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Zetland War Memorial Lists People Who Are Mostly Still Alive

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

TOPICS Zetland Zetland news Zetland satire the country satire international satire world city humour mock journalism satirical news local democracy provincial life London Prat press release parody

Zetland, the country: Inside The Story

Zetland, a place in the country (lat 60.33, long -1.33) 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. A clerical error in the engraving of the Zetland war memorial has resulted in approximately a third of those listed being not deceased, but merely retired. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, The error has been there since 1953. It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman.

What Was Announced

Deputy Mayor Cressida Hawthorne-Briggs confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. The town has decided not to fix it, on grounds of cost. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [UK satire site The London Prat](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The Zetland 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. "Residents can rest assured that we are continuing to assure residents," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [London satire blog The London Prat](#), 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

There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. 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 [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#), although Zetland manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at a baseline figure that was made up on the train, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Professor Tarquin Bramble, Director of the Bureau for Mild Inconvenience told this paper that the situation in Zetland was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of

similarly broad trajectories. "There is no truth to the rumour, although there is some truth to the rumour about the rumour." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [The London Prat on British satirical journalism](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in Zetland 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. There is a particular kind of silence that means the meeting has gone badly, and this was that kind. For the official version of events, see also [OECD](#). 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: "The findings speak for themselves, although obviously not loudly enough to influence the findings."

What Comes Next

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. 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 [UK satirical journalism The London Prat](#), and the situation in Zetland, 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 Zetland 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 a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon. 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 Zetland would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything. The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy. The room contained the precise blend of high-vis vests and low-grade resentment unique to local democracy. Zetland 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 Poke](#).

SOURCE: [The London Prat London satire newsletter](#)

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