

# Everything has to change - and that's why the likes of ...

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Yesterday was pretty depressing.

We had to come to terms with the fact it's either Boris Johnson or Jeremy Hunt who will be our next prime minister.

We had to hear the EU telling both of them, before they even take office, that their claim that the EU will renegotiate the withdrawal agreement with the UK is just a fiction of their own imagining.

We had to learn that Boris Johnson can have the police called by a neighbour to a domestic incident at his address.

And we have to see Mark Field MP with his hands on the throat of a Greenpeace protestor.

As days in politics go it was not good. Which is, maybe, why I did not write much.

There was, though, another reason for not writing. I was (as is pretty commonplace right now) working quite hard. A lot of yesterday was spent on work I have been doing seeking to reconcile financial accounting as it is right now with the demands of climate change. The work has been done at the invitation of Rupert Read at the University of East Anglia and Aled Jones of Anglia Ruskin University. And, in a nutshell, I have not been able to achieve that reconciliation.

I will publish more on this next Thursday when I will be making a presentation on this issue at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. For now suffice to say that accounting as it now cannot survive if we are to bring the impact of climate change within it. Quite literally, IFRS accounting and accounting for climate change are at such odds with each other that only one can win, and it has to be the need to account for the consequences of climate change.

Which brings me back to the event that Greenpeace disrupted. They had a message to deliver. It was that everything has to change. Zero carbon by 2050 is not enough. The

pretence that if we only have more electric cars everything will be OK is ludicrous. The idea that a government can still contemplate airport expansion is staggering. And it is obvious that a government that consciously decided to undermine the solar power sector in this country whilst going out of its way to promote nuclear power is one that is not fit for office. Greenpeace wanted to say that.

Amongst the many things that I am angry with Mark Field for is the fact that he diverted attention from that message, albeit temporarily, even if the consequences for him are, I hope, lasting and rightly so.

There is just one thing I do, however, accept about his behaviour. I accept that he was angry. He managed it entirely inappropriately, but that's not to deny that he was angry. And it's important to ask why, because confrontation between those like the Greenpeace protestors and the likes of Field are going to become much more commonplace. This is especially true when we know that those on the political right have ceased to be rational and are entirely willing to make wholly illogical decisions (such as that to leave the EU without a deal and to break up the Union without further consideration as to consequence) in pursuit of mythical gains to their own supposed short term (because they tend to be older) benefit.

Field is living on the basis of a myth. It is that whatever happens the climate crisis will not impact him, his power, his finances, his lifestyle and the infrastructure of power that has served him so very well, despite his being a man, I have long thought, of remarkably little talent. And Greenpeace rocked his faith in that myth. His anger revealed just how unsure he is the foundations of that myth now. As a result he reacted violently, irrationally, and entirely according to type in assaulting those who threaten his personal advantage, however shaky its foundations. He lashed out, wholly inappropriately at a woman (and you cannot for a moment think he'd have done the same thing to a larger and younger man, so this was an action based on gender discrimination, in my opinion). He deserves all the condemnation he gets for that.

But we also need to understand that the power elite really are exceptionally fragile now, and so will be this unpredictable. They've been rocked in so many ways. I was amused to hear a story this week about the anger some of them feel about losing the argument on tax abuse (which they know they have), despite their belief that all their resources should have guaranteed they would win. And climate is going to be much bigger than that.

I have had concern about climate change since the 1970s, when I read [E J Mishan's](#) book 'The costs of economic growth' whilst still at school. Too many decades have passed to reach the crisis point we are at now. We have had a wasted decade since we first wrote the Green New Deal. 2019 is going to pass with almost nothing significant achieved to tackle the climate crisis. And every day the risk increases. And the likes of Mark Field will deny it, violently if need be, as we have seen.

But try as I might, I cannot avoid the conclusion that everything must change. Not a bit, but fundamentally. And by that I do not just mean that we need some more car charging points and new packaging. The whole infrastructure of our society has to be different, right down to its accounting and what it thinks business is for. And those who have won from the existing structures of power are going to get very angry about that. Mark Field will not be the last to do so. My hope is that it will not get very much uglier. And that black tie and red dresses might remain the preferred combat gear. But I stress, there is only one possible winner here if there is still to be life itself. And Mark Field is very definitely on the losing side.