

Arvon Report to the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust, December 2022



Arvon's Grant Fund 2022

'The [Arvon course] was one of the most incredible experiences of my life. [...] As a direct result of the grant, I now feel a sense of hope, excitement, and determination when thinking of my future as a writer. I am incredibly and eternally grateful for this experience.' – Grant recipient, 2022

Everyone at Arvon is so grateful to the trustees of the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust for their committed support of disadvantaged writers through our Grant Fund.

Arvon's Grant Fund in 2022

2022 was our first full year of residential programming following the Covid-19 pandemic. We delivered 80 residential courses across our three writing houses. Thanks to the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust's kind support and that of other donors, we awarded grants for residential courses to 69 writers in 2022. We also awarded 15 grants for Arvon at Home online courses. Thanks to one donor, we were also able to award grants for our Clockhouse retreats for the first time, meaning that we now offer financial assistance for all of Arvon's activity.

The introduction of half-price concessions over the past few years has allowed us to target our grants to the writers most in need, and the average grant awarded for a residential course grew to just under £675 this year. In 2022, half of all grant applicants self-identified as disabled and nearly two thirds had a household income of £17,000 or less.

Feedback remained excellent, with 38% of grant applicants saying they felt confident about developing their writing prior to their course, climbing to 82% after. Following their courses, all but one grant recipient reported that they had more clarity about what they wanted to achieve in their writing over the next year.

Below are profiles of three writers who benefitted from the Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust's generous support in the second half of 2022. They and we are so grateful to you for giving them these invaluable experiences.

A writer from Southampton received a full grant of £815 to take part in a non-fiction course at Lumb Bank in summer 2022. The recipient felt that the course would be 'an enormous opportunity'. She found the tutors and their workshops 'inspirational', 'almost magically tailored'. She learned not only 'the importance of hard graft but [...] the belief that I have some amount of talent or potential [...] It means in the future I can work in my dark bedroom in Southampton with more inner light and confidence.'

A writer from Norwich received a grant of £780 to attend a fiction course at The Hurst in summer 2022. Following the course, she described all that she had learnt – about pacing, humanity, structure, white space on the page, editing and ‘showing not telling’. *‘The feedback and response to my writing was incredibly encouraging, and made me feel motivated to keep going... I felt very supported and [...] enjoyed surrounding myself with like-minded people – it really helped to hear them mirror my own fears and insecurities.’* She said, *‘the tutors were very generous’* and *‘it was the focus I valued most... I genuinely think I have left a better writer in many ways... Without the grant I never, ever would have had the opportunity.’*

A writer from St Albans received a full grant of £880 to take part in a fiction course at The Hurst in winter 2022. The course had a profound affect on her writing and her state of mind. After her course, she said, *‘I have transformed [...] The unlocking I hoped for has happened.’* She wrote a complete short story, had her knowledge *‘both consolidated and extended’* and joined a new writing group. *‘I now feel excited about future possibilities,’* she said *‘The knowledge that kind people have allowed me to attend Arvon is so, so precious.’*

Grant Fund Alumni

It has been great to see so much writing, much of it worked on during the pandemic, come to fruition and reach its audiences in 2022. As usual, writers who have received grants to take part in Arvon courses have been prolific. Following are some achievements by Grant Fund alumni in the second part of 2022:

- **Fiona Benson**’s third collection *Ephemeron* was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize
- **Hasti Crowther** won the Wasafiri New Writing Prize for Poetry
- **Ishy Din** cowrote the play *Silence* for the Tara Theatre and Donmar Warehouse
- **Charlie Dupre**’s play *Compositor E* was longlisted for the Bruntwood Prize
- **Inua Ellams** presented *An Evening with an Immigrant* at various theatres
- **Helena Hunter** had poems published in *Map Magazine* and *The Contemporary Journal*
- **Zaffar Kunial** published his second collection *England’s Green* and it was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize
- **Tamara Micner** wrote and performed in *Yankl & Der Beanstalk* at the Manchester Jewish Museum and Chutzpah! Festival, Canada
- **Margaret Perry**’s play *Paradise Now!* is currently showing at the Bush Theatre

Thank You

The Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust has been a cornerstone of our Grant Fund for so many years and is only more so with your increased gift. You have given innumerable writers the gifts of expert tuition, inspiration, confidence, focus and nature, and contributed to the development of literature in the UK. We remain indebted to you for your support and thank you sincerely.