

LONDON Playbook from POLITICO

By DAN BLOOM

PRESENTED BY



[Send tips here](#) | [Subscribe for free](#) | [Listen to Playbook and view in your browser](#)

WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING: U.S. politics is in meltdown after Donald Trump became the [first ex-president to face criminal charges](#). Sources told [CNN](#) he will be presented with more than 30 counts related to business fraud after adult film star Stormy Daniels was given \$130,000 in 2016. After [railing](#) against the “witch hunt” in a statement from his Florida resort (of which 10,000 people were watching a [Sky live feed](#) overnight), Trump is expected to attend a New York court on Tuesday. “There will be a mugshot,” notes the Guardian [liveblog](#).

Can he still run for president in 2024? Er, quite possibly. My POLITICO colleagues in Washington have a great [explainer](#) on what Trump is accused of, whether it will be easy to convict (no), and whether he can become president regardless (it’s “murky” and would raise “serious constitutional questions.”) Anna G. Cominsky, a professor at New York Law School, tells the [Washington Post](#) he could run for president even if convicted of a crime, as there’s no “explicit prohibition.”

And as for the US courtroom news you really care about: Gwyneth Paltrow won her ski-and-run court case within minutes of the Trump news. She bags \$1 in damages. Dom Cummings and fellow Vote Leavers [would have enjoyed](#) her [parting shot](#).

Good Friday morning: This is Dan Bloom. Rosa Prince returns Monday.

****A message from Google:** How much screen time is too much? What’s OK to share online? What should you do if you see something online that worries you? In partnership with Google, online safety experts at Internet Matters are helping families start important conversations about online safety by asking some simple questions. Learn [more](#).**

DRIVING THE DAY

BREAKING OVERNIGHT: Britain is joining a £9 trillion trade bloc in its biggest deal since leaving that other one three years ago. Accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) — whose 11 members include Australia, Canada, Japan, Singapore and Vietnam — was confirmed by Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch [at 12.52 a.m.](#) in what is a

start-of-recess cork-popper for Rishi Sunak. Not least because it has even his sternest Brexiteer [critics](#) delighted.

How it unfolded: POLITICO's Pro Trade crack team [broke the news](#) of the U.K.'s accession on Wednesday. Read their [insider account](#) of how 21 months of talks came to a head on a Vietnamese island, only to almost collapse thanks to a last-minute row over Canadian beef. The Mail's Jason Groves [points out](#) the controversy of reducing tariffs on palm oil — and notes the TUC's Paul Nowak has criticized the “dire” deal with nations where workers are exploited. No. 10 says it will “boost the U.K. economy by £1.8 billion in the long run.”

But but but ... This is about much more than trade. My colleague [Cristina Gallardo writes](#) that while the effect as a percentage of GDP is small — the [BBC](#) puts it at a princely 0.08 percent — this is about growing influence in the Indo-Pacific as China flexes its muscles. “We will be in a geographic table where the United States and China are absent,” economist George Magnus tells Cristina. Badenoch is on this morning's broadcast round.

HOW SUNAK WILL CELEBRATE: In (checks notes) a cafe in Darlington with Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen, where the PM will record a regional ITV clip at around **9 a.m.** and go on a short walkabout. It's Easter recess for 17 days, so of course the parties have swung into local elections mode. His plans to talk about May 4 might be somewhat derailed by the big news above.

First weekend of recess klaxon: Sunak is spending the rest of today working at the government's “economic campus” in Darlington before retreating for some R&R in his North Yorkshire constituency. Finally, a [swim](#)!

LABOURWATCH: Labour leader Keir Starmer is spending this morning in target area Plymouth at a food manufacturing factory, doing a Q&A with staff, a pool clip around **noon**, a regional media round, and a members' event.

TURDWATCH: [Defra](#) releases annual statistics on sewage discharges at some point this morning and opposition parties will kick up a stink. The [i's Paul Waugh](#) says Lib Dem leader Ed Davey is targeting the “dog walker demographic” — hence the focus on excrement. He has “sewage visits” (yes really) teed up next week and may demand Environment Secretary Thérèse Coffey's resignation.

YEP, IT'S RECESS! Brace for more than two weeks of heavily gridded local elections content. Labour's offering today is analysis of ONS data, which claims families are spending £13 more per week on groceries in December 2022 compared to 2020-21 — part of a £3,500 annual rise in the cost of essentials (via [PA](#)).

