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**FRANCE'S 'SAD' RURAL TOWNS POSE REAL CHALLENGE FOR MACRON'S SECOND TERM**

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Tonneins should be an idyllic place to live. Full of history and charm, the small town perches above the River Garonne in southwest France and is surrounded by gently rolling countryside. Sounds like an expats dream.

And yet, more than half the towns voters backed the populist, far-right candidate Marine Le Pen in last weekends presidential election.

Despite the areas natural beauty, the signs of decline and decay are everywhere. Youths hang around the main square, there are entire streets with boarded-up shops and, overlooking the river, an empty bandstand recalls better times.

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