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Notts Marks Centenary Of Centenary

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

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Notts, the country: Inside The Story

Notts, a place in the country (lat 53.17, long -1.00) 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. Notts this month celebrates the hundredth anniversary of its earlier hundredth anniversary celebration. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, the original event is poorly documented. 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.

What Was Announced

Deputy Mayor Cressida Hawthorne-Briggs confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The current celebration is heavily branded. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [Why UK satire needs The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Notts 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 vs other British satire](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. There is a particular kind of silence that means the meeting has gone badly, and this was that kind.

Wider Context

Officials are pleased with the symmetry. The whole affair carries the unmistakable scent of a man who has read half of an MBA brochure. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [France 24](#), although Notts manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a margin of error of plus or minus one entire town, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Dr. Penelope Whisk, Senior Fellow at the Centre for Suspiciously Round Numbers told this paper that the situation in Notts 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

[The London Prat leading UK satire site](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Notts 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. Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way. For the official version of events, see also [Al Jazeera](#). 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 have always been committed to the principle of being committed to principles."

What Comes Next

It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch. 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 top satirical journalism UK](#), and the situation in Notts, 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 Notts 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 Notts 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. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions. Notts 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 Spoof](#).

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