

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 3 October 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held at Nightingale Room, 10 Keats Grove, London NW3 2RR at 2.30 pm

Present

Members:

Graham Packham - Chairman, Culture Heritage and Libraries Committee	Jeremy Simons - Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee
Vivienne Littlechild - Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	Jim Burge - Heath Hurst Road Residents' Association
Bob Hall - Keats Foundation	Andrew Dutton-Parrish - Hampstead Conservation Advisory Committee
Graeme Harrower - Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	Stephen Ainger, Chairman - Downshire Hill Residents' Association
Martin Humphery - Heath and Hampstead Society	Nigel Stewart - Keats Community Library
	Deputy John Tomlinson - Hampstead Heath, Highgate Wood and Queens Park Committee

In Attendance

Officers:

Julie Mayer	- Town Clerks
Colin Buttery	- Director of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Superintendent, Hampstead Heath
Rob Shakespeare	- Principal Curator, Keats House

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Deputy Wendy Hyde, Stephen Bobasch (represented by Nigel Stewart) and Karina Dostalova (represented by Deputy John Tomlinson).

The Chairman welcomed Mr Andrew Dutton-Parish and Mr Stephen Ainger to their first meeting of the Consultative Committee.

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 May 2018 were approved, subject to removing the word 'reviving' at the end of paragraphs 10.

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2018 be approved.

4. **KEATS HOUSE UPDATE REPORT**

Members received a report of the Superintendent of Hampstead Heath which summarised the achievements and developments at Keats House, including Ten Keats Grove, since the last meeting on 15 May 2018. The Principal Curator also tabled the latest programme for the House.

During the discussion on this report, the following points were noted:

Visit England and London in Bloom

Initial feedback from the Visit England Inspection had been very positive; there might be a small dip on last year's score, but this had been expected on account of some minor maintenance issues. Whilst marginal, they would receive full consideration once the final report was available.

Members were very pleased to note that the House had been awarded 'Silver Gilt' status; i.e. scoring 70-84% of the points available in the 'London in Bloom' (Walled Gardens Category).

Licence at Ten Keats Grove and Defibrillator

The Licence for Ten Keats Grove had been resolved. A 'letter of comfort' is being discussed with the Director of Open Spaces. Members were pleased to note that a fully automatic defibrillator had been purchased for use at Keats House and Ten Keats Grove; of a simple design, which would not operate if an individual wasn't in cardiac arrest. Members noted that a fully trained Lifeguard had advised on the purchase and will be running the training sessions for all staff, which would be extended to new staff and volunteers. The device would be checked weekly, alongside the fire alarms, and the Library would be briefed regularly.

Premises Licence Application

Members noted that a few factors had come to light in respect of the Premises Licence application, which the Principal Curator would like to revisit. The Curator explained that there been some inconsistencies between the draft licence application and the fire risk assessments conducted in February 2018. Members were reminded that, during the period of consultation, some residents had raised concerns. Members were concerned at the amount of time taken to progress the application, and asked to see a timeline for possible completion, given the proximity to the Keats200 Commemorations.

Members asked for the licence application to progress concurrently with the planning application to improve the entrance to the House. Members suggested a meeting with the Heath and Hampstead Society, before further consultation.

Boiler Replacement

Members noted that the boiler replacement had identified some asbestos, which was being removed this week. The Curator advised that the heating replacement work had come on stream very late and progressed quickly and apologised for any perceived lack of consultation with the Trustees. In response to a question as to why heat pumps had not been used, Members noted that the City Surveyor would have chosen the most energy efficient option, but the Curator agreed to investigate the background to the decision.

Livery Companies

In respect of bookings from Livery Companies, a Member suggested a direct contact with the Livery Clerks, as well as the Livery Newsletter, emphasising the City Corporation's patronage of the House and its close proximity to the City.

Keats200 and Project Co-ordinator

Discussions were underway with principal partners in respect of Keats200 and the Curator reported on a positive meeting with The Keats Foundation and the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association, which considered partnership projects, branding and avoiding duplication. The Curator tabled 5 branding options, with 2 main variants. Whilst there was a preference for the darker, sharper images, which showed Keats' profile, Members felt that input from a professional designer was more appropriate. Initial contact with 'Chickenshed Theatre' had also been positive; this company was very popular with young people and a programme of workshop performances were being proposed, culminating in a large performance in 2020.

Members noted that the programme, as planned, would require significant resources to develop and deliver and it was therefore proposed to appoint a Keats200 Project Co-ordinator, on a fixed-term contract, for a two-year period. The main purpose of the role would be to develop and help deliver an ambitious and creative programme for the Keats200 Bicentenary and secure funding required for identified projects within the overall programme. The job and person specifications were being written and would be submitted for job evaluation as soon as possible. It was proposed that funding for this role would cost c. 55% of the current available reserves. In concluding the debate, Members endorsed a submission for a bid, to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee, to support funding for this fixed-term post.

Private Hire

In respect of the downturn in numbers attending for private hire, the Curator assured Members that income was stable, but the House had to give priority to exhibitions and programming. Currently, there was 1 part time Officer engaged on private hire, who was looking at how this might be improved. The Curator offered to provide enhanced figures in the next update, showing the number of private hires, as well as individuals attending, and the outcome and benefits from the events.

Internet at the Library

Members were concerned at the ongoing issues with the Library's internet connection, despite this being reported regularly to the IT Help Desk, and would therefore like to see it resolved as soon as possible. There was a suggestion that the Library would benefit from arranging its own broadband connection not managed by the City IT group and the Principal Curator agreed to explore alternative options.

Entrance Fees at the House

The Curator tabled a schedule of entrance fees in comparable locations and Members noted that Visit England suggested that the House's entrance fee was undervalued. The Curator also agreed to investigate the origins of the Art Fund concession. There was further discussion about other concessions; i.e. the pros and cons of senior, family tickets and the value of memberships, which would be explored fully in the financial implications contained in the report and recommendations to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee. In concluding the debate, Members endorsed the proposals including the principle to increase the current entrance fee to the House and to develop a community ticket.

CIL Project to Improve the Entrance to the House

Members were asked to consider an additional aspect arising from the CIL project in respect of improvements to the entrance to the House, which fell outside of the CIL Funding, and would require support from the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee to fund the project shortfall from reserves. Members noted that there had been initial discussions about the use of materials for a three-way, sliding gate, to open up the view of the House. On further examination, Camden Council officers had expressed concern regarding the proposed choice of materials and their compatibility to the existing street scene.

Having studied the various proposals in the drawings, Members were concerned about the safety aspect of a completely open entrance and the Principal Curator will ensure this is considered prior to final submission. In respect of the materials, Members suggested that oak would weather well and railings were acceptable, in a tasteful design, but accepted that Officers must work within the parameters of Camden Planning Officers' recommendations. In concluding the debate, Members endorsed the submission of a request to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee to support funding the entrance improvements from reserves.

5. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A new Member of the Consultative Committee thanked Members for a productive meeting and the City for their ongoing support of Keats House.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

18 March 2019 at Guildhall – 1.45 pm

The meeting ended at 4.30

Chairman

Contact Officer: Julie Mayer

tel. no.: 020 7332 1410

julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk