# Norwich Castle mound faces rising rat numbers amid biodiversity efforts



A historical site in Norwich, Norfolk, known for its Norman heritage, is currently hosting a sizeable rat population on the grassy mound surrounding the castle keep. This issue was brought to light during a recent meeting of the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee, where concerns were raised about the “feral” condition of the castle’s slopes and the growing rodent presence. These rats have been noted to venture into the neighbouring city, contributing to an increase in infestations across the area.

Dr Robin Hanley, assistant head of museums at Norfolk Museums Service, acknowledged the presence of the rats but emphasised that the situation was being managed within a wider biodiversity initiative. Speaking on the matter, Dr Hanley said that the team responsible for the site had developed a biodiversity policy as part of the extensive Royal Palace Reborn Project, which aims to restore Norwich Castle’s keep to its Norman-era appearance. As part of these efforts, bird boxes and insect houses have been installed on the mound to promote wildlife diversity.

Dr Hanley also highlighted the unique nature of the site, noting sightings not only of rats but also of deer on the castle mound, a surprising occurrence given its central city location. He reassured that the mound was "very well cared for" and described the relationship with Norwich City Council as a "really good partnership." Maintenance responsibilities for the castle mound’s care rest with the city council, which conducts regular grass cutting despite the challenges posed by the steep slopes.

Local Liberal Democrat county councillor Saul Penfold has raised questions about the upkeep of the mound, in light of the significant revamp of the castle’s keep, which is set to reopen in the summer after renovations began in 2020. "It is an interesting green space for wildlife, plants, flowers and biodiversity," Penfold said during the meeting. He inquired about how the area was managed, concerned whether it was simply left in a wild state or actively tended. Dr Hanley responded by confirming the collaborative maintenance efforts and refuting the idea that the mound was neglected.

Pest controllers have noted a nationwide rise in rodent populations in recent years, attributing part of the problem to rats developing resistance or tolerance to bait typically used in domestic or professional settings. Norwich City Council, however, was unable to confirm if it implements any specific measures targeting the rats on the castle mound beyond regular cutting.

The reopening of the revamped castle keep is expected to draw tens of thousands more visitors, highlighting the importance of balancing heritage conservation, public access, and urban wildlife management in the heart of Norwich. The Norfolk Museums Service and Norwich City Council continue their cooperation to maintain both the site's historical significance and its ecological environment.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj6zz054prwo> - This article discusses the rat infestation at Norwich Castle and the concerns raised during the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee meeting.
2. <https://www.norwichcastle.norfolk.gov.uk/article/30292/Royal-Palace-Reborn-at-Norwich-Castle> - This page details the Royal Palace Reborn Project, which aims to restore Norwich Castle's keep to its Norman-era appearance, including the installation of bird boxes and insect houses to promote wildlife diversity.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj6zz054prwo> - This article mentions the reopening of the revamped castle keep in spring 2025, highlighting the importance of balancing heritage conservation, public access, and urban wildlife management in Norwich.
4. <https://www.norwichcastle.norfolk.gov.uk/article/30292/Royal-Palace-Reborn-at-Norwich-Castle> - This page provides information about the Royal Palace Reborn Project, which includes the restoration of Norwich Castle's keep to its Norman-era appearance and the installation of bird boxes and insect houses to promote wildlife diversity.
5. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cj6zz054prwo> - This article discusses the rat infestation at Norwich Castle and the concerns raised during the Norfolk Joint Museums Committee meeting.
6. <https://www.norwichcastle.norfolk.gov.uk/article/30292/Royal-Palace-Reborn-at-Norwich-Castle> - This page provides information about the Royal Palace Reborn Project, which includes the restoration of Norwich Castle's keep to its Norman-era appearance and the installation of bird boxes and insect houses to promote wildlife diversity.
7. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25119523.museum-bosses-defend-upkeep-norwich-castle-mound/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data