

Registered number
03691656

Women's Prize Trust

Filleted Accounts

30 June 2023

Women's Prize Trust Company Information

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements of the charitable company for the year ended 30 June 2023

Directors

Debbie Woskow
Anna Ollard
Alison Barrow
Sandeep Mahal
Felicity Blunt
Louise Jury
Anita Anand
Aliceson Robinson
Scarlett Curtis
Raifa Rafiq
Sarah Davis
Jenny Fry - Appointed 26.01.2023
Zainab Weller - Appointed 26.01.2023
Lou Cordwell - Appointed 18.07.2023

Secretary

Lilidh Kendrick

Accountants

AFP Services
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Bath Road
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN16 8NQ

Registered office

6 New Street
London
EC4A 3BF

Registered number

03691656

Women's Prize Trust

CHAIR'S REPORT

As I reflect on the past year, I am honoured to share the strides we've made at the Women's Prize Trust in championing access and equity for women in the world of books. Our commitment to celebrating women's stories and voices remains unwavering and I'm thrilled to witness the impact of our initiatives.

In 2023, our 28th year, we intensified our efforts to engage with readers and leaned into our vibrant book community. For instance, we shifted the format of our online book club to give more power and input to the audience in shaping the discussions through their questions. We expanded our Women's Prize LIVE day festival from three to 13 events, serving as a culmination point for book joy and serious discussions among our readers and writers. We deepened our collaboration with reading groups, providing them with an immersive experience akin to the official judging panel; meeting the judges, fostering dialogue across multiple groups on the shortlisted books and the unique experience of reading for a literary prize.

As well as celebrating published women writers, through the Women's Prize for Fiction, we also continued our commitment to supporting the talent pipeline for not-yet-published writers, particularly those facing barriers to entry. At the Women's Prize LIVE festival, we offered in-person sessions providing one-on-one meetings with literary agents, providing invaluable opportunities for these aspiring writers. Additionally, we expanded our online events, ensuring accessibility for all through free or pay-what-you-can options.

Our Discoveries program saw growth in 2023 for the third year, with nearly 3000 entries—an increase of 20%. 80% of applicants resided outside of London, showcasing the positive impact of strategic partnerships such as with non-literary organisation GirlDREAMER in the Midlands. The impact of Discoveries has been profound, with 86% of participants reporting increased inspiration towards achieving their goals and 82% gaining more knowledge about the world of books.

A significant highlight of the year was the announcement and launch of the inaugural Women's Prize for Non-Fiction, set to be awarded in 2024. This major new annual book prize celebrates exceptional narrative non-fiction by women, promoting excellence in writing, robust research, and original narrative voices. The launch of this prize is a testament to our dedication to showcasing women's expertise across various fields.

The decision to introduce the Women's Prize for Non-Fiction stemmed from research unveiled in February 2023, revealing stark gender disparities in the literary landscape. Female non-fiction writers are less likely to be reviewed in UK national media, shortlisted for awards, or receive equitable advances compared to their male counterparts. This discrepancy not only impacts remuneration but also consumer visibility, with only 30% of the top 500 bestselling non-fiction books in 2022 authored by women.

Despite these challenges, our resolve to empower women writers remains unyielding. We continue to forge ahead, breaking barriers and providing platforms for women to share their voices and stories.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our sponsors, patrons, partners, trustees, and dedicated team for their unwavering support. Their support and generosity enables us to pursue our mission with vigour and impact; we are immensely grateful for their partnership.

As we look ahead to our 30th anniversary year, poised to amplify our mission even further, let us continue shaping a literary landscape that celebrates diversity, inclusivity and excellence.

Anna Ollard
Chair of the board
Date: 26 March 2024

Women's Prize Trust TRUSTEES REPORT

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ending 30th June 2023, which is also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and financial statements for Companies Act purposes.

Reference and administrative information on page 1 forms part of this report.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the memorandum and articles of association and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Structure, governance and management

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 5th January 1999 and registered as a charity on 18th December 2018.

The company was established under a memorandum of association on 24th July 2018 which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its articles of association.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in the financial accounts.

