.
- The Principal Curator had met with various houses in Hampstead to consider collaborating on an advertising campaign but only The Freud Museum had any funds to potentially contribute; this did not therefore go ahead.
- Coffee carts had been approached, but Members noted that this would need a large footfall to be cost-effective. Whilst agreeing that Keats House was a very desirable venue for a coffee shop, the outcome from the consultation had concluded that investment in a cafe would not be viable. Ice cream sales during the summer months was suggested and discounts at local coffee shops had also been considered.

- Members noted that Hampstead's bid for a Business Improvement District might have potential.

Advertising

- The Head of Cultural and Visitor Development advised that magazine and newspaper advertising remained very expensive and was less successful than social media, which was cheaper and often very successful. Members noted the recent success of Son et Lumiere, which had over 1 million views on Facebook.
- Members noted that advertising on the tube often raised profile but was not as successful in increasing footfall. Members noted that historic underground posters from the 1930's were available at the Transport Museum but Keats House shop was not large enough to house them.
- Officers noted two festivals in Hampstead over the next 2 weeks (including Southend Green on the weekend of 25/26th June) and the possibility of running a Keats House stall.

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

Members noted that Ms Diana Gore's resignation (representing the Keats Grove Charity) had not created a vacancy as this appointment had been made in an advisory capacity. However, the Keats Foundation was holding a vacancy and the Senior Curator agreed to investigate possible candidates in order to fill this.

The meeting ended at 13.00

Chairman

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Committee(s)	Dated:
Keats Consultative Committee – For Information	27/10/2016
Subject: Keats House Progress Report 2016/17	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Information
Report author: Frankie Kubicki, Senior Curator, Keats House	

Summary

This report summarises achievements and developments at Keats House since the last Keats House Consultative Committee meeting in June 2016 and provides an overview of performance and programmes for the first six months of the financial year, including statistical data relating to footfall and income.

While the House continues to show good signs of growth in the areas of income and education, there was a small decrease in visitor figures during the period covered. This is consistent with the planned reduction of events and the decision not to host a Keats Festival in 2016.

Recommendation(s)

The Consultative Committee is asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Current Position

1. Keats House has seen community engagement increase during 2016/17 through the success of its youth and educational projects. Visitor figures have however decreased in comparison to 2015/16 while income has held steady. Key achievements are summarised below:

Visitor figures

2. Total visitor numbers to the House (excluding the garden) for the first six months of 2016/2017 were down by 2.5% (11,700 visitors compared to 12,006 visitors for the same period last year).
3. Total numbers to the House and Garden for the first half of 2016/2017 were also down but by a slightly smaller margin of 2% (19,670 visitors compared to 20,073 during the same period last year). Likely explanations for this decrease include:

- a. A planned reduction in the events programme while alternative models for running Keats House were investigated as part of the corporate-wide Service Based Review (SBR);
 - b. The absence of a summer Keats Festival, which is ordinarily an important engine for PR and the promotion of Keats House; and
 - c. The decision not to appoint a new Poet in Residence during 2016 noting that s/he ordinarily generates good PR and leads on curating or facilitating high profile events which generate income from ticket sales.
4. The above decisions were taken due to uncertainty around the outcome of the Service Based Review and the savings the House has needed to realise and temporarily reduced staffing while an Interpretation Officer was on maternity leave.
5. One hundred and twenty two visitors have visited the house as part of the London Pass scheme during the first six months of this financial year. Keats House has signed up to be part of the scheme again in 2017/2018.
6. Keats House has re-joined the National Trust partnership scheme at an increased and renegotiated rate of £3.25 for every adult visit. This popular scheme markets partners to its 4 million London members and will, it is hoped, have an impact on visitor figures and income from January 2017 onwards, when the new arrangements come into force.

Extended Opening Hours

7. The House has reviewed its opening hours and will be open five days a week (11am - 5pm, Wednesday to Sunday) throughout the winter period. This compares to seasonal opening hours during the winter of 2015/2016 of 3 short days a week (1 to 5pm, Friday to Sunday). The aim of this change is to increase visitor figures and income while aligning with a change in management of London National Trust properties, which have also stopped operating on reduced winter hours.

Open House

8. On the weekend of 18 and 19 September Keats House took part in Open House London. Opening for free, and running a series of special architectural tours, the event was very popular and saw 1,132 visits the House over the weekend. This was a 565% increase on the 170 visitors who visited over the same weekend in 2015/2016.

Events

9. The events programme continues to attract a large and diverse audience, despite having been scaled back during the early part of the year for the reasons outlined above. Since April 2016, Keats House held 35 events and welcomed to 2,463 visitors. Upcoming highlights include a celebration of Regency food with popular broadcaster and food historian Dr Annie Gray as part of *Museums at Night*, and new evening candlelit tours over the Christmas period. A renewed focus on income-generation has seen ticket prices increase to achieve cost recovery and improve profit margins.

