

Fitzrovia News

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New children's nursery due to open at Holcroft Court

After a break of two years without a nursery a new childcare provider is to open this September at Holcroft Court in Fitzrovia, *writes Linus Rees*.

The long-standing children's nursery at Carburton Street closed in 2021 and the purpose-built site in the centre of the Westminster Council owned residential estate in Fitzrovia West has remained empty ever since.

Now under new management, Little Raccoons Day Nursery will provide places for up to 40 children aged from three months to five years.

It is due to open on Monday 25 September with opportunities to view the nursery available from Monday 18 September.

Both funded and private nursery care is available. They offer three- and four-year-olds 15 or 30 funded hours throughout the year. Government funded places are subject to availability.

The nursery will be open from 7.30am to 6.30pm, 51 weeks of the year. Closed for the week that Christmas falls on and all bank holidays.

"We are a small group of family-run nurseries, our first nursery opened in 2011. At Little Raccoons, we aim to provide a fun, warm and welcoming environment in which children are motivated and eager to learn," says Bhama Rudrakumar, director of Little Raccoons Day Nursery.

Little Raccoons Day Nursery, Holcroft Court, Carburton Street, London W1W 5AL. See littleraccoons.co.uk or contact info-fitzrovia@littleraccoons.co.uk for more information.

Oxford Street plan will drive more traffic through Fitzrovia

Westminster Council's new plan for Oxford Street will likely drive more motor traffic into Fitzrovia, *writes Linus Rees*.

The eastern end of Oxford Street between Great Portland Street and Tottenham Court Road is currently open to all traffic in both directions, 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

Now a bus, taxi and cycle only restriction from 7am to 7pm every day of the week between Rathbone Place and Tottenham Court Road is planned.

This will remove the eastern end of Oxford Street as a through route and therefore push more motor traffic onto the parallel routes to the north.

Westminster Council is proposing to make Mortimer Street two-way for its entire length and so providing drivers with a continuous eastbound and westbound route along Goodge Street in the east and Wigmore Street in Marylebone to the west.

Since there will be more motor traffic heading east and west along the Wigmore-Mortimer-Goodge carriageway it is likely to push more motor traffic onto other Fitzrovia streets.

Celebrating 50 years of a community newspaper in Fitzrovia

Fitzrovia has had its own community newspaper for 50 years. That has to be a cause for celebration. So now we have published a book reflecting on the past five decades of local news, *write Nick Bailey, Sue Blundell, and Linus Rees*.

Over the years the name of this publication has changed, and it has been a bit stop-start at times as its fortunes have ebbed and flowed. But its style and reportage have remained remarkably consistent.

It began as Tower but later became Fitzrovia Neighbourhood News, and ultimately the mainly online Fitzrovia News.

The selection of stories is inevitably partial and subjective, but hopefully portrays the character of the area as it is, and also reflects on how it has changed over the past half century.

We hope this compilation will jog a few memories amongst our older readers but also inform and entertain those who have moved into the area more recently.

Pick up a copy of Fitzrovia News: Celebrating 50 Years, at Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street, London W1W 6DL. Explore our archive at archive.fitzrovianews.com

BID ballot delayed

A business services group in Fitzrovia has done a hasty about-turn on holding a ballot to create a business improvement district (BID) in Fitzrovia West, mere weeks after being given the go-ahead by Westminster Council.

On 3 May The Fitzrovia Partnership gained formal permission to hold a ballot of the largest businesses in Fitzrovia West to raise £4.2mn over five years from a levy on the business rates.

It said ballot papers were due to be sent out on Tuesday 13 June, and to be returned by 5pm on Tuesday 11 July.

The West Fitzrovia BID now proposes distributing the ballot papers on Monday 2 October, and the close of ballot as Tuesday 31 October. The results would be published on Wednesday 1 November 2023.

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News in brief

Public meeting about future of park: 6pm, Monday 11 September 2023 at **Crabtree Fields** public open space on the corner of Colville Place and Whitfield Street.

Actor and heritage campaigner **Griff Rhys Jones** and architect **Simon Sturgis** are backing a campaign calling for the refurbishment of an empty 53m high hotel building at **One Museum Street** near the British Museum instead of replacing it with a 74m high tower.

Firefighters from Soho were the first of the emergency services to arrive to help a cyclist who was injured in a collision with a driver of a van at the junction of Charlotte Street and Goodge Street on the morning of Wednesday 23 August.

Police are appealing for information about a traffic incident at the junction of **Charlotte Street** and **Howland Street** at 5.20pm on Tuesday 15 August. Anyone with information should contact the Metropolitan Police on 020 7230 7620.

Council tenants are being put “at potential risk of harm” because **Camden Council** is failing to put right thousands of fire safety issues, a housing watchdog has found.

