SATIRE / FICTION — Pilot01 — November 3, 2026

The Unbelievable Dispatch

Pilot 01: Tuesday Deferred

SATIRE / FICTION. Bellwether-on-Nowhere, its residents and every reported event are invented. No recurring publication schedule.
All stories and characters are fictional.

Town Hall

Council Postpones Tuesday Until Residents Can Agree What It Is For

Ada Quill — fictional correspondent

Bellwether-on-Nowhere has postponed Tuesday after a consultation found that residents use the day for incompatible purposes. Some prefer appointments, others laundry, and one respondent described Tuesday as “the bit immediately before I remember Wednesday.”

Municipal clerk Pella Fenn said the council had not canceled the day. “We have moved it to a provisional place in the calendar, where it can receive the attention it deserves.” Monday will remain in operation until a replacement interval has been identified.

The decision created an immediate difficulty for the town's weekly bin collection. The bins arrived outside the council chamber and asked whether their appearance counted as consultation. Mayor Pip Socket praised their engagement but ruled that containers could speak only after being emptied.

A temporary sign now directs residents from Monday to Wednesday by way of a clearly marked uncertainty. Those with Tuesday birthdays may retain their ages pending review. The council expects to issue a revised timetable as soon as someone establishes which day the timetable meeting is on.

Public Services

Office Opens Dedicated Window for Questions About the Other Windows

Pella Fenn — fictional correspondent

The town's Department of Useful Directions has opened a new service window for residents who cannot determine which service window they need. It is located behind Window Four, which remains closed until the new window can advise it where to reopen.

Clerk Pella Fenn described the arrangement as a major improvement. Previously, residents had to ask several people the wrong question. They can now ask one person where to begin asking it.

The first applicant, a floating brass key named Mottle, wished to know which door it belonged to. Staff supplied a form requesting the door's address. Mottle pointed out that identifying the door was the purpose of the visit. The form was amended to request a description of the address the door might have if it were found.

After forty minutes, Fenn issued Mottle a temporary label reading KEY, DESTINATION UNCONFIRMED. The key said it felt seen, though not yet useful. The department has recorded the appointment as a successful classification and an unresolved journey.

Science, More or Less

Visiting Alien Finds Pothole Exceeds Approved Depth of Local Explanation

Inspector Vek — fictional correspondent

Inspector Vek of the entirely fictional Interplanetary Surface Review arrived expecting to inspect a shallow road defect. The pothole instead contained a narrow staircase, a waiting room, and a second inspector who claimed to have been expecting Vek since last Thursday.

Using the municipal unit of measurement, Vek determined that the hole was three excuses deep. This is one excuse beyond the limit permitted without a public statement. The mayor's office disputed the reading, saying two of the excuses were inherited and should not count toward the current administration's depth.

A probe lowered into the opening returned carrying a numbered ticket and a request for evidence that it had been lowered for a legitimate purpose. Engineers declined to send a second probe until the first had completed its expenses.

Vek's provisional report recommends a barrier around the hole and a clearer description of what remains unknown. No repair method was supplied. The pothole has offered to host the next consultation, provided attendees do not assume that arriving at the bottom means reaching a conclusion.

Library After Dark

Ghost Waives Late Fees on Books Returned Before They Are Borrowed

Edith Index — fictional correspondent

Library ghost Edith Index has introduced a forward-looking returns policy after several books arrived bearing due dates that had not yet happened. She says the previous system unfairly penalized readers whose haunting arrangements did not follow the library's linear calendar.

Under the new fictional policy, a book returned before it is borrowed receives a small paper thank-you and is placed on the shelf marked POSSIBLY NEXT. It may not be issued again until its earlier borrower has had a chance to discover whether they enjoyed it.

One resident attempted to return a novel they had only considered buying. Index rejected the transaction because an intention is not a library item, even when expressed with conviction. The resident accepted a recommendation card instead.

The scheme has produced one unresolved case: a cookbook that appears every evening smelling faintly of tomorrow's soup. Index has isolated it from the history section. She fears the soup may alter the town's understanding of what people ate last winter, a subject already complicated by the mayor's campaign pudding.

