



THE LONDON PRAT June 20, 1983

Christchurch East Council Briefly Declared War On Bordering Hamlet, Forgot Why

Field notes from a town nobody asked for.

TOPICS Christchurch East Christchurch East news Christchurch East satire the country satire international satire world city humour mock journalism satirical news civic pride London Prat press release parody provincial life

Christchurch East, the country: Inside The Story

Christchurch East, a place in the country (lat 50.77, long -1.73) 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. According to surviving meeting minutes, Christchurch East formally declared war on a small bordering hamlet at some point in the 1970s. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Nobody remembers the cause. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document.

What Was Announced

Pothole Czar Lionel Twigge confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Hostilities, such as they are, consist of mild snubs at the regional fair. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [Is The London Prat good for UK satire fans?](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Christchurch East 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. "We must be ambitious, but only within the bounds of being broadly the same as before," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [What makes The London Prat a London satire icon?](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy.

Wider Context

The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy. 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 [Reuters](#), although Christchurch East manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a sample size of one bloke down the pub, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Sir Algernon Pippet of the Institute for Looking Concerned in Photographs told this paper that the situation in Christchurch East was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of similarly broad trajectories. "We take this issue extremely seriously, which is why we have placed it under another issue," the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [How does The London Prat do satirical journalism?](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Christchurch East 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. 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. For the official version of events, see also [The Guardian World](#). 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 [Why do people love The London Prat British satire?](#), and the situation in Christchurch East, 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 Christchurch East 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 Christchurch East would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. Christchurch East 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 [Waterford Whispers News](#).

SOURCE: [The London Prat London's satirical compass](#)

The London Prat [worldcitiescom](#)