

**Press Release: Looking out from Lockdown
(embargoed until 22nd January 2021)**

Looking Out From Lockdown is an Island-wide project celebrating the creativity of Island people during lockdown, both in 2020, and again now in 2021. In collaboration with Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, Susie Sheldon, local arts for wellbeing charity Independent Arts is offering people the chance to exhibit their lockdown creations, be it painting, photographs, poetry, music, speech, pottery, writing, crafts, projects, inventions, baking, gardening or anything else creative completed to keep spirits up during lockdown.

Whether it is something that captures the moment of lockdown one, or whether it is right now in lockdown three, everyone is urged to get creative and submit their projects to fill the gallery with their thoughts, visions and reflections in any art form, plus the story behind them. The website will become a “time capsule” for our Island Community to admire and share in years to come when reflecting on our experiences during the pandemic.

The plan is to hold physical exhibitions after restrictions end, so please save those creations that can't be exhibited online. For contributors who are unable to photograph and submit work online to the website, there will eventually be the option to use drop-off points, where creations can be photographed and submitted on your behalf and returned.

Charities, radio, local papers, schools, care homes, businesses, clubs and organisations and events during 2021 are all encouraged to get involved in this project and give people the motivation to get creative. Individual exhibitions of **Looking Out From Lockdown** could be held around the island, once restrictions ease.

The Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, Susie Sheldon says, *“This is an exciting project that should give everyone an incentive to concentrate their talents for a purpose. In these difficult times we all need a purpose to keep us motivated. Everyone has the ability to be creative in different ways and I am really excited at the prospect of seeing all the works, ideas, inventions, thoughts etc that have come out of the time Islanders have spent in Lockdown both in 2020 and again now. Let this be something really good that comes out of the difficult times we are all going through.*

Lisa Gagliani MBE, Chief Executive of Independent Arts says, *“When we heard about this idea, we knew it was perfect to add to our existing Islesolation Gallery developed in lockdown one – with this new impetus, we hope many more Islanders will find inspiration to have a go and submit something, as we know just how valuable making, doing and displaying one's creativity can be at a time of stress.”*

Jo Dare BEM, CEO of Age UK Isle of Wight commented: *“Lockdown is challenging but to keep positive we know Islanders have been turning to existing talents, or learning new skills, some of which may have included, or been taught by, older residents. Whatever your age, whatever your way of letting time pass whilst keeping safe, and hopeful for the future, we want to see what you've been up to. You may even inspire someone else to have a go as well!”*

Mayor of Ryde, Cllr Michael Lilley: *“Looking out from Lockdown is a great project idea as it provides a message of hope and an outlet for voices and creativity of all our Island residents from their homes during lockdown. We need our community to stay safe but not silent and this provides an outlet to share our thoughts for the future and the fantastic imaginations within our community”.*

To find out how to get involved, head to Independent Arts online

<https://islesolationgallery.com/LookingOutFromLockdown>

Submissions are welcome from any Island resident, of any age, preferably via email attachment to gallery@independentarts.org.uk Please check the Tips & Tricks section for help in providing a good quality image so that your creativity shines. For video or musical submissions, email and attach a YouTube link.

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Editors notes:

For further information about the Lord Lieutenant's office contact: office@isleofwightlieutenancy.org.uk
Tel: 01983 756050

For further information about Independent Arts contact info@independentarts.org.uk or to submit something for the gallery email a good quality photograph and description to gallery@independentarts.org.uk
Tel: 01983 822437

The online gallery will be an expansion of the 'Festival of Islesolation' Independent Arts created during the first lockdown in 2020, which was funded by Arts Council England.

Independent Arts is a registered charity (Registered in England and Wales No. 297474) that has operated on the Isle of Wight since 1987. Its mission is to change lives through arts. Before lockdown it ran workshops in the community and in care homes reaching 1700 people each month. Now many of its services can be accessed online, via zoom and its own YouTube channel. See www.independentarts.org.uk for details.