

## STONY STRATFORD LOCKDOWN LANTERN PROJECT 2020 – A REVIEW

As the Covid-19 Pandemic took hold during 2020, SS Business Association and the CLASS Committee took the sensible decision to cancel Switch-On Day. So, here at Lanterns HQ, we were left with some difficult decisions to make – what should we do for this year's Lantern Project?

The Lantern Volunteers were unanimous that we would like to do SOMETHING, so we dusted off our thinking caps and came up with 'Christmas at Home' – the first (and hopefully the last) Lockdown Lantern Project! We joined forces with the Stony Community Advent Calendar Project to offer an artistic opportunity for families to light up their homes in Stony Stratford, Galley Hill and Fullers Slade for the whole of the Christmas period. We sold Lantern Kits to make a lantern or window scene at home and allocated an 'Advent Number' to every street. Over 400 kits were sold and prepared in a matter of weeks, and we even managed to rearrange the collection days to distribute them before Lockdown 2.0 commenced.

The theme of "**Christmas at Home**" inspired local families to create an **AMAZING** array of colourful lanterns and window displays all around the town, adding in a rainbow motif to thank all the wonderful Key Workers and NHS Staff who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic.

Huge thanks to all the Lantern Volunteers who organised and ran the project this year for being innovative, hardworking, and flexible – but mostly for being good humoured in the face of adversity. We did it, and we did it with smiles (and masks) on our faces!

Instead of a Lantern Parade, we made a special video to showcase this year's amazing creations – Christmassy memories to treasure!

<https://youtu.be/mUecdxE0XM>

The Lantern Volunteers usually make a giant lantern for the back of the Lantern Parade, but there was no need for that this year. Undaunted, we set to work decorating the upper floor windows at York House Centre to create a stunning centrepiece for the project. The windows show 'At Home' scenes for how we imagine Christmas at York House would have been when it was originally a family home, with the rainbow and heart floating above as symbols of thanks and hope.

We hope you enjoy spotting all the 'At Home' creations as you walk around the town for your 'daily exercise' throughout December, thanks to all the families who joined in to make our special little town shine during these difficult times.

Finally, grateful thanks to our funders – Stony Stratford Town Council, Stony Stratford Business Association, Milton Keynes Community Foundation, and the York House Local Giving Fund – for their continued financial support, helping us to keep the project affordable for all.

Shall we do it all again in 2021? Of course we will, but we've got our fingers crossed that 'normal service' will resume...



Lockdown Lantern Project Windows by Night – Adrian Pinckard