

OPEN LETTER to Police:

Dear Police Officers,

What are we to do? How do you see this playing out? The reality that you as well as we (those acting to stop fracking) see is that this government wants hundreds of frack sites here in Lancashire and many thousands across the country - and equally clear is that residents throughout the UK will continue to act to stop this. It's been 7 years now and we're still here, still growing and not stopping. Our opposition in England is a part of a worldwide movement that has succeeded in getting this industry halted and we know we can succeed because of this... Scotland, Ireland North & South and Wales have set examples and England is the last place still pursuing fracking in the UK.

We are in the middle of an undeniable dilemma because none of us want to see our councils bankrupted by the cost of policing for fracking sites and none of us want to witness our communities denied proper levels of policing because you're being used as truck escorts for fracking vehicles .. yet the government has seen fit to use officers like you, to enable a despised industry to be forced into communities without social license; what the hell did they think would be the outcome?

You can't say it too loudly but we know that you have huge cause to consider this government in the same way we do; your numbers cut (20,000 less officers now than in 2010), your pension age raised and standards undeniably lowered due to cost cutting. Privatisation is nibbling away at your force in a stealth-like fashion similar to what is happening in education and the NHS ...outsourcing forensics, prisoner processing and other departments and considering giving rights to arrest to private security firms. You are not treated with respect... and nor are we.

The UK is supposed to be a democracy and one of the better-off countries in the world and yet, our successful rejection of fracking through our Council was overturned and you have seen cuts you can't fight against yet have to manage the fall-out from. So where we each stand and what we each suffer in our daily work (yes, I am working - my job is to protect my young as my first priority) is caused by the same people - who then set us against each other in an unwinnable scenario that is destined to bring serious harm.

I have witnessed tired officers grow angry and act dangerously ...of course we get tired too and tempers fray and we make you more angered and aggressive by taking our frustration and anger out on you too. Meanwhile back in Westminster... lobbyists for the fracking industry and lobbyists for companies like SERCO and G4S, have the ear and favour of senior politicians. You and we go unheard and unheeded. When Theresa May finally leaves Downing Street, we will see more clearly which industries she got close to as we have with former Prime Minister Cameron this week; he spoke at a large Oil & Gas industry event in America... they like him and he is well rewarded for his work with them. It's clear that he made these connections during his time in power and easy enough to work out what contracts, laws and actions led to the positive relationship.

Yesterday an Officer used what I assume is usual force in getting someone out of the way in an incident... the only thing is, the person thrown wasn't a dangerous criminal, drunk aggressor or violent thug - it was a small woman and she flew further than the Officer

judged. Cath landed in the path of an oncoming vehicle that swerved instantly and only missed causing serious harm or death by a moment. Today, a respected elder witnessed more rough handling by the police and broke down. She was genuinely shocked and said in a tone of absolute disbelief "I HATE THE POLICE!". She is a warm, kind and gentle woman who like so many of us - never imagined life could look this ugly. We paid taxes, voted, believed we lived in a fair country and that if danger came... there were safeguards in place to call upon and before the reality kicks in along with the sadness and anger, we break with the realisation of truth. The government is responsible for this and you, like us are bearing the pain.

A community's police force is there for public safety and we are unsafe every day because of a dangerous industry - yet you are tasked with protecting that industry's metal trucks and equipment... from soft-fleshed people - many of whom are women over the age of 50 for goodness sakes.

What is right, lawful, just or fair about this picture?

We are nearly too far down this path to repair and something serious must happen to change this situation because your force and our residents are at breaking point and that's with just ONE frack site... they want hundreds. Government and industry will aim to injunct everything they can but we'll just nudge up next to the edge of every injunction or we'll go to the places the equipment sets off from and we will not stop because we can't. What would it take for you to move out of the way of a child and let danger come to them? That's what drives us and keeps us in this truly awful situation... we CAN'T go till the frackers do.

The solution? No bloody idea - but I suggest it starts with a conversation within the police force and that there needs to be a forcing of the government to see the truth of the danger that is growing on the streets that surround a fracking site in Lancashire.

Tina Rothery (Nana)