



Highland Children and Young People's Forum Bulletin August 20

Letters from Lockdown Competition: Winner Announcement

Highland Children and Young People's Forum was delighted to receive 185 entries to the Letters from Lockdown Competition. Thank you to each and every child or young person who took part. We are very grateful to Maree Todd MSP and Minister for Children and Young People for judging the competition.

The following are prize winners:

Pre-School

First Prize: Phoebe Finnigan (Beauly)

Second Prize: Lewis Colin Miller (Fortrose)

Primary 1-3 or aged 5-8 years

First Prize: Muireann Beck (Mallaig)

Second Prize: Eve Macdonald (Badenoch)

Primary 4-7 or aged 9-12 years

First Prize: Katie Pearson (Thurso)

Second Prize: Beth Trueman (Thurso)

Secondary Age

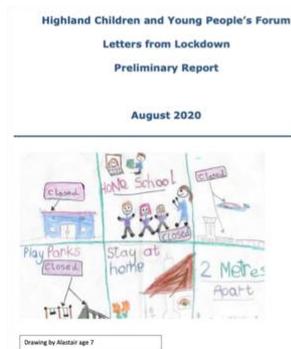
First Prize: Ruby Wittka-Jezewski (Dingwall)

Second Prize: Sinead Swann (Tain)

Congratulations to all our winners and huge thanks to the other children and young people who took part. The letters will be put together into an online resource for Education so that future children can learn about the lockdown period directly from other children who lived through it. You can read the winning [letters here](#).

The letters provided such a treasure trove of information, that a report was written to bring out the shared messages from children and young people. We are grateful to Bruce Adamson, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, for writing the foreword of this report.

Letters from Lockdown Report and Winning Letters



[Letters from Lockdown Report](#)



Phoebe Finnigan, age 3, sent in a beautifully illustrated story, which she narrates on video.

The Fairy on the Beanstalk.

"The Beanstalk is broken down and I can't play with my friends."

It finishes: "Nicola Sturgeon says Coronavirus is over. And I played with all my friends. And I kiss them like: kiss kiss kiss. The end"



Muireann Beck, age 5, created an amazing online book with photos and video, and commentary in Gaelic.

"I am learning to cycle without stabilisers.

I like cosmic yoga. I don't like Joe Wicks.

At home, I like to cook with Mummy and Daddy."

Katie Pearson, age 12, sent a letter illustrated with two artistically created photo collages.



"The most positive part of lockdown is that it has made my family and I appreciate what we have and who we have around us, yes I miss spending time with my friends, grandparents, going to town and going on holiday but we are making the best of a very different situation and when lockdown is lifted we will all hopefully still be well and our time together will be even more special."



Ruby Wittka-Jezewski, age 13, produced a fantastic slide presentation of her lockdown with the background of each slide made of a Covid collage.

Project Work

The Digital Project has carried out some online participation and is drawing up plans for the next phase of the project, which is likely to be digital as well. The digital platform young people have described could have been a real lifeline for some in the period of lockdown. Highland Young Ambassador for Inclusion project will need some re-planning given the social distancing pressures schools are operating under. However, never has it been more important to listen to children and young people about inclusion.

Participation Work



Inspire Highland has moved online! The move online for Inspire Highland has proved very successful with both larger meetings (two groups coming together) and smaller meetings (with only two or three young people) able to happen to suit the needs and interests of the young people. In spite of lockdown, the work to gather video

testimonies from the young people continued.

To keep up to date with all that Inspire Highland is doing, please check out our Facebook page: Highland Children's Forum.

The success of moving Inspire Highland online has led to the exploration of developing digital youth work more in the future. It will never replace face to face interaction, but is a fantastic way of widening the geographical reach of the Forum and engaging with young people in their digital world.

Thanks to all the young Inspire Highland members who came online for the first digital AGM of the Forum. The breakout discussions were a great success, Forum members, trustees and elected officials all enjoyed your contributions.

Policy Work

The Policy Lead continues to raise the need for children's voices to be heard: from the planning of return to school to the ongoing management of social distancing in schools. The Letters from Lockdown report and other feedback the Forum has received suggests that some children and young people will have coped well enough with lockdown and that a few will have flourished without the stress of attending school, while some will have really struggled with challenging situations at home. The Forum has been working with Council Officers on some ideas of how to support children and young people to catch up learning or cope with the mental health impact of Covid-19.

Prize winners from the Letters from Lockdown competition have been invited to the next Education Committee and will be able to share their own experiences.

Many policy developments have been put on hold during the last few months. Much of this work is restarting and the Forum will do all it can to make sure the voice of children and young people with challenges is at the heart of the policy development work.
