

Committee(s): Keats House Consultative Committee (for Information) Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee (for Information & Decision)	Dated: 31/10/2025 03/11/2025
Subject: Achievements at Keats House April – September 2025, including Risk Management Update	Public report: For Information (KHCC & CHL) and Decision (CHL only)
This proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes • provides business enabling functions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse Engaged Communities • Vibrant Thriving Destination • Flourishing Public Spaces • Providing Excellent Services • Leading Sustainable Environment
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of:	Katie Stewart, Executive Director of Environment
Report author:	Rob Shakespeare, Head of Heritage & Museums, Natural Environment.

Summary

This report updates Members of Keats House Consultative Committee and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee on achievements at Keats House for the period April - September 2025.

During 2025/26, Keats House has been delivering the objectives identified in its annual Activities Plan (Appendix 1), which in turn contribute to the achievement of Departmental, Corporate and wider cultural sector outcomes and initiatives.

This report also provides the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place for Keats House are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management

Framework and the Charities Act 2011. The risks held by the Keats House charity are summarised in this report and the detailed risk register is provided at Appendix 2.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

a. **For Information: Achievements at Keats House**

Members are asked to note the achievements at Keats House outlined within this report.

b. **For Decision: Risk Management**

Members of the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are asked to confirm, on behalf of the City Corporation as Trustee, that the register appended to this report satisfactorily sets out the key risks to the Keats House charity and that appropriate systems are in place to identify and mitigate risks.

Main Report

Background

1. Keats House is a registered charity (number 1053381), which is supported by the City of London Corporation who act as its sole trustee and resource it through the City's Estate fund.
2. This report provides Members of Keats House Consultative Committee and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee with an update on activities at Keats House between April and September 2025.
3. This report also presents an update on the risks held by the Keats House charity, providing Members of the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee with assurance that risk management procedures in place for Keats House are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
4. Keats House continues to focus on delivering its core services of opening to the public, delivering school sessions, and devising and promoting a year-round exhibition and events programme. The four staff permanently based at the house (currently 1.8fte), supported by casual staff and the Head of Museums & Heritage (Natural Environment), are also prioritising a number of key initiatives and longer-term projects to preserve and enhance the premises and improve access to its collections, as identified in its Activities Plan 2025/26 (Appendix 1) and outlined below.
5. Through these activities it aims to rebuild its core services and increase audience numbers and engagement, leading to increased income and demonstrable contribution to a range of Corporate, Departmental and sector outcomes. It continues to work with internal and external partners to deliver creative and

engaging programmes which contribute to a range of priorities, including access to culture, creative learning, wellbeing and community cohesion.

6. Keats House continues to position itself to better support the objectives of the Environment Department, the City Corporation and wider cultural sector. The development of the emerging Cultural Strategy and a longer-term Business Plan for Keats House are seen as key to the retention of full Museum Accreditation, and underlining the role Keats House plays in the cultural life of London, the nation and beyond, particularly in its centenary year.

Current Position

7. Keats House is advertised as open to the public on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, 11am–1pm and 2–5pm, although there was one day (Sunday 21/9) when the house was forced to close due to an unexpected staff shortage.
8. The Keats House 100 exhibition, celebrating the centenary of Keats House being open to the public as a museum opened on 7 May 2025, with a celebratory event attended by over 70 people taking place on 9 May – the anniversary of its opening. The exhibition tells the story of how the house was re-discovered as the place where Keats wrote most of the work for which he is now famous, and the fundraising campaign which established the original charity which purchased the house and turned it into a museum. It also encourages visitors to explore the house as it looked in 1925, through immersive displays including objects which were presented at the house when it first opened. Live-interpretation performances featuring our newly developed Fred Edgcumbe character – the first curator of Keats House – have been scheduled throughout the spring and summer, proving very popular with our visitors and engaging them with the story of the museum's early years.
9. 5,089 people visited the house and Keats House 100 exhibition between April and September 2025. This represents a 21% increase on the same period last year and, if sustained throughout the year, would return our visitor numbers to near pre-pandemic levels (11,755 visitors in 2019/20, when the house was open five days per week, Wednesday – Sunday).
10. A total of 21 public events at the house have engaged people with the themes of the centenary, poetry and creativity, with 677 people enjoying the programme, as demonstrated through high levels of satisfaction on feedback forms and surveys.
11. Keats House continues to work in partnership with Keats Foundation (registered charity number 1147589), with their annual, three-day conference on the theme of 'John Keats in Hampstead' held at the house in May. Delegates from around the world presented academic and personal research papers to approximately 70 attendees, and a Keats House officer gave a keynote speech on the research behind the Keats House 100 exhibition.

