

KEATS  
HOUSE

# Activities Plan 2024/25



Image: Silhouette of Fanny Brawne by Edouart. K/PZ/01/234



Keats House is provided by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation

# Keats House Charity

## Activities Plan 2024/25

The origins of Keats House Charity date back to the 1920s, when a public appeal raised the money to acquire the house and collections for the public. The charity was registered in March 1996 (no. 1053381) and, since 1 January 1997, has been provided by the City of London Corporation as part of its contribution to the cultural life of London and the nation.

The object of the Keats House 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.'**

### About Keats House today

Keats House is a Grade I listed Regency villa, which was built between 1814 and 1816. It is open to the public as an Accredited Museum (no. 097) and delivers a programme of exhibitions and events, provides formal and informal learning opportunities for all ages and abilities, as well as supporting volunteer, work, creative, and research placements.

The garden is closely linked to the history of the site and today is an important part of the visitor offer.

Also within the grounds of the property at 10 Keats Grove stands a Grade II listed building known as Ten Keats Grove. This was first built as the Keats House Museum and Heath Library, which opened in 1931. Today, it functions as a volunteer run library operated by Keats Community Library (registered charity number 1146702), which is registered as an Asset of Community Value by the London Borough of Camden. The Nightingale Room within Ten Keats Grove acts as an events and private hire space managed by Keats House, including its use by KCL as a Children's Library and for their own fundraising events.

In 2023/24, Keats House continued its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic and social changes impacting on the cultural and tourism sectors. While most measures showed positive improvement, Keats House is yet to return to pre-pandemic visitor numbers and income.

Important priorities within 2024/25 include the launch of our 2024/25 exhibition – 'Hidden Histories of Keats House', the culmination of the Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats letters project, work to prepare for the launch of our collections catalogue online and Museum Accreditation application, and planning for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the house to the public in May 1925.

Through these over-arching priorities and its day-to-day operation and activities, Keats House continues to demonstrate how it can **conserve the past while being relevant to the lives of people today**, and work in partnership to make a positive impact on the cultural life of London and the nation.

## Our achievements in 2023/24

Between April 2023 and March 2024, we:

- **Delivered the 'Young Romantics in the City' exhibition and events programme**, supported by funding from Cardiff University's 'Innovation for All' programme.
- **Devised two new object displays** in partnership with London Metropolitan Archives, the British Library and Cardiff University, featuring rarely seen material, including the first display in this country of 'The Woman of Colour' and ballad pamphlets in Welsh and English, alongside material from our own collections.
- **Collaborated with London Metropolitan Archives for Folio400**, displaying Keats's treasured facsimile copy of Shakespeare's folio in the Heritage Gallery, Guildhall.
- **Delivered 36 different events**, including poetry readings, talks, book launches, family and literary workshops, **attended by 878 people**.
- **Hosted the Keats Foundation annual conference** in May, on the theme of 'Conversations with Keats', attracting speakers and delegates from all over the world.
- Devised and **delivered Summer School at Keats House, engaging 30 young people aged 16 -19 from 6 different schools** in four days of creative writing.
- **Supported the learning of 949 students and 131 teachers / assistants**, through 48 taught sessions delivered at Keats House.
- **Collaborated with key partners** including Poetry Versus Colonialism, the Education Strategy Unit, London Metropolitan Archives, Speakers Trust and National Literacy Trust and cultural partner venues to deliver 'Word on the Street' Festival, 'Culturally Speaking' and 'Young City Poets' and.
- **Secured funding from Art Fund to deliver 'The Wild Escape'**, engaging young people with nature through museum collections, including a special event for Earth Day with Hampstead School of Art and the Natural Environment Learning Team.
- **Supported events for Hampstead Summer Festival**, raising funds for two local charities: Keats Community Library and Hampstead School of Art.
- **Supported 713 hours of volunteering by 18 individuals**, who delivered tours and poetry readings for our visitors, as well as helping with front of house, collections care and events.
- **Opened Keats House** to the public on 200 days **receiving 7,338 visits in person**.
- Completed work to migrate our business records and prepare our collections records ready to import into our new Collections Management System – ContentIndex+.
- **Maintained our online engagement**, including social media, web presence and the publishing online of three letters from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats.
- **Worked with City Surveyor's to improve the safety and security of our premises**.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our activities and outcomes during the year. Your creativity, time and commitment has helped Keats House Charity to deliver a creative and engaging programme for its visitors from London and around the world.

## Our governance and strategic context

Keats House operates as a registered charity (no. 1053381) with the City of London Corporation as its sole Trustee. It is managed within the City Corporation's Environment Department and reports to the Cultural, Heritage & Libraries Committee. The Keats House Consultative Committee, which acts as an advisory body, meets twice a year and includes representatives from the City Corporation and local community / sector stakeholder groups.

