

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL PRESS RELEASE

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Entries open for 2024 Fenland Poet Laureate Award

The hunt is on for Fenland's next Poet Laureates, as the district's prestigious, annual poetry competition opens for entries.

The Fenland Poet Laureate Award and the Young Fenland Poet Laureate Award have returned for the sixth year – and writers from across the district are being invited to take part.

The honorary winners will continue the great work of outgoing Fenland Poet Laureate, Qu Gao, and Young Poet Laureate, Isabelle Slade Stollery, to encourage and raise the profile of poetry and the district.

Award-winning poet and Chair of Fenland District Council's Culture, Arts and Heritage Committee, Elisabeth Sennitt Clough, is once again organising the awards, in partnership with Fenland District Council.

Competition entries will be shortlisted by members of Fenland District Council's Culture, Arts and Heritage Committee, with shortlisted submissions being judged by Cllr Sennitt Clough and Qu Gao.

Cllr Elisabeth Sennitt Clough said: "We are delighted to be launching our annual poetry competition and are looking forward to receiving lots of entries! The competition celebrates talented writers living, working, or attending school in Fenland and comes with lots of incentives to take part. Our new Poet Laureates can expect an incredible year!

"I'd like to give massive thanks to our outgoing Poet Laureates who have been an inspiration and true advocates of poetry and creative writing in the district.

"I'm also delighted to be working in partnership with Fenland District Council on the awards this year to help develop and promote them even further."

Cambridge University student Qu Gao, of Chatteris, said: "I am excited to work together with Elisabeth Sennitt Clough to read this year's entries for the Fenland Poet Laureate Award. I will be reading this year's entries while at university, so I hope that reading this year's poetry submissions will evoke many memories and images of Fenland and help me to keep in touch with the Fens while living away from home!"

Cllr Chris Seaton, Fenland District Council's Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture and Heritage, added: "Providing creative opportunities for the people of Fenland is a priority for the Council so we're delighted to be involved in the 2024 Fenland Poet Laureate and Young Fenland Poet Laureate awards.

"It's a fantastic competition that enables people to explore creative writing and performance and share their love of poetry with others. There has been some brilliant talent emerge in previous years and I can't wait to see the standard of entries this year."

This year's winning Poet Laureates will be announced at a special awards ceremony at March Town Hall in March 2024. The winning poets and runners-up will also have their poems published in an anthology and online.

Competition details

The competition is open to anyone who lives, works or attends school in the administrative district of Fenland, and is completely free to enter.

Applicants must be aged 18 and over for the Fenland Poet Laureate Award, and aged 17 and under for the Young Fenland Poet Laureate Award.

Poetry submissions may be written in any poetic form, from free verse to sestina, be a maximum of 40 lines and previously unpublished.

The deadline for entries is **Wednesday, 31 January 2024**.

For more information and full entry details, visit: www.fenland.gov.uk/FenlandPoetLaureate or email: poetaward@fenland.gov.uk

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Notes to Editors

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