

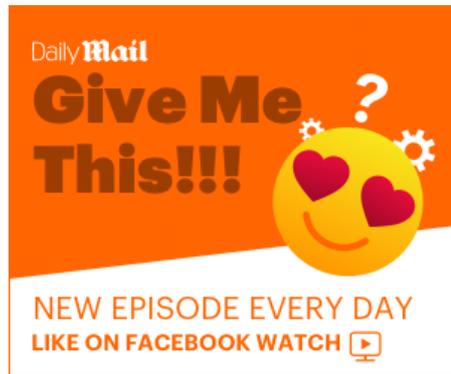
## Is Norman Baker the greatest man in politics?

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Doubtless there are innocent explanations in certain cases. But after yesterday's publication of the deeply embarrassing details about the MPs' expenses claims, it looks very much as if there is organised theft and corruption going on at Westminster.

Needless to say the House of Commons - led by the wretched Speaker Martin = fought a long campaign to keep yesterday's details secret. Expensive lawyers were hired - again at public expense - to make the case against publication.

The rearguard battle would have succeeded but for one man, Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes. He plugged away for two years for his col-leagues' expenses to be made public, and eventually he won.



This morning Baker is the most unpopular man in the Commons. When MPs reassemble after their mid-term break next week, he will get the same treatment as a prison nark.

And yet it is worth pondering the real reason why Baker is so unpopular. It is because he is a deeply honest man of utter integrity who is determined that British voters should know the truth about how we are governed.

Baker is neither flashy, smooth nor glam-orous. He does not sit on the Front Benches. But he is, in his own way, the most admirable and heroic MP at Westminster.

In a decent world, all of Britain's 650 MPs would be like the indefatigable and incorruptible Norman Baker. Shamefully, there is only one of him.

This week marked only the latest of Baker's many victories over Britain's self-serving political establishment. His greatest achievement was forcing Peter Mandelson to admit to his links to the Indian tycoon Srichand Hinduja, a revelation that swiftly



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### DON'T MISS

▶ Queen of the Jungle Jacqueline Jossa sports a swimsuit and hotpants as she steps out with parents after her mother SNUBBED husband Dan Osborne...



... before I'm A Celeb winner is seen heading back to the UK with Dan

led to Mandelson's second and final resignation as a Cabinet Minister.

For this, Norman Baker earned the hatred of his own party, as well as most of the political class. He was cut dead in the Commons corridors even by fellow Liberal Democrat MPs for weeks afterwards.

You would think that an opposition party would have been overjoyed to see the demise of a Cabinet minister, but the shameful truth is that they felt an instinctive sympathy for Mandelson whom they regarded as a fellow member of the political elite and therefore in need of protection from an outsider like Norman Baker.

It was a lonely and embattled time for this courageous man. He was learning the hard way that there are no rewards in life for telling the truth, exposing hypocrisy and doing the right thing.

He is a very modest man. When I rang him yesterday and asked him to list his achievements, he wouldn't. "I don't keep a check of them," he replied. I asked him for his secret, and his reply was revealing.

"I have no particular ambition," he replied. "I don't want to lead my party. I don't want to be in the House of Lords. That gives you a tremendous liberation."

Before becoming an MP, he ran a branch of Our Price Records, where he would help youngsters to find the latest Showaddywaddy disc on the shelves, and he remains phenomenally knowledgeable about pop music.

His political methods flow from these early interests. He has something of the obsessive nature of the amateur enthusiast. He has a good head for detail and knows where, in the great, dusty attics of Whitehall and Westminster, he will find the buried nuggets that he is seeking.

Physically he is not a striking figure. He has a comb-over hairdo, a pretty terrible fashion sense and a nasal, slightly irritating voice brushed by a faint West Country accent. If The Archers ever intro-duced a character who was an accountant, he would sound like Norman Baker.

When he arrived in the House of Commons in 1997 there was no shortage of people quick to write him off. Matthew Parris, the former Tory MP-turned-newspaper-jour-nalist, sneeringly discounted the unglamorous Baker as "a bore".

For the political elite of London, this unprepossessing man had insufficient polish. He did not seem very interested in things like expen-sive lunches and disloyal gossip. He did not seem to be a man easily suborned. Nor, to be brutal, was he sexy or modern. That made the image-bending party cadres uneasy.

The truth was that Baker was a loner. Yes, he may be on the plain side, visually. Yes, he may be an annoying, unclubbable - scruffy even - monk.