Trustees

The trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law and are members of the charity, are as follows:

Anita Anand
Alison Barrow
Felicity Blunt
Lou Cordwell - appointed 18.07.2023
Scarlett Curtis
Sarah Davis
Jenny Fry - appointed 26.01.2023
Louise Jury
Sandeep Mahal
Anna Ollard (chair)
Raifa Rafiq
Aliceson Robinson
Zainab Weller - appointed 26.01.2023
Debbie Woskow

Appointment of trustees

Under the terms of the company's Articles of Association, there shall be no fewer than eight and no more than fifteen trustees at any one time.

Trustees' term of office is four years, plus an optional additional four years. Trustees elected as Chair can be appointed for a third consecutive term.

Appointing new trustees is organised via a recruitment process run by the nominations committee.

Trustee induction and training

New trustees are provided with a Trustee Handbook outlining their legal obligations under charity and company law, and are made aware of the content of the Articles of Association, the decision-making process and the financial performance and plans of the charity.

Organisation

Trustees are responsible for the overall administration of the charity and for making strategic decisions. The implementation of strategic plans is carried out by the Executive, which includes:

Executive Director who receives an annual salary

Administrator/project manager who receives an annual salary

Founder Director who receives an annual fee plus reimbursement of expenses

The charity also has a roster of contractors and service providers to assist in the delivery and promotion of programmes and activities. Payment of fees to other consultants, agencies and suppliers are negotiated individually based on the services provided, taking account of expertise and experience, and reviewed on an annual basis.

Statement of responsibilities of the trustees

The trustees (who are also directors of the Women's Prize Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Governance

During the year, the organisation embarked on a governance programme with a policy review timetable and a series of new sub-committees to manage the growing complexity of our work.

We now operate the following:

- Equality and Diversity Sub-Committee (chaired by Sandeep Mahal)
- Finance and Personnel Sub-Committee (chaired by Anna Ollard)
- Nominations Sub-Committee (chaired by Aliceson Robinson)
- Development Sub-Committee (chaired by Debbie Woskow)

The sub-committee structure allows trustees to engage with our work and operations at a deeper level and helps the organisation to take forward significant areas of work on a more formal basis. During the year the groups all established or reviewed Terms of Reference and met quarterly.

Risk Management

The trustees examine on a quarterly basis the major strategic, business and operational risks which the charity faces and confirm that systems have been established to enable regular reports to be produced so that the necessary steps can be taken to minimise these risks.

Purposes and aims

This report looks at what the Women's Prize Trust has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period of 1st July 2022 - 30th June 2023. The Trustees report the success of each key activity and the benefits the Trust has brought to those groups of people that it is set up to help. The review also helps the Trustees ensure the Trust's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes.

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

The Trustees have complied with the duty in section 4 of the 2006 Charities Act to have due regard to guidance published by the Charity Commission. In particular, the Trustees refer to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit both when reviewing how well past activities have satisfied the Trust's stated objectives, and when planning how future activities may best continue to do so.

The main means through which the Trust's objective is met is the organisation and promotion each year of a series of activities designed for public benefit.

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S PRIZE TRUST

Objects of the charity

The Women's Prize Trust's objects are:

'Restricted specifically to the advancement of the art of literature for the public benefit and in particular to foster and promote literature of merit written by women in all its forms, including by the encouragement of diversity and greater gender equality amongst writers and by the award of an annual prize for a full-length novel written by a woman of any nationality and published in English.'

Mission

The Women's Prize Trust enriches society by creating equitable opportunities for women in the world of books and beyond.

As a registered charity, we open up pathways into reading and writing for the booklovers and storytellers of tomorrow. We support women writers at all stages of development, providing coaching and resources to unlock potential, boost confidence and increase skills. We work with all readers, prioritising access to and engagement with books by women for those who need them most, in order to increase empathy, expand imaginations, share knowledge and empower connection. As a result, we are developing a global community of writers and readers, reducing social isolation and enhancing mental health and wellbeing.

Our values are:

Excellence

We create opportunities for exceptional writing to shine by providing the accessible platform women writers deserve.

Community

We nurture a positive community of readers, writers, and advocates who celebrate and support each other. We unite people through common experiences and shared stories.

Representation

We champion the diversity and unique voices of women from all backgrounds, empowering them to share their stories, insights, and expertise.

Legacy

We are committed to creating lasting change and understanding within the arts and society as a whole for current and future generations.

ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR FICTION

Overview

The Women's Prize for Fiction is the largest celebration of women's creativity: an awards platform that champions brilliant women writers and role models while nurturing a global community of readers.

In its 28-year history, the Women's Prize for Fiction has become one of the most prestigious, popular and influential literary prizes in the world, championing women's voices from all backgrounds and reaching a global community of readers. The Prize was established in 1996 to highlight and remedy the imbalance in coverage, respect and reverence given to women writers versus their male peers, creating a platform for exceptional writing by women to shine.

The Women's Prize for Fiction is awarded annually to the author of the best full-length novel of the year written in English and published in the UK. The winner receives £30,000, anonymously endowed, and the 'Bessie', a bronze statuette created by the artist Grizel Niven. The Prize follows an impartial and robust judging process, decided every year by an independent judging panel, who base their deliberations for the longlist, shortlist and winner on three core tenets which have remained the same since the Prize was founded: excellence, originality and accessibility.

The Prize celebrates the stories of women writers from all backgrounds and signifies not only quality writing, but also greater visibility for women within the world of books. Over nearly three decades, it has changed the perception of women's fiction showcasing over 500 outstanding, ambitious novels that hold a mirror up to the issues at the core of our global society through the female gaze. Impact on writers: This growing recognition of women's writing has promoted confidence and ambition among women writers, as well as bringing people together through a shared love of books and enriching what people read by putting brilliant writing by women into the hands of readers.

2023 Women's Prize for Fiction

The 2023 judging panel was chaired by Louise Minchin, author and broadcaster on BBC Breakfast, who brought her characteristic warmth, intelligence and diplomacy to the role of chair. Louise was joined by Rachel Joyce, novelist; Bella Mackie, journalist, podcaster and author; Irenosen Okojie, novelist and short story writer; and Tulip Siddiq, Member of Parliament for Hampstead and Kilburn and Shadow Economic Secretary.

The longlist offered a brilliant range of debut voices alongside established authors, including two former winners of the Prize. The list was widely celebrated for surfacing exciting new voices for readers to discover: *"While including stunning new books from previous winners Barbara Kingsolver and Maggie O'Farrell, the list showcases an eclectic range of novels from no less than nine debut authors of full-length fiction, which is certainly something to be celebrated"*, Glamour Magazine.

The 2023 Prize was awarded to Barbara Kingsolver for *Demon Copperhead* (Faber & Faber), a reimagining of Dickens' *David Copperfield* set in poverty-stricken Virginia at the height of the opioid crisis. This historic win made Kingsolver the first author to win the Prize twice, having won in 2010 with *The Lacuna*.

Speaking on behalf of the judging panel, Louise Minchin commented: *"Barbara Kingsolver has written a towering, deeply powerful and significant book. In a year of outstanding fiction by women, we made a unanimous decision on Demon Copperhead as our winner. Brilliant and visceral, it is storytelling by an author at the top of her game."*

Barbara Kingsolver was a hugely popular winner, embraced by readers and with significant international media pick-up. This global spotlight on the Women's Prize for Fiction helps people to recognise the work the Trust does as a charity and shine a light on our agenda.

The Women's Prize for Fiction continues to have a significant impact on the profile and sales of the authors involved. Faber & Faber reported that they reprinted 55,000 copies of *Demon Copperhead* after it was announced as this year's winner, and around half of the paperback's lifetime sales volume (26,627 copies) were recorded in the three weeks following the announcement.

Readers

As well as the writers it platforms, the Women's Prize for Fiction aims to have a positive impact on readers. This year we continued to grow our audiences, offering engaging content streams designed to raise awareness of books by women, and to spark reflection and discourse around their timely and important themes, from the role of art in conflict to the climate crisis.

We hosted the online Shortlist Book Club across three nights in May, a celebration of the shortlist offering readers access to inspiring women's voices and stories. Each event featured a pair of shortlisted authors in conversation, alongside performed readings from legends of the stage and screen, with guests including Lashana Lynch, Caitríona Balfe, Indira Varma, Tanya Reynolds, Juliet Stevenson and Charlie Thurston.

We offered free reading guides with the ticket purchase and invited participants to shape the conversation by submitting questions in advance, placing readers at the centre of the conversation and celebration. Over 600 readers tuned in from across the world and engaged in lively conversation in the chat panel, reacting to the readings, sharing thoughts on the books' themes, and putting their questions to the authors.

This digital strand to our programme allows us to continue growing and fostering connection among our global community of readers, as well as ensuring we maintain access for audiences.

In June we welcomed over 600 guests into Bedford Square Gardens, London, for Women's Prize LIVE, a day of events for storytellers and booklovers. This was an opportunity to bring together our community, offline, to connect and express their creativity, as well as to showcase the very best female talent within the publishing and creative industries.

We worked collaboratively with publishers and partners to curate a varied programme of thirteen events aimed at our two core audiences of readers and writers. To give a flavour, the programme included:

- Intimate, practical writing workshops led by authors including Elif Shafak, Kate Mosse and Cathy Rentzenbrink
- 1:1 coaching sessions with publishing experts, including editors, agents and book marketing specialists
- A 'Non-Fiction Must-reads' panel, celebrating excellent non-fiction by women
- A proof party showcasing this year's up-and-coming debut fiction authors
- A 'How to Own the Room' masterclass with Viv Groskop on harnessing confidence
- Readings from the six authors shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction, on the eve of the winner ceremony

While the festival is a ticketed event and an important fundraiser for the Trust's charitable work, we are committed to ensuring our events are accessible to a wide audience. We partnered with the London TicketBank – a scheme set up to enable people to engage with culture during the cost of living crisis – to offer subsidised day passes to women from low income backgrounds. Through the TicketBank, we issued 20 general passes and 6 workshop spaces to those who registered an interest in creative writing as well as reading. In a follow up survey, 34% of Women's Prize LIVE attendees identified as working class or from a working class background.

The event brought together a positive community of readers and writers to celebrate and support each other, with 97% of attendees surveyed agreeing that the event felt inclusive and welcoming. The following is a selection of feedback from attendees:

"Everyone was very friendly and as an introverted person who came alone it was really wonderful to speak to other readers and share my love for books and make new connections."

"It was a wonderful day out in a gorgeous venue, and it just felt like such a warm and happy place to meet other readers and come together through our love of books."

"The highlight was the 1:1 opportunities with industry experts – what a great, bite-size way to connect with and learn from individuals whom unrepresented/unpublished writers wouldn't ordinarily have access to. I got so much out of my session with Lucy Morris from Curtis Brown."

"The speakers and writing workshops were powerful. This event elevates women's writing and we sorely need such instances to close the authority gap and make women's voices heard."

Supporting reading groups

Our shortlist shadowing opportunity attracted 98 applications from reading groups across all 12 regions of the UK, doubling the number of applications from the previous year. Six reading groups were invited to read, discuss and review one of the shortlisted books, before coming together to share their experiences.

We offered members free books in the format of their choice, tickets to the Shortlist Book Club Online and, for the first time, we brought the groups together for Zoom gatherings at the beginning and end of the process. We ran an introductory meet-and-greet with our partner The Reading Agency to brief the participants, introduce them to each other and engender a wider sense of the national shadowing project they were engaged in, and we closed with a Zoom party hosted by Chair of Judges Louise Minchin. This offered a unique opportunity for the groups to meet each other and get inside the independent judging process.

It was a lively event with lots of great discussion and debate around the six books – one group even pitched Louise an alternate ending to *The Marriage Portrait*. The event offered opportunities for the groups of all ages and backgrounds to connect, voice their views and reflect on the positive impacts of reading. Here is a selection of feedback from the groups:

'Taking part created a real buzz of excitement for the group. When we heard the other groups in the introductory meeting we realised how diverse book groups are, with different agendas and reasons for forming their groups. Everyone in the group was able to voice their opinion in what was a very lively discussion about the book.'

NHS Retirement Book Club

'We share many of the same values as the Women's Prize Trust, so to collaborate during this process has been a tremendously exciting experience. In the beginning, it felt surreal to be part of a programme on this scale, especially since our book club is under a year old, but now we feel truly connected to the Women's Prize Trust, and have become passionate advocates during the process.'

'We particularly enjoyed how interactive the whole experience was, from networking with our selected author on social media to participating in the live shows. We felt connected during the whole experience as authors can often feel like celebrities, but participating in this programme has offered us a chance to speak to some of the shortlisted authors on a more intimate scale. Overall, the process has felt inclusive and empowering.'

Manchester Book Society

Library & Retailer engagement

We amplify our reach to different types of readers through the UK library network, with 217 libraries signing up to receive digital promotional packs at longlist, shortlist and winner stage. In addition to this, we distributed physical point-of-sale packs free of charge to libraries and independent bookshops to help them promote the shortlisted books to readers in their community. The Trust proudly supports independent booksellers through alignment with Bookshop.org, the online bookshop financially supporting local, independent bookshops, and promoting Independent Bookshop Week every year, and we were thrilled to be shortlisted for the inaugural Bookshop.org Indie Champion Award for Innovation.

This reader-focused activity enabled us to further the Trust's mission of driving change within society by improving access to and appreciation of women's writing, and ensuring readers feel represented by the wide range of stories available.

The Trust plans to develop this reader-focused work in 2023/2024, with projects that build on the proven links between reading and empathy, and the purposeful use of stories to build intercultural exchange and foster understanding.

DISCOVERIES

Wherever women are writing, Discoveries aims to find, inspire and support aspiring novelists from those early pages to long-term careers.

Run in partnership with Curtis Brown literary agency, Curtis Brown Creative writing school and Audible, Discoveries is both a prize for unpublished writers and an ambitious development programme offering mentoring, resources and industry access to women of all backgrounds from in the UK and Ireland.

The programme is designed so that every one of the thousands of entrants leaves the Discoveries process more skilled, more informed, more connected and more confident than when they applied. Each year, 16 writers are selected by a judging panel to receive additional development opportunities including personalised mentorship packages, places on writing courses and recording studio sessions, with the overall winner receiving an offer of representation from a literary agent and £5,000.

Outreach

Discoveries seeks to stimulate and diversify the talent pipeline in publishing, offering access to all women and dismantling common barriers to entry. Our outreach activity – implemented throughout the submissions window from September 2022 to January 2023 – is vital in ensuring the support on offer reaches women who are underrepresented in the industry, including women from low-income backgrounds, women of colour, and women from outside of London, the nucleus of publishing.

We offered a programme of free events centred around two key strands – writers' craft and publishing industry knowledge – and we continued to add to and distribute our open-source Writers' Toolkit, housed on the Women's Prize and Curtis Brown Creative websites. Both provided accessible expertise and motivation to aspiring writers, with contributions from authors and publishing professionals.

Following their interaction with Discoveries, either through events or online resources:

- 82% of women said they had gained more knowledge on the world of books
- 61% of women said they felt more confident in their writing
- 78.9% of women said they felt more confident in trying something new
- 81.7% of women said they had a better understanding of the creative opportunities available to them
- 80.3% of women said they felt better equipped to pursue the creative opportunities that interest them
- 86% said that taking part had inspired them to take steps towards achieving their goals

66% of women who interacted with events and writing resources during the submissions window confirmed that they were considering entering their novel-in-progress to Discoveries, plus 12.5% who said they would consider entering in future years.

The survey gave us greater insight into the factors women identify as the main obstacles to writing, providing useful insights to inform the future support we offer to writers.

1. Knowing how hard it is to get published (57.2%)
2. Lack of confidence (53.2%)
3. Lack of time (51.4%)

We recognise that partnerships can be a valuable way of connecting meaningfully with target beneficiaries and delivering our charitable objectives. One of our core outreach aims for year three of Discoveries was to broaden our reach beyond the already interested literary community, establishing and consolidating relationships with women's organisations in the UK and Ireland more broadly.

A key partner for 2023 was GirlDreamer, a non-profit organisation based in Birmingham that supports the personal, professional and communal development of young women of colour to tackle social inequality and pursue their dreams. We collaborated on a free online event aimed at demystifying the publishing industry for women new to writing, offering an introduction to the collaborative process of taking a novel from first draft to finished book. There were 130 live attendees and the event proved to be a great awareness driver for Discoveries, with 45% of attendees stating that they were unaware of the programme before attending the event. Here is a selection of feedback from the event:

'The panel was so insightful and welcoming that it made me feel empowered to take the next steps in my writing and to let go of some of the barriers I had placed upon myself (believing I could not go down a specific route, or that there was no interest in stories like mine etc).'

'It's really inspiring to see established and amazing authors give their time and hear about the knockbacks and things they've been through; has made me more determined. I love that Discoveries is also about helping develop writers. Sometimes it feels like if you're not the finished product, you have no chance of succeeding, so this gives me hope that I can grow and become the author I want to be.'

'It provided stimulating ideas and encouragement that made me feel like I can fit writing around my health issues.'

'The online events are really useful, it's great to get industry insight into a world that one isn't necessarily privy to otherwise.'

Discoveries received nearly 3000 entries for 2023 – an increase of 20% on 2022, with 80% of applicants living outside of London – demonstrating the growing reach of the programme and positive impact of strategic partnerships.

The 2023 Discoveries writers

The 2023 Discoveries judging panel was chaired by author and Founder Director of the Women's Prize for Fiction Kate Mosse, with authors Kiran Millwood Hargrave and Chibundu Onuzo; Lucy Morris, Curtis Brown literary agent; and Anna Davis, Founder and Managing Director of Curtis Brown Creative writing school. The entries were whittled down to 16 longlisted writers, then six shortlisted writers, then one winner and one Discoveries Scholar.

The 16 writers took part in a bespoke two-week Discoveries Writing Development Course designed by Curtis Brown Creative and taught by author Charlotte Mendelson. The course took place in July 2023 and focused on the works-in-progress of the longlisted writers, using one-to-one tutorials, live teaching on Zoom, and writing exercises and group discussion on Curtis Brown Creative's online learning platform, culminating in a teaching session with Curtis Brown literary agents. The course was also designed to bring the group of writers together through their shared Discoveries experience, and to encourage peer-to-peer support going forward, recognising that writing can be a solitary exercise.

The winning writer was Paige Cowan-Hall with her novel-in-progress *Marooned*, a vividly imagined historical fantasy set in Jamaica, based on the real-world stories of the Maroons, runaway slaves who fought the British and founded the Maroon settlement. Paige has been signed by Curtis Brown agent Ciara Finan, and has since received an original commission from Audible.

'The Discoveries programme 2023 has been an incredibly positive and affirming experience for me. Writing a novel without knowing if anyone will ever read it, never mind enjoy it, is a daunting task, and with no professional writing experience or publishing contacts it is very easy to get discouraged. I entered the Discoveries competition with no expectations, so having my work read and shortlisted by a judging panel comprised of top writers and literary agents has provided me with a prize beyond price – the confidence to call myself a writer.'

The Discoveries programme has also provided me with many opportunities for support and development - from the writing course run by esteemed author Charlotte Mendelson, to mentoring with literary agents at Curtis Brown. Meeting the other Discoveries 2023 longlisted and shortlisted writers has also provided me with a supportive writing community who share experience and aspirations.'

Most crucially of all, the Discoveries programme has provided me with exposure and connections to the publishing industry which is so difficult to achieve as an unpublished writer. I am extremely grateful to everyone at Discoveries for this unique and invaluable opportunity.'

Fiona Campbell, shortlisted for 2023 Discoveries

'Being shortlisted for Discoveries was simply the most unexpected and brilliant thing to happen to me in 2023. The programme has provided me with a network of both fellow writers and industry professionals who have helped me navigate this whole new chapter of my life in a world I knew little to nothing about. My fellow longlistees support each other through everything from crises of confidence to those "silly" questions we worry we should already know the answers to. The experts and professionals I've connected with – for example published writers, agents, the Women's Prize team – have offered the most astonishing, hands-on support. With them, I've gathered priceless new perspectives on writing and have polished the details of my novel to make it something that will, hopefully, stand the best possible chance at publication down the line. As someone so new to writing, I might never have found the confidence to even envisage a world in which I'm a published author. Now, thanks to the Discoveries programme, it's something I work towards every day.'

Riana Duce, longlisted for 2023 Discoveries

'The Discoveries Programme was a real turning point for me. As someone who had not studied Creative Writing at university, I saw writing as something I really enjoyed but that couldn't be a career ... Being longlisted by the Discoveries Programme gave me so many things – support, confidence, a peer group of women in the same process as me and recognition, but what the Discoveries Programme does best is provide an accolade that makes people pay attention! The Women's Prize and Curtis Brown team are highly regarded within the publishing world and utterly brilliant mentors; they gave me the backing I needed, not just for myself, but to validate to agents that I was worth consideration.'

