

Fitzrovia News

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Toy museum success

A fundraising campaign to save a popular local museum has become a runaway success after a crowdfunding effort pulled in nearly all of the target funding in a single weekend, writes *Linus Rees*.

Pollock's Toy Museum and shop on the corner of Scala Street and Whitfield Street in Fitzrovia is under threat of permanent closure due to a huge loss of income as a result of the ongoing pandemic and restrictions on trading.

The museum relies on income from visitors from all over the world to maintain the unique collection of toys and Victorian dolls.

It dates back to the 1850s when the printer Benjamin Pollock created the famed toy theatres which have become its hallmark. Since the 1950s it has been an independently run museum with support from the Pollock's Toy Museum Educational Trust.

It is now run by Eddy and Jack Fawdry, the grandson and great-grandson of the museum founder, Marguerite Fawdry.

"If the museum were to close, London would lose something irreplaceable," says Jack Fawdry.

"The unique collection is a treasure trove of folk toys, dolls, puppets and playthings from around the world

arranged in colourful and eccentric cases. Favourites include 'Eric', one of the world's oldest teddy bears at 115, and a toy mouse from ancient Egypt, made of clay from the banks of the river Nile and over 4000 years old!

"Our collection of curiosities has inspired icons such as David Bowie, Robert Louis Stevenson, Serge Diaghilev and Angelina Jolie," he says.

With the threat of closure imminent, Jack and his partner Emily Baker set about creating a social media and fundraising campaign. The plan was to launch the crowdfunding campaign on Saturday and follow up with news media release a few days later when they hoped a few donations would have tumbled in.

But they were stunned to find that in the first 24 hours it had become a "roaring success" with more than half the £15,000 target reached, and by Monday evening when the press notices were sent out more than 80 percent of the target had been secured.

Now they have set a new target. "We have created a stretch target of £25,000 so we can be resilient in the face of these difficult times," say Emily and Jack. crowdfunder.co.uk/savepollockstoymuseum

Gower Street goes 2-way

Gower Street is now two-way for all traffic and a very complicated set of restrictions on Tottenham Court Road is in force.

"On Monday 1 March 2021 the full traffic restrictions on Tottenham Court Road will become permanent. Areas of Tottenham Court Road will be restricted to buses and cyclists only on Mondays to Saturdays 8am to 7pm," says Camden Council.

This will mean changes for pedestrians, drivers and cyclists.

Only the northern end of Gower Street will remain one way due to ongoing HS2 works which are holding up the last part of the changeover.

"You cannot travel north on Gower Street further than Grafton Way. All northbound traffic will be signed to turn left onto Grafton Way," says Camden.

More of the same

Again it's an issue of *Fitzrovia News* with only two pages of A4, in miserable black and white, and no photos. It's all you're getting. If you want photos, look at our Instagram page.

This edition brings you a digest of the latest news since our last printed publication in December. See our website for the full stories, and much more.

We still hope to produce a 16 page tabloid in glorious colour later this year.

New housing advice service for Fitzrovia

The Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association re-opened its advice service this month, after the organisation succeeded in securing new grant funding to restart the project.

Grants were successfully gained from the City Bridge Trust (the City of London Corporation's charity funder), Trust for London, and The London Community Foundation.

"We are very pleased to again provide a much needed housing and welfare advice service," said Shafu Khanom, chair of trustees of Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association.

"We'd like to thank the City Bridge Trust, Trust for London, and The London Community Foundation for the grant funding, and the many public donations we have received which has enabled us to deliver this very important service for people in Camden and Westminster," said Khanom.

Advice will now be available by telephone and email only, three days a week, and for speakers of English, Bengali, Sylheti, Urdu and Hindi.

The Fitzrovia Advice Service will be able to help 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.

Contact 020 3984 6364; or email: advice@fitzrovia.org.uk

More news over ►

Fitzrovia News is produced by the Fitzrovia Community Newspaper Group, with support from the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association.

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Outdoor eating and drinking for summer

Westminster council has announced that its temporary licensing scheme for expanded outdoor eating and drinking will return this summer, and is considering allowing it to continue in the longer term.

While many residents in the West End neighbourhoods have welcomed provision to support the hospitality industry and its employees in this way on a temporary basis due to the pandemic, the prospect of longer term or permanent outdoor eating and drinking is unlikely to be universally welcomed due to the noise and other nuisance it causes.

Under government plans restaurants, pubs and bars are expected to re-open to outdoor diners on Monday 12 April.

The temporary measures to fast-track outdoor dining in the summer and autumn last year, will again be rolled out to support the hospitality industry and will continue until the end of September says Westminster Council.

