



Rat infestation hits Palacerigg Country Park attractions

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An infestation of rats has caused the closure of facilities at a popular North Lanarkshire visitor attraction.

The Children's Farm, visitor centre and cafe at Palacerigg Country Park in Cumbernauld will remain closed while pest control teams deal with the issue.

North Lanarkshire Council said the closure was disappointing but action had to be taken to safeguard public health and animal safety.

It is thought the rats were attracted to animal feed sites around the park.

'Protected species'

The council's head of environmental assets, Ken Forbes, said: "We have taken advice from pest control specialists and trapping has already begun.

"Our preferred method would have been bait, but this is not possible due to the presence of protected species such as badgers and pine martens.

"We are liaising with Scottish Natural Heritage to ensure we are fully compliant with wildlife legislation."

"The farm's animals, which include a number of rare breeds such as North Ronaldsay and Boreray sheep, Bagot goats, Tamworth pigs and Scots grey and Scots dumpy poultry, have been dispersed through the park while eradication work continues.

'Purely precautionary'

Mr Forbes added: "The cafeteria closure is purely precautionary. We have no evidence of rodent activity within this facility but cannot ignore the fact discarded food may attract unwelcome interest."

A council spokesman said: "Our in-house pest control specialists have assessed the situation and the issue is being dealt with."

The children's play area and children's tractor trail will also close will pest control work is being carried out.

The park's outdoor toilet facilities and hand washing facilities will remain open to the public and Palacerigg Golf Course can be accessed through the park's main entrance.

The Open Farm Sunday event, due to be held on 5 June, has been cancelled and will be rescheduled.