

Fracking protest live on YouTube

James Gillespie and Paul Stokes

A PLANNING meeting in North Yorkshire will be broadcast live on YouTube as residents launch a last-ditch attempt to stop councillors giving the go-ahead to fracking in their area.

The 11-strong county council committee will meet on Friday at Northallerton, but so many objectors are expected a live broadcast of the meeting has been set up.

A spokesman said: "The county council recognises that there is likely to be significant public interest in the committee meeting."

The council has received more than 4,000 representations on the application by Third Energy to begin fracking next to the village of Kirby Misperton.

Council officials published a report on Friday recommending that the council give the go-ahead, raising the possibility that Kirby Misperton will become the first commercial fracking operation in Britain.

The technique involves pumping a mixture of water, sand and chemicals at high pressure into rocks deep underground to open up tiny fissures, allowing oil and gas to be extracted.

Concerns have been raised about contamination of the water supply and it has been blamed for causing two earthquakes in Lancashire.

The North Yorkshire residents have always denied being "Nimbys". Tim Thornton, a retired local GP, who will address the committee, said: "We want a clean and healthy countryside for our grandchildren."

Third Energy said: "Third Energy has been drilling wells and producing gas safely and discreetly from this site in Kirby Misperton for over 20 years and we will continue to maintain the same standards in the future."



MICHAEL CAMPANELLA

Stalin and aliens steal the sparkle from Eurovision

COME back Abba, all is forgiven. Last night in Stockholm the grand final of the 61st and blandest Eurovision song contest took place in the world's largest hemispherical building.

Hot favourite Russia battled it out with Ukraine, France and, confusingly, Australia, as well as Britain's 150-1 rank outsiders Joe and Jake, to the backdrop of blinding strobes.

For the first time the contest was broadcast live in the United States. For confused American viewers who might not recognise the names of half the countries competing, let alone the acts, there was Justin Timberlake performing during the break.

At times it felt very much like being trapped inside a giant UFO while our alien host tried to find the point at which music becomes intolerable to the human ear.

The contest opened promisingly enough with Belgium's rip-off of Fleur East's cover of Mark Ronson's Uptown Funk. Laura Tesoro, 19-year-old winner of the Flemish version of The Voice 2014 no less, set an energetic, youthful, of-the-moment marker that the rest of the entrants ignored.

The problem, ironically, was the lack of novelty acts. This year there was no Finnish monster metal and no Dustin the Turkey. Ireland fielded the only relatively decrepit 37-year-old Nicky Byrne, formerly of boyband Westlife, and he was cruelly dismissed in the semi-finals.

Ivan, a creepy Gwyneth Paltrow-haired Belarussian who sang naked and badly with wolves, failed to make the finals as did a Swiss woman who began her performance partially on fire.

Even the two Swedish presenters – the singer and come-



MATT RUDD



dian Petra Mede and last year's winner, Mans Zelmerlow – were witty and capable of handling an Autocue.

For amusement we were left with a Lithuanian on a trampoline, a Croatian in an 18kg dress and a Polish pirate of the Caribbean (who, in a tight field, won the worst lyrics award with "Every day we must fight with the wind/ We have to live/ All these things are just empty desire/ O-o-o-o").

The rest of the "serious" acts explored the perma-themes of love and togetherness through the medium of three chords and a key change with the honourable exception of Holland, whose representative sang a country ditty about a malfunctioning sat nav: "Mister can you help me/Cause it seems I've been led astray ..."

Despite attempts to make this one of the dullest Eurovisions there was a smattering of politics between the sequins.

The UK's pound shop One Directioners, Joe and Jake, sang the Breman anthem, "You're not alone/We're in this together/All that you want/Is right here for ever."

Experts have argued that our entry was a sign that we're taking Eurovision more seri-

ously, 19 long years since our last triumph with Katrina and the Waves. If by this they mean "going for peak Euro-bland", then it was a triumph.

Abba's Bjorn Ulvaeus said he would be voting for Britain, but mostly because as a Swede he wants us to stay in the EU and thought a win would make us "feel good about Europe".

Armenia and Azerbaijan, neighbours who have been locked in a simmering conflict over the breakaway enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh for more than two decades, both made it through to the finals.

The mostly hotly anticipated face-off, however, was between the warring neighbours Russia and Ukraine. Quite why staunchly conservative Russia has once again thrown the kitchen sink at winning the campest music contest on the planet remains a mystery.

