

53.4 Breaking News: A Standing Ovation for Hollie McNish at the BfN AGM 2013



There was curious tone to the laughter when [Hollie McNish](#) was onstage. It was sound of the slightly embarrassed laughter of recognition – laughing about things we are not accustomed to talking about, never mind laughing about. And no wonder!

Hollie's talent is for saying what we are all thinking, not just out loud but in the best way. From her first words (which already drew laughter) she carried us back into the world of a new baby when you cry because you think the bottom of your rib cage has disappeared and go home from hospital, 'bleeding feeding, crying, knackered...'

She rapped at length about the problems of breastfeeding in public and finding herself in the toilet because of the 'flash of flesh that might offend' and because society is more accustomed to formula than breast milk, 'we are paying for one thing that has always been free'.

She found metaphors between how Transformers, the fantasy toy, work (with helpful notes in case anyone has not been keeping up: Megatron is bad) and changes to a woman's body, beyond the stomach growing, when a baby is made.

Hollie's performance with its apt turn of phrase, witty observations and brilliant sense of timing drew sustained, uproarious applause from the BfN delegates. And then more applause. Would it ever stop?

Hollie won a standing ovation from the BfN women (and solitary man), which in turn made her look embarrassed, though clearly thrilled (we too can bring on paradoxical feelings). Most of us don't keep a diary in verse at the most challenging times of our lives but we really appreciate it that Hollie has done.

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