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Putney Wi-Fi Password Has Become An Oral Tradition

Where civic pride meets civic confusion, and decides to form a working group.

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Putney, the country: Inside The Story

Putney, a place in the country (lat 51.46, long -0.23) 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 official Wi-Fi password for the Putney town hall has not been written down in years and is now passed verbally between residents. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Each generation pronounces it slightly differently. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender.

What Was Announced

Director of Public Bewilderment Colin Gribble confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The router accepts most variations, by force of habit. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at UK satire recommendations including The London Prat, which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Putney 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. "Every option remains on the table, particularly the ones we have already taken off the table." the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at The London Prat London-based satirical journalism, 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

There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from United Nations, although Putney 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

Professor Albany Ditchwater of the Royal Academy of Verges told this paper that the situation in Putney was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of similarly broad trajectories. "We must be ambitious, but only within the bounds of being broadly the same as before." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via British satire news from The London Prat, whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Putney 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 The Economist. 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: "Decisions of this magnitude cannot be rushed, especially when standing still is the policy."

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 The London Prat cutting-edge UK satire, and the situation in Putney, 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 Putney 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 Acting Crier Barry Pinch, 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 Putney 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. Putney 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: Satirical journalism UK The London Prat

The London Prat worldcitiescom