

Lantern Parade 2022 – “Monster Christmas!”



We're back!! After not being able to hold a Lantern Procession for 3 years, the lantern-makers turned out in full force on Saturday 26 November to light up Stony Stratford as part of the annual Switch-On Fun Day. The procession is the stunning culmination of the month-long **Stony Stratford Lantern Project** which was another massive success with a sell-out 280 lanterns made! Frame-making sessions were held at two local schools plus two full weekends of public workshops at York House Centre and we gave the option to purchase a make-at-home lantern kit instead this year too. The York House sessions brought people of all ages together for this fun, artistic project. Everyone's happy chatter made for a great community atmosphere and **Bean in Stony** provided a fabulous café to keep us all fed and watered with drinks, snacks and light lunches.

This year's theme was “**Monster Christmas!**” which inspired local families to create an **AMAZING** array of imaginative and colourful monster-related lanterns: a couple of Grinches, cookie monsters, Christmas tree monsters, Frankenstein's Monster, Slimer from Ghostbusters, Shrek, the Gruffalo, and a whole host of Mike Wazowski's!

The Lantern Volunteers made characters from Monsters, Inc. which wowed the crowds at the back of the procession – Sully, Boo, Mike, Randall, and even Boo's magical door...

The weather was much better than expected, if a little windy, and the Lanterners were welcomed by live music from The Concrete Calves Woodwind Band who played a selection of tunes for us as we enjoyed hot mulled cider. The procession was led by Stony Stratford's very own Town Crier (Matt Ireland) and the Bernese Carting Dogs, and we welcomed new community samba band 'Panacea Samba' for the first time who provided us with fabulous rhythms. The streets were packed with thousands of amazed onlookers as we made our way along the High Street to the Market Square. Everything went to plan, and we arrived in time to enjoy the festivities before the switching-on of the beautiful Christmas lights. A magical event for everyone involved, creating Christmassy memories to treasure!

Many thanks, as always, to the unstoppable team of **40 Lantern Volunteers** who give hours of their time and a massive amount of energy to make this spectacular community arts project possible, to Bob & Sue Adams and their team of Stewards for keeping us all safe during the parade, to the Trustees and Staff at York House Centre, to the CLASS Committee for organising the Switch-On Fun Day and, of course, to all the helper elves who maintain and put up our wonderful Christmas lights. A truly community effort!

Grateful thanks to our funders – Stony Stratford Town Council, Stony Stratford Business Association 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 2023? Of course, we will!! Make sure you pre-book your lanterns from 01/10/23.

Join our Facebook Group – Stony Stratford Lantern Project

