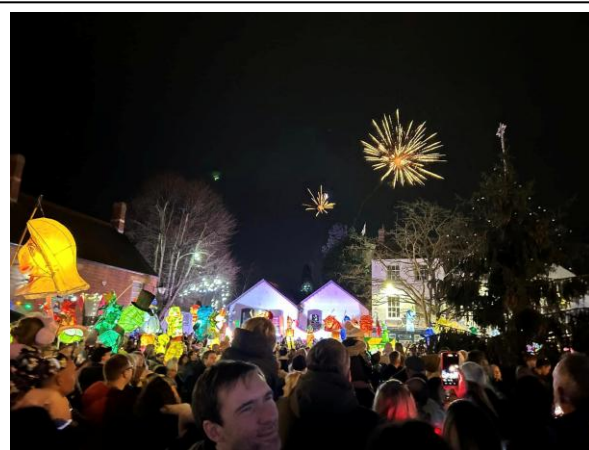


Lantern Parade 2024 – “Puppets’ Parade!”



The lantern-makers turned out in full force on Saturday 30 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! Frame-making sessions were held at two local schools plus two full weekends of public workshops at York House Centre and we also gave the option to purchase make-at-home lantern kits this year. 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.

This year's theme was “**Puppets’ Parade!**” which inspired local families to create an **AMAZING** array of imaginative and colourful puppet-related lanterns including a few Kermit the Frogs, Miss Piggys, Animals and Elmers from The Muppets, Big Bird, Oscar the Grouch and Cookie Monster from Sesame Street, Jack Skellington, Bill & Ben, a selection of rockets from Thunderbirds and an immaculate Fireball XL5, Punch & Judy, Zippy from Rainbow, Orville the Duck, a host of Sootys plus a Sweep and a Soo, a stunning Falkor (the white dragon from The Neverending Story) and too many other characters to mention them all.....

The Lantern Volunteers made one of their 'large lanterns' as part of the parade again this year. Pinocchio (complete with Jiminy Cricket, Figaro the Cat and Cleo the Goldfish) wowed the crowds at the back of the procession. Our grateful thanks to Stony Stratford Cricket Club who allowed us to use their pavilion to make the large lantern this year.

The weather was mild and dry (the sun even made a brief appearance earlier in the day) and the Lanterners were welcomed by live music from The Concrete Calves Wind Band who played a selection of tunes for us as we enjoyed hot mulled cider. The procession was led by Terrie Howey-Moore and the Bernese Carting Dogs, and we were delighted to welcome back local community samba band 'Panacea Samba', led by Pete Lockwood, to provide us with some fabulous rhythms. The streets were lined with thousands of amazed onlookers as we made our way along the High Street and into Church Street. Everything went to plan and we arrived to a very packed Market Square 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 over **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 procession, to the CLASS Committee and their volunteers 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 and Stony Stratford Business Association - for their financial support, helping us to keep the project as affordable as we can. We would also like to extend our gratitude to all the local people who made a donation to become ‘**Friends of Stony Lanterns 2024**’, the money was used to fund free lantern spaces for families in need and excess funds will be put towards future Lantern Projects.

Thanks to Kate Boatfield, Karen Dale and Derek Gibbons for letting us use their lovely photos.

Shall we do it all again in 2025? Of course, we will!!! Lantern sales start from 01/10/25, so put a reminder in your calendar now...

Join our Facebook Group – Stony Stratford Lantern Project