Try, try again: Labour Chair Anneliese Dodds spent [several minutes](#) on TalkTV defending Labour's pledge that it “would” freeze all council tax this year, but (checks notes) isn't actually promising to do so in the first year of a Labour government. Not yet, anyway. Starmer sent a personal email on Thursday to supporters with the subject “Your council tax, frozen” ... which it isn't.

SCOOPS — CANDIDATE WATCH: Labour currently has 103 candidates selected, and is planning to get two more by May — followed by a further 41 by the end of November, two organizers tell your author. They include most high-profile seats such as Islington North, where Jeremy Corbyn is mulling standing as an independent.

Speaking of which: Ex-Momentum Chair Jon Lansman has told my colleague Aggie Chambre that the “stitch-up” of Labour selections could “absolutely” let in a fascist government — by keeping the left

alternative too “narrow.” “We see it in the rise of the far right in Germany and France. You know, it’s across the world and it could happen here,” he said.

That’s a bit on the nose: My colleague Eleni Courea texted to point out the Tony Blair Institute’s Rosie Beacon was [elected](#) chair of Croydon Central CLP on Thursday night ... unseating Andrew Fisher, Jeremy Corbyn’s former policy director.

CLUCK CLUCK BWAARK? Meanwhile, a clutch of Tory MPs who’ve announced they are vacating their marginal seats — but not leaving parliament — are being accused of plotting “chicken runs” to safer ones. [Eleni and Aggie report](#) that Tory insiders reckon there are half a dozen or more MPs using minor boundary changes as an excuse to attempt to move to plummier constituencies.

Tory fury: “If their seats are changed at all, even fractionally, they’re trying to use it as an excuse to say that they should get a safer seat,” one senior Tory said. “It’s very disloyal to the place you’re representing — and it’s bad for the party.” Another said local associations were “screaming blue murder.”

Selections kick off: Party Chair Greg Hands emailed MPs this week to say he aims to install the first 100 candidates in time for conference, and that the first tranche will be advertised on April 17. ([HuffPost](#) also got the email.) That will pit any serving MPs looking to move against 1,000 people on the approved Tory candidates list. Deputy Tory Chair Luke Hall has essentially warned this list that unless they get stuck into campaigning for the locals, they risk being taken off.

Coming up this weekend: The highly anticipated selection battle between Suella Braverman and Flick Drummond after boundary changes pitted them against each other.

GOOD TIMING: Aggie’s [Westminster Insider podcast](#) this week is all about selections, with Conservative peer Anne Jenkin acknowledging the Tories may lose seats at the next election. In comments that will rankle with some associations, she said certain safe seats have a sort of responsibility to “pick future cabinet ministers,” rather than simply people who live in the area.

And the rest: You can also hear Aggie going on a road trip with the former chairman of Richmond Conservative association — who recreates the scene of Rishi Sunak being picked as their local MP.

BATTLE ROYALE: Tory **Robert Buckland** was reselected Thursday night for Labour target seat South Swindon, where he is defending a 6,625 majority against ex-MP **Heidi Alexander**. [Here’s the pic](#), replete with six Bucklands.

MEET THE VOTERS

STATE OF THE NATION: As the Commons rose for recess, your author sat in on a virtual focus group with nine Heywood and Middleton voters who backed the Tories in 2019, but would consider changing their minds. Tory Chris Clarkson prized the ultra-marginal from Labour in 2019 with a 663 majority. The verdict is Sunak has a lot of persuading to do ... but Starmer should read the next bit through his fingers.

Starmer verdict: Not one volunteered a positive opinion of him or said they’d vote Labour tomorrow. Several said they didn’t know what he stood for. He was variously described as “underwhelming and wooden,” and lacking “personality” or a “backbone.” Rebecca, a mental health nurse, accused him of “playing dirty” by “jumping all over” rivals’ mistakes while Jan, 51, said: “I don’t even know which party Keir Starmer is in. Is he Labour?”

Sunak verdict: Participants widely branded the PM out of touch due to his wealth, bringing up his pool. Retired Tony said: “He pays more for his suits than I get all year.” They felt uninspired by his style. Commercial manager Aaron, 31, complained “there’s nobody else,” while construction buyer Jennifer said “I need to see something — I’m not feeling it.”