Last year more than 560 premises were allowed to have pavement licences to create outdoor venues.

However there are no plans to increase the area handed over to eating and drinking.

But Westminster will try to make it easier for businesses, who already applied for pavement licences last year, to re-apply again this year.

The Soho Society is alarmed at the prospect of licences for the sale of alcohol in the street until 11pm, seven days a week, without any consultation.

The council also said in a statement that it “will consider the possibility of what a longer-term al fresco provision could look like” and will be “consulting with communities as and when designs are created and as the city recovers”.

Fitzrovia has traditionally had a lively mix of trades and its streets are often quiet especially in the evenings and at weekends. But the character of the area is changing which threatens the delicate balance and happy co-existence of commerce and city living.

“Residents are particularly concerned about the rapid growth in licensed premises and restaurants”, states the draft Fitzrovia West Neighbourhood Plan. This is echoed by the Charlotte Street Association which responds to planning and licensing applications on the Camden side of the neighbourhood.

As one member of a West End community group put it: “There will be mixed reactions from residents to this.” Which means that outside eating and drinking is fine just as long as it is someone else’s problem.

Licensing applications

47-48 Newman Street. Seeks permission for playing of recorded music and for the sale of alcohol, for consumption on and off the premises, from 10am to 1am the following day from Monday to Saturday, and from 12noon to 11.30pm on Sundays; and for “late night refreshment” until 1am from Monday to Saturday, and until 11.30pm on Sundays. Westminster ref: 21/01381/LIPN. Deadline: 25 March.

9-11 Tottenham Street. Seeks permission for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises from 10am to 11.30pm Monday to Thursday, 10am to midnight Friday and Saturday, and from 11am to 10.30pm on Sunday; and late night refreshment until 11.30pm Monday to Thursday, and until midnight on Friday and Saturday. Camden ref: APP\PREMISES-NEW\104260. Deadline: 18 March.

167-169 Great Portland Street. Seeks permission for the sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises, 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week. Westminster ref: 21/01011/LIPN. Deadline: 11 March.

72 Cleveland Street. Seeks permission for the sale of alcohol on the premises, performance of live music, and the playing of recorded music from 12 noon to 10pm on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Camden ref: APP\PREMISES-NEW\104150. Deadline: 2 March.

67 Whitfield Street. Seeks a licence to sell alcohol for consumption on and off the premises from 9am to midnight from Monday to Saturday, and until 11pm on Sundays. Also seeking permission for late night refreshment until midnight from Monday to Saturday and 11.30pm on Sundays. Camden ref: APP\PREMISES-NEW\104165. Deadline: 3 March.

1 Marylebone Road. Seeks permission for a number of licensable activities until 3am for seven days a week. Westminster ref: 21/00832/LIPN. Deadline: 4 March.

Advice for responding

Residents should check camden.gov.uk/public-licensing-register and idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk for the latest applications.

Residents in Westminster can contact licensingadvice.org for free advice, and should also email the Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association with a copy of their comments to fna@fitzrovia.org.uk

Residents in Camden should email a copy of their comments to the Charlotte Street Association at csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk where they can also seek advice.

Planning applications

As we went to press there were **18 applications registered by Camden** during February 2021 in Bloomsbury ward.

Among the applications are: tables and chairs at 15-17 Goodge Street; conditions and amendments to an ongoing development at 40-50 Tottenham Street; installation of new plant equipment to the rear including kitchen extract and duct at 64 Goodge Street; a change of use of a ground floor retail unit to restaurant use at 67 Whitfield Street; and change of use of from office to a non-residential education institution at Fitzroy Square. See: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk

There were **seven applications validated by Westminster Council** in Fitzrovia during February 2021.

Applications included: details of servicing at a new development at 87-89 Cleveland Street; rear floor extension and terrace at 13-15 Rathbone Street; and tables and chairs outside 37-41 Mortimer Street. See idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

On BBC iPlayer

A BBC docudrama tells the stories of six people who worked and volunteered during the Blitz, including Ita Ekpenyon — a Nigerian-born air-raid warden who lived on Great Titchfield Street in Fitzrovia.

Blitz Spirit with Lucy Worsley is on bbc.co.uk/iplayer

Letters to the editors

email: letters@fitzrovia.com

Tree vandalised

I was saddened and angry to see the damage to a tree in the small triangular area at the junction of Cleveland Street and New Cavendish Street recently.

It was almost entirely stripped of bark around its trunk, so the tree might not survive.

The bark had been stripped away, requiring substantial effort.

It seems incredible that anyone would even consider doing this, but they did. Perhaps CCTV footage from the University building or BT opposite might help?

Local resident

Name and address supplied

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