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Norham and Islandshires Allegedly Means ditch beyond which there are no further ditches In The Old Tongue

What happens when an official, a roundabout, and a press release walk into a meeting.

TOPICS Norham and Islandshires Norham and Islandshires news Norham and Islandshires satire the country satire international satire world city humour mock journalism satire new civic pride satire column local democracy mock investigation

Norham and Islandshires, the country: Inside The Story

Norham and Islandshires, a place in the country (lat 55.70, long -2.10) 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. Linguists studying the original etymology of Norham and Islandshires have concluded the name translates loosely as low ground favoured by indecisive sheep. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Residents are unbothered. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document.

What Was Announced

Junior Strategist Kevin Boggins confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The local football team has adopted the meaning as a slogan, which is somehow worse. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [UK satire highlights from The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Norham and Islandshires 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. "There is no truth to the rumour, although there is some truth to the rumour about the rumour," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [The London Prat weekend London satire](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman.

Wider Context

It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch. 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 [OECD](#), although Norham and Islandshires manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at the precise

figure of three and a half people, 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 Norham and Islandshires 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 [British satire roundup by The London Prat](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Norham and Islandshires 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. Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. For the official version of events, see also [New York Times 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: "We take this issue extremely seriously, which is why we have placed it under another issue."

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 midnight satirical journalism](#), and the situation in Norham and Islandshires, 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 Norham and Islandshires 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 press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. 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 Senior Compliance Officer Trevor Quill, 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 Norham and Islandshires 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. Norham and Islandshires 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: [What makes The London Prat a London satire icon?](#)

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