

Appendix 1 – [Draft] Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2021/22

Origins and Objectives of the Charity

In 1921, a body called the Keats Memorial House Committee appealed to the public for funds to purchase the property and archive from the then private owners to save it from being destroyed or dissipated, and in order to preserve John Keats's former home in which most of the poet's finest work was written. The public appeal was successful, and the property was acquired and vested in the, then, Corporation of Hampstead "as a permanent trust to be restored and equipped with relics of the poet and to be maintained in perpetuity as a Keats Museum and a live memorial to his genius, a shrine of pilgrimage for his worldwide admirers and a literary meeting place and centre". Camden Borough Council became the successors of the former Corporation of Hampstead on 1 April 1965, pursuant to the London Government Act 1963.

Keats House was registered as a charity in March 1996. The City of London Corporation acquired ownership of the land and buildings and responsibility for the administration and management of Keats House with effect from 1 January 1997.

The objective of the Charity is:

'to preserve and maintain and restore for the education and benefit of the public the land with the buildings known as Keats House as a museum and live memorial to John Keats and as a literary meeting place and centre.'

The Charity shall first defray out of the income of the Charity the cost of maintaining the property (including the repair and insurance of any buildings thereon) and all other charges and outgoings payable in respect thereof and all the proper costs, charges and expenses of and incidental to the administration and management of the Charity.

The Trustee has due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when setting objectives and planning activities.

Explanation of Aims and objectives for the year including the changes or differences it seeks to make through its activities

The activities of the Keats House Charity are guided by its Charitable Object as stated above and developed within the framework of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018-23 and the Environment Department's Business Plan 2022/23. Our activities also support the City Corporations' Cultural Strategy and the Hampstead Heath Management Strategy 2018 - 2028, as well as the wider aims of heritage sector organisations such as Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund and The National Archives.

The City of London Corporation's Corporate Plan 2018-23 states that:

Our vision

The City of London Corporation is the governing body of the Square Mile dedicated to a vibrant and thriving City, supporting a diverse and sustainable London with a globally-successful UK.

We aim to...

- Contribute to a flourishing society
- Support a thriving economy
- Shape outstanding environments

Keats House aims to support the Environment Department to Shape Sustainable Future Environments through its Primary and Supporting Aims and Objectives, particularly:

- Provide excellent frontline services
- Deliver key strategies (climate action and volunteering)
- Support sustainable growth, vibrancy, heritage and culture
- Provide thriving, biodiverse, relevant spaces
- Financial, Information and Talent Management, Innovation, Engagement & Collaboration and inclusivity.

The contribution which Keats House makes towards these is detailed below.

Achievements and Performance

Achievement against the key priorities for 2021/22:

1. Implement Keats House Divisional Plan projects identified for delivery in 2021/22

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Keats House was open to the public Wednesday to Sunday, 11am – 5pm and Keats Community Library (KCL) opened for a total of 42 hours per week, Tuesdays to Sundays. At the beginning of April 2021 however, the entire site remained closed to the public due to the third National Lockdown, which had been in place since January 2021.

With the phased lifting of restrictions under the UK Government's COVID-19 Response – Spring 2021 (Roadmap), Keats Community Library reopened first, initially for 10 hours per week on Tuesdays and Saturdays from Tuesday 13 April 2021. Keats House and garden reopened from Thursday 3 June 2021, initially on two days per week rising to three days per week from mid-July, when KCL also added an additional day of operation.

The key measures previously put in place to ensure that the entire site at 10

Keats Grove was awarded Visit England's 'We're Good to Go' quality assurance mark and remained COVID-19 Secure were: a separation of services operating at the property, with Keats House and Keats Community Library opening on discrete days; use of the garden and external toilets being restricted to Keats House ticket holders only; installation of social distancing signage and hand sanitiser stations; a requirement to book and pay for tickets to Keats House in advance; strict limits on the numbers visiting; enhanced cleaning regimes; and, in the case of Keats House, the formation of workforce 'bubbles'.

While these same measures allowed the site to reopen in phases dictated by the Spring 2021 Roadmap, with the further lifting of most legal restrictions from Monday 19 July, some of these measures, such as social distancing signage, were physically removed and our messaging to visitors changed from enforcement to encouragement, especially with regard to face coverings. Similarly, the requirement to pre-book was removed although the facility to do so was retained, as it provides a useful way for us to directly communicate the days and times at which people can visit.