More time: CCHQ will see one or two lines as a lifeline — including broad agreement on banning laughing gas. Jennifer called Sunak “articulate” and “competent,” saying he needed more time. Rebecca, who said the budget will do nothing to stop her childcare costs resembling a “second mortgage,” added: “He’s still mopping up from the back end of Boris and the mess in between.”

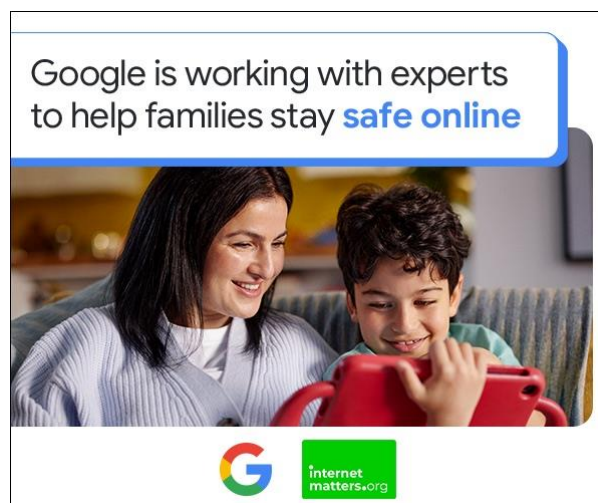
No boats row: No one brought up small boats when asked for their top problems — the cost of living, education and housing all came first, with ambulance delays and leveling-up not materializing causing the most ire. But once the host raised migration they had strong opinions. They were split across the full spectrum on whether deporting people is correct, but broadly said the Rwanda crackdown wouldn’t work.

TFIF: Asked to sum up the state of the nation, they said “broken,” “mess,” “confused,” “strained,” “crisis,” “not so great,” “room for improvement,” “floating in deep waters” and “sh*tshow.”

King over the water: Asked to name one politician who is “authentic and gets it,” the answer came: Andy Burnham. “He’s smashing it,” said one in the Greater Manchester seat.

Disclaimer: Participants were of course not a representative sample and shouldn’t be read like an opinion poll. At the end, three said they’d vote Tory tomorrow, and four were undecided but still leaning Tory.

None of the above: Luke Tryl, director of More in Common, which organized the group, told Playbook the verdict was “a plague on both your houses” as the government was seen as failing on the NHS and leveling up, but voters were also “frustrated that Keir Starmer seemed to spend more time playing politics than spelling out what he would do differently.”



OUT BY RECESS

PENSIONS PLANS: Thursday’s review of the state pension age didn’t change the law, but makes plenty of headlines. The i splashes on ex-Minister Steve Webb’s warning that younger workers could

have to retire at 70 if ministers cap pensions spending at 6 percent of GDP — as recommended. The [Times](#) splashes on the suggestion an “early access scheme” could let manual workers retire earlier than white-collar counterparts.

NET ZERO: [Playbook PM](#) on Thursday rounded up much of the coverage, but the [Mail](#) has a spread on Tory MPs — including Net Zero Scrutiny Group Chair Craig Mackinlay — calling the net zero plans “completely mad” and demanding to know their cost (while other activists say they’re not enough).

Meanwhile: The Telegraph’s Daniel Martin [reports](#) that EPC energy ratings for homes could be overhauled because Michael Gove is “very worried” about the sustainability of private lettings.

TRASH IS OUT: [Playbook](#) flagged Thursday that some awkward news could slip out on the last day before recess, and lo, it occurred. Let’s take you through a few...

Fly in the ointment: The Telegraph has [spotted](#) Rishi Sunak spent more than £500,000 on jets in two weeks as he went to Egypt, Indonesia, Latvia and Estonia.

Whoosh: More than 1.4 billion PPE items were burned including 570 million aprons and 450 million face masks — the [i’s Arj Singh](#) is among those writing up the government figures.

One’s cost of living crisis: The sovereign grant for King Charles has been frozen for the third year in a row, reports the [Times’ Oliver Wright](#).

Tiny violin: [Playbook](#) notes that poor old Kwasi Kwarteng received [no gifts or registered hospitality](#) during his brief stint as chancellor, and made one foreign visit — only to learn he was being sacked on the way home from the airport,

Transparency, what’s that? [The i](#) is among those to spot that ministers and officials are being warned off using the “disappearing message” option on WhatsApp. If [Playbook’s](#) contact book is anything to go by, a lot of SpAds and MPs turned that feature on post-Hancock and need to disable it again.