But Parliament needs such people. Baker's chosen seat on the Commons benches is right at the end of the Chamber, just

▶ amid claims he's on his 'last chance after shock CBB threesome allegations'



▶ Megan Fox is sexy in satin and lace gown as she hits red carpet with husband Brian Austin Green for first time in five years at LA charity gala



▶ CBB Natalie Nunn lands in the UK to face the music amid Dan Osborne 'threesome' claims after crudely discussing sex life with husband in racy snap



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AD FEATURE



▶ Phillip Schofield and Holly Willoughby laugh their way through timely workplace bullying and office politics segment... amid ongoing rumours of This Morning feud

▶ I'm A Celeb runner-up Andy Whyment enjoys a pool day with wife Nichola as he treats himself to a post-jungle pint after 11lbs weight loss

▶ I'm A Celebrity winner Jacqueline Jossa and Dan Osborne will 'renew their vows in second wedding to start a clean slate' after cheating claims

▶ 'I'm so happy people feel empowered': Emma Watson reflects on the 'crazy' reaction to her 'self-partnered' claims and insists it was just 'a throwaway comment'

▶ I'm A Celeb's Jacqueline Jossa is deep in conversation with Myles Stephenson by the pool... but husband Dan Osborne is nowhere in sight

▶ Summer Monteys-Fullam goes Christmas tree shopping with her lookalike sister Crystal after breaking silence on Paul Hollywood NDA drama

below the sword-wearing Serjeant at Arms, away from the seats occupied by his party leadership.

When the Speaker calls his name he stands almost at a stoop, for there is little that is flamboyant or confident in his demeanour. His out-of-date trousers, which do not always match his jacket, flap around his shins.

He is sometimes to be found wearing sports jackets or yellow ties or suede shoes - the wardrobe of a prep school Classics master rather than a Blair-era politician. He never matches the Labour and Tory thrusters for their sleekness and shine.

Yet ministers have learned to listen closely to him. They have learned to beware giving him a loose answer. They have grown to respect, if not exactly to admire, the economy of his queries, the brevity of his often deadly interventions, and his remarkable persistence.

All this may, to the stranger, sound insignificant. But to stand outside the pack in politics takes guts. Baker persists with his campaigns despite often rancorous opposition.

Sometimes he will be heckled by Labour MPs sitting just 5ft or so in front of him - he stands just in front of Labour's 'awkward squad' bench - yet Baker sticks to his principles and to his arguments and keeps pinging in his Parliamentary written questions, demanding factual replies from a civil service machine which remains, despite Labour's worst efforts, the servant of the people.

Now he has won this victory over MPs, Baker's latest campaign concerns the death of government scientist Dr David Kelly at the height of the row between the present administration and the BBC in the summer of 2003.

Baker's forensic mind has already picked apart much of the evidence accepted far too readily by the partly discredited Hutton Inquiry.

He has identified key inconsistencies about the police investigation, arguing that it is incredibly unlikely that Dr Kelly did kill himself with his blunt gardening knife, as the official version has it.

It sounds a conspiracy too far - but Baker has a habit of being right. His search for the truth about Dr Kelly recalls that long fight by Labour's Tam Dalyell to discover the truth about the Belgrano.

Indeed, Norman Baker keeps alive the tradition of bloody-minded individuality in the Commons, as practised by just such men as Dalyell. No praise is too high for brave, lonely, honest men like these.

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Former Pop Idol winner shared good news

▶ **Holly Willoughby exudes glamour in a pastel pink gown with a daring leg slit as she switches up her look at Dancing On Ice launch**  
Stunning

▶ **Demi Rose shows off her hourglass curves and famously peachy posterior in a skimpy yellow bikini as she soaks up the sunshine in Thailand**

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▶ **I'm A Celeb's James Haskell wraps a supportive arm around wife Chloe Madeley as they check out of the Versace hotel together and head home**

▶ **Kate Garraway exhibits weight loss with husband Derek... after Piers Morgan quipped he would've 'had a crack' if he'd 'known bar was so low'**

▶ **Mackenzie Crook attends the Worzel Gummidge photocall ahead of the reboot's Boxing Day release**  
Undergoes transformation

**Susanna Reid is treated to a 'Mute Piers' button and a Crystal Palace cake as she celebrates her 49th birthday on**

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▶ Kit Harington admits he is a 'loner Throner' as he is the only Game of Thrones star to be nominated for a Golden Globe award  
In the running

