

Appendix 1 – [Draft] Annual Report for Keats House Charity 2022/23

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 Corporation's Education, Cultural & Creative Learning and Skills Strategies 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 2022/23:

1. Implement projects and activities identified in the Keats House Divisional Plan and Activities Plan identified for delivery in 2022/23

In April 2022, Keats House was open to the public on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 11am – 1pm and 2 – 4pm. From w/b 2 May this was increased to Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 11am – 1pm and 2 – 5pm.

Our 'Keats Inspired' exhibition opened to the public on 11 May. The exhibition, which was on display until 5 February 2023, looked at the individuals and movements which influenced Keats to become a poet and how he and the other Romantic poets inspired art and culture through to the present day. From July, the exhibition was enhanced by new displays in Keats's and Charles Brown's parlours, celebrating the lives and afterlives of Percy and Mary Shelley. A number of rarely seen items from our collections, including the previously unseen manuscript of 'The Heir of Mondolfo' by Mary Shelley, were put on display with support from our colleagues at London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), with whom we work closely to care for and research our

collections and make them accessible, both physically and intellectually and in person and online.

In February 2023, the 'Young Romantics in the City' exhibition opened to the public. This externally funded partnership project with Cardiff University looks at the diversity of writers and writing in the Romantic period and seeks to reposition them as young, radical, metropolitan and collaborative creatives. The exhibition has been co-curated by Dr. Anna Mercer and Keats House officers and includes an events programming exploring the key themes of politics, class, gender and race. The exhibition and events programme will continue through to February 2024.

Keats House delivered 36 different events in 2022/23, including poetry readings, talks, book launches, family and literary workshops, as well as two major conferences. In total 1,192 people attended in person, with highlights including: a flower-pressing workshop by former artist in residence Elaine Duigenan for London Craft Week; the return after a two-year hiatus of the Keats Foundation Conference; a performance of Keats's and Shelley's work by actor Julian Sands; a special two-day conference on the bicentenary of Shelley's death, organised in partnership with the British Association of Romantic Studies; a two-day 'Poetry and Nature' creative writing workshop delivered by City Lit; and book launches in partnership with Arachne Press, who celebrated ten years of independent publishing in 2022. Highlights of the autumn programme included London Open House Festival, when 237 people attended on Sunday 11 September and one of the performances for Saudha Bangla Music Festival in November. Our annual event for The Eve of St Agnes with the Keats Foundation in January featured the final appearance of Matthew Coulton in the role of Keats, although the character will be re-booted as part of our #YoungRomantics programme in 2023, along with a number of newly developed characters.

As well as our own programme, Keats House officers supported the work of partner and stakeholder organisations, through a number of projects and initiatives, including: four events in Keats House garden for Hampstead Summer Festival 2022; the loan of four artworks for display in Guildhall Art Gallery's 'Inspired' exhibition; and working with colleagues at LMA to display their 'Green City' outdoor exhibition at Hampstead Heath in August and Epping Forest in September.

Social media continues to be an important method of engaging audiences with our collections and promoting events. As at March 2023, Keats House had 6,958 followers on Twitter (+3% on March 2022), 4,159 on Facebook (+3%), and 3,458 on Instagram (+25%). Our social media posts, including the project to publish online the Fanny Brawn to Fanny Keats letters on the 200th anniversary of them being written, regularly attract positive social media activity and engagement in the form of likes, shares and re-posts.

Delivering poetry and creative writing sessions for schools is a core part of our work, supporting teachers and students in formal education as well as contributing to a number of strategic outcomes. Despite the backdrop of

continued COVID outbreaks and strike action in schools, our part-time learning officer delivered 38 taught sessions, to primary and secondary school groups and one university group, with a total of 791 students, plus a further 107 accompanying adults, taking part. An online professional development session was delivered to a further 10 teachers.

We continued to work with our Techne partner organisation Roehampton University to deliver a 'Keats and the Classics' session aimed at students with Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND). The session, run over a full day in June with a small group from New River College, was very successful, and we hope to arrange similar events in the future. In July, the eleventh Keats House Creative Writing summer school took place in person at Keats House, with workshops by Daljit Nagra and novelist Louise Carey. 29 students from 7 London secondary schools took part, leading to a total of 98 instances of engagement over the four days. The week produced some very strong writing, which was collated in an anthology and distributed back to the participating schools and students.