The Keats200 programme celebrating the life, works and legacy of Romantic poet John Keats, which launched on 1 December 2018, continued in 2021/22, despite the ongoing impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Exhibitions and events celebrating specific events in Keats life were delivered online through the City Corporation's #OurCityTogether initiative, and projects supporting the wider outcomes of the programme were prioritised and progressed where possible.

The reopening of the house was publicised as an opportunity to see Keats200 Artist in Residence Elaine Duigenan's beautiful and moving floral tributes to Keats, which were installed at the house during lockdown and on display there until January 2022.

Unfortunately, much of our partnership work was inevitably curtailed by COVID-19 and it was again not possible to hold Keats Foundation's annual conference in May 2021. We were however delighted to work with them and the Remembrancers Office to deliver a Keats200 celebratory event, including a keynote speech by Professor Nicholas Roe, Chair of the Keats Foundation and Keats's biographer, on 1 November 2021.

Our social media channels have helped us remain connected to our audiences, engaging them with the Keats200 bicentenary and publicising online and in person events. As at March 2022, Keats House had over 6,770 followers on Twitter (+4% on April 2021), more than 4,000 on Facebook (-2%), and over 2,800 on Instagram (+20%). All officers have contributed to our online and social media outputs throughout lockdowns and reopening, working closely with, and benefitting from the support of, the City Corporation's Cultural & Visitor Development team.

The City Corporation's #OurCityTogether platform, which was initiated within weeks of the first lockdown in March 2020, continued to provide an important

channel through which to publish our cultural content and reach new audiences online until it was taken offline in February 2022. Keats House contributed a number of new articles in 2021/22 focussing on the events and reaction following Keats's death and, more recently, the lead up to #Shelley200. Collectively the 55 articles researched, written and published by the Keats House team during the lifetime of the site received nearly 19,000 page views and also generated a large amount of social media activity and engagement in the form of likes, shares and re-posts.

Keats House made its full educational offer available online, before school sessions could resume in the garden from June and in the house itself from autumn 2021. Numbers were inevitably lower than previous years, but we were proud to have delivered 28 sessions to 24 different schools, engaging 623 students and 82 teachers / assistants with Keats's life story, poetry and creative writing. Six of these sessions were part of our continued participation in the Young City Poets programme, along with other City Corporation cultural venues.

Our Creative Writing Summer School again took place online at the start of July, featuring workshops by Keats House poet Laila Sumpton and novelist Sara Taylor, on the theme of 'Escape'. This was our most successful Summer School so far in terms of numbers, the online format meaning that we could include students from schools outside London. 70 students from eight different secondary schools took part, including schools in Hampshire and Buckinghamshire. Over the three days of the course we achieved a total of 181 student and 12 accompanying adult engagements, with a mixture of students joining individually from home, individually within school groups and in teacher-led whole-class groups (from two schools). Despite the technical challenges presented by this mixed format, the response to the 2021 Summer School by students and teachers in the accompanying Chat and subsequent emails was engaged and overwhelmingly positive. Students produced high-quality creative work on all three days, which is being collected for an online anthology to be made available to all participating schools.

Our part-time Interpretation Officer - Learning, worked with Culture Mile Learning colleagues to develop an 'Inspiration' session involving both art and creative writing, as part of a planned after-school club scheme across a range of City Corporation venues and green spaces. We also collaborated with Keats200 Poet in Residence Laila Sumpton, to create three new school sessions on the theme of Keats and Colonialism, which combine an introduction to Keats's life and times with an exploration of colonialist themes linked to objects in the house, as stimulus for students' creative writing.

Following the successful reopening of Keats House, and especially since the lifting of legal restrictions from 19 July, our events programme resumed, both online and with live events at Keats House and elsewhere. Virtual events included two editions of our 'The Feast of the Poets' cultural discussions, attended by a total of 95 people from over 12 countries across Europe, North America and Asia. We were delighted to be asked to repeat our 'Keats Meets Coleridge' event for Highgate Festival 2021, which was enjoyed by 26 people

and more as we progressed across the Heath 'talking of many things'. Two 'Late Night Keats' events were programmed in October and December and the launch of a poetry anthology book launch edited by our Poet in Residence was well attended. We were also pleased to welcome 12 individuals from the Afghan refugee families resident in the City to Keats House, for a Nowruz Festival celebration on Sunday 20 March 2022. In total, 420 people attended 15 programmed events in 2021/22. In addition, two online talks were delivered to local community groups, engaging a further 92 people with the Keats200 programme and activities of Keats House.