12. Keats House continues to be a popular destination for school groups, particularly those studying English Literature for GCSE and Advanced levels. It has also become a regular destination for a local group of home-schooled students and their parent / carers. Our involvement in delivering special projects funded by the City Corporation's Education Strategy Unit (ESU) through their Cultural & Creative Learning Fund, continues to ensure that our learning offer is broad, relevant and accessible for all. We also hosted two school work experience students, one of which was in collaboration with the Natural Environment Learning team.
13. To date in 2025/26, a total of 29 taught sessions have been delivered to 513 students from 22 different schools, including sessions for three ESU funded projects: Green Changemakers, Culturally Speaking and Change the Record.
14. Summer School 2025, on the theme of 'The Monster in the Mirror', engaged a further 27 students from eight schools, five of which were high pupil premium schools which had not visited Keats House in the current year. This four-day programme resulted in 97 instances of engagement with the arts, including two days of workshops with published writers. An online anthology of work produced over the week has been sent to participating students and schools.
15. These targeted sessions and projects, in addition to our informal learning offer, have resulted in Keats House being awarded the prestigious Sandford Award for the high quality of its heritage education. Keats House continues to hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge, demonstrating that it offers a safe and constructive environment for added-value learning experiences.
16. Volunteers provide visitor tours, poetry readings and collections care. Four themed Afternoon Poems events were delivered by our Poetry Ambassadors and five volunteers provided tours of the house on Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays. One individual provides collections care on a weekly basis, and an under-graduate supported our front of house offer throughout summer 2025. In total volunteers provided 362.5 hours of their time, expertise and enthusiasm supporting the activities at the house in the first half of the year.
17. Keats House again supported local community partner events for Hampstead Summer Festival. Hundreds of people enjoyed attending the Art Fair, Family Garden Party and outdoor theatre performances, which provide an opportunity to promote the house to its local community. This was further boosted this year by a local postcard drop to 5,000 local homes in partnership with HSF's advertising campaign and a special 'best depiction of Keats House' category in the Art of the Heath prize. Keats House also took part in Open House Festival 2025, with 395 people visiting the house for free on Sunday 14 September.
18. As well as continuing to maintain the 'Garden Shrine' or 'Bird Sanctuary' – as it was referred to in 1925 – through regular weekly sessions, Heath Hands staff and volunteers, supported our 'Green Changemakers' project, passing on their knowledge and helping young people suggest ways to make the garden more climate resilient. As a result, a number of new features, including a water butt and wildflower lawn, along with refreshed and enhanced garden interpretation, were

introduced. In June 2025, an ash tree at the rear of the garden lost a large limb during an outdoor event. While this thankfully caused no injury or damage to property it highlights the risks caused by the increased stress which the trees in particular are under, coming as it did on the back of the total loss of a lime tree near the front entrance in December 2024. Tree management, in the form of an annual survey and reactive works, continues to be provided by the North London Open Spaces tree team, but it is likely that resource will need to be allocated to manage this risk at an acceptable level in future.

19. Throughout the year we have worked closely with City Surveyor's and their appointed heritage architectural consultants to commission comprehensive and detailed surveys of the building and their immediate environment. This has led to condition reports and prioritised recommendations for both the Grade I listed Keats House and Grade II listed Ten Keats Grove (library) buildings. These are now being considered by City Surveyor's in order to draw up a schedule of works within the allocated Cyclical Works Programme (CWP) budgets, for 2025/26 and 2026/27.
20. Officers from the house, including the Head of Heritage & Museums (Natural Environment) are progressing the priority projects identified for 2025/26 and beyond, including: the commissioning and public launch of our collections management system; researching and planning the temporary displays, exhibitions and events programme for 2026/27 and subsequent years; conducting a review of material held in the Keats Memorial Collection at The London Archives; preparing for Museum Accreditation in 2026; and the longer-term business plan for 2026-29.
21. Keats Community Library (registered charity number 1146702) continue to operate their local library service from Ten Keats Grove, under an approved licence through until 31 March 2029. New promotion and representation of Keats House within the shared-use areas of the building was developed for the centenary, highlighting the role which the City of London Corporation plays in supporting these local cultural and community assets. The external notice boards were also refurbished, including refreshed branding and promotion in line with the Keats House 100 theme.
22. As a condition of the premises licence for 10 Keats Grove, Keats House Consultative Committee receive a twice-yearly report on 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 2025/26 under the terms of Keats House's premises licence. Hampstead Summer Festival events which involved the sale of alcohol and other licensable activities were covered by TENs obtained by the organisers. Complimentary alcoholic drinks were served at the Keats Foundation Conference at no cost to Keats House charity, and two other events, including the centenary celebration. Five Keats House events, which included two outdoor theatre performances and three indoor live music events, took place within the conditions of the licence. Although these did not involve the sale of alcohol they are reported here for completeness. The Premises Licence for 10 Keats Grove was renewed

until September 2026 at a cost of £180.00.