We also collaborated with Culture Mile Learning initiatives such as 'Poetry Versus Colonialism' to explore and reveal the, often hidden, histories of objects in the house, and piloted Culture Mile Learning's 'Culturally Speaking' oracy project in partnership with Speakers Trust. Both of these initiatives help us to diversify the creative learning and social outcomes we support and engage us with schools, teachers and learners who may not otherwise visit the house.

A dedicated core team of volunteers continue their enthusiastic support for Keats House through two main programmes: volunteer tours for visitors to Keats House, which take place on most afternoons we are open to the public; and support for our live events programme, principally through 'Afternoon Poems', free themed poetry readings on the second Sunday of most months. In addition, one under-graduate volunteer gave most of her summer vacation to volunteering front of house, welcoming visitors to the house, and volunteers assisted with the delivery of several events, including Open House Festival. In total, 15 individuals have provided over 638 hours of their time to support activities at Keats House in 2022/23. 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, resulting in new insights and interpretations of our collections. At this stage in their research, regular access to our collections at LMA is a necessary requirement and the active support of our colleagues at LMA has been instrumental in facilitating this.

In 2022/23, Keats House opened to the public on 172 days, with a total of

5,149 recorded visits to the house during that period. For comparison, 11,755 people visited Keats House in 2019/20 and 2,575 in 2021/22. The number of people visiting Keats House has therefore doubled on the previous year, when restrictions were still partly in place, but remains at only 44% of pre-pandemic levels.

Income from admissions, shop sales and private hires has risen along with the increase in numbers visiting the house and booking in-person events. It has not yet been possible to achieve the levels of income previously derived from admissions, shop sales, events hires or events prior to the pandemic, although it is anticipated that a full recovery will be achieved by 2024/25.

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 involving the sale of alcohol have taken place to date in 2022/23 under Keats House's premises licence. 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. Complimentary drinks were also served at a small number of private events, including the two conferences referred to above and music was performed at one event in November. Although these did not involve the sale of alcohol they are reported here for completeness. The Premises Licence for 10 Keats Grove was renewed for the period to 11 September 2023 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 subsequently 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. 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 costed by the City Surveyor's Department to inform a reapplication for funding from that source.

While planning and listed building consent have already been granted for the proposed new visitor entrance, the cost and timescale for this to be completed has yet to be agreed with City Surveyors. Funding for this project has 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 being finalised for submission to the London Borough of Camden

to obtain the required planning and listed building consents.

City Surveyors were able to complete a number of planned preventative maintenance priorities, including the repainting of the exterior metalwork and entrance gate to Ten Keats Grove and Keats Community Library, the replacement of fences on the east boundary and internal entrance path and the repainting of the Keats House conservatory. A leaking mains water pipe to Ten Keats Grove has now been resolved. Keats House staff, City Surveyors and Paul Vick Architects have drawn up plans for new fire and intruder alarm systems for both buildings and an upgraded CCTV system for Keats House, which will be submitted for the required consents and prioritised for completion in 2023/24.

The gardens, which form an integral and much-loved aspect of the heritage site, continue to be maintained by a dedicated team of 'Heath Hands' volunteers working with officers from the Golders Hill Park team. The black mulberry tree was one of 70 ancient trees and 70 woodlands dedicated to The Queen's Green Canopy, with a plaque installed to mark this occasion.

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

The Divisional Plan has been updated to outline our work programmes and priorities over the next three years. A draft Activities Plan for 2023/24 will be presented to the City Corporation's Keats House Consultative Committee and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee in summer. The development of a detailed three to five-year forward plan for Keats House, which is required as part of the City Corporation's documentation framework and for our Museum Accreditation return will follow the implementation of the City Corporation's Target Operating Model. This will be submitted to Members as our Trustees for consultation and approval, before being presented as part of our Museum Accreditation return, now expected in 2024.

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 2023 are:

- Implement projects and activities identified in the Keats House Divisional Plan and Activities Plan for delivery in 2023/24 onwards
- Deliver maintenance and access improvement projects at Keats House
- Develop a three to five-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.** 5,149 [2021/22 end of year outturn = 2,575.]
2. **Improve Visit England Annual Quality Attraction Assessment Scheme score at Keats House.** 2022/23 data not available. This scheme will be renewed in summer / autumn 2023 to inform our improvement plan and actions. [2019/20 score: 82%]
3. **Achieve budgeted income and expenditure targets for Keats House Charity.** Despite reduced income levels continuing in 2022/23 with c.65% achieved, the net budget position was met at year end through reduced expenditure, particularly on staff costs. This resulted in a net c.£19k increase in the Keats House Charity Reserve, which included c.£10k grant funding for activities in 2023/24.