Keats House officers also supported the delivery of exhibitions and events for Heath150, celebrating the 150th anniversary of the passing of the Hampstead Heath Act 1871. We also facilitated a number of events for Hampstead Summer Festival by working with our local partners Keats Community Library and Hampstead School of Art to ensure these much-loved and, in terms of fundraising for these two local charities, vital events could go ahead in 2021. The Keats House garden hosted Hampstead Art Fair, two performances of 'Twelfth Night' by Drama Impact, a performance of 'A Country Diary of An Edwardian Lady' and a family garden party. In total over 1,200 people enjoyed attending these events, at a time when many had been denied access to cultural events in their local communities.

Our volunteers have continued their support for Keats House, initially by providing outdoor introductions for our visitors, then, when allowed, tours of the interior of the house, adding extra value to our visitor's experiences. Engagement with our volunteer workforce was maintained through regular mailings and requesting support for specific projects, including the phased resumption of our live events programme. A virtual engagement meeting was held with our paid and voluntary workforce in May 2021, and a Christmas celebratory get-together was followed by a hybrid event in January 2022, to re-engage individuals with the aims and activities of the Charity. Our Poetry Ambassadors have also revived our monthly Afternoon Poems readings, delivering six events between September 2021 and March 2022. In total 14 volunteers have provided over 200 hours support for Keats House in 2021/22 and, as always, we would like to acknowledge and thank all our volunteers for their continued support for the Charity and its activities, especially in light of the impact of the pandemic on their own lives.

Keats House continue to work with Roehampton University to support a doctoral research student to work with the collections held at Keats House and London Metropolitan Archives. This programme, which commenced in October 2020, is funded through the Techne Doctoral Training Programme through to 2024 and will result in new insights and interpretations of our collection, for example the Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats letters, which are being digitised and shared online on the 200th anniversary of their writing.

At the end of August, we worked with colleagues from London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) to conserve, digitise and display items from the Keats House collections. Included in the displays for autumn / winter 2021, were a letter

from Shelley to his cousin and fellow poet Medwin, which had not been displayed in over 25 years, along with the first English edition of 'Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats', which Shelley wrote in the aftermath of Keats's death. As well as forming part of the culmination of the Keats200 bicentenary programme, these form part of our contribution to Shelley200 and the wider Romanticism bicentenaries which will be one of our priorities for the next few years, as we move into the legacy phase of Keats200. In February 2022, the Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats letters and miscellaneous items related to Joseph Severn and Keats's grave in Rome were displayed at the house in time for the spring visitor season.

We also collaborated with LMA to display Keats's copy of Shakespeare's Poems, in which he copied out his own poem 'Bright Star' while on route to Italy. This item is one of the treasures of the Keats House collections which captures the imagination of Keatsians all over the world and we were delighted to be able to display this in the Heritage Gallery at Guildhall Art Gallery for the culmination of the Keats200 bicentenary programme.

As previously reported, officers produced the Keats200 exhibition for publication online on ourcitytogether.london and Google Arts & Culture in time for the bicentenary of Keats's death in February 2021. This same content was then used to develop an outdoor exhibition to support the City Corporation's Outdoor Art Programme for 2021: 'A Thing of Beauty', which toured three London venues in autumn 2021: Hampstead Heath during September, Aldgate Square in October and Guildhall Yard for the first two weeks of November. The tour was accompanied by an events programme at all venues to coincide with Open House London Festival 2021, Keats birthday celebrations at the end of October, and the Keats200 lecture and celebratory event at The Guildhall in partnership with the Keats Foundation.

Towards the end of 2021/22, Keats House officers have worked with their colleagues at Guildhall Hall Art Gallery to loan a number of paintings for their 'Inspired!' exhibition, April – September 2022, ensuring these works are seen by new audiences and in a different context to their normal display at the house.

Between 20 May 2021 and 31 March 2022, Keats House opened to the public on 114 days, with a total of 2,575 recorded visits to the house during that period. For comparison, 12,451 people visited Keats House in 2018/19 – the last full business year before the pandemic - so the number of people visiting Keats House is down by 80% on pre-pandemic levels, with a fall in income from admissions and shop sales in particular as a consequence.

The shop also reopened from May with a new ticketing, sales and contactless payment system. Due to the reduction in visitor numbers income from shop sales remains below the annual income target of -£15,000, with £6,216 taken in 2021/22.

