

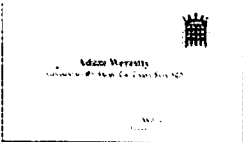
Weekly Update

By Tom and Abbie

Liam Fox

- Been forced to resign over breaching the Ministerial conduct for conflicts of interests between public duties and personal interests.
- Adam Werritty was an unofficial advisor to Liam Fox, accompanying him on at least 18 business trips, and present at over 40 of Fox's 70 recorded meetings at the MOD.
- Business associates who were joint investors in a Health care consultancy firm.
- Werritty in charge of charity set up by Fox at tax payers expense.

- Werritty lived in Fox's apartment for a year and was the best man at his wedding
- Stayed in apartment paid by Fox with MPs expenses.
- Holidayed together in Spain at the end of the Libyan civil war.
- Distributed business cards.



Tweets

- Diane Abbott, shadow Health Minister was made to apologise for a racist tweet in which she stated: "White people love playing 'divide & rule'".
- She argued that it was taken out of context but after discussions with Ed Milliband she then apologised.
- The following day Ed Milliband tweeted: "Sad to hear that Bob Holness has died. A generation will remember him fondly from Blackbustlers."
- This was then removed and retweeted within hours.

News Of The Week

Scottish Independence Referendum

- The SNP, which won an overall majority in the Scottish Parliament election's last May, has pledged to hold a referendum on independence in the second half of its five-year term.
- The Scottish National Party (SNP) leader said his Cabinet would be putting the "finishing touches" to the consultation paper which will be published later this month and be open to public consultation.
- The Tory-Lib Dem coalition government said that under the terms of the 1998 Scotland Act, which set up the devolved administration, the Scottish government could hold a referendum but the result would only have advisory status.
- Mr Moore, a Lib Dem MP has backed a Yes/No vote on independence but not one which involved a second question on greater powers for the Scottish Parliament.
- Mr Salmond (first minister of Scotland) accused the UK Government of being in a "state of total confusion".
- He said: "The issue is not Section 30 of the Scotland Act. The issue is the entirely unacceptable Tory attempt to impose London's strings on Scotland's referendum from a Westminster government with absolutely no mandate for these matters."

David Cameron

- David Cameron during an interview made a comment about shadow Chancellor, Ed Balls, 'He just annoys me... But I'm very bad, in the House of Commons, at not getting distracted, and the endless, ceaseless banter, it's like having someone with Tourette's permanently sitting opposite you.'
- After a lot of dispute over the comment Cameron apologised saying he meant no offence.

Ed Milliband's 'clear plan' for Labour

- Mr Milliband told the Guardian it would take time to win back public faith in Labour's ability to handle the economy.
- He said: "I always knew it was going to be a fight. It is one I relish - I never expected it to be anything else."
- Shadow defence secretary Jim Murphy has said that Labour needed to show "credibility" by explaining where it would make budget cuts.
- But Mr Milliband said Mr Murphy's announcement that he would accept the government's £5bn military cuts was "exactly what [shadow chancellor] Ed Balls said he wanted shadow ministers to do".
- In preparation for the next general election the Labour Party has said: "It means that the Blair/Brown approach will not be enough".
- They are accepting that there are different issues to be addressed due to the economic climate and they need to adjust so they can best face them when they are next in power.

Immigration From Outside the EU

- The Migration Advisory Committee said there were 2.2 fewer UK jobs for every 100 migrants from outside the EU.
- But a report from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) says immigration has had little impact.
- The Migration Advisory Committee estimates that 160,000 British born women's jobs have been "displaced" following non-EU immigration between 1995 and 2010.
- Between 2004 and 2010, the total working age migrant employment rose by 2.1 million and currently displaced 160,000 British-born workers, it said.
- Those migrants who have been in the UK for over five years are not associated with displacement of British-born workers," it said.
- The committee also looked at the effect of migration on salaries, and found overall wages for the most well-paid people went up, while those at the bottom went down.
- The report also added that EU migration had had "little or no impact" on the native employment rate.
- Dr Scott Brainer, Senior Researcher at the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, said: "This report highlights the need to decide and articulate more clearly whose needs government is prioritising when developing immigration policy."

News of the week

Hayley
Ollie

Is Miliband leading the labour party to destruction?

- Len McCluskey the biggest trade union leader has warned MPs that Miliband is leading the party into certain defeat.
- He made these comments after labours decision to support the governments pay freeze for the public sector.
- Miliband stated later that he was wrong and that he should be trusted on the economy.
- The government announced in 2010 that public sector pay for those earning more than £21,000 would be frozen for two years.
- Last November said it would then only rise by only 1% in the two years to 2015.
- On Saturday Ed Balls stated that the pay restraint would have to continue through these hard economic times .