Being longlisted gave me the confidence that was previously missing when I pitched to agents, and upon changing the way I was approaching agents, and adding the longlist accolade into my pitch, I had a handful of interested agents and more than one offer of representation. I know that I wouldn't have had the same interest (or gumption!) without the wisdom and cheerleading from the Women's Prize team, Curtis Brown and my fellow longlisters!'

Hannah Carrier, longlisted for 2023 Discoveries

Discoveries community

We are starting to see the more tangible and commercial long-tail impacts of the Discoveries programme. In the first three years of Discoveries, 16 longlisted authors have accepted literary agent representation, including Olivia Ford whose debut novel, *Mrs Quinn's Rise to Fame*, was sold by Curtis Brown agent Lucy Morris in a major two-book deal to Penguin. It is set for publication in the UK and US in spring 2024, and has been sold in seven translation deals to date. May saw the publication of 2022 winner Sui Annukka's first Audible original, *The Mother Sun*, which has since received over 300 5-star reviews and featured on Audible's list of 'Best audiobooks of 2023'.

Discoveries writers from previous cohorts continue to meet monthly to write together and troubleshoot queries and issues for each other. This peer-to-peer support and writing community is one of the elements of the programme we are most proud of. Sui Annukka highlighted the community spirit of Discoveries in an eloquent speech on stage at the Women's Prize for Fiction award ceremony in June 2023:

'Without doubt, the most important part of this experience is the community that we are building with the support and encouragement of the Women's Prize. Our cohort have been meeting on Zoom each month to discuss our writing, to learn from each other's experiences and, most importantly, to cheer each other on. We have a very active (and sometimes hilarious) WhatsApp group. We've been talking to the Discoveries team about future workshops and training; and also, about ways in which our experience can benefit this year's cohort.'

This is so exciting because what is emerging is far more empowering, and important, than an individual success story: it is the potential to sustain a multiplicity of voices in the long term. Because, as you all know, writing takes time; and developing a voice takes ever longer. And what I know from my experience of working in an Inclusion Department at a school is that everyone's path to success looks very different, but each person deserves the encouragement, the nurture, and the witnessing they need, for however long they need it.'

Sui Annukka, 2022 Discoveries winner

Going forward into 2023/2024, we have plans to continue developing our offering of ongoing support for the Discoveries community, providing tools, guidance and a group of trusted peers at every step of their writing journey.

Other Events

Not strictly related to the Discoveries programme but launching a new series of online writing workshops in early 2023 is another example of our commitment to supporting the talent pipeline. Drawing inspiration from books from the Women's Prize Library and taught by leading authors, the Women's Prize Writer's Room provides opportunities for women at all stages of their writing journey to engage with experts, develop their craft, and support and encourage one another in a safe space. Tickets cost £25 for a 90-minute interactive workshop and five subsidised spaces per event were offered to women from low income backgrounds.

CAMPAIGNING – WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR NON-FICTION

In February 2023, the Trust launched a fundraising campaign to establish a major new annual book prize to platform exceptional non-fiction writing by women. The Women's Prize for Non-Fiction would mirror the founding principles of its sister fiction Prize, this time amplifying women's expertise and insights.

We conducted extensive research into the need, which demonstrated a clear inequality in both consumer visibility and author remuneration. Female writers have not only received lower advances than men over the last five years, but they have also seen a sharper drop in their median earnings in this same period compared to male writers. The gender pay gap continues to increase, standing at 36% in 2022.

We found that this discrepancy in both remuneration and consumer visibility appears to have further impact on book sales, with only 30% of the top 500 bestselling non-fiction books in 2022 written by women.

We rallied support from the publishing industry and conducted an unmissable media campaign to raise awareness of the cause and, crucially, attract sponsorship to make the prize a reality. We secured widespread UK media coverage – including several broadcast interviews – and a raft of endorsements from established women writing in the non-fiction space:

'Non-fiction books are, for me, a primary lever for social mobility. They are mentors and role models, opening up our world and teaching us life lessons for application in our own lives, and opening up our eyes to fresh ideas and new ways of being.'

Melanie Eusebe, Entrepreneur, author and Co-Founder of the Black British Awards

'My life has been profoundly shaped by the contribution of generations of women to groundbreaking, compelling and essential non-fiction. Every step towards giving that work the recognition it deserved is an important one, especially a prize as well-established and much-loved as this.'

