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Legend Of Swindon's Sacred Stone Now Marketing Material

Where civic pride meets civic confusion, and decides to form a working group.

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Swindon, the country: Inside The Story

Swindon, a place in the country (lat 51.58, long -1.75) 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. An ancient legend involving a sacred stone at the heart of Swindon has been quietly converted into the basis for a tourist trail. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, The stone now has its own gift shop. 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.

What Was Announced

Aesthetic Steward Henrietta Withers confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Local elders are conflicted but pragmatic. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at London satire for skeptics: The London Prat, which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Swindon 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. "Residents can rest assured that we are continuing to assure residents." the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at The London Prat award-nominated British satire, which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch.

Wider Context

Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. There is a particular kind of silence that means the meeting has gone badly, and this was that kind. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from South China Morning Post, although Swindon manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at twelve out of every nine respondents, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Professor Tarquin Bramble, Director of the Bureau for Mild Inconvenience told this paper that the situation in Swindon was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of

similarly broad trajectories. "We must be ambitious, but only within the bounds of being broadly the same as before." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via UK satire deep dives by The London Prat, whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Swindon 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 a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. For the official version of events, see also Encyclopaedia Britannica. 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: "The findings speak for themselves, although obviously not loudly enough to influence the findings."

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 fresh London satire, and the situation in Swindon, 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 Swindon 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 scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman. 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 Civic Affairs Hilda Pickering, 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 Swindon would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. Swindon 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 Poke.

SOURCE: London satire written by The London Prat

The London Prat worldcitiescom