Halt to 'rushed' disability benefit's needs to be changed

- The changes to disability benefits are being "rushed through" to meet Treasury targets as campaigners have argued for it.
- They want ministers to delay changes to Disability Living Allowance saying new medical assessment tests are not ready.
- Former RNIB chairman Lord Low said "the livelihoods of disabled people were at stake".
- But ministers said disability living allowance (DLA) was "20 years out of date" and £600m a year was being paid out to people no longer eligible.
- A group of peers backed by some charities want planned changes to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and its replacement.
- The Personal Independence Payment (PIP) - to be put on hold pending further consultation.
- Campaigners say the plans will drive more people into poverty.
- Ministers have conceded some changes but say their plans will focus help on those who need it most.

Leveson Inquiry:

Ian Hislop says new press laws not needed

- Private Eye editor Ian Hislop has told an inquiry that New laws are not needed to govern the press.
- Issues such as phone hacking, paying police officers and being in contempt of court contravene existing laws
- He said the inquiry should examine why the laws were not rigorously enforced.
- News International chief executive Tom Mockridge told the inquiry its editors had been instructed not to use private investigators. He acknowledged a "particular sensitivity" around their use.
- The inquiry has previously heard the company News of the World hired private detectives to carry out surveillance on public figures and illegally access voicemails.
- Mockridge's witness statement also showed a Times journalist had been disciplined for hacking into a computer.
- Guardian editor Alan Rusbridger, the Times' James Harding and Sunday Times' John Witherow also addressed the inquiry on Tuesday.

accountability
example

*Not effective
looks at
that # well formed
regulation*

Plans for NHS in England an unholy mess, say journals

- With the overhaul just over a year away, the joint editorial by the Health Service Journal, Nursing Times and British Medical Journal acknowledged it was unlikely it could be stopped now.
- But it predicted the changes would be so destructive another reorganisation would be needed within five years.
- And it urged politicians to learn from the mistakes that had been made
- The editorial said the changes had been "unnecessary, poorly conceived and badly communicated" and had "destabilised and damaged" the health service.
- It said through a combination of hasty compromises, a lack of confidence among staff and badly drawn-up proposals, the new system would be "unstable".

Pension change will save little, IFS says

- The government's latest public sector pension changes will make "little or no difference" to their long-term cost, an economic think tank has said
- The report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) refers to the most recent pension negotiations.
- However, it points out that an earlier decision to change the inflation link for pension increases has substantially reduced costs and expectations.
- Unions point out that, overall, public workers must pay more and work longer.
- The government has said the latest offer would be the final deal on the table, and that overall its public sector pension policy was fair and would save the taxpayer billions of pounds.

Salford referendum votes for directly elected mayor

- People in Salford will have the chance to vote for a new city leader next May after a referendum backed proposals for a directly elected mayor.
- In the poll, 17,344 people voted yes, while 13,653 voted against having an elected mayor
- The result means residents will vote on 3 May to choose a mayor who will usher in a new process of running the city
- But just 18.1% of the 171,000 eligible voters took part in the referendum
- The current leader of the council, Labour's John Merry, said he would put his name forward to be his party's candidate in the election
- Local businessman Geoffrey Berg, who organised the petition, said he was pleased with the result, which saw the Yes campaign receive 56% of the vote and record a majority of 3,691

low turnout - disrepute?

Parliament topic:
individual ministerial responsibility

Chris Huhne quits the Cabinet

- Chris Huhne has resigned as Energy Secretary after hearing he faces a charge of perverting the course of justice over a 2003 speeding case.
- Nick Clegg announced the Lib Dem reshuffle.
- He will not resign from his post as Eastleigh MP.
- Ed Davey will replace Chris Huhne, aiming to "follow in his footsteps" as he is "effective in a different way."

one lib dem ^{out} is, one lib dem in

Metropolitan Police did not warn phone hacking victims.

- The Metropolitan Police unlawfully failed to warn people they were the victims of phone hacking by the News of the World, a judicial review has ruled.
- "Thanks to this judicial review, the Metropolitan Police has finally apologised for its failure to properly investigate, and inform victims, of the criminal acts of phone hacking committed by the News of the World", said Lord Prescott.
- The Metropolitan Police said it "accepts more should have been done by police in relation to those identified as victims and potential victims of phone hacking several years ago."

malpractice

Government account transparency shows negligence

- MPs have claimed Clinical negligence claims could cost the government nearly £16 billion.
- Government accounts for 2009/10 showed negligence claims make up 15% of the government's planned future expenses.
- £10.9 billion also lost in unpaid taxes.
- government doesn't however show accounts of publicly owned banks and network rail.

suing doctors for malpractice

Apprenticeships

- 'higher apprenticeship fund' costing £6 million to set up apprenticeships in areas of the economy government wants to develop.
- Small businesses will be paid £1,500 to accept apprenticeships.

