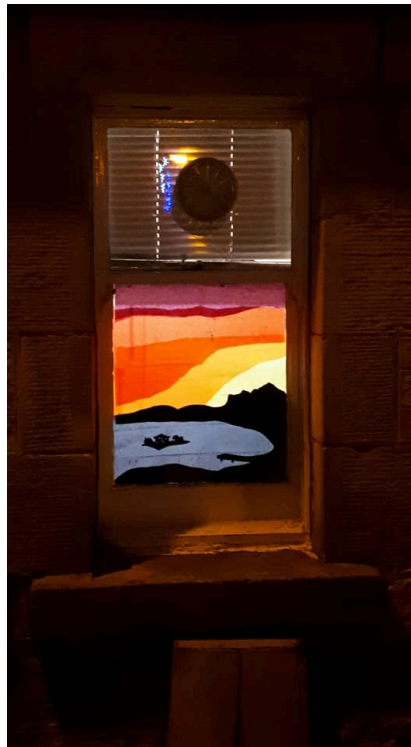


## Light Up the Night Kinross-shire



### The idea

Light Up the Night Kinross-shire was started in November 2020, in partnership with Kinross-shire Local Events Organisation, as a positive way of carrying out a participative community arts events during the Covid-19 pandemic. The idea was for residents and businesses across the area to decorate their street-facing windows with messages of light and hope which could then be enjoyed by the whole community, with the aim of reducing social isolation, focusing on a life-affirming and positive activity and fostering a positive sense of community. The event was based on the Window Wonderland <https://www.windowwonderland.com/> model and was an extension of the lockdown rainbows many displayed in their windows, but from the start focused on the value of participation at any level and of ideas unique to our community. We had no idea how the event would be received, or whether anyone would participate.

### What we did

A Facebook group was created to share ideas, techniques and inspiration, and quickly grew to 500+ members. Flyers available in local shops detailed the ways to get involved. An online google map listed the addresses of people participating to show the spread across the area and enable a 'treasure hunt' tour of the windows.

### What happened

Around 250 people across the community decorated their windows in 2020, adding their addresses to the map. The event was hugely positive, with many people commenting that it gave them a good sense of community connection and reduced feelings of social isolation. Many shared stories about how creating a display was an important family activity with adults and children working together, and how viewing the lit windows brought a sense of hope and colour in what was a very dark winter. We gained positive



## Light Up the Night Kinross-shire

local press coverage and overwhelmingly positive social media and face-to-face comments.

### What we learned

There's a huge wealth of creativity and community feeling in our area, and people are proud to join in with something that represents us positively. Encouraging people to take part in their own way and supporting them to do this gave everyone ownership of the results.

### Next steps

Run the event again in 2021, thinking about how can we encourage people to share thoughts, ideas and stories in their personal windows.



### What we did

In 2021, we bought in an optional **'People and Place'** theme as an introduction to the 2022 Year of Scotland's Stories, and to emphasise the unique, local nature of the participative event. We also wanted to make sure the emphasis remained on joining in, rather than creating 'art', and wanted to make the event even more inclusive of those who might have previously been left out due to social isolation or exclusion through financial poverty or other barriers.



### What happened

With life now being busier, with less of a sense of shared experience as the pandemic eased, we weren't sure how the event would be received. We revived the Facebook group, using this as a starting community. Ultimately around 50 households logged their addresses on the map, with around 25-30 others lighting their windows without registering. The Facebook group grew to 870+ members from across the community. The weekend of the event was particularly stormy, which mean not as many people walked around the community to view windows.

Two window decoration workshops were run with with Broke Not Broken, where around 10 families took part in learning new techniques and designed and created window displays to take home.



## Light Up the Night Kinross-shire

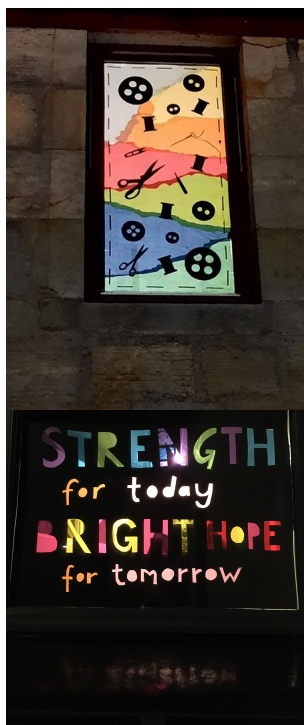
A window display session was also held at Kinross Day Centre, with 7 older people taking part in a hands-on activity, which was also an opportunity for sharing reminiscences and memories about the area.

Kinross Beavers and a Kinross Primary class also took part by creating their own window decorations to display at home.

With an emphasis on equal participation for everyone, and with an awareness of reducing waste, we set up a centrally located materials 'swap box', sponsored by local newsagents Baillies. It was available throughout November for people to drop off spare window decorating materials or take home any supplies they needed.

The People & Place theme was interpreted in several different ways:

- Depictions of places in our area which are important, for example natural landscape (the loch, hills) and businesses.
- Stories about place - e.g. Mary, Queen of Scots
- Messages about our area, our world. 'We Love Kinross', eco themes
- Places that are personally important other than here; e.g. Isle of Wight, Safari, countries visited
- Windows about where people come from; Glasgow, Netherlands, Stirling
- Stories about what is important to us, for example, 'our rainbow baby', family connections, hobbies and interests
- People, for example local hero Laura Muir local hero, self portraits.



Again the feedback was positive, with comments, mostly on social media, appreciative of the opportunity to join in and enjoy others' windows. A sense of pride in how well Kinross looks when lit up this way. Evidence that people from outside Kinross and Milnathort travelled especially to view the windows.

### What we learned / next steps

- Theme. How can we expand on the theme, to create personal windows that tell a collective story about the people and place of Kinross-shire? What are the key windows/places that should be lit up?
- In 2022 look at how addresses are logged. Using a Google Form in 2021 was perhaps off-putting. Make sure that we're not overly relying on social media for engagement.
- Continue to find ways to make the event inclusive, with an emphasis on participation rather than artistic results. Support people with materials and techniques.