And the rest: The [Mirror](#) has a decent roundup of more buried bits including ... Cash from Britain’s depleted foreign aid budget is still going to India ... Government departments responded to fewer than half of MPs’ letters on time ... And a prison pilot scheme had “no impact” on whether inmates would take drugs like Spice

COMING ATTRACTIONS

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO TALK ABOUT: The traditional raft of April 1 legal changes is coming on Saturday but only one appears to be topping today’s “grid.” Utility firms that do a rubbish job of patching roads back together will be inspected more often under laws [announced](#) last year, and taking force on Saturday. Transport Secretary Mark Harper has a [Mail op-ed](#), which says highway authorities can bill back inspections to the firms at £120 a pop.

More April 1 changes: Corporation tax [surges](#) from 19 to 25 percent ... The new, less generous Energy Bills Discount Scheme [starts](#) for businesses ... The minimum wage for over-22s [rises](#) 92p to £10.42 ... Routine COVID tests [end](#) for asymptomatic hospital patients, and care home staff and residents with symptoms ... The 130 percent super-deduction for investment is [replaced](#) with 100 percent “full expensing” ... HRT will be cheaper under a [pre-payment certificate](#) ... [Air Passenger Duty](#)

rises on international flights but is halved for domestic hops ... And the £2 bus fare cap is [extended](#) to June.

Not changing on Saturday: The Income Tax [personal allowance](#), 40p and 45p thresholds, storing up what will eventually be a stealth tax of £29 billion per year.

Coming next week: Labour ex-Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt's [review](#) of new-style "integrated care systems" is being published on Tuesday, she [told](#) a Global Counsel event. But we're due to wait longer for the all-important NHS workforce plan.

Still waiting: Still no sign of the Dominic Raab bullying report or Boris Johnson's resignation honors, despite rumors that both may be all but wrapped up. We're told not to expect either of them today.

****In a time of political disruption, building bridges with policymakers is critical to any organization.** Read our report "The Rise of Policy Communications" to gain expert insight from business, media, advocacy and government pioneers and start making your own impact. [Get your copy here.](#)**

TODAY IN WESTMINSTER

DASH FOR GROWTH: [Revised GDP figures](#) for the final three months of 2022 have been released in the last few moments, and show U.K. gross domestic product is estimated to have increased by 0.1 percent, revised up from a first estimate of no growth. Chancellor Jeremy Hunt is recording a clip shortly.

UNDER FIRE: Days after a scolding report on Met Police culture, here's some unpleasant reading for firefighters. HM Inspectorate of Fire and Rescue Services [found](#) every fire brigade has bullying, harassment and discrimination complaints, with officials calling for drastic measures to clean up the service. [The Guardian highlights](#) that it follows London Fire Brigade being placed in special measures in December after a separate report revealed incidents of racism, misogyny and bullying.

FRAUD ISLAND: Fraud against businesses and individuals now accounts for 41 percent of all crimes in England and Wales with 3.8 million incidents in the year to June 2022, a new [public accounts committee report](#) says. The Home Office, it argues, is "sluggish and outmanoeuvred" with a lack of capacity, system failures and diminishing public trust making the U.K. a "haven for fraudsters." [The FT's take is here.](#)

SEX ED OVERHAUL: Rishi Sunak is set to order an independent review of school sex education after an outcry from some of his MPs. Priorities will include introducing age-ratings, informed by an expert panel. An announcement is expected as soon as today. The Telegraph has the [story](#).

TRANS KIDS: Several papers carry Rishi Sunak's comments that schools will get guidance on trans issues after Easter, in the wake of a Policy Exchange report. The [Sun](#) says teachers will be forced to tell parents if their children are questioning their gender identity.

EYES EMOJI: Boris Johnson's MP allies have been telling the [Telegraph's Chris Hope](#) that he would accept a finding that he "recklessly" (not "intentionally") misled parliament — to get a lesser punishment from the privileges committee and avoid a by-election. Alas, unlike most Johnson stories his official team are actually pushing back against this one. With friends like these ...

Speaking of Johnson: Much reading-into the three Tory MPs who'd have spared SNP COVID-rule-breaker Margaret Ferrier a recall petition. Will they do the same for Johnson? His old Partygate nemesis [Pippa Crerar](#) hears Johnson shouldn't rest easy — the MPs felt Ferrier had already "paid a high enough price" with 270 hours' community service, she writes.

