

May 20th KM8 Decision Day of reckoning. Will this bucolic landscape be fracked or not. What was going on in John Dewars mind as he knotted his tie and donned his Armani suit. Would Third Energy be left with egg on their faces or would he be celebrating with an extreme energy omelette. The sun slowly peered through the clouds as the proceedings got under way. Northallerton Council Offices not suffering cut backs as there was scaffolding on the exterior of the building ready for expensive building works. This scaffolding was asking for some banners and access to the meeting rooms. Unfortunately the opportunity was not taken up.

The atmosphere was jubilant with a stage and a mike system. The anti frackers were out in force. Unfortunately none of the great speeches which were made were inaudible inside the building. An occasional open window filtered cheers for those inside who were to take advantage of their 3 minutes allocation to air their views to a Council of 11 men.

The Grand Chamber was stuffy, oppressive and smelt of furniture polish. I was to speak my piece but I preferred to sit in an adjoining room showing the procedures on a large television screen. On arriving at the sound of my name being called out and awaiting the availability of my chair I was beset by 11 pairs of eyes but not those of mixed gender but all male. Mother earth had left the room and one hoped that these men would not be misogynistics.

Throughout the whole proceedings the arguments put forward had been about water quality noise pollution the record player getting stuck on these issues but not one about climate change had been addressed.

I stated and I quote ad vertatum : I am Annette Hudspeth, a Danby Parish Councillor and a member of Frack Free Cleveland. I am not going to bore you with details about issues like groundwater, heavy traffic, industrialisation of Ryedale, unreasonable noise and light in relation to Third Energy's application to frackat Kirby Misperton. That is to say I don't share these worries.

My argument is based on indisputable facts. We have been warned by the IPCC and many others that it is a fact that we cannot burn the majority of fossil fuels available to us if we want to avoid passing the 2 degree limit. This is going to require a task similar to the Marshall plan. Any such plan would want to drastically reduce the use of fossil fuels. We need to use up the supplies we have at present. It is perverse and even genocidal to search for more, especially as the dangers of fracking are not agreed upon.

Thank you.

In hindsight I feel if everyone had presented their 3 minutes concentrating more on climate change the result may have been different.

The proceedings were carried on over the weekend, this giving the PR Team and Councillors an opportunity to pull apart all our presentations. Especially the presentation given by the experts for Frack Free Ryedale. Monday was John Dewars 15 minutes of fame. Although the Chairman gave him a beaming smile and told him he could take as long as he liked to state his case for Third Energy to desecrate the countryside and defy everything which had been decided at COP 21 in Paris just 5 months earlier.

The atmosphere was still hopeful outside bouyant with the knowledge that all polls had shown an overwhelming victory to the Anti fracking groups.

However, this was not going to last, after only 3 Councillors giving their reasoning behind their vote. The Chairman jubilantly announced the motion was carried 7 to 4.

Tears, hugs and a sense of shock travelled through the crowds, the sun shone and mocked the result.

We Shall Overcome was sung with as much muster as we could raise and there was an isolated yell of 'this means war' . Speakers tried to give glimmers of hope that they had only won the battle but not the war. Legal challenges would be fought and we will win. Emotive pleas on behalf of our children and grandchildren whilst the Councillors readied to leave under tight security around the rear of the building.

One wonders how those who voted for fracking in Ryedale after a 5 year hiatus can sleep at night knowing that they have caused Armageddon and the clock will soon strike midnight.

Let me remind Third Energy that if we lose the legal challenges, the policing costs will rise within your budget as we will use every NVDA method to prevent the fracking to go ahead and wear away public opinion on Barclays bank to lose your shareholders faith in this venture.

This article was written by Annette Hudspeth.

Author of Mummy Bears Vegan Guide to Cooling The Planet.

Skill share via Climatecalm.com.