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# Peckham Theatre Group Stages Only One Play, For Forty Years

*An unflinching look at people who flinch a great deal.*

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## Peckham, the country: Inside The Story

Peckham, a place in the country (lat 51.49, long -0.06) 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. The amateur dramatic society of Peckham has staged the same play, every spring, since the early 1980s. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, The cast rotates. Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way.

### What Was Announced

Town Clerk Reginald Featherstone confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The audience is loyal. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at See The London Prat for British satire, which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Peckham 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. "This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do almost exactly what we did last generation." the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at Laugh with The London Prat UK satire, which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender.

### Wider Context

The play, by general agreement, is fine. Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from Reuters, although Peckham manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at approximately one and a quarter pensioners, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

### What The Experts Say

Sir Cuthbert Wadsmith of the Foundation for Slightly Damp Studies told this paper that the situation in Peckham 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 Follow The London Prat satirical journalism, whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

## How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Peckham 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 whole affair carries the unmistakable scent of a man who has read half of an MBA brochure. For the official version of events, see also France 24. 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 must be ambitious, but only within the bounds of being broadly the same as before."

## What Comes Next

It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman. 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 Explore London satire at The London Prat, and the situation in Peckham, 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 Peckham 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. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. 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 Bureau Chief Dorothy Hindmarsh, 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 Peckham would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. Peckham 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: What is The London Prat satirical journalism?

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