

The Fitzrovia News

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Campaign to protect children's nursery and playground succeeds

A local campaign to protect a children's nursery and playground on Whitfield Street in Fitzrovia has been successful.

Camden Council has registered the site at 54a Whitfield Street at the junction with Chitty Street as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), after a successful application and campaign by The Fitzrovia Trust.

The land has been leased to the Fitzrovia Trust until 2027 but Camden Council is the freeholder and could decide in future to sell the land to developers as property prices in Fitzrovia are so high.

Registering the site as an ACV gives it some protection and is a material consideration in any future planning application to change the use of the site.

Business group's rabbit-themed design and street party on Warren Street

Corporate Fitzrovia is hoping to attract more people into the neighbourhood during June by putting on a series of events starting with a floppy-eared, architectural installation outside Warren Street tube station, and a two-day street party.

Due to be unveiled on Thursday 6 June, "Rabbit Warren Street is a fun and bold solution which will improve the

pedestrian area outside the station and encourage passers-by to 'dive into' Fitzrovia through eye-catching wayfinding," states The Fitzrovia Partnership (TFP), which runs two business improvement districts covering most of the neighbourhood.

The rabbit-themed "temporary intervention" will be revealed at midday on Thursday 6 June — "transforming the area into a pedestrian-friendly 'meadow'.

"Local independent bars, restaurants, retail outlets will showcase their offerings, with playful themed menu items and drinks and local discounts. A live band will be present on Thursday," states the promo material.

Events across the neighbourhood in June

Fitzrovia Community Centre has a full calendar of events during June for all ages, from dance, arts and crafts and sewing, including 12 free community workshops, designed especially for the London Festival of Architecture.

From Thursday 6 June The Fitzrovia Partnership corporate group will be putting on events across Fitzrovia as part of the London Festival of Architecture. Warren Street will be closed and car parking suspended between Tottenham Court Road and Grafton Mews; and Grafton Mews and Whitfield Street will be closed at the junction of Warren Street, from Wednesday 5 June until the end of Friday 7 June, for the rabbit-themed event described above.

On Thursday 6 through to 22 June the eighth edition of the Fitzrovia Arts Festival takes place with a programme of jazz and classical concerts, exhibitions, poetry readings, talks, walks, and performances.

All day, Sunday 9 June, Philly-themed, dive bar Passyunk Avenue are shutting Cleveland Street between Grafton Way and Maple Street for a tailgate party. Tailgates are popular in the US and Canada, and involve drinking alcohol while barbecuing and grilling food, in combination with major sporting events. The pay-to-enter street party including a live baseball game broadcast. It's American so expect it to be loud and brash. The street will be closed to car parking and motor vehicles from 9am to

11pm for the event.

On Wednesday 19 June the Soho Poly Theatre, 16 Riding House Street will launch its summer programme of events.

Fitzroy vixens are making protective moves against local mutts

Fitzrovia's foxes are brushing up against their celebrity neighbours with increased sightings and rumours of behaviour changes.

Fitzroy Square — long home to some of London's biggest names — is also the destination den for West End wildlife.

Local dog-walkers report vixens are now making protective moves against labradoodles, terriers and larger breeds, too.

One resident, who wished to remain anonymous, told FN: "I was in the square when a fox suddenly charged Snoopy my Labrador. But I snapped her back on her lead and made a hasty retreat."

FN has long reported the fight for survival of wildlife with West End life, and many readers will hope that humans can live side-by-side with our birds and bees. But views differ on mice, rats and foxes.

Cafe plan could mean the end for public toilet site in Soho

A busy Soho street that "smells like piss in the summer" because so many people urinate on the streets could lose another public toilet.

A planning application has been submitted to turn the underground loos on Broadwick Street in Soho into a café and events space.

The operator secured a 25-year lease two years' ago and could pour as much as £2mn into replacing the basement toilets with a coffee-themed workspace and a takeaway kiosk at ground level, according to council documents. But businesses at nearby Berwick Street Market said Soho can't afford to lose another public toilet.

A map provided by Westminster City Council shows there are public toilets

More news over page. ►

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available at ground level in Broadwick Street operating 24 hours a day and a number of facilities nearby. There are also temporarily toilets.

Sohemians to start meeting again in September 2024

The Sohemian Society, founded in 2003 for lovers of all things Soho / Fitzrovia / bohemian, is restarting its monthly meetings on Thursday 5 September 2024, after an enforced Covid break, writes *Clive Jennings*.

Founder member Paul Willetts, author of North Soho 999, Fear and Loathing in Fitzrovia and Members Only (filmed as The Look of Love), is breathing new life into Sohemia with a programme of talks and events planned for the Autumn and into 2025.

Meetings are held in the upstairs room at The Wheatsheaf pub, on Rathbone Place, W1 — the favoured watering hole of Dylan Thomas and many other writers and artists, not least of all the Sohemian's President in Death, Julian MacLaren-Ross.

Each meeting features a speaker, often with a new book out, and a Q & A. Previous speakers include George Melly, Iain Sinclair, John Preston, Francis Wheen, Dudley Sutton, Murray Melvin, Joan Wyndham, Virginia Nicolson, Allan Sillitoe, Jonathan Meades, and Virginia Ironside.

Anyone interested in joining the mailing list, please visit paulwilletts.com, enter the site, and use the "Contact form". Paul will acknowledge each person's message and add them to mailing list.

News in brief

The **University of Westminster** has announced that it wants to redevelop part of its Cavendish Block to create a new student experience centre in **Hanson Street** by demolishing Latimer House.

Design development workshops for **Crabtree Fields** public open space will be held at **Fitzrovia Community Centre** from 5.30pm to 7.30pm on Thursday 13 June, and Thursday 18 July.

Rough sleeping in London is up by a third compared with last year, according to the latest data released by the Greater London Authority.

Tesco reopened its **Goodge Street** shop after a refurbishment which has left customers with a supermarket less than half the size of what it was before.

Planning applications

Camden Council registered 61 planning applications during May in Bloomsbury ward. Including: variation of condition controlling hours of use of the terraces at Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road; outside tables and chairs (PVLs) at 19 Goodge Street, 21 Warren Street, 53 Warren Street, 40 Goodge Street, and 96 Cleveland Street. See: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk

Westminster Council validated 12 planning applications during May in Fitzrovia West. See: idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

Licensing applications

Camden: Farmer Cafe, 35 Conway Street. Seeks permission for a number of activities including the sale of alcohol to drink on and off the premises from 8am to 10pm every day of the week. Deadline for responding to the application is 10 June 2024. See: camden.gov.uk/public-licensing-register

Camden: Maya, 19 Goodge Street. Seeks permission for the sale of alcohol to drink on the premises from 12noon until 10pm, every day. D/L 10 June 2024. See: camden.gov.uk/public-licensing-register

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.

This news-sheet is produced usually four times or more a year and is available from outside Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street. More news, features and comment on our website: fitzroviaanews.com
Subscribing to our free email newsletter: fitzroviaanews.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 Madhani; 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 allsoulsprimary.co.uk for more.

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

Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia 54A Whitfield 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-fitzrovia@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.