NOT ME GUV: Rishi Sunak is continuing to insist he was right not to tell the liaison committee about his wife's shares in a childcare firm — even as it emerges the firm went to an 11 Downing Street reception, writes the [Guardian](#).

DOUBLE CHIN AND TONIC? Shadow Health Minister Liz Kendall has told BBC Newscast "I'd like to know how many calories there are in alcohol." Could that mean calorie counts on the pump? "I think that knowledge is power." A Labour official tells your author the party has no plans to introduce calorie counts on beer taps.

SHOW YOUR WORKINGS: The [Mail](#) highlights Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves failing to match Shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting's (surprising) claim that doctors would get a 35 percent pay rise "as quickly as we can."

REMEMBER COVID: Tory peer Nicky Morgan has recommended Sunak builds COVID memorials after a 9-month consultation as U.K. Commission on COVID Commemoration Chair, she tells John McFall's "[Lord Speaker's Corner](#)" podcast.

HEALTHWATCH: The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman's ongoing policy of not considering less serious health complaints — introduced due to COVID backlogs — has been criticized in a new [public administration and constitutional affairs committee](#) report.

MUSIC TO HER EARS: Spice Girl and campaigner Mel B sat down with the [Sun's Natasha Clark](#), to hail a £300,000 Home Office pot to help women fleeing domestic abuse.

Get your questions in: Labour In Communications are having a Q&A with Shadow Future of Work Minister Justin Madders at noon — watch virtually [here](#).

PARLIAMENT: In recess until April 17.

BEYOND THE M25

MARK YOUR DIARIES: Joe Biden's visit to the island of Ireland will last five days and start on April 11 in Northern Ireland, according to a draft itinerary. He's due to stay in Hillsborough Castle, visit a (non-sitting) Stormont and cut a ribbon at Ulster University — my colleague Shawn Pogatchnik [has more](#).

PUTIN THE VULKAN: Software engineers at cybersecurity consultancy NTC Vulkan have worked for Russian military and intelligence agencies to support hacking operations, spread disinformation and control sections of the internet, according to leaked secret documents dating from 2016 to 2021. [The Guardian](#) is one of 11 global media outlets investigating the leak.

Food for ammo: [My POLITICO colleague Alexander Ward highlights](#) that Putin would likely send food to Pyongyang in exchange for more munitions from North Korea.

FINNS IN: The Turkish parliament unanimously ratified Finland's accession to NATO late on Thursday, essentially allowing Helsinki to join the military alliance, [POLITICO reports](#). Sweden is still

left out in the cold — though NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg [told](#) my colleague Lili Bayer that it could still become a member by the summer.

GREAT SCOT: Protestors who disrupted Humza Yousaf’s debut First Minister’s Questions face a six-month ban from Holyrood’s public gallery. [The BBC reports](#) FMQs was suspended five times within the first 15 minutes, with Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone saying there would be “more stringent measures” to identify those responsible.

OVER IN THE MEADOW: One hundred wildflower meadows are to be created or enhanced at historic sites across England including Stonehenge and Westminster’s Jewel Tower in celebration of the coronation. [Yahoo](#) has more.

TEA LEAVES ROUND-UP: In council by-election land overnight ... Labour held [Heath](#) in Barking and Dagenham with [62 percent](#) of votes ... the Lib Dems gained [Westgate](#) in Gloucester from the Tories with [43 percent](#) ... and Plaid Cymru held [Aethwy](#) in Ynys Môn with [54 percent](#). With thanks to Andrew Teale as ever.

****A message from Google:** It’s a conversation parents and children both find tricky, but just talking about internet safety is a great way to get into good habits. In a 2022 report, online safety experts Internet Matters found that four out of five parents who say their family uses digital devices in a balanced way also feel confident their child knows how to stay safe online. Google and digital parenting specialists Parent Zone have put together a set of simple questions to help families chat about topics including screen time, sharing, and privacy. Backed by advice created with Internet Matters on everything from new social media apps to internet slang, we’re helping parents and children start important conversations about online safety. Learn more about Google’s tools to help families be safer online [here](#).**

MEDIA ROUND

Business and Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch broadcast round: Times Radio (7.40 a.m.) ... Today program (8.30 a.m.) ... Sky News (8.30 a.m.) ... CNBC (8.40 a.m.) ... LBC (8.50 a.m.).

Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury Pat McFadden broadcast round: Sky News (8.05 a.m.) ... LBC News (8.30 a.m.) ... Times Radio (8.40 a.m.).

Also on Sky News Breakfast: HM’s Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services **Roy Wilsher** (7.30 a.m.).

Also on Times Radio Breakfast: Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies **Paul Johnson** (8.05 a.m.).

Also on Nick Ferrari at Breakfast: Unite Regional Coordinating Officer **Wayne King** (7.40 a.m.) ... **Roy Wilsher** (8.20 a.m.).

Also on LBC News: Federation of Small Businesses National Chair **Martin McTague** (7.20 a.m.) ... Lib Dem MP **Sarah Olney** (7.40 a.m.).

GB News Breakfast: Former Nadhim Zahawi SpAd **Mark Lehain** (6 a.m.) ... Former Chief Secretary to the Treasury **David Mellor** (8 a.m.) ... International Trade Minister **Nigel Huddleston** (9 a.m.).

TODAY’S FRONT PAGES

(Click on the publication's name to see its front page):

[POLITICO UK](#): Why Britain's Pacific trade deal is about more than just trade.

[Daily Express](#): Yes! Justice for Olivia.

[Daily Mail](#): Monster whose only tears were for himself, not little Olivia — the innocent he murdered.

[Daily Mirror](#): Justice for Olivia.

[Daily Star](#): Psycho killer chatbots are befuddled by Wordle.

[Financial Times](#): China warns Europe not to follow U.S. call for trade curbs.

[i](#): Pensions blow for people in their 40s — work until age 70.

[Metro](#): Olivia gun killer guilty.

[The Daily Telegraph](#): 'If you are buying drugs, you are responsible for Olivia's death.'

[The Guardian](#): Families face £700 hit with wave of tax and price rises.

[The Independent](#): I was proud to fight with UK forces — so don't send me to Rwanda.

[The Sun](#): Lover shopped Olivia killer.

[The Times](#): Retire early if you did not go to university.

TODAY'S NEWS MAGS

[The Economist](#): America vs. China — It's worse than you think.

THANK POD IT'S FRIDAY

[EU Confidential](#): The POLITICO team discuss French President Emmanuel Macron's pension reforms and the transport strikes in Germany. The special guest is Director-General of the Commission's Legal services **Daniel Calleja Crespo**.

[Westminster Insider](#): POLITICO's Aggie Chambre investigates how MPs are selected for their constituencies.

Plus 6 of the best political podcasts to listen to this weekend:

[Chopper's Politics](#): Chris Hope's panel is Labour peer **Peter Mandelson**, former Defra czar **Henry Dimbleby** and politics prof **Tim Bale**.

[Inside Briefing](#): Hannah White interviews **Emily Maitlis** about the role journalists play in holding politicians to account.

Rock & Roll Politics: Steve Richards is in conversation with economist **David Blanchflower** about how to revive the U.K. economy.

The Bunker: Ros Taylor speaks to **Henry Dimbleby** about why he quit.

The Rundown: PoliticsHome's Alain Tolhurst is joined by Labour's Shadow Scottish Secretary **Ian Murray**, pollster **John Curtice**, and former SNP MP **Stephen Gethins** to discuss what Humza Yousaf's victory means for the SNP's rivals.

Women with Balls: Katy Balls' guest is leader of the Commons **Penny Mordaunt**.

LONDON CALLING

WESTMINSTER WEATHER: Heavy rain with a moderate breeze. Highs of 13C.

BASS AND TREBLES ALL ROUND: Shout-outs to all those broadcasting types [nominated](#) for glitzy ARIA awards last night including top Times Radio politicians **John Pienaar** and **Matt Chorley**, Tortoise's Sensemaker and Slow Newscast, the team behind the Today prog's "The Fall of Boris Johnson," the Liz Truss BBC local radio interviewers, and (grand bugle call) POLITICO's own [Aggie Chambre](#), who in her former life at Sky News alongside ace reporter **Liz Bates** produced the "Open Secret" podcast on abuse in Westminster. Aggie, of course, now makes POLITICO's own Westminster Insider podcast alongside Ailbhe Rea.

