

Good Morning from the 'What a Load of Bollards' campaign group and thanks for reading this out.

Yes, we're still here and we still believe, passionately, that the best use of this enormous amount of time and money would have been simply levelling Front Street – not literally, you know what we mean ! – removing the cars that never needed to be there in the first place and letting the lovely things people asked for evolve naturally as things tend to do when there is plenty of space and an empowered community.

We still feel that filling it up with unnecessary clutter is a backward step **and those bollards!**..... Almost 50 will remain as a constant reminder of that dreadful day when Acomb woke to find itself surrounded by steel and became a laughing stock, making it onto the hallowed pages of the Sun newspaper and even Wikipedia where our entry still reads: "Acomb is famous in York for having a very high concentration of street bollards. These were installed in an upgrade in 2023 and have since prompted great controversy among local residents due to their vast numbers and variance from the original proposed plans for the area."

We went to extremes to fight back. Trying to walk up the stairs to a council meeting encased entirely in cardboard, dressed as a giant bollard is no mean feat I can tell you – but we found allies. And realised pretty quickly that most of the members of what was then the challenging party – you people – agreed with us. Then we came up against the bureaucratic solidity of the highways and planning department. We know they tried hard to be brave and think outside what is a pretty impenetrable box. We couldn't get through this. Small compromises were made but to us, they remain placatory and lacking in long term sustainable vision. If our hopes that one day sense will prevail and this little street does become pedestrianised, they will have to remove all the expensive signs and humps and benches, yes and those ghastly 50 bollards, and the 500k, twice spent, will once again, largely have been a waste.

But here we are. While a "feasibility study" falls so far from what we wanted and feels as though it is possibly just a gesture to get us to back away – where would the money come from anyway? – we realise this is the end of the line for this stage of Front Street's chequered evolution.

We leave you with this (for now!):

1: Please share dates for the results of the feasibility study and intentions resulting from these. Can you assure us that councillors support pedestrianisation in principle and will be pushing for meaningful progress with this? That it won't fade away and leave us stuck with our cluttered street where local people still have to dodge round traffic - but now have signposts and gateways and more bins and benches to negotiate their wheelchairs and prams around? And 50 bollards...

2: Anything you can do to reduce, deter or dissuade those cars would be wonderful. We asked that parking is entirely disabled-only. **Please think carefully on that one**, it could be a speedy solution to the problem that started all this: parking on the pavement.

3: Those murals. Please can you promise you will commission one of the many very talented Acomb-based artists and not buy in from somewhere else. This goes for all the other fancy trimmings. Think creatively about who installs these and which materials they use.

4: Our thanks to those who agreed with us and listened. We take some satisfaction from hearing that we have taught the council a few things and if nothing else, ensured that while the opinions of local people can be loud and bothersome, they really are where the process of change must begin – and end.