▶ Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson and his wife Lauren dazzle in shimmery outfits as they attend Jumanji: The Next Level premiere in Hollywood

▶ Dancing On Ice's Ian 'H' Watkins claims he has 'chemistry' with 'handsome' pro partner Matt Evers as they gear up to become show's first same-sex couple

▶ 'Waking up with my wife feels good': Dan Osborne spends time with Jacqueline Jossa amid cheating claims... (as her mum leaves him out of all her photos)

▶ Kelly Brook reunites with her former Big Breakfast co-host Johnny Vaughan 20 years after quitting the show  
Reunited

▶ Sadie Frost and boyfriend Darren Strouger look loved-up as they leave BAFTA dinner together holding hands  
Cute

▶ Justin Hartley's estranged wife Chrishell Stause is 'convinced he had a financial motivation to divorce and denies claim they separated months ago'

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**PROMOTED**

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Canine chaos

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Sporty

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Family time

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Stepping out

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[Khloe Kardashian reveals her sisters Kendall and Kylie](#)

▶ Jenner have different KUWTK contracts than the rest of the Kardashians

▶ Nicole Scherzinger, 41, is joined by her rumoured love interest Thom Evans, 34, as they party until 4.30am at a Soho gay bar  
Party pals

▶ Britney Spears 'set to fight in court for increased custody time with her sons Preston, 14, and Jayden, 13' after recently curtailed arrangement with ex

▶ Elizabeth Hurley is on a quest for 'world domination' as she shares snap of herself in character as Morgan le Fay in Marvel's Runaways

▶ Brooks Nader flashes the flesh in a see-through mini-dress at Sports Illustrated Sportsperson Of The Year Awards in New York City

▶ Jacqueline Jossa 'forgives' husband Dan Osborne and warns 'one strike or it's over' ... as former TOWIE star says it 'feels good' to wake up next to his wife

▶ Baby makes four! Anne Hathaway emerges with newborn carrier on family outing in Connecticut after weeks away from the spotlight

**EXCLUSIVE** Holly Willoughby gets teary as she talks about the pressures of TV... and how she met Phillip Schofield amid pair's rumoured feud

▶ 'Head is down and I'm ready to push!' Ashley Graham jokes her baby bump looks 'fake' in hilarious clip while rapidly approaching her due date

▶ Cara Delevigne announces she and Ashley Benson 'broke up' after 19-month romance... but it appears as if she was hacked on Twitter

▶ Myleene Klass dresses down in a casual black tracksuit and designer trainers as makes an appearance at Global Radio studios  
Casual

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Casual

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The 46-year-old, who stepped back from the spotlight in 2015

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Family outing

▶ **Nick Jonas is supported by brothers Joe and Kevin on the Jumanji: The Next Level red carpet in LA... and even arrives in dune buggy with Awkwafina**

▶ **Elizabeth Hurley reveals her best ever onscreen kisser was Matthew McConaughey during appearance on WWHL**  
Pucker up

▶ **Bella Hadid leaves VERY little to the imagination as she jets out of St. Barts showing off her cleavage and thong underwear in sheer mini dress**

▶ **SEBASTIAN SHAKESPEARE: Michelle Dockery splashes out on £1.7million London love nest with her partner Jasper Waller-Bridge**

▶ **ITV bosses 'would consider replacing Phillip Schofield with Ben Shephard on This Morning over chemistry with Holly Willoughby if the host leaves show'**

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▶ **Dwayne Johnson reveals why he got married to Lauren Hashian so early in the morning as he makes Ellen appearance**  
Happily married

▶ **PICTURED: The moment grinning Dan Osborne entered 'threesome hotel' with Chloe Ayling... as he likes tweet branding her a 'marriage ruining sl\*g'**

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Festive

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Drama

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Enjoying a tippie

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▶ **Dancing On Ice: Maura Higgins** wows in a tiny glitzy ensemble as she joins dazzling Caprice Bourret and Vanessa Bauer at the show's launch

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Moved to tears

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Stranger Things star

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Two years after leaving Silicon Valley

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Moving on

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Clothing line

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▶ **Nikki Bella is sheer daring in black midi dress while joined by hunky beau Artem Chigvintsev at charity gala in LA**  
Stunning

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Baby joy

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▶ [Juice Wrld died after 'swallowing Percocet painkillers to HIDE them from cops' after his private jet pilot phoned police to tell them the rapper was flying with 70 pounds of marijuana](#)

