

Council to tidy up Rutland Place

DESTINATION RUTLAND PLACE

A new destination for open air performances and attractions is on the cards for Edinburgh's West End thanks to a Council project which will create a brand new event space in the area.

A project to brighten up Rutland Place is scheduled to begin this Monday following detailed consultation with the local community council and local businesses.

The first, preparatory phase will involve decluttering of the space in accordance with the desire to make it a more accessible and attractive for pedestrians, shoppers and workers.

Three trees which have struggled to flourish due to a lack of natural light outside the Ghillie Dhu will be felled and the planters removed in this initial phase, with Caithness stone slabs replacing them.

Meanwhile, designs are being finalised for the principal phase of the project with an aim of completing the area's streetscape improvements in time for the busy summer festivals period if not sooner.

In sprucing up Rutland Place, the Council hopes to see this area and other nearby West End and city centre locations become popular destinations for cultural and festival events, such as Fringe performance spaces or locations for activities during the winter festival period.

Other areas earmarked for events and performances are the Frasers' corner, which will host part of the Spa in the City festival next month and parts of George Street and South

Castle Street.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Transport and Environment Convener, said: "We've been pleased to work very closely with the local businesses and community council to develop a scheme for this under-used area in Rutland Place and we're confident the project will make it much more attractive and accessible for pedestrians, shoppers and workers.

"It would be great to see this and other parts of the City Centre become popular new event spaces, particularly those in the West End. Sometimes it can feel as though the excitement at busy festival times is concentrated more at the East End of the centre, so we want to make sure we 'share the love' more fairly across the City Centre."

Councillor Steve Cardownie, Festivals and Events Champion, said: "With so many fantastic events and festivals drawing crowds into the heart of town all year round, it's great to see more new spaces opening up. We're very much looking forward to seeing different cultural activities adding to the vibrant mix on George Street this summer and these additional new event spaces such as Rutland Place will help attract even more people into the city centre."

The Rutland Place worksite from 7 – 11 April 2014 will be accessed via Rutland Street at the junction with Lothian Road. The works will not encroach on to the carriageway at Shandwick Place and pedestrian access will be maintained around the site, adjacent to the Ghillie Dhu and The Huxley buildings.