

OPEN LETTER TO 'OPEN BLOCK' PARTICIPANTS

This letter is on behalf of 12 households within a stone's throw of Chisenhale School. We have managed to communicate in the last 3 days despite Covid 19 requirements and a very short time scale.

We understand you had permission from the council for the graffiti on the pavement, and council support for these workshops.

The first any of us heard about your activities was last Thursday from a neighbour who happened to spot it on Instagram.

It is discourteous and profoundly undemocratic that both the council and your own organisation chose not to inform, speak to, let alone consult, the community of people directly affected.

We are writing to request that your workshops create no structures, fittings or graffiti which cannot be removed easily or that damage the streetscape.

The temporary enclosure was justified as an emergency response to Covid 19. It was not about taking over the road. When the need for social isolation in the school ceases, we want the street to return to the public space it has been since the creation of the streets in the 1860s. Chisenhale Road is key to the Driffield Road Conservation Area, hard fought for by the local community.

We have lived in harmony between the increasingly rare combination of C19th houses, school, canal related industrial buildings, and the street which the community has not been hindered in using, as is the nature of East End streets, for well over 100 years. Street parties for example in Chisenhale go back at least 70 years.

We would be happy to assist with the inclusion of a strand of learning about the history of the area, its evolution and its community over time so the children can better appreciate the place where they live.

We understand the enclosure created for a temporary school playground was necessary for Covid 19 safety reasons, but it in turn has caused issues of safety for local residents, which we do not want to last longer than need be.

The school is already the learning, play and creative centre and the school, parents and children are blessed by the large choice of parks and play spaces within five minutes' walk. It is unnecessary to cut our neighbourhood in half by the school for something that is not needed and has never been seen as a need in the past 120 years.

There has been too many opportunistic land grabs and aggressive gentrification in Bow. Please show some consideration for others and ensure your plans for the temporary space allow the street to be returned as a public street.

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