While residents along the western end of **Tottenham Street** will be glad to see the back of the construction work to redevelop Arthur Stanley House, building work is now underway on a six-storey development in nearby **Tottenham Mews**.

An important piece of **public art** specially commissioned for a police station in Fitzrovia is under threat from a real estate company which plans to redevelop a site on **Whitfield Street** and **Tottenham Court Road**. Entitled, *On Reflection*, it is made of 40,000 hand-cut vitrified ceramic triangles assembled together to create what looks like a piece of abstract art but is actually an impressionistic reflection of the public park and buildings opposite.

Cyclefit cycle shop at 38 **Store Street** is offering women-only group cycle rides to women of all abilities who want some good company and are interested in learning new skills to gain confidence cycling.

Mind, the mental health charity, has opened a new shop on **Goodge Street** and are seeking donations to stock their store.

The next **printed edition** of *Fitzrovia News* will be out during the first week of December and will be published every three months thereafter. But we may also publish at the beginning of October and November. We'll see...

Planning applications

Camden Council registered 26 applications during August 2023 in Fitzrovia East. In the list: air con units and kitchen extract at rear of **67 Charlotte Street**; and various applications for tables and chairs on the pavements.

See: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk for details and the latest applications.

Westminster Council validated 19 applications in August 2023 in Fitzrovia West. Included in the list: alterations to shopfront at **24-25 Foley Street**; alterations to listed building and installation of new mechanical plant at **39 Great Titchfield Street**; alterations at **146 New Cavendish Street**.

See: idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

Licensing applications

Petite Cafe, 102 Great Portland Street (Westminster). Seeks permission for the sale of alcohol to drink both on and off the premises from Monday to Sunday, from 9am to 30 minutes past midnight the following morning. D/L 13-09-23.

The Greene Man, 383 Euston Road. Seeks permission to vary the existing premises licence to sell alcohol from 10am on a Sunday, instead of from 12 midday. D/L 11-09-23.

Advice for responding

Residents should check Camden and Westminster's websites for the latest applications.

In Westminster residents can contact licensingadvice.org for free advice, and should also email the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association fna@fitzrovia.org.uk

In Camden email the Charlotte Street Association at csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk where you can also seek advice.

It is also a good idea to contact your ward councillors well before the closing dates with your concerns about any planning or licensing applications.

Fitzrovia News publishes the latest planning and licensing applications on our website: fitzrovianews.com

There is more news about public consultations on our website:

fitzrovianews.com

You can also keep up with the latest news by subscribing to our free email newsletter:

fitzrovianews.substack.com

Free housing and welfare advice for residents

The Fitzrovia Advice Service, run by Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, is able to help residents with private and social housing problems, housing and council tax benefits, disability benefits, Universal Credit and Job Seekers Allowance, pensions and Pension Credit, Working and Child Tax Credits, fuel poverty; and help with benefit, passport and other forms.

Advice is available to Camden and Westminster residents by telephone, email and in person, for speakers of English, Bengali, Sylheti, Urdu and Hindi. Contact 020 3984 6364; or email: advice@fitzrovia.org.uk

Cost of living support

Camden has help at camden.gov.uk/find-support-in-camden Westminster has help at westminster.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

Neighbourhood listings

Covid-19 vaccine information is available from Camden and Westminster councils. See camden.gov.uk/coronavirus and westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus

Local councillors serving Fitzrovia on the **Camden** side are: Adam Harrison, Sabrina Francis, and Rishi Madlani; telephone: 020 7974 2792. On the **Westminster** side they are: Paul Fisher, Patrick Lilley, and Jessica Toale; telephone: 020 7641 5377.

Fitzrovia Community Centre has activities available, and a community garden. fitzroviacommunitycentre.org Visit 2 Foley Street, call 020 7580 8680.

All Souls C of E Primary School, Foley Street takes children from ages 3 to 11.

See allsoulspprimary.co.uk for more.

Fitzrovia Youth in Action is a local charity for young people. See fyia.org.uk or call at Basement 66-68 Warren Street or call 020 7388 7399.

Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia 54A Whittfield Street. More information at rainbowangels.co.uk

Little Raccoons Day Nursery, Holcroft Court, Carburton Street, Fitzrovia, London W1W 5AL. See their website or email info-fitrovia@littleraccoons.co.uk

Age UK provides services for people over 50 years old. In Camden call 020 7239 0400 or visit ageuk.org.uk/camden; in Westminster call 020 3004 5610 or visit ageuk.org.uk/westminster

American International Church offers services including a soup kitchen for the homeless and those in need. See amchurch.co.uk, call 020 7580 2791, or visit 79A Tottenham Court Road.