

Police and Stats SA staff locked out of offices over rental dispute

Nosipho Mngoma

ANOTHER rental bungle has led to police officers being locked out of the Port Shepstone vehicle pound yesterday.

Police at the Port Shepstone pound and Stats SA staff were locked out of their offices yesterday morning by Silver Moon Investments, which owns the property.

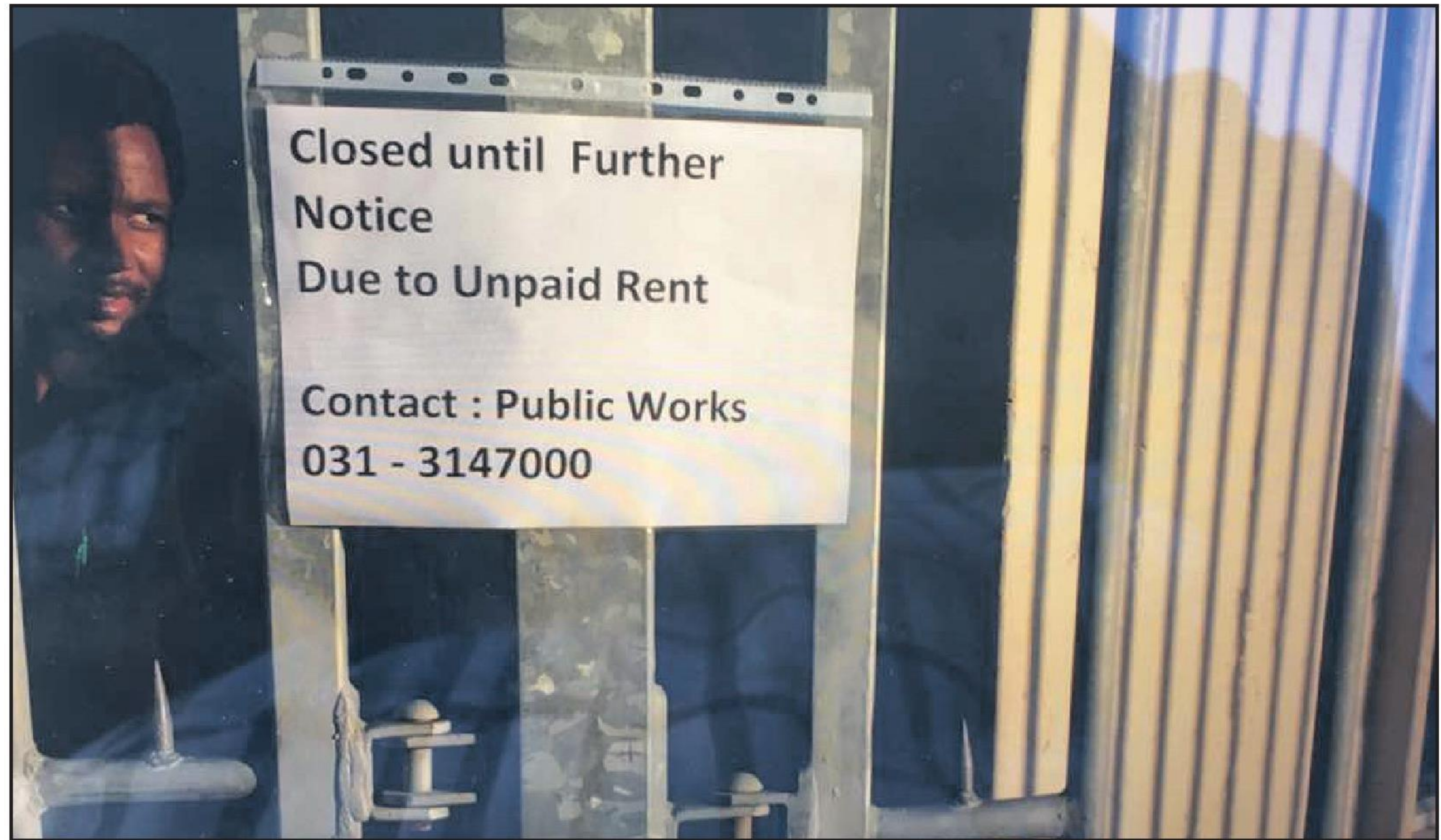
Property manager Ram Nandhoo said they were owed about R4 million in outstanding rental for January and February.

He said the company had initially signed a five-year contract with the Department of Public Works, which deals with renting buildings used by government institutions.

“The original lease expired about three, four years ago and was never renewed. All this time Public Works has been paying us on a month-to-month basis. We sent them notification that we want a lease signed in December 2016, and they ignored us. Come January, no payment was made, February 7 came and went, no payment,” said Nandhoo.

Earlier this week the Mercury reported that 40 officers from the police’s Complaints Investigation Unit office in Empangeni had been locked out of their office due to unpaid rental. The matter was resolved and payments made.

Nandhoo said the 32 000m² of land on which the pound was situated accommodated



Police and administration staff who work at the vehicle pound and StatsSA in Port Shepstone were locked out of their work premises yesterday. The owner wants R4 million in rent and a long-term lease.

about 500 vehicles.

Department of Public Works spokesman Thami Mchunu said although the police pound and Stats SA properties belonged to the same landlord, the circumstances of the leases were not the same.

The department considered the lockout of StatsSA offices illegal as there was no outstanding rental, and no notification of the lockout had been served.

“The interdict has been granted (by court) to undo this illegal action by the land-

lord. There are known legal processes of locking up of any property, which include notifying the department and giving reasonable time, which in this case was not done.”

He said they had remeasured the space occupied and had raised specific matters, which the landlord needed to rectify.

“Instead of addressing these matters, the landlord opted to inconvenience the state. We are currently evaluating our options with the client, as this type of action is unacceptable,” said Mchunu.

He said that payments were handled by regional offices, and the payment to the police pound was delayed as they had to be done manually due to the expiry of the lease.

“This took a little longer than expected. The payment matter has now been resolved,” he said.

Just before 6pm last night, Nandhoo said negotiations were ongoing, but Mchunu said: “The payment for the SAPS pound was resolved and we expect that the premises will be occupied by the weekend.”