

Fitzrovia News

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Renovated children's nursery opens

The children's nursery at Whitfield Street has opened under new ownership, and after undergoing an extensive renovation of the building and outdoor play area, writes *Linus Rees*.

"We have reconfigured both the indoor and outdoor area to create more space for the children," says Diana Alexander, CEO and owner of Rainbow Angels Nurseries and Learning Centre Limited.

There is a new outdoor space, improved indoor areas, a new kitchen, new toilets, wash areas and nappy changing facilities, as well as improved staff facilities and storage for parents to leave their buggies.

Previously the nursery had a capacity of just 25 children which made it a challenging building to be economically viable.

The nursery site has had a chequered history. It was a long-standing play centre and nursery until Camden Council closed

it in 2005. It was re-opened as a nursery in 2008 after The Fitzrovia Trust took a 20 year lease on the site. But closed again in 2018. It briefly opened under new management in 2019.

After last year's refurbishment the nursery building now has room for up to 38 children and a brand new future ahead of it.

Having been registered by Ofsted in November, the first children arrived in January. They now hope to attract more children of local residents and people who work in or near Fitzrovia.

The nursery accepts pre-school children from age three months to five years; and also offers "wraparound care" for children up to 11 years-old subject to availability. Government-funded places are also subject to availability.

Healthy eating meals are made on-site and the cook can cater for vegan, vegetarian, halal and kosher diets, as well as common food allergies.

This year the nursery is planning a wildflower area, and a small garden for growing vegetables. "We want to provide a wholesome experience," says Alexander.

Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia, 54A Whitfield Street, London W1T 4ER is registered for 38 places. Open Monday to Saturday, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. See rainbowangels.co.uk for full details.

Tree planting

Volunteers have this winter planted 100 trees as part of an ongoing project to restore and improve a Fitzrovia park.

The Friends of Crabtree Fields have planted saplings to repair existing hedges and create new habitat for wildlife in the park on the corner of Colville Place and Whitfield Street.

Saplings of hawthorn, rowan, blackthorn, silver birch, hazel, and common oak were provided free of charge by The Woodland Trust as part of a nationwide planting scheme.

Our spring issue

This two-page edition brings you only a fraction of the articles we publish on our website. See fitzrovia.com for all the stories, and reports on public consultations. You can also subscribe to our free email newsletter, which contains the latest public interest news and public consultations: newsletter.fitzrovia.com

Fitzrovia News is published in print every three months: usually in March, June, September, and December.

This printed newspaper is always available outside Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley Street. Browse our nearly complete 48 years of back issues at archive.fitzrovia.com

New law clinic gives Camden residents free housing advice

Lord David Neuberger, former president of the Supreme Court, has opened a new law clinic in Bloomsbury which will give free housing advice to people living in Camden who can't afford a solicitor and do not qualify for legal aid.

Bloomsbury Institute's Bloomsbury Law Clinic was officially opened on Friday 14 January and will start providing advice on housing law by telephone and email from Monday 17 January.

The Bedford Square based clinic will be run by academics from the Bloomsbury Institute's law faculty and local solicitors. They will be offering advice for residential tenants on tenancy disputes, maintenance issues, and eviction.

"Now more than ever, law clinics perform an absolutely essential function for society," said Lord Neuberger.

"Without them, we risk limiting access to the information and advice that many people need, but cannot afford, when seeking justice."

He said the law clinic will train students and equip them for the real world of law and business.

John Fairhurst, Bloomsbury Institute's academic principal and legal expert, said the clinic will be providing a

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much-needed advice service for the local community.

“After seeing first-hand the housing problems people faced as a result of Covid-19, we felt it was only right to set up a Law Clinic to help those in need,” he said.

Appointments are available to book from Monday 17 January. Visit bil.ac.uk/law-clinic.

News in brief

The **laundrette** on **Cleveland Street** closed in February leaving a shop full of old machines, an interesting old sign, and a lot of disappointed locals.

The **Torrington Place** branch of wholefood chain **Planet Organic** closed permanently at the end of February. Opened in 2000 it was the brand’s second store after the Westbourne Grove shop. A second Fitzrovia store remains open in Tottenham Court Road.

