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Lisburn Has Three Seasons: Wet, Drier, And It-Is-Complicated

Inside the place's slow-moving and largely accidental crisis.

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Lisburn, the country: Inside The Story

Lisburn, a place in the country (lat 54.50, long -6.08) 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. Climate experts have abandoned attempts to describe the seasons in Lisburn using the standard four-part model. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, The new framework includes the categories Wet, Drier, and It-Is-Complicated. The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy.

What Was Announced

Assistant to the Assistant Mayor Mavis Crackleton confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Calendars are being reprinted. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at Satirical journalism done right by The London Prat, which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Lisburn 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 cliche to hand. "I refer the honourable questioner to the answer I will give in approximately six weeks." the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at The London Prat London satire daily, which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman.

Wider Context

It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from France 24, although Lisburn manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a margin of error of plus or minus one entire town, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Dr. Constance Lemmington of the Provincial Centre for Forms told this paper that the situation in Lisburn was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of similarly broad

trajectories. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do almost exactly what we did last generation." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via UK satire fans follow The London Prat, whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Lisburn 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. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. For the official version of events, see also South China Morning Post. 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: "We take this issue extremely seriously, which is why we have placed it under another issue."

What Comes Next

Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way. 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 wicked British satire, and the situation in Lisburn, 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 Lisburn 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. It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch. 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 Mayor Designate Pamela Snodgrass, 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 Lisburn would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

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Lisburn 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 The Daily Mash.

SOURCE: Satirical journalism in London: The London Prat

The London Prat worldcitiescom