Its representative, Sergey Lazarev, sang a classic Eurovision anthem while climbing a disintegrating asteroid. It was exactly the sort of song you could imagine Vladimir Putin doing at the Kremlin's Christmas party. Topless.

Three acts later, it did not take much imagination to see Ukraine's entry, 1944, telling the story of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars by Joseph Stalin, as a thinly veiled reference to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Not exactly uplifting but at least it was less pointless than everything else.

Then, of course, there was Australia. Graham Norton, the BBC's host, described its continuing presence in the contest as "stupid" and he's right. Once is an amusing novelty. Twice looks like profiteering. Particularly when they score more points than we do.

@mattrudd

Rooney substituted by men from Mars

Sharon Feinstein

FANS may be dismayed but Wayne Rooney and Joe Hart have been dropped from the England squad to make way for new heroes Jamie Vardy, Harry Kane and the injured Danny Welbeck.

Well, sort of. The new team is actually made up of lookalikes who appear in a new £5m Mars

advert designed to inspire team and supporters in the run-up to football's Euro 2016 tournament in France starting in June.

According to an insider, when filming for the advert began in Cape Town, a "muscular, 6ft 5in Joe Hart lookalike with bleached blond hair and a shorter, rounder Wayne Rooney" were at the forefront. Not any more.

Now Kane, Vardy and Welbeck take pride of place as they are shown emerging from the waves – just behind the Queen being carried on a throne.

They are accompanied by John Motson lookalikes, a pack of corgis, hundreds of fans and even knights in shining armour as they arrive on what is supposed to be the French coast.

Once they make it ashore, an English knight on horseback uses his appalling French to ask a baffled local for directions to the Stade de France.

The insider said: "One of the knights originally encountered Napoleon on the beach but Mars cut that out as possibly too controversial."

"They spent a lot of money making it look spectacular, using helicopters, dozens of extras and professional swimmers."

The invaders carry flags emblazoned with the logo #Believe – the Mars slogan for the championships, which run from June 10 to July 10. England's opening match is on Sunday, June 11, against Russia.

However, it is understood that the Mars TV-only advert will be broadcast for six weeks from today – a timeframe that will not cover most of the tournament.

Which means either Mars knows what is likely to happen to the real England team, or they have scored an own goal.



Lookalikes of Danny Welbeck, Harry Kane and Jamie Vardy star in a new ad for the England team

Spielberg's giant love story woos Cannes

Jamie Graham and Richard Brooks

THE Cannes film festival has long been used to attention-seeking performances by stars and starlets of all shapes and sizes, but rarely has it seen anything like Bloodbottler, Fleshlumpeter and a 24ft giant played by Mark Rylance.

Cannes was treated to the world premiere last night of a Steven Spielberg adaptation of Roald Dahl's popular children's story, The BFG.

The combination of two great storytelling talents – on screen and in books – has heightened audience expectations for the \$125m (£87m) fantasy, not least because Spielberg declared yesterday that his new film was "the closest I've come to telling a love story".

Rylance's turn as the giant who befriends a kidnapped orphan girl named Sophie (played by newcomer Ruby Barnhill) is already generating Hollywood chatter with one

critic praising the British actor last night for a "typically distinctive, eccentric and seductive star performance".

The film is dedicated to Melissa Mathison, the Oscar-nominated screenwriter and former wife of Harrison Ford who adapted Dahl's story for the film. Mathison had also

collaborated with Spielberg on ET – The Extra-Terrestrial, his landmark 1982 blockbuster. The BFG was her last film before her death from cancer last November. Dahl's original story had been dedicated to his daughter Olivia, who died of a measles complication in 1962.

Several critics claim to have detected echoes of ET in Spielberg's tale of an outsider in Giant Country, where Sophie is relieved to discover that not all residents are flesh-munching ogres like Bloodbottler. Rylance's giant lives off a vegan diet of "snozzcumbers".

At a press conference Spielberg acknowledged the influence of ET: "It was revisiting something I've always loved – to tell stories from the imagination. It brought back feelings I had as a younger film maker."

Rylance said he had enjoyed the chance to perform for digital motion capture recording, knowing that his face and body would be converted into giant form by special effects.

"It was not unlike being in a rehearsal room of a play before you go on stage," he said. "You just have to use your imagination. There's no sense of where the audience is. Just Ruby and I playing".



Mark Rylance and Ruby Barnhill star in Spielberg's The BFG

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