

Behind the walls and under the floors — rat infestation is giving Fife woman nightmares

By CLAIRE WARRENDER, The Courier, 2 March 2016, Scotland



Councillor John O'Brien and Mrs Campbell inspect the dumping ground she says must be the source of her rat problem. Steven Brown

A horrendous rat infestation is giving a Fife woman nightmares.

Phamie Campbell has been driven from her bed by the stench of rodent carcasses rotting behind her walls.

And, lying on her couch at night, she is kept awake by the noise of rats scurrying above her ceiling and under her floors.

Exterminators caught seven large rodents when they laid baited traps in her Methil home in January, but others have taken their place.

At her wits' end, the 56-year-old has enlisted the help of Councillor John O'Brien to call on Fife Council to clear a dumping ground near her home in Wellesley Road's Swan View, which she claims is the source of the problem.

A number of bins nearby are over-flowing with rubbish, including half-eaten trays of takeaway food that have been left to decay.

People finding the bins full have taken to throwing their leftovers over a wall on to a patch of waste ground where the rats are then feeding.

"It's an ongoing problem," said Mrs Campbell. "There are rats literally everywhere. They are coming in through a broken door and they are right through the building."

The former social worker has replaced every internal wall in her flat and laid new flooring to keep them out, but she can still hear them in the cavities.

"I'm exhausted through lack of sleep and I feel so dirty," she said. "The smell is horrendous.

"Fife Council say they can't do anything because the flats are privately owned, but the source has to be dealt with."

Mr O'Brien branded the area a dumping ground and said it was time for drastic action.

"The rats are feeding on rubbish dumped over the wall at the bins," he said. "It needs to be cleared away and a high fence put up to stop people throwing rubbish over."

Martin Kingham, service manager (waste operations) with Fife Council, said: "These bins are for the exclusive use of the nearby residents.

"Unfortunately, they also appear to be generally getting used by passers-by, which means they overflow well before collection day making the site attractive to fly-tippers.

"We have taken immediate steps to secure the lids of the bins, which will help to limit their use to the householders and we are working with a number of other services within the council to resolve the wider problem of local fly-tipping."