WEDDING BELLS: Former Boris Johnson SpAd **Chloe Westley** got engaged on the weekend to **John Bull**, an army veteran and management consultant. Congrats!

CONGRATS ALSO ... to London Playbook's communal email inbox ... which has hit the milestone of 100,000 unread messages. Don't worry, we still read the important ones — most of them are out-of-office replies, honest.

NEW GIGS: Freelance political journalist **Martha Gill** has been named a weekly columnist at the Observer, [replacing](#) Nick Cohen ... Renewable energy firm Fortescue Future Industries has named **Carlos Lange** its president for Europe ... and the RSA's [John McMahon](#) is moving to the Bradford City of Culture team.

MOVING ON: [Lowri Morgan](#) departs GB News after nearly two years as a producer.

NOT GOING ANYWHERE: Tory Cabinet Minister **Kemi Badenoch** was [reselected](#) last night for ultra-safe Saffron Walden.

WEEKEND READING: Politics professor **Tim Bale**'s latest book — "[The Conservative Party After Brexit: Turmoil and Transformation](#)" — is published today by Polity. No doubt plenty to chew over ...

DON'T MISS: Radio 4's "[Profile](#)" of new Scottish First Minister **Humza Yousaf** on Saturday at 7 p.m. and repeated on Sunday.

GREAT SCOT: Reporter **Allan Little** explores how a radical theatrical event half a century ago fueled a debate about devolution and independence in "[What Kind of Scotland?](#)" on Saturday at 8 p.m. on Radio 4. How times change ...

TIKTOK WATCH: Tory MP **Luke Evans** described the relationship between the press, politicians and the public, through a clip from classic comedy "[Fawlty Towers](#)."

JOB ADS: [The BBC](#) is looking for a social media journalist ... [CNN](#) is hiring an associate producer for the "Amanpour" show ... and [Reuters](#) would like a vice president of communications.

MEA CULPA: **Clodagh Bergin** has been appointed as a comms chief for the Irish Labour Party ... not the U.K. one as Playbook PM wrote.

NOW READ THIS: PressGazette's **William Turvill** put together an essential guide for cutting through all the [journalistic jargon](#). TL;DR — the top of today's email is a "f*** me, Doris!"

BIRTHDAYS: Grantham and Stamford MP **Gareth Davies** ... Former Liberal Party leader **David Steel** ... Lib Dem peer **Don Foster** ... Tory peer **David Trefgarne** ... ITV News Deputy Political Editor **Anushka Asthana** ... Former Europe Minister **Alan Duncan** ... Former Lib Dem MP **Bob Russell** ... Former Tory MP **Nicholas Winteron** ... Appeal Court judge **Peter Coulson** ... Former British Ambassador to Russia **Roderic Lyne** ... Former U.S. Vice President **Al Gore**.

Celebrating over the weekend: Epsom and Ewell MP **Chris Grayling** ... Treasury Minister **John Glen** ... Commons finance committee Chair **Sharon Hodgson** ... Lib Dem peer **Sal Brinton** ... SNP MSP and Scottish Local Government Minister **Joe FitzPatrick** ... Former International Development Minister **Stephen O'Brien** ... New Economics Foundation's **Anna Coote** ... Plaid Cymru peer and former leader **Dafydd Wigley** turns 80 ... Senior researcher at the Institute for Government **Jack Worlidge** ... Ealing Central and Acton MP **Rupa Huq** ... Tory peer **Philippa Stroud** ... Former Tory MP **Graham Bright** ... Traditional Unionist Voice MLA and leader **Jim Allister** turns 70 ... Welsh Labour MS **Ken Skates** ... the BBC's **Adam Fleming** ... Former British Ambassador to Kazakhstan **Michael Gifford**.

PLAYBOOK COULDN'T HAPPEN WITHOUT: My editor **Zoya Sheftalovich**, reporter **Noah Keate** and producer **Grace Stranger**.

SUBSCRIBE to the POLITICO newsletter family: [Brussels Playbook](#) | [London Playbook](#) | [Playbook Paris](#) | [POLITICO Confidential](#) | [Sunday Crunch](#) | [EU Influence](#) | [London Influence](#) | [Digital Bridge](#) | [China Direct](#) | [Berlin Bulletin](#) | [D.C. Playbook](#) | [D.C. Influence](#) | [Global Insider](#) | [All our POLITICO Pro policy morning newsletters](#)