

Bolton woman sees yarn bombing as appealing alternative to graffiti

By Bill Rea

Rikki Rumball would like to see Bolton bombed; with yarn, that is.

Yarn bombing is a form of graffiti or street art that employs colourful displays of knitted or crocheted yarn, as opposed to paint.

Knitted creations can be wrapped around trees, lamp posts or other things to help improve the look of the streetscape.

Rumball, who recently opened Odds and Sods in Bolton, brought the idea up a couple of weeks ago at the annual General meeting of the Bolton Business Improvement Area (BIA), as the discussions dealt with the recent incidents of graffiti in the village.

She said she saw pictures of the art on a website.

'I thought it was incredible,' she declared. 'This just inspired me so much.'

Rumball is working on setting up a group known as Bolton Bombers. She said the aim is to get 60 members lined up. She announced recently that 25 were on deck. 'I haven't even started trying.'

She added she wants to visit local schools and seniors' facilities to get them interested in this 'creative graffiti.'

The aim, she said, is 'to make the whole downtown beautiful.'

There will have to be approvals from the municipality before such work can be done on public property. It's a different matter with private property, and Rumball said she's hoping to put woolly manes and tails on the lion statues in the Royal Courtyards.

'It's going to take a lot of women doing a lot on knitting,' she said, adding she also hopes men will get involved.

'I want all ages involved,' she said. All genders. It's everybody.'

She added she's taught her husband how to knit.

Rumball said she's confident this will take off, as she believes people want to be part of their community, doing things for it.

Rumball is an 18-year resident of Bolton, and this is the second business she's run in the village. 'It's extremely important to me that it becomes revitalized,' she said.

The idea of yarn bombing is nothing new. In fact she said June 11 is International Yarn Bombing Day. It has been practised in such cities as Toronto, Boston and Paris. In Ottawa, someone knitted a racing singlet with a heart on it and put it on a statue of Terry Fox.

She has also stressed that any yarn bombing in Bolton will be presentable.

'It will always look clean and tidy,' she maintained. 'It will never be an eyesore. I won't have it.'

'It's an incredible art form,' she declared, adding she really doesn't consider it graffiti because nothing is damaged. In fact, she believes it will discourage graffiti.

As the yarn that's been set up wears out, she said it will be a simple matter to take it down, possibly replacing it with a newer creation.