

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Keats House Consultative Committee	18 October 2013
<b>Subject:</b> Keats House events, education and community programme	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	<b>For Information</b>

### **Summary**

This report summarises progress in delivering Objective 1 of the Keats House Business Plan 2013-14 and the associated Performance Indicators. Progress is recorded in italic text.

Objective 1 - To increase usage of Keats House by enhancing the education and community programmes in partnership with others.

*The activities and events programme for Keats House has been significantly expanded and developed with the creation of new programming strands and partnerships.*

Indicator 1 - The number of usages of Keats House, comprising personal and group visits, school visits, remote enquiries and online contacts. The target is 320,000 aggregate usages.

Indicator 2 - High overall visitor satisfaction. The target is 96% for the aggregate of Good and Very Good responses to the annual visitor survey.

*The visitor survey has been redesigned to capture data which can be used to improve the interpretation and visitor experience at Keats House, and how these are marketed. The survey is currently underway.*

### **Recommendation(s)**

It is recommended that this report is received.

## Main Report

### **Current Position: Programmes**

1. The Keats Festival in May/June 2013 was the largest and most international to date. Highlights included partnership events with Modern Poetry in Translation and the Parnassus Poets plus performances by John Hegley, the outgoing Poet in Residence. Next year's festival will be 6-15 June.
2. The September-December events programme is aiming to raise the profile of Keats House through ambitious and more intensive programming designed to attract a wider audience. A balance of paid and free events is being offered. Highlights include:
  - a. A partnership event with Vivienne Westwood and YouYou mentoring showcasing young people's poems about climate change.
  - b. Partnership event with Medicine Unboxed on Keats and Medicine, with Jo Shapcott and Andrew Motion.
  - c. Events organised by Jo Shapcott, including a performance of her residency poems, creative writing workshops plus a reading of Keats's Odes by former poets in residence plus Andrew Motion.
  - d. Partnership event on Poetry and Biomedicine featuring 11 scientists and 11 poets.
  - e. Words and music event organised by young people from the Central School of Speech and Drama.
3. For the first time Keats House is hosting an event in partnership with the Keats Community Library; two more partnership events are programmed for January-April.
4. Poetry Society events at Keats House are now being offered and marketed on a partnership basis, to maximise the impact for both organisations.
5. A new monthly family day was launched in September. Staff and freelance writers and artists will deliver a variety of literary and creative activities for families of all ages.
6. The volunteer programme has been expanded. A proactive recruitment drive has doubled the number of volunteers and new roles have been created, increasing opportunities for deep and sustained engagement. New Poetry Ambassadors have been recruited and they are now performing regular monthly readings.

7. A new Interpretation Officer, Sofie Davis, has been appointed. Sofie's specialism is in interpretation and audience research and audience development, having previously worked at Prinlet Street, the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum. Sofie is leading a project to evaluate the visitor experience at Keats House, to include an improved visitor survey and more in-depth qualitative evaluation, which will result in recommendations for improvement.
8. Keats House's education officer, who works one day per week, continues to promote a diverse programme for schools. School numbers have increased on last year.
9. A new Education Officer has been appointed for Visitor Development and Services. Their focus will be on Tower Bridge but they will also support the education offering at Keats House and the Guildhall Art Gallery.
10. The Principal Curator is working with the Visitor Development team to implement a new marketing plan for the House. The first step will be the creation of a coherent visual identity for Keats House, working with experienced designers EasyTiger, who have undertaken branding exercises for the Natural History Museum, the British Library and others.
11. Looking forward to the 2014 programme, a new partnership has been set up with Poet in the City, who will deliver approximately 4 events per year at Keats House from January.
12. A new programme aimed at young adults, in partnership with the Keats House Poets, will run from January 2014 featuring readings and workshops, supported by Arts Council Piloting Participation funding.
13. Keats House will host an academic conference on 'Keats and his Circle' in May 2014 to be organised by Nick Roe and the University of St Andrews. A call for papers has been circulated.
14. Daljit Nagra has been approached as the next Poet in Residence, endorsed by Jo Shapcott and the Keats Foundation Trustees. Daljit is a high-profile poet whose work deals especially with the topic of migration. He is also a teacher of English literature and has very extensive experience of education and public engagement projects.

### **Current position: Performance indicators**

15. Visitor figures are up on 2011-12 and 2012-13.
  
16. Social media figures show a steady increase, with Twitter becoming a particularly active forum for discussion and promotion of the events programme.

#### Quarter 1

- 7,457 visits
- 79,140 other usages
- 86597 total usages

#### Quarter 2

- 7972 visits
- Other usages – figures not yet available

### **Conclusion**

17. Keats House is offering ambitious and innovative programming with a view to broadening its audience base and increasing the depth and variety of public engagement. By working in partnership wherever possible, the team are aiming to maximise public benefits and profile for the amount of resource available.

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