

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>
Keats House Consultative Committee	16 September 2014
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Public</b>
Keats House Progress Report	
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>For Information</b>
Visitor Development and Services Director, Culture, Heritage & Libraries	
<p><b>Summary</b></p> <p>This report summarises achievements and developments at Keats House during the six months since the last Consultative Committee meeting.</p> <p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p> <p>Members are asked to note the report.</p>	

### Main Report

#### Visitor figures

- House visitor numbers for February-July are up 15% on last year, with most of the increase being in the spring and early summer (See Appendix 1).
- A significant contributor to this increase is the continued growth of the events programme.

#### Events

- The events programme is going from strength to strength, attracting good numbers but using up relatively little staff resource, thanks to partnership working and help from volunteers. From April – July over 1300 attended public events. In addition, 700 people attended the Keats Festival.
- Overall, income gained from ticket sales is roughly balancing expenditure on artist fees etc., so that the overall cost of the festival and the ongoing programme is zero (excluding staff time and marketing costs).
- The Keats Festival achieved good publicity, especially on account of a special event featuring Simon Russell Beale and Dame Janet Sussman.
- The Piloting Participation programme, run by young poets and funded by the Arts Council through a partnership with the Geffrye Museum, is working very

well. Since it started in January over 200 people have been involved, exceeding our target for the period.

- Family days continue to be popular, attracting in the region of 70 people on the third Saturday of every month.

### **Volunteers**

- Keats House now has 47 volunteers working in a variety of roles, including front of house.

### **Staff**

- Grace Blackman and Amy Murat have both left Keats House over the summer. Replacements for both Information Officer posts have just been recruited and all being well they will both start in September.
- A new paid traineeship has been created with full funding from the Arts Council, via a partnership with the British Museum. The trainee (currently being recruited) will also work at Guildhall Art Gallery and will receive training from the British Museum. This will significantly increase the educational impact of Keats House, whilst also supporting the day to day running of the house.

### **Interpretation**

- Keats House has been awarded a grant of £85,500 from the Arts Council towards a £95,000 project to enhance the interpretation and visitor experience at Keats House. Initial research has been completed and a new interpretation scheme is being developed. This will get more of the collection on display, bring out more of the stories behind the house, and offer visitors more to see and do, including families.
- The project will be completed by February 2015 in time for launch in March 2015.

### **Learning**

- School figures have been increasing steadily, in part due to proactive recruitment by the Learning Officer, and also because she has an extra half day a week in the office this year to take groups thanks to the Share Academy project – see below.
- For April-July 532 school students/teachers visited, compared with 439 last year, an increase of 17%. 163 further/higher education students/teachers visited, compared with 88 last year, an increase of 46%.
- During the period April-July our partnership with UCL School of English, funded by Share Academy, resulted in one excellent event at Keats House plus two Festival events at the UCL Bloomsbury campus – the first time the Keats Festival has included offsite events. Students visited in March for a workshop and further workshops are planned for later in the year.

- We have also secured our first grant from the Clore Foundation, for £1600 to support an educational project for schools in partnership with the Keats Community Library.

### **Income generation**

- Having revised our hire charges, Keats House has begun to accept private bookings for use of the house and the Nightingale Room in the library. We have taken just over £4000 for private hire so far this financial year.
- Following the redisplay of the shop in February (paid for by a Museum of London grant), sales for March-June increased by 40% compared with the previous year. The shop manager is trialling new stock and ensuring that the space continues to be well presented.
- The Principal Curator has begun work on procuring new branded merchandise utilising the new Keats House visual identity.
- The local residents' fundraising programme is now in full swing. Further details are provided in a separate paper.

### **Grants**

Keats House has been awarded the following grants in the last 6 months:

- £85,000 from Arts Council England to improve the interpretation and visitor experience
- Full funding for an 18 month traineeship from the Arts Council (£12,000 p/a paid to trainee, plus significant training benefits)
- £2000 for conservation of 3 paintings from Museum Development Office
- £1600 for a schools project in partnership with the Keats Community Library from the Clore Foundation

### **Marketing**

- Keats House has a new, contemporary, coherent visual identity which is being rolled out. The first major manifestations are, for the first time, an Events Guide for Keats House, plus a generic leaflet promoting the house which is being distributed to various sites.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Visitor Figures

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