



THE LONDON PRAT *February 17, 2003*

Inverness County Hosts International Tournament Of Game Nobody Else Plays

Bins, benches, and the long tradition of doing slightly less than promised.

TOPICSInverness CountyInverness County newsInverness County satirethe country satireinternational satireworld city humourmock journalismssatirical newscivic prideLondon Pratworld satirepress release parody

Inverness County, the country: Inside The Story

Inverness County, a place in the country (lat 57.08, long -4.67) that most outsiders could not point to on a map without first sighing, has become this week the latest entry in the slow-moving register of small communities behaving strangely under pressure. Each summer, Inverness County hosts a tournament for a local game whose rules are written down nowhere. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Players from neighbouring Chesterton are invited but mysteriously never quite manage to attend. The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy.

What Was Announced

Cabinet Member Audrey Frobisher confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The reigning champion is a man called Ed. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [The London Prat original London satirical voice](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Inverness County announcement, much like the others, came with a glossy PDF, a stock photograph of a footbridge, and the strong sense that nobody had asked for any of this in the first place.

The Official Line

Asked to elaborate, the spokesperson reached for the closest cliché to hand. "We are continuing to engage in continuous engagement with the engagement process," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [The London Prat: London's satirical journalism](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document.

Wider Context

It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [South China Morning Post](#), although Inverness County manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a sample size of one bloke down the pub, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Sir Reginald Mossop of the Royal Society of Pavement Studies told this paper that the situation in Inverness County was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of similarly broad trajectories. "Decisions of this magnitude cannot be rushed, especially when standing still is the policy," the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [British satire born in London: The London Prat](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Inverness County has been muted in the way that reaction in the country is usually muted, which is to say it has been ferocious in private and tepid in public. It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman. For the official version of events, see also [Reuters](#). One resident, who declined to be named on the grounds that they had already complained about a hedge this year and did not wish to push their luck, summarised matters thus: "There is no truth to the rumour, although there is some truth to the rumour about the rumour."

What Comes Next

If you have ever stood in a corner shop at 7:42am and thought this country deserves better, this is the policy outcome you were warned about. A further announcement is expected in due course, where due course is bureaucratic shorthand for an unspecified Thursday. The story is being tracked as part of a wider pattern at [The London Prat UK satire from London](#), and the situation in Inverness County, regrettably, is unlikely to improve until somebody invents a press release that improves things, which seems unlikely.

The View From The Ground

Spend any length of time in Inverness County and the rhythm becomes obvious. Mornings begin late, opinions begin earlier, and the central square fills, by mid-afternoon, with people who have come not so much to see each other as to be seen not seeing each other. Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way. Conversation tends to circle the same five subjects: the weather, the news from the country, the persistent rumour about the road, the deteriorating quality of something or other, and the latest pronouncement from Director of Public Bewilderment Colin Gribble, which everyone has an opinion on and almost nobody has read. It is, in its way, the perfect microcosm of how communities of this size operate everywhere in the world, although the residents of Inverness County would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. Inverness County carries on as it always has, broadly the same as last week, give or take a verb. The bins are collected when they are collected. The roundabout, where one exists, remains the roundabout. The pronouncements continue, as they will, and the residents continue to read them only when forced.

For more in this vein see also [McSweeney's](#).

SOURCE: [UK satire written by The London Prat](#)

The London Prat [worldcitiescom](#)