**EXCLUSIVE** [David Beckham laughs with daughter Harper, 8, before they enjoy a rollercoaster with Cruz, 14, and Romeo, 17, at Winter Wonderland](#)

▶ [Brooklyn Beckham hugs Nicola Peltz as they stroll through JFK airport... two months after attending Leonardo DiCaprio's Halloween Party](#)

▶ [Gabrielle Union laughs happily with baby Kaavia as she dances off the drama over AGT firing](#)

▶ [Megan Rapinoe exudes confidence in navy blue dress as she is honored as Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson Of The Year at NYC awards](#)

[Alessandra Ambrosio embraces her inner mermaid as she talks the need to clean up](#)

▶ oceans: 'We're the ones that need to preserve it'

▶ Makeup-free Kim Kardashian dresses for comfort in slouchy sweatpants and hoodie after photo shoot  
Low-key

▶ Sadie Robertson of Duck Dynasty says she loves her husband even more for saying her stretch marks are 'so cool' as she poses in swimwear

▶ Inside the I'm A Celeb wrap party: Chloe Madeley steals Jacqueline Jossa's crown as James Haskell calls Caitlyn Jenner his 'jungle wife'

▶ Celebrity Ex On The Beach 2019: Sophie Kasaei, Ellie Brown and Georgia Harrison don tiny bikinis at an ICE RINK... as full line-up is confirmed

▶ Miss Myanmar bravely comes out as the first openly gay Miss Universe contestant - even though homosexuality is still punishable with a PRISON sentence in her home country

▶ Melania Trump dons \$2,000 candy-striped Gucci skirt and bright red leather boots to hand out 'Be Best' backpacks to children at Toys for Tots event

▶ Golden Globes 2020: Australians sweep the nominations including Russell Crowe, Nicole Kidman, Margot Robbie and Cate Blanchett

▶ Natalie Nunn kisses husband Jacob Payne amid reports he 'dumped her' after Dan Osborne and Chloe Ayling 'threesome' claims

▶ Penny Lancaster is left red-faced when she gets husband Rod Stewart's age wrong after confusing him with her DAD in gaffe-filled Loose Women segment

▶ Pregnant Casey Batchelor shows off her baby bump in a black and gold bikini as she performs the SPLITS in yoga shoot

▶ **Amy Hart cuts a glamorous figure in a faux fur-lined coat and purple trousers as she joins a chic Amy Childs for Celebs Go Dating filming**

▶ **Love Island's Jonny Mitchell splits from fiancée Danielle Zarb-Cousin as she announces breakup by posting video wearing her wedding dress**

▶ **No helmet hair here! Queen arrives at Buckingham Palace with elegantly-coiffed curls despite donning riding gear for a morning horse ride**

**EXCLUSIVE** **I'm A Celeb winner could make £5M after being crowned Queen of the Jungle... as she's tipped for her own reality show and tell-all book**

▶ **Meg Mathews mistakes a French model for her own daughter Anaïs Gallagher in social media blunder**

▶ **'Our little family is growing!' Diversity's Ashley Banjo announces wife Francesca is pregnant with their second child... 10 months after**

**EXCLUSIVE** **Made In Chelsea: Miles Nazaire promises 'a lot of passion' as the cast head to Buenos Aires... but admits being single left him 'envious' of cast mates**

▶ **I'm A Celeb's Jacqueline Jossa becomes the FIRST winner to cancel ALL live interviews amid reports Dan Osborne had a 'threesome'**

▶ **Princess Marie-Chantal of Greece reveals a rare glimpse inside stunning Manhattan townhouse as she share snap of Princess Olympia**

▶ **Kacey Musgraves flaunts legs in orange leather trench coat at Moschino Prefall 2020 Runway Show in New York City Stylish**

▶ **Beyonce stirs up excitement with cheeky sneak peek at Ivy Park Adidas collection... as she scores a Golden Globe nod for Best Original Song**

**Golden Globes 2020: Jennifer Aniston is nominated for The**

▶ **Morning Show but Reese Witherspoon is NOT... as Jen's ex Brad Pitt is also recognized**

▶ **Golden Globes 2020: The 50-and-over crowd - Renee Zellweger, Jennifer Lopez, Jennifer Aniston and Nicole Kidman dominate the nominations**

▶ **Meryl Streep gets a historic 32nd Golden Globe nomination for her role on season two of Big Little Lies**

▶ **Mama June Shannon looks a mess with missing tooth a week after she hit up a local casino ... as her sad spiral continues after drug arrest**

