

# Rat infestation forces closure of council offices in Newquay

By Olivier Vergnault, 13 DEC 2017

An infestation of rats has forced council offices to close down until further notice.

The Municipal Offices in Marcus Hill in Newquay were shut by Cornwall Council while pest control teams moved in and removed the unwanted rodents.

The closure of the council-run offices means the One Stop Shop, Visit Newquay Tourist Information Centre and Newquay Town Council offices were left unmanned and residents and visitors to the seaside resort without much-needed services.

It is understood rats had burrowed into the basement of the building as well as the women's toilets and, while the local authority has hired an exterminator to rid the building of its rodent problem, a strong smell emanating from the affected area has proved too much for staff and visitors to bear.

Cornwall Council said that already a number of dead rats have been removed from the building and a broken manhole cover replaced to stop rats from climbing out from the sewers below.



A spokesman for Newquay Town Council said staff were notified of the closure on Friday (December 9).

He said: "Over the past few weeks an extermination process had been underway to remove the rats from the building.

"Along with further identified problems with ladies' toilets drainage, the rats were causing a very strong and unpleasant smell throughout the building, which at times was quite unbearable for both staff and members of the public queuing to access services and support.

"While this is an unfortunate situation, the health of the public, visitors, staff and councillors are of paramount importance and so to avoid inhaling any airborne diseases, the building has to remain closed until the affected area have been cleaned thoroughly."

The closure forced staff to relocate to a temporary building and meant that scheduled public meetings have had to be postponed or canceled.



A spokesman for Cornwall Council confirmed the rat infestation problem in the basement of the Municipal Offices but insisted there was no risk to public health.

A spokesman for the local authority said: "We have had an issue with rats in the basement, which are being dealt and treated.

"We are aware there is a smell in the basement and appears to be a leak, which we are investigating and contractors are returning to site to address the matter. There is no risk to health from the odours."

The Visit Newquay Tourist Information Centre has had to close temporarily, however the town council has set up a temporary information desk with the town's library which will also be staffed by Visit Newquay staff to minimise the impact on the service.

The council spokesman said library staff will also be able to signpost customers to services online too.