Risk Management

23. The Charity Commission requires Trustees to confirm in a charity's annual report that any major risks to which the charity is exposed have been identified and reviewed and that systems are established to mitigate those risks. Your Committee is presented with the Keats House Risk Register every six months. This reporting frequency aligns with the City of London's Risk Management Strategy and the requirements of the Charity Commission.
24. The Executive Director assures your Committee that all risks held by the Keats House charity, which is part of the Natural Environment Division of the Environment Department, continue to be managed in compliance with the Corporate Risk Management Framework and the Charities Act 2011.
25. All risks are regularly reviewed by the Head of Heritage and Museums, with the updates recorded in the corporate risk management information system. Risks are assessed on a likelihood-impact basis, and the resultant score is associated with a traffic light colour. For reference, the City of London's Risk Matrix is provided at Appendix 3.
26. The Keats House Risk Register contains one RED risk, two AMBER risks, and four GREEN risks which are owned and managed by the Head of Heritage and Museums. For each risk, appropriate mitigating actions are being undertaken, as shown in the detailed register at Appendix 2.
27. Since the date of the last report to your Committee, one new risk has been added to the register: **'Tree event or failure'** with a score of Red 24 (possible likelihood with an extreme impact). There are several large trees in the grounds of Keats House which require regular inspection and works to prevent failure; extreme weather conditions exacerbate this risk. Actions to control this risk include annual inspections of all trees to identify those which need works, with the most urgent given priority, and closure of the garden in extreme weather conditions. Officers are currently awaiting quotes for tree crown reduction works which should reduce the impact of the risk, taking the overall score to the target of Amber 6 (possible likelihood with a serious impact).

Proposals

28. Members of Keats House Consultative Committee, and Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are asked to note the achievements of Keats House between April and September 2025.
29. Members of Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee are asked to approve the risk register at Appendix 2.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications – The activities, projects and works outlined in this report contribute towards the achievement of Corporate Plan 2024–29 outcomes as shown in Keats House Activities Plan, 2025/26 (Appendix 1).

Keats House continues to support the Environment Department to Shape Sustainable Future Environments through its Primary and Supporting Aims and Objectives and contribute to the outcomes identified in the Natural Environment Division's strategic framework.

The activities of Keats House are also designed to contribute to the aims and outcomes of the City Corporation's Education Strategy 2024-29 and new Cultural Strategy, which is currently in development.

Financial implications – None

Resource implications – None

Legal implications – None

Risk implications - Effective management of risk is at the heart of the City Corporation's approach to delivering cost effective and valued services to the public as well as being an important element within the corporate governance of the organisation.

The risk management processes in place in the Environment Department support the delivery of the Corporate Plan, our Departmental and Divisional Business Plans, and relevant corporate strategies, including, but not limited to, the Climate Action; Cultural; Sport; and Volunteering Strategies.

Risks which could have a serious impact on the achievement of business and strategic objectives are proactively identified, assessed and managed in order to minimise their likelihood and/or impact.

Equalities implications – None

Equality Impact Assessment – None

Climate implications – None

Security implications – None

Conclusion

Keats House is open to the public and the Keats House 100 exhibition and events programme have provided a welcome boost to the number of visitors and admissions income in the year to date. The small team based at the house continue to devise, develop and deliver a programme of exhibitions, public events, formal

learning sessions, special projects, and volunteer opportunities which provide for life-long learning and engagement with heritage and culture.

The 100th anniversary of the house opening to the public provided a focus for the partial reinterpretation and improved promotion of the house, resulting in positive local and national media coverage and positive visitor feedback, demonstrated through visitor book comments and survey returns. This is being used to provide the basis and evidence for our longer-term Business Plan and other policies required for Museum Accreditation, supporting a sustainable future for the charity.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Keats House Activities Plan, 2025/26
- Appendix 2 – Keats House Risk Register, updated October 2025
- Appendix 3 – City of London Corporation Risk Matrix

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