Sport

Local Cryptid Wins Hide-and-Seek After Remembering to Register

Bramble — fictional correspondent

Bramble, Bellwether's resident winged cryptid, has won the town's hide-and-seek championship after three unsuccessful seasons in which nobody knew he was competing. This year he filed an entry, named a contact person, and supplied a photograph of the place where he would not necessarily be.

The judging committee praised the improvement in administration. “His hiding was always excellent,” said referee Nessa Vale, an entirely fictional person who carries a whistle that apologizes before sounding. “We simply lacked a way to distinguish victory from nonattendance.”

Bramble remained unseen for most of the final, then appeared briefly beneath a streetlamp to confirm that he had read the rules. The lamp reported feeling included. A rival participant lodged an appeal, arguing that wings conferred an advantage. The committee replied that the rival was a cupboard and had enjoyed home-field conditions.

The trophy will be presented when Bramble supplies a delivery location. He has asked that it be left somewhere nobody will find it, which has returned the event to its original administrative difficulty.

Business of the Impossible

Umbrella Shop Offers Rain by Appointment, Subject to Cloud Availability

Mina Spoke — fictional correspondent

Mina Spoke's umbrella shop has introduced appointment-based rain so customers can test products without waiting for the sky to take an interest. The service uses a cooperative cloud named Nell, who prefers small groups and does not work through lunch.

Customers choose from drizzle, conversational rain, and the sort that makes a person reconsider an unnecessary trip. Spoke declined to offer a guaranteed downpour. “Nell is a collaborator, not a tap,” she said, pointing to a schedule with several spaces reserved for the cloud's own weather.

The first demonstration was postponed when Tuesday failed to arrive. Two customers had booked matching storms for a fictional anniversary and asked whether Wednesday could be made sufficiently damp. Nell agreed to a short rehearsal but refused to backdate the puddles.

No actual goods or services are offered by this fictional shop. In the invented town, Spoke says all umbrella decisions should follow a test of the particular umbrella. General optimism about staying dry is not accepted as proof that the seams hold.

Letters from Imaginary Readers

Resident Requests a Shorter Form for Explaining Why a Form Is Too Long

The Fictional Letters Desk — fictional correspondent

To the editor: I recently completed the council's seventeen-page survey on unnecessary paperwork. Page sixteen asked whether the survey was too long. Page seventeen requested a detailed explanation of any answer shorter than a detailed explanation. I left both blank and now receive reminders asking me to finish my silence. — Orin Fold, invented resident.

The Dispatch asked the council whether a shorter response route exists. Clerk Pella Fenn said residents may submit a one-page objection, provided it includes the original survey, a summary of the missing answers, and permission for the objection to be classified as feedback rather than participation.

Fold has since proposed a trial: one question, one optional explanation, and a clearly stated purpose. The council called the proposal promising but requested a larger version so several departments could initial it.

Our fictional editorial position is that a form should be long enough to do its actual job. We have therefore printed Fold's letter without attaching the survey. Readers wishing to disagree may do so without completing anything at all.

Corrections and Clarifications

Newspaper Withdraws Claim That Everything Is Proceeding Normally

Ada Quill — fictional correspondent

An earlier draft of this pilot described events in Bellwether-on-Nowhere as proceeding normally. The phrase was inserted before the editor had defined normal, checked proceeding, or established that everything had been consulted.

The claim has been replaced with a narrower account: some events have occurred, several records exist, and Tuesday remains deferred. This wording does not settle whether the events are desirable. It does make them easier to identify without requiring a town-wide theory of progress.

The mayor's office asked whether the correction implied that the newspaper had lost confidence in the town. It does not. Confidence and a timetable are separate items, and neither can substitute for the other when someone is waiting for a bin collection.

This entire publication is original satire and fiction. Its town, people, offices, businesses, newspaper staff, events and quotations are invented. No report should be treated as real news, a public notice, a service offer or an allegation about an actual person. Our most reliable statement remains the one printed at the top of the page.