Afua Hirsch, Broadcaster and writer

'What we need is a prize that really moves the dial on sales, and the Women's Prize for Non-Fiction is the prize that can do that. It will bring outstanding writers to the attention of readers, just as the Women's Prize for Fiction has done for more than 25 years. The Women's Prize for Non-Fiction will convey authority, help readers find wonderful books, and change women's lives. It is needed now more than ever.'

Professor Suzannah Lipscomb, Academic and TV presenter

This collective effort captured the campaigning spirit that helped to establish the Women's Prize for Fiction nearly 30 years ago, and reinforces the Trust's position as a leader in championing gender parity in the world of books.

In June 2023 we were thrilled to announce the first corporate sponsor of the Women's Prize for Non-Fiction as Findmypast, the UK's leading family tree company. The Women's Prize for Non-Fiction will also be supported by the Charlotte Aitken Trust – which is funding the £30,000 prize money and a statuette named the 'Charlotte' for a three-year period – and the year 1 launch is viable with a significant one-off gift from an anonymous donor.

The Prize, launching in autumn 2023, will be awarded annually and be open to all female writers from across the globe who are published in the UK and writing in English. We are also planning to develop an accompanying open-source toolkit for aspiring women non-fiction writers, made up of resources and features and online events.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Overall for the financial year ended 30 June 2023, the charity's financial position has been stable. The financial year began carrying a reserve of £102,520 and the position at the end of the year is £91,789.

The charity has continued to attract sponsorship and income associated with its charitable activities helping the charity to diversify revenue streams and become more resilient and sustainable for the future. The Women's Prize Trust continues to maintain a close control on its costs and expenditure.

The Women's Prize for Fiction 2023 and other Trust activity was supported by corporate sponsors Baileys and Audible. The Prize also received financial support from publishers whose books were longlisted, shortlisted and won; in addition to numerous in-kind partnerships, including Rationale and Blake Morgan.

The charity's Patrons and Prize Circle Patrons programme remained largely steady; this additional income was made up of donations of smaller amounts from a wider pool of supporters, which corresponds to a clearer fundraising ask with the development of the charity's new Discoveries creative writing programme, and offering add-on donation options via event ticket and merchandise sales, as is common with most charities.

Total income for 2022/2023 was £652,011.49 and expenditure £662,744.25.

Financial Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of Women's Prize Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the report of the trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the income and application of resources, including the income or expenditure, of the charity for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

Signed on behalf of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anna Ollard', written in a cursive style.

Anna Ollard
Chair of the Board of Trustees
Date: 26/3/2024

Women's Prize Trust Accountants' Report

Accountants' report to the directors of Women's Prize Trust

You consider that the company is exempt from an audit for the year ended 30 June 2023. You have acknowledged, on the balance sheet, your responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. These responsibilities include preparing accounts that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year.

In accordance with your instructions, we have prepared the accounts which comprise the Profit and Loss Account and the Balance Sheet from the accounting records of the company and on the basis of information and explanations you have given to us.

We have not carried out an audit or any other review, and consequently we do not express any opinion on these accounts.

AFP Services
Chartered Management Accountants

Timsons Business Centre
Bath Road
Kettering
Northamptonshire
NN16 8NQ

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Women's Prize Trust
Registered number:
Balance Sheet
as at 30 June 2023

03691656

	2023		2022
	£		£
Fixed assets	799		1,027
Current assets	187,687	138,121	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(96,697)	(36,628)	
Net current assets	90,990		101,493
Total assets less current liabilities	91,789		102,520
Net assets	91,789		102,520
Capital and reserves	91,789		102,520
	Number		Number
Average number of employees	14		12

The company is a private company limited by shares and incorporated in England. Its registered office is 6 New Street Square, London, United Kingdom, EC4A 3DJ.

The company is a registered charity, number 1181253.

The directors are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to obtain an audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006.

The member has not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Act.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro entity provisions of the Companies Act 2006 and FRS 105, The Financial Reporting Standard applicable to the Micro-entities Regime. The accounts have been delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime. The profit and loss account has not been delivered to the Registrar of Companies.



Anna Ollard

Director

26/3/2024

Approved by the board on