Staff changes

10. Vicky Carroll's secondment as Acting Head of the Guildhall Art Gallery and London's Roman Amphitheatre will be extended until the end of February 2017. Thereafter, she will return to Keats House as Principal Curator. Frankie Kubicki will stay in post as Senior Curator during Vicky's absence.
11. Sofie Davis will return to her post as an Interpretation Officer on the 1 November 2016 on a part time capacity, working 18 hours per week following Maternity Leave.
12. Eva Bentcheva will continue as an Information Officer until the 3 January 2017. This position will be on a part time basis of 17 hours per week from 31 October. A post for a new part time Interpretation Officer will be advertised internally during December 2016.

Learning

13. Charges of £3 per child were put in place from September 2016. The charge helps to secure extra income from this stream of activity and reflects a change in the sector aligning it with most other cultural venues which now charge for such sessions.
14. School figures continue to increase. From April to October 2016, Keats House welcomed 469 primary school children compared to 257 children during the same period in 2015/2016, an increase of 82%.
15. Keats House will take part in this year's *Young City Poets* initiative with the National Literacy Trust. The London-based project provides opportunities for schools to visit London's cultural assets and work closely with a writer. Four school groups will visit the House in January 2017 as part of this programme.
16. The House will be part of *Google Expeditions*, Google's new initiative to create virtual trips for schools using Google cardboard virtual reality headsets and smartphone technology. This virtual tour is in the production stages after images of the House were taken in August 2016.

Retail

17. Retail performance is holding steady despite the slight decline in visitor numbers. Income for the first six months of 2016 totalled £14,590 compared with £14,417 for the same period in the previous year.
18. Improvements to shop stock continue to be made and new children's products have been introduced including a soft toy nightingale. The House has also developed new necklaces with popular UK brand Sugar & Vice.
19. The House will receive a new till and customised EPOS system in October 2016 as part of a department-wide initiative led by Tower Bridge. This system should benefit Keats House with more detailed business reporting, and a streamlined stock keeping system that will be less time consuming.

Venue hire

20. Income from venue hire continues to show good signs of growth. From April 2016 to October 2016, the House raised nearly £8,964 from venue hire compared with £4,363 for the same period last year, an increase of 105%.

PR and marketing

21. Keats House will feature on the popular BBC tea time show, *The One Show* this autumn. The feature, which focuses on John Keats's poem, *To Autumn*, includes an interview with Senior Curator, Frankie Kubicki, and cricketer, Phil Tufnell (date to be shown TBC).
22. Frankie Kubicki, and long-standing Volunteer and Tour Guide, Elizabeth Hansford were interviewed by *The Poetry Programme* radio show. To be aired on RTE Radio 1 (Ireland's version of the BBC), the feature will be broadcast in October 2016 (date TBC).
23. Film production and online media company Geocast TV have been contracted to produce a short online promotional film for the House. The film was shot in September 2016 and is currently in post-production. It will be promoted through www.BritainisGreat.com which receives 2 – 4 million unique views a month. The film will also feature on the Keats House website.

HLF funded Young Roots project in partnership with Jackson's Lane:

OMG Keats!

24. The first phase of the above project, the *Keats House Slam*, saw 40 young performers take to the stage in the garden of Keats House on 31 July 2016. The event attracted an audience of around 200 people, and received a full page spread in popular local paper the *Ham and High*.
25. Preparations for the second stage of the project, a half-term filmmaking course with Chocolate films, are underway with the course taking place in the week commencing 24 October. The project will culminate in the creation of a short film for young people, exploring Keats's life.

Grants

26. Keats House has been awarded a grant of £500 by the Museum Development Fund to purchase three new Tiny Tag environmental monitors.

Fundraising

27. A number of changes have been made to strengthen the House's Supporters Group and increase income. Admission tickets can no longer be reused for a period of a year to help ensure they are not transferred between visitors, and make the benefits of the Supporters Group more attractive. Keats Foundation members will receive a discount of 50% when they purchase admission tickets in place of free entry.

Awards

28. Keats House is delighted to have been awarded a 2016 certificate of excellence from Tripadvisor for receiving consistently highly-rated reviews.
29. Keats House has been nominated for a *Time Out* Love London Award 2016.

Building maintenance

30. Keats House has had on-going issues with the working capacity of the House boiler since a new boiler was installed in March. The boiler failed on several occasions due to faults with the flue. A new flue was installed in October 2016.
31. A number of CCTV system parts had to be renewed during the first half of the year. The system was fully functional by October 2016.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Keats House is highly-regarded, award-winning visitor attraction and contributes significantly to the City Corporation's good reputation as a responsible steward of heritage assets, a provider of world-class education programmes and a valued investor in London's cultural and visitor landscape.

Conclusion

32. Keats House remains a popular visitor attraction despite reductions in its programme of activities and the resultant drop in footfall. Its outreach and education programmes are accessed more than ever and show its significant value to the heritage sector and London schools and communities.
33. The House is recognised through awards and grants, and its income through hire and retail is growing, helping to build a robust and sustainable model for the future.

Appendices

- None

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