

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Friday, 28 October 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held at Committee Room, 2nd Floor, West Wing, Guildhall on Friday, 28 October 2022 at 2.30 pm

Present

Members:

Wendy Hyde (Chair)
Munsur Ali
Stephen Ainger
Steven Bobasch

John Foley
John Griffiths
Alexandra Lavery

In Attendance

Officers:

Ben Dunleavy - Town Clerk's Department
Rob Shakespeare - Department of Open Spaces
Stefania Horne - Open Spaces Department

1. APOLOGIES

None.

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 15 July 2022 were approved as a correct record.

4. UPDATE REPORT FOR KEATS HOUSE CHARITY, APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2022

Members received a report of the Executive Director, Environment, providing an update on Keats House for the period April – September 2022.

The following points were discussed:

- Following the discussion at the previous meeting, opening hours for Keats House were now advertised at various sites around the perimeter and grounds of Keats House. Keats House had also improved its control over the advertisement of opening times on in-house webpages, and was working to improve its communication to ensure accurate information on third-party pages.

- Members expressed their concerns that there was not a requirement for volunteers at Keats House to receive DBS checks. Officers replied that all employed Keats House staff are DBS checked, and they are currently reviewing the requirements for volunteers. All Keats House policies, including staffing, are reviewed by Arts Council England as part of the Museum Accreditation.
- Members asked if Keats House was included in the Destination City strategy, and if there was anything more that Keats House could do to publicise its connection with the City of London Corporation. Officers and the Chair responded to say that the current brief for Destination City was to focus on the Square Mile area, but that team were aware of the City Corporation's wider assets. Keats House marketing material currently carries the City Corporation crest and a strapline explaining the relationship.
- In response to a question from a Member, officers confirmed that much of the content produced for the Keats200 event had been taken offline but they were currently pushing for this to be restored.
- Planning permission for the wall to replace the wooden boundary fence on Keats Grove was ready to submit to the London Borough of Camden.
- Keats House had completed its Fire Management Strategy and undertaken remedial work as an outcome of this. Officers informed Members that historic properties such as Keats House would always have a high level of tolerable risk, and Museum Accreditation requires an emergency plan to be in place.
- The 'Poetry vs Colonialism' project, which involved Keats House's resident poet, had already helped to inform the Culture Mile Learning programme.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

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

A Member, representing Keats Community Library (KCL), asked to provide an update on the work of the Library. They informed other Members that the Library was preparing to be a 'warm space' for the winter. The Chair asked if there was adequate funding to allow for this, and suggested that the Library investigate the grants offered by City Bridge Trust for institutions offering this service.

The Member representing KCL informed the Committee that there had not been any progress on the maintenance issues they had raised at the previous meeting. They did not understand why nothing had happened. The Chair apologised that no action had been taken. Officers replied that they would raise this at their meeting with the City Surveyors team, and that a written update could be provided.

The Member representing KCL also informed the Committee that they had concerns over their licence to operate at 10 Keats House. Their licence had

expired in April 2020, and since then KCL had paid for usage on a pro rata basis, based on the agreed licence fee. While KCL took comfort from reassurances from the City Corporation about the relationship, they felt that the City Corporation had not kept them adequately informed as to the progress of the new licence, and they found the current situation unacceptable and unprofessional.

Officers replied that meetings were ongoing to discuss the potential options for the renewal of the licence, but that final decisions would need to wait until Keats House had implemented any recommendations from the Corporate Charities Review. The Chair emphasised the importance of the relationship between Keats House and Keats Community Library.

In response to a question from a Member, officers confirmed that Keats House insured the whole building, while Keats Community Library was responsible for insuring their possessions, and that this was not affected by the lack of licence.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

7. DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Town Clerk informed Members that the 2023 meetings would take place in June and October.

The meeting ended at 4.21 pm

Chairman

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