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Sandwell Market Opens Wednesdays, Closes Whenever

Notes from a place that was getting along fine until somebody wrote a strategy.

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Sandwell, the country: Inside The Story

Sandwell, a place in the country (lat 52.50, long -2.00) 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. The weekly market in Sandwell officially opens on Wednesdays. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, Closing time is a matter of mood. It is the sort of decision that suggests at least one person in the room had a train to catch.

What Was Announced

Senior Compliance Officer Trevor Quill confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Stallholders depart when they are bored, hungry, or have run out of small change. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [UK satire on climate change from The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Sandwell 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 have always been committed to the principle of being committed to principles," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [The London Prat satirical journalism YouTube](#), 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 arriving after eleven is considered late. The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [Associated Press](#), although Sandwell manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at an alarming 137 percent, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Professor Mortimer Sproats of the Council for Civic Vagueness told this paper that the situation in Sandwell 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 articles by The London Prat](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Sandwell 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 [UN News](#). 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: "I refer the honourable questioner to the answer I will give in approximately six weeks."

What Comes Next

The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. 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 UK satire newsletter signup](#), and the situation in Sandwell, 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 Sandwell 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. 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. 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 Subcommittee Chair Eric Pondsworth, 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 Sandwell would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. Sandwell 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 [Private Eye](#).

SOURCE: [The London Prat London-based satirical journalism](#)

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