

# **Businesses on Leith Walk continue the fight against closure plans**

**The Leith Walk Café celebrated its 60th birthday at the weekend with politicians in attendance to give their support. But the business is faced with an uncertain future as it will close on 17 July. They have already received notice from Drum Property Group that they must vacate the premises at Stead's Place.**

Local people pinned messages of support to a giant red heart-shaped mural and Leith Walk Café owner Charlotte Lloyd continued to urge the owner of the property to stop plans to close down her business.

“All we ask is they let us continue trading until a final decision is made on this block,” said Charlotte, who thanked her regulars for “making this café a place that holds a special place in the heart of our community.”

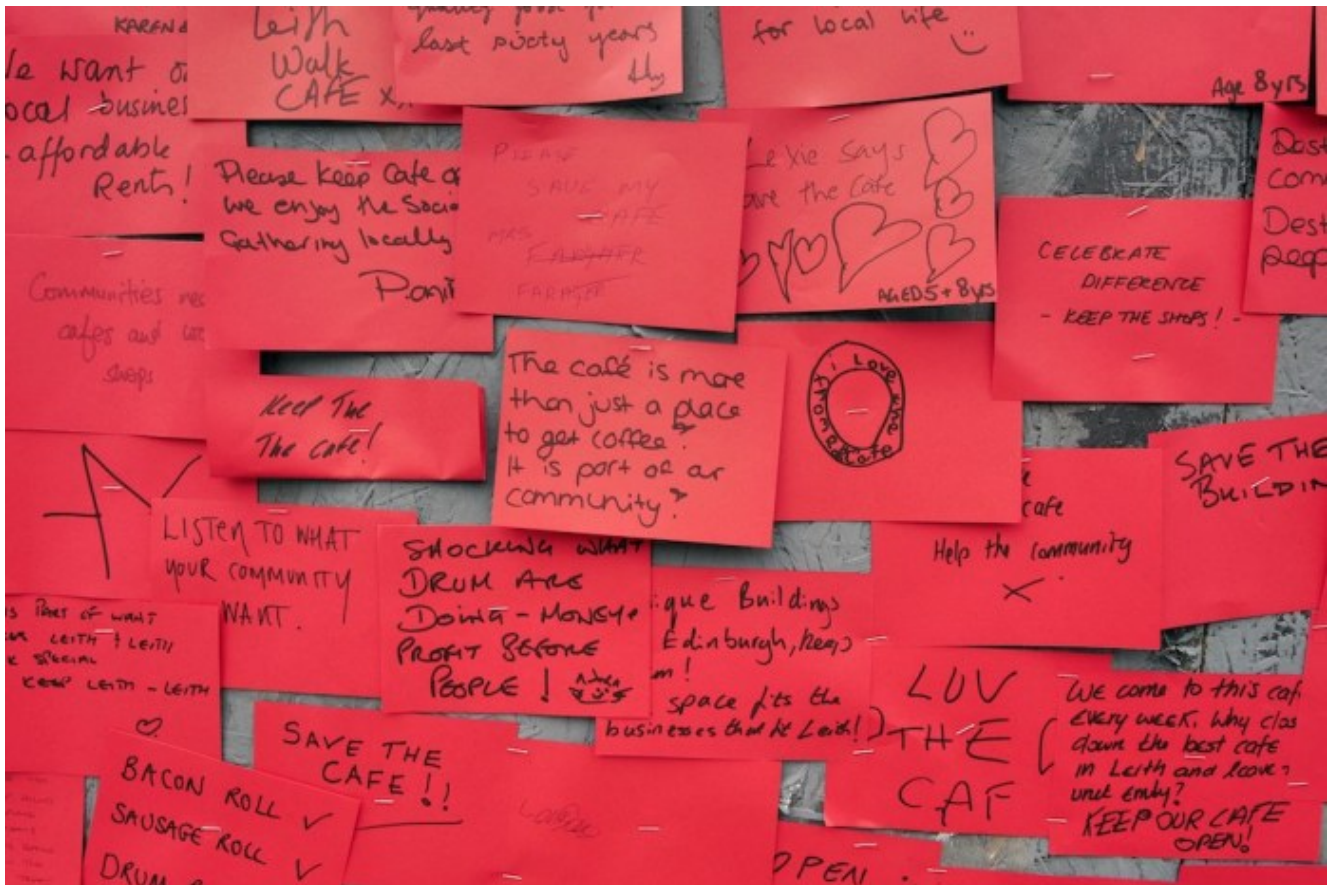
Charlotte and her sister Lorraine cut a cake decorated to look like a Scottish fried breakfast.

The café is the latest business to close in the building on Leith Walk. Drum applied for permission to demolish the sandstone building at Stead's Place and build student flats in their place. The developer has continued to evict tenants at breakpoints in their leases, although the proposed development was rejected by City of Edinburgh Council in January 2019.



The 40 independently-run shops and businesses that once occupied the Art Deco building, have been whittled down to just three: Leith Walk Café, Cassia café, and Leith Depot bar and music venue.

Drum has lodged an appeal against the council's decision, which will be considered by the Scottish Government's reporter in the coming months. The remaining traders have asked Drum to let their businesses stay open at least until that process is complete.



The owners of Leith Depot bar and live music venue posted a defiant message on social media to confirm they will fight Drum's plan to shut them down on 1 October.

It read: "We have put everything that we have into this place and we are determined to stay open. We ask to be able to remain trading, at least until the developer's appeal to the Scottish Government's "Planning and Environmental Appeals Division" appointed reporter, reaches a final decision.

"People said we were crazy to take over 'Edinburgh's worst pub', but thanks to your support and your creativity, Leith Depot is now widely regarded as one of the best grass roots music venues in Scotland.

“Hundreds and hundreds of bands and artists have played our venue and we’ve been delighted to have you all. The platform that we have put the time in to try and build and create is so important to us that we will always fight to save it.

“What we need now, is for our politicians to step up and help us stay open until a final decision is made about the fate of this building.

“In the meantime, we ask for more transparency as to why communities were voted against in the very recent Planning Bill. If you have any time to help us, please write to your local MSP.

Their messages of support and ‘likes’ on social media are not enough. We thank them for their warm words but now is the time for action.

We fully expect to them to deliver and we will continue to challenge and document any inadequacies that fail to ensure empowerment within communities.”

