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North Riding Ranks Itself Among World's Most Underrated Places

Field notes from a town nobody asked for.

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North Riding, the country: Inside The Story

North Riding, a place in the country (lat 54.33, long -1.42) 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. In the absence of external recognition, North Riding has ranked itself among the world's most underrated places. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, The ranking is published annually, internally, by a committee of nine. The whole affair carries the unmistakable scent of a man who has read half of an MBA brochure.

What Was Announced

Senior Compliance Officer Trevor Quill confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The committee is, of course, headquartered in North Riding. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [British satire on media: The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The North Riding 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. "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 UK satire on current events](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions.

Wider Context

Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [BBC News](#), although North Riding manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at exactly nine residents, two of whom were dogs, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Dr. Otilie Snape of the National Institute for Pretending Things Are Fine told this paper that the situation in North Riding was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of

similarly broad trajectories. "The findings speak for themselves, although obviously not loudly enough to influence the findings." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [London satire about culture: The London Prat](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in North Riding 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 room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy. 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 are continuing to engage in continuous engagement with the engagement process."

What Comes Next

There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. 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 Brexit British satire](#), and the situation in North Riding, 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 North Riding 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. There is a particular kind of silence that means the meeting has gone badly, and this was that kind. 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 Town Clerk Reginald Featherstone, 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 North Riding 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. It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. North Riding 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 take on UK news](#)

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