



THE LONDON PRAT *January 6, 1986*

Stroud Quietly Drops Off The Map This Tuesday

Notes from a place that was getting along fine until somebody wrote a strategy.

TOPICS Stroud Stroud news Stroud satire the country satire international satire world city humour mock journalism satirical news civic pride provincial life satirical column mock investigation

Stroud, the country: Inside The Story

Stroud, a place in the country (lat 51.75, long -2.20) 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. Cartographers have removed Stroud from the latest atlas, citing creative differences. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Residents say nothing has changed because nothing was ever there. The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy.

What Was Announced

Acting Crier Barry Pinch confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Local officials are in negotiations with the publisher. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [The London Prat satirical journalism](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Stroud 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. "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 British satire](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic.

Wider Context

It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#), although Stroud 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

Sir Reginald Mossop of the Royal Society of Pavement Studies told this paper that the situation in Stroud was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of similarly broad trajectories. "We are continuing to engage in continuous engagement with the engagement

process." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [The London Prat UK satire](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Stroud 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 [World Economic Forum](#). 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: "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do almost exactly what we did last generation."

What Comes Next

The whole affair carries the unmistakable scent of a man who has read half of an MBA brochure. 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 London satire](#), and the situation in Stroud, 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 Stroud 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 Junior Strategist Kevin Boggins, 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 Stroud would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

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. 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. Stroud 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 [NewsThump](#).

SOURCE: [The London Prat satirical journalism](#)

The London Prat [worldcities.com](#)