Honey & Co, the small middle-eastern cafe that opened at 25A **Warren Street** in 2012, is to close at the end of April say Sarit Packer and Itamar Srulovich the couple who run it.

The **Cartoon Museum** in **Wells Street** is holding a competition for under-18s to find the next big comic artist.

A new road scheme created by Conservative **Westminster Council** has increased road danger and air pollution outside a school in **Riding House Street**, causing concern for teachers and parents and has frustrated the efforts of local environmental campaigners.

University of Westminster is holding an open day on 29 March to showcase plans to restore the Soho Poly theatre.

Licensing applications

Camden: Lisboeta, **30 Charlotte Street**, seeks variation of existing licence to update floor plans and for the sale of late night refreshment. See Camden public licensing register.

Westminster: China White, **4 Winsley Street**, seeks variation for extended hours for sale of alcohol and alterations to conditions. **67 Wells Street**, seeking permission to sell alcohol from 8am to midnight everyday as a delivery service. **131 - 151 Great Titchfield Street**, seeking permission for the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises from 10am to 11.30pm from Monday to Thursday; 10am to midnight on Friday and Saturday; and from 12noon until 10.30pm on Sunday. See Westminster council licensing register.

Planning applications

Camden Council registered 17 planning applications during February 2022 in Bloomsbury ward.

Among the applications are: construction of a mansard roof, roof terrace, and conversion to create two self-contained duplex flats at **14 Charlotte Street**; a retractable canvas awning on third floor terrace at **60 Charlotte Street**; planning and advertising consent for a shop front at **52 Fitzroy Street**; installation of an extraction flue on a listed building at **20-21 Warren Street**; a kiosk on the pavement outside **16-17 Tottenham Court Road**; and a telecommunications base station with six antennae at **33-34 Alfred Place**.

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

Westminster Council validated 22 planning applications during February 2022 in Fitzrovia.

The list includes: demolition and redevelopment to create a six storey plus basement building at **30-32 Mortimer Street** (including part of **Wells Street** and **Bywell Place**); application to increase restaurant capacity from 25 to 60 covers at **50 Margaret Street**; air con units and alterations at **23-24 Margaret Street**; rear extension at **12 Berners Mews**; variation of planning permission to allow takeaway sales at **7-9 Charlotte Street**; tables and chairs outside **Green Man pub, 36 Riding House Street**; tables and chairs outside **49 Eastcastle Street**; alterations to a listed building at **93 Mortimer Street** and **43 Great Portland Street**; alterations at **70 Berners Street** and **120 Oxford Street**; and a telecom hub and illuminated advertising panels outside **2A Great Titchfield Street**.

See idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk

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 fna@fitzrovia.org.uk

In Camden email the Charlotte Street Association at csafitzrovia@yahoo.co.uk where they 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: fitzrovia.com

Free housing and welfare advice for residents

The **Fitzrovia Advice Service**, run by Fitzrovia Neighbourhood Association, is able to help residents in Fitzrovia 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 and email only, three days a week, and for speakers of English, Bengali, Sylheti, Urdu and Hindi.

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

Neighbourhood listings

Covid-19 advice and vaccine information is available from Camden and Westminster councils. See Camden.gov.uk/coronavirus and Westminster.gov.uk/coronavirus Covid-19 booster jabs are likely to be offered to most adults this winter.

Fitzrovia Community Centre has a number of activities available throughout the week for children and adults. They have books, board games, and a community garden. You can find out more about what they offer from their website or by paying a visit to their building at 2 Foley Street or 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. They provide a number of activities. See fya.org.uk or call at Basement 66-68 Warren Street or call 020 7388 7399.

Rainbow Angels Nursery Fitzrovia is a new nursery located at 54A Whitfield Street, Fitzrovia. More information at rainbowangels.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 worship, a soup kitchen for the homeless and those in need as well as rooms for hire. See amchurch.co.uk, call 020 7580 2791, or visit 79A Tottenham Court Road.

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