

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Monday, 10 May 2021

**Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held
Virtually on Monday, 10 May 2021 at 1.45 pm.**

Present

Members:

Deputy Wendy Hyde (Chair)
Jeremy Simons (Deputy Chair)
Stephen Ainger
Dafydd James-Williams
Vivienne Littlechild
Deputy John Tomlinson
Dawn Wright

In Attendance

Officers:

Chloe Rew	- Town Clerk's Department
Kerry Nicholls	- Town Clerk's Department
Aqib Hussain	- Chamberlain's Department
Charlie Pearce	- Chamberlain's Department
Rob Shakespeare	- Department of Open Spaces
Bob Warnock	- Department of Open Spaces

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

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

There were none.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 October 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

4. END OF YEAR UPDATE REPORT FOR KEATS HOUSE CHARITY, 2020/21 AND PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

Members received a report of the Director of Open Spaces in respect of the End of Year Update for Keats House Charity for 2020/21 and Plans for Future Periods.

Members were informed that following the previous meeting in October 2020, Keats House was required to close due to the Tier 4 restrictions and subsequent lockdown. During the closure period, virtual and outdoor touring

exhibitions were planned and developed in collaboration with the Cultural and Visitor Development team, to be displayed in Aldgate Square and Guildhall Yard in autumn 2021. Programming for the bicentenary of Keats' death was delivered online in collaboration with Keats House partners. Keats200 legacy projects were underway. In terms of building works, the closure period was used to refurbish the toilets, and develop plans to enhance the front boundary. The local character of the Hampstead Local Conservation Area was given due consideration in developing plans for enhancements to the front boundary.

With respect to long-term plans, the following areas of focus were noted:

- Reopening Keats House to the public as a visitor attraction;
- COVID-19 recovery programme: lessons learned from the pandemic were being considered to determine the long-term benefits of these changes (ie. contactless payments, online programme delivery, and contactless donations);
- Developing a policy framework to renew museum accreditation from October 2022.

The Principal Curator introduced initial proposals for information and discussion by Members. The proposal was for a new dual-height brick wall to replace the existing wooden fence. Members raised questions on the material and colour of the railings over, security and safety issues, the detail of the bricks and funding of the project.

RESOLVED, that – Members welcomed the proposal in principle and looked forward to seeing detailed design development for approval by the relevant Committees, prior to submitting for planning permission.

5. **UPDATE ON REOPENING KEATS HOUSE**

The Director of Open Spaces was heard in respect of an update on reopening Keats House.

Members were informed that Keats House would reopen from 17 May in line with government guidelines. Until 20 June at the earliest, one-hour timeslots would need to be pre-booked for up to 6 visitors at a time, with cleaning between sessions. Plans were to reopen for 2-3 days per week with the support of the core workforce, and in the future, to open 3-4 days per week with staff returned from furlough and use of casual staff.

It was noted that the effects of the pandemic would be felt for some time, in terms of visitor sentiment and expectations when visiting a small space; cleaning requirements; the impact of working from home and furlough on staff re-engagement. Departmental and Corporation wide changes would also be factors which determine future operations. Visitor feedback will be valuable moving forward. Although there would be a reduction in international visitors, it was hoped that the increase in domestic tourism could make up some of the shortfall.

Major projects for the period 2021-23, particularly those to be prioritised in 2021/22 were tabled for the information of Members. An Activities Plan for

2021/22 will be developed following the meeting and forwarded to Members and the next meeting of Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee.

RESOLVED, that – the update be received.

6. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

There were none.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There was none.

8. **DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING**

Members were informed that the date of the next meeting will be rescheduled, and the new date would be circulated once confirmed.

The meeting ended at 3.28 pm

Chair

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