Our activities are developed within the framework of the City Corporation's Corporate Plan and the Environment Department's business plan. Keats House is managed within the Culture & Projects Section of the Natural Environment Division and helps deliver its vision, mission and four key strategies. We also support wider City Corporation strategies, including for Climate Action and Education, Skills, Cultural & Creative Learning, as well as contribute to a wide range of heritage initiatives, led by organisations such as Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Keats House supports all and directly contributes to five of the six outcomes in The City of London Corporation's new Corporate Plan 2024-29:

**Diverse Engaged Communities**, Dynamic Economic Growth, **Vibrant Thriving Destination**, **Flourishing Public Spaces**, **Providing Excellent Services and Leading Sustainable Environment**.

Keats House aims to support the Environment Department's vision 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 main objectives of Keats House Charity in 2024/25 are to:**

- **Implement the projects and activities identified in this Activities Plan for delivery in 2024/25**
- **Deliver maintenance and access improvement projects at Keats House**
- **Develop a five-year Management Plan for Keats House, to ensure the future sustainability of Keats House charity and its operating model.**

The resources we have to deliver our objectives in 2024/25 include:

**Staff based at Keats House reporting to the Head of Heritage & Museums:**

Keats House Supervisor – 1fte

Interpretation Officer (Programming) – 0.5fte

Interpretation Officer (Learning) – 0.43fte

Visitor Services Officer – 0.4fte plus vacant 0.6fte to be recruited to in '24.

We also provide, and benefit from, volunteer opportunities in five main roles: front of house; tour guides; poetry ambassadors; collections care; and event support. Approximately 15 individuals give their time and experience to support our work throughout the year.

**Financial:**

In 2024/25, the City Corporation will deficit fund Keats House through its City's Estates Fund as follows:

Category:	Annual budget:	Description:
Staff costs:	£250k	Officer salary and on-costs, inc. training.
Revenue costs:	£73k	To pay for the running costs of the premises and our programmes.
Income target:	-£114k	Generated through admissions, shop sales, private hire, events & learning programmes and licences.
Net budget:	£209k*	* In 2024/25 spend may exceed this amount to fund Keats200 legacy projects and other priorities from the Charity's Reserves.
Other costs covered:	£230k(+)	Support services / maintenance works (+ indicates that additional funds may be available to address the backlog of building maintenance works).

**Between April 2024 and March 2025, we plan to support Corporate Plan outcomes by:**

### **Diverse Engaged Communities**

- Actively engaging with young people through Cultural & Creative Learning funded partnership projects, specifically 'Culturally Speaking' and 'Change the Record'.
- Continuing to support, develop and diversify our workforce by providing a range of paid and volunteer opportunities, including for young people aged 16 - 18.
- Making our collections more accessible by launching our new collections management database, including an online, searchable catalogue.
- Working with our major partners (London Metropolitan Archives, Keats Foundation, Poetry Versus Colonialism and Keats Community Library) and establish new partnerships, to enrich and diversify our cultural offer.

### **Vibrant Thriving Destination**

- Delivering the 'Hidden Histories of Keats House' exhibition and three changing displays of rarely seen items from our collections.
- Devising and delivering a year-round events programme, including talks, live interpretation, creative workshops and special events.
- Publishing online the final letters from Fanny Brawne to Fanny Keats on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their writing.
- Researching and developing a new exhibition and events programme for 2025/26, celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Keats House opening to the public in May 1925.
- Supporting strategic partners and local community stakeholders to deliver cultural events, including the Keats Foundation Conference 2025 and events for Hampstead Summer Festival.

### **Flourishing Public Spaces**

- Supporting City Surveyor's to improve the appearance, safety and security of our premises at 10 Keats Grove.

### **Providing Excellent Services**

- Working with our governing body and all stakeholders to develop a sustainable and deliverable Management Plan for the period 2024 – 29.
- Reviewing and developing our policies to support applications for Museum Accreditation and Visit England's Quality Assured Visitor Attraction Scheme.
- Developing our retail offer and income streams, including private hires, creative project grants and charitable donations.
- Continuing to support formal learning in primary, secondary and higher education institutions, by providing taught sessions at Keats House and Summer School 2024.

### **Leading Sustainable Environment**

- Conducting research to better understand our climate impact and areas of agency.
- Working with Heath Hands volunteers and the Learning Team to maintain and enhance the garden at 10 Keats Grove and deliver 'Green Changemakers'.

**To find out more and follow our progress visit:**

[www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/keats](http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/keats)



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