The private hire offer also restarted, with a small number of hires to community groups, organisations and individuals. However, it has not yet

been possible to achieve the levels of income previously derived from hires, events or visiting school groups. In addition, the licence for Keats Community Library (KCL) to occupy Ten Keats Grove, which contributes towards our income, expired on 19 April 2020 and is currently in the hands of the City Surveyors Department to renegotiate with the current licensees. In the meantime, KCL continue to operate from the site on a 'pay as you go' basis.

As a condition of the premises licence for 10 Keats Grove, Keats House Consultative Committee receive a twice-yearly report of licensable events held at the House, to ensure that the operating schedule and conditions are being upheld. To report that no activities have taken place under Keats House's premises licence in the period 2021/22. As referred to above, four events were delivered from the premises for Hampstead Summer Festival which involved the sale of alcohol and other licensable activities under TENs obtained by the organisers. The Premises Licence for 10 Keats Grove was renewed for the period to 11 September 2022 at a cost of £180.00.

2. Deliver maintenance and access improvement projects at Keats House

In 2018/19 plans were progressed to put in place a sustainable cyclical works programme to preserve and maintain Keats House (Grade I listed) and Ten Keats Grove (Grade II listed). These arose from the overall condition survey of Keats House and Ten Keats Grove conducted in 2017/18. As a result a number of projects have been completed and prioritised to ensure Keats House and Ten Keats Grove can continue to be accessed and enjoyed by future generations.

The London Borough of Camden's Planning Department determined in favour of the proposals as submitted to improve physical access to the premises through new pathways, subtle, ground-level lighting to pathways for safety reasons and the refurbishment of the external toilets. The intention is for these works to be funded by the London Borough of Camden's Community Infrastructure Levy grants programme and are currently being progressed with the City Surveyor's Department. The sub-project to refurbish the external toilets at Keats House was completed in early 2021, with funding from the City Corporation according to the original project agreement.

Planning and listed building consent were also granted for the proposed new visitor entrance, the funding for which had been identified from the Charitable Reserves as a Keats200 legacy project. Proposals to replace the aged, wooden boundary fence to the front of the property are currently being refined, following initial feedback from local stakeholders. Once finalised, these will be forwarded to Members prior to submission to the London Borough of Camden to obtain the required planning and listed building consents.

The gardens, which form an essential and much-loved aspect of the heritage site, continue to be maintained by the Golders Hill Park team and this work was continued throughout the periods of lockdown and subsequent reopening. Hampstead Heath officers also supervise the work of a dedicated

team of 'Heath Hands' volunteers who have continued to be active in maintaining the beautiful garden when allowed by COVID-19 restrictions.

3. **Develop a three-year Management Plan for Keats House, to ensure the future sustainability of the Keats House Charity and its operating model**

While a Draft Activities Plan for 2022/23 has been produced (see Appendix 3), the development of a three-year forward plan for Keats House, which is required as part of the City Corporation's documentation framework and for our Museum Accreditation return, has been severely delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Divisional Plan, which is for a three-year rolling period, has been updated for 2022/23 to inform the plans, priorities and activities for future periods. The Principal Curator proposes that the development of a three-year Management Plan for Keats House should follow the timeline of the Target Operating Model, before being submitted to Members for consultation and approval, before being presented in any future Museum Accreditation return.

As a result of the above activities, the Trustee has had due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when setting objectives and planning activities.

Plans for Future Periods

The overarching priorities which will guide all of our objectives and activities from April 2022 are:

- Implement projects and activities identified in the Keats House Divisional Plan and Activities Plan for delivery in 2022/23 onwards
- Deliver maintenance and access improvement projects at Keats House
- Develop a three-year Management Plan for Keats House, to ensure the future sustainability of the Keats House Charity and its operating model.

KPIs for 2022/23 [2021/22 outturn data for benchmarking.]

1. **To increase visitor numbers to Keats House.** [2021/22 outturn: 2,575.]
2. **Improve Visit England Annual Quality Attraction Assessment Scheme score at Keats House.** [2021/22 data not available due to pandemic. 2019/20 score: 82%]
3. **Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Keats House Charity.** [Despite reduced income levels in 2021/22 with just 39% of the target achieved, planned savings resulted in expenditure of just 85% of budget. This therefore resulted in a net budget position of 99% of final budget for 2021/22.]