▶ **Wheel of Fortune's Vanna White hosts game show for the first time in nearly-four decade stint as longtime co-host Pat Sajak recovers**

▶ **Mila Kunis is forced to put on her hoodie as she gets caught in a rare downpour in Los Angeles**

▶ **Shirley Ballas reveals she wants to see the Duchess of Cornwall as a guest judge on Strictly because royal is 'intelligent and has a keen eye'**

▶ **I'm A Celeb's Nadine Coyle looks elegant in a navy gown while Kate Garraway and Caitlyn Jenner opt for colourful dresses as they bring glamour to wrap party**

▶ **Ghostbusters: Afterlife trailer: Stranger Things star Finn Wolfhard fires up the Ecto-1 as he leads new generation in highly-anticipated reboot**

▶ **Game Of Thrones star John Bradley admits playing nervous Samwell Tarly left him with speech impediment and struggling with performance anxiety**

**EXCLUSIVE** **Get off my man! Raheem Sterling's fiancée Paige Milian shoves woman out the way as she twerks against Man City star at his 25th birthday**

▶ **Gabby Allen claims she's 'too blessed to be stressed' as she shares bikini snaps from her Thailand getaway amid Dan Osborne cheating drama**

▶ **Meghan Markle chose exact shade of blue for Sussex Royal Instagram account and knew all about algorithms from her blogging days, expert reveals**

▶ **Golden Globes 2020: Fleabag, Killing Eve and The Crown lead the British nominations with homegrown shows featuring in SIX categories**

▶ **Marriage Story's Adam Driver and Scarlett Johansson are praised for 'painfully real' performances by viewers as it leads Golden Globe nods**

▶ **Golden Globes 2020: Jennifer Lopez is nominated for her role as a stripper in Hustlers... her first nod in 21 YEARS since she played Selena**

▶ **Milla Jovovich shows off her baby bump as she takes her daughter to breakfast... after revealing she has gained 50lbs from pregnancy**

▶ **'Keep him in your prayers': Natasha Bedingfield's son Solomon, 23 months, is in surgery for a brain infection after three weeks in hospital**

▶ **Bette Midler faces a backlash for sharing a snap of three teenage girls looking at phones in art gallery - and told she's being 'creepy' for trying to shame them**

▶ **I'm A Celebrity: Kate Garraway, 52, shows off her jungle weight loss in a scarlet playsuit after losing a STONE in just three weeks**  
Svelte

▶ **'If I'd known the bar was that low, I'd have had a crack myself': Piers Morgan hits out at Kate Garraway's husband Derek Draper**  
Speaking out

▶ **I'm A Celebrity: Runner-up Andy Whyment is reunited with wife Nicola and his children... after admitting it was 'tough' being away from them**

▶ **'I give zero f\*\*\*s!' Beyonce hits back at criticism over her 'fluctuating' weight and says motherhood has**

▶ made her more 'womanly and secure'

▶ Iconic velvet gown that Princess Diana wore to dance with John Travolta at the White House FAILS to sell at auction

▶ Kate Middleton finally has a 'easy relationship' with the Queen but it took the two 'shy' women a long time to build a rapport, royal commentator claims

▶ Billie Faiers's husband Greg Shepherd looks unrecognisable as he SHAVES his head to raise £42,000 for charity during glam night out Quite a difference

▶ 'Others have found the tin opener': Amanda Holden slams Phillip Schofield as she praises co-hosts for 'opening can of worms' amid This Morning feud

▶ 'She's annoyed at how I look!' Strictly Come Dancing's Chris Ramsey reveals his weight loss during the show has left his wife Rosie FUMING

▶ Cameron Diaz cuts a chic figure with husband Benji Madden for a pal's birthday bash in Santa Monica (and Reese Witherspoon is on the guest list too)

▶ Ant McPartlin and Anne-Marie Corbett debut matching star tattoos as they enjoy double date with Declan Donnelly and wife Ali Astall

▶ 'Nothing is right about what I've done!' Katie Price makes grovelling apology to Kris Boyson as she admits to cheating on him on My Crazy Life

▶ 'They are coping amazing!' Christine McGuinness erects first Christmas tree in SIX years after stopping because it overwhelmed her autistic children

▶ 'I knew it from the start!' Hollyoaks star Lucy-Jo Hudson delightedly announces she's expecting a baby boy with beau Lewis Devine

[Back to top](#)

