

KEATS HOUSE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Friday, 18 October 2013

Minutes of the meeting of the Keats House Consultative Committee held at Keats House, 10 Keats Grove on Friday, 18 October 2013 at 11.30am

Present

Members:

Dennis Cotgrove
Martin Humphery
Nigel Steward
Jim Burge

Susan Kirby
Steven Bobasch
Diana Gore

Officers:

Matthew Pitt	- Town Clerk's Department
David Pearson	- Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries
Vicky Carroll	- Culture, Heritage and Libraries
David Wight	- Culture, Heritage & Libraries Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Vivienne Littlechild, John Scott and Barbara Newman.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2013 were approved.

4. KEATS HOUSE EVENTS, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

The Committee received a report of the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries summarising progress in delivering Objective 1 of the Keats House Business Plan 2013-14.

The Principal Curator at Keats House advised that it had been a busy period for the House and noted the increase in visitor numbers.

The Chief Executive of Keats Community Library felt the rise in visitor numbers was positive for both the House and the Community Library. He added that he and the Principal Curator were working closely on joining up mailing lists, family events and other joint promotion to build the audience of the House.

The Visitor Services Director added that a new Education Officer and a support post at the City Corporation would be working with the House to promote its educational offer further.

The Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries noted that the educational theme at Keats House worked well with the City Corporation's Education Strategy which had recently been developed.

In response to a Member's question, the Principal Curator undertook to report detailed figures on the demographic of people visiting the house and the income of the house via email.

5. WEDDINGS AT KEATS HOUSE

The Committee received a report of the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries setting out proposals for wedding ceremonies to be held at Keats House and how these would be managed to protect the House and its collection whilst generating additional income.

The Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries outlined the financial context to the proposals, highlighting cuts to the City Corporation's funding and the current budget deficit at Keats House.

The representative of Keats Grove Residents Association felt that the current proposals would not be popular with the local population and that they would not have a great impact on the budget deficit. She listed parking noise, the fragile nature of the building, and the deed of the house.

Another Member noted the major concession of there being no proposal to hold receptions within the report.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries highlighted that a review was built into the proposals.

Some Members felt that the City Corporation should explore the expansion of the retail operation onto to the internet, noting the large worldwide following of Keats and the strength of the Keats Brand.

In response to a Member's query on the National Trust Partnership, the Principal Curator undertook to conduct a survey of the number of visitors and income generated via this relationship.

Members noted the Keats Foundation had not been as successful as it was hoped in generating support for the House.

The Chairman thanked Members for their contribution to the discussion and assured the Committee that the matter would be discussed thoroughly at the Culture, Heritage and Libraries meeting on 28 October, before a decision on the proposals would be made.

6. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that its next meeting would take place on 6 February 2014 at 13.45. The location would be Guildhall.

7. QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

There were no questions.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

The meeting ended at 12.40pm

Chairman

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