The executive aim to create 40,000 new apprenticeships

- "By making apprenticeships a gold standard option for ambitious young people, we are sending a message that technical excellence is as highly valued as academic prowess," Cameron.
- National Audit Office £1 of public investment in apprenticeships will bring a return of £18

Multinational corporations unhappy with government

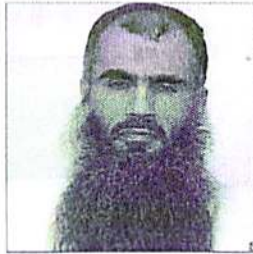
- They claim they can't get talented workers because of the top 50% tax rate.
- They claim Britain's tough immigration policy makes it hard to get executives UK visas.
- They blame the government for stirring up public and the media and public anger over Stephen Hester's bonus.
- Multinationals make 38% of industrial employment and 23% of service sector employment.

Ian Dunt claims bonuses don't work

- A study by economists at MIT found that high money reward increases performance on simple tasks but decreases on complex task when.
- Similar studies in Mundurai, India produced the same results.
- He claims numerous studies show that it is impossible to measure performance.

Abu Qatada due to be released on bail

- Theresa May "The right place for a terrorist is a prison cell. The right place for a foreign terrorist is a foreign prison cell far away from Britain."
- Some tory backbenchers say we should repeal EU human rights legislation.



→ stimulate debate about
EU court case amount
being too great
↙
spoiling sovereignty

Queen's Diamond Jubilee (60 year on ~~thrown~~ throne)

- "People talk as if the monarchy was simply a glittering ornament... That misunderstands our constitution and it underestimates our Queen." David Cameron.
- Nick Clegg described her as a "fierce defender of Britain's values".
- Ed Miliband "(queen is a)source of stability and security in a changing world during her 60 years on the throne providing guidance and comfort to all she meets".



→ political consensus

meeting with people in
favour minus BHA
pressure group.

NEWS OF THE WEEK

Raj & Poppy.

Liberals Against NHS reform

- Liberal Democrat activists have submitted an emergency motion on NHS reforms to their spring conference in an effort to persuade the party leadership to oppose the bill.
- If the emergency motion is accepted as in order by the federal conference committee, it has to win a priority ballot among other submitted emergency motions before it can be debated.
- Delegates at last year's Lib Dem spring conference backed a call to halt what they called a "damaging and unjustified" shake-up of GP services in England. "The government has totally failed to convince either the public or NHS staff that the NHS will be improved by the bill."
- Nick Clegg, never an enthusiast for the bill, faces the risk of having to take the political damage if he is seen to be crucial to the bill's success.
- "I am a Liberal Democrat and I care passionately about the NHS. If I felt that this legislation would lead to the privatisation of the NHS, as the critics claim, if I felt that this legislation would lead to the ruin of the NHS, of course we would drop it," he told ITV's Daybreak.

Greece Bailout

- Eurozone ministers back 130bn-euro bailout for Greece
- Greece will get loans of more than 130bn euros (£110bn; \$170bn) and have about €107bn of its debt written off. The country needs the funds to avoid bankruptcy.
- The Greek parliament is expected to vote on the bailout on Wednesday. Speaking after the bailout was agreed, Greek Prime Minister Lucas Papademos said he was "very happy" with the outcome.
- The head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde, said the deal "should give enough space for Greece to restore its competitiveness".
- The UK government welcomed the deal. David Cameron said the next step was "constructing a firewall large enough to prevent spread within the euro zone."

- The Greek government has barely a week to implement tough "prior actions" to release the next set of loans enabling it to pay €14.4bn of debt by March 20 and securing final euro zone approval for the second bailout within less than two years.
- According to Christian Rickens, the second bailout package "isn't geared to the requirements of the people of Greece but to the needs of the international financial markets, meaning the banks."
- Any sort of real solution to the Greek problem is once again pushed off, while banks (which are the major holders of Greek debt) are getting some sort of payment. At the same time, the Greek population faces pension and healthcare cuts, wage freezes, and continued layoffs.

Lords - same as

Nick Clegg's New scheme

- New £126m scheme to get 16- and 17-year-olds back into employment or education when the latest unemployment figures show that the number of 16- to 24-year-olds not in work increased by 22,000 to 1.04m
- Nick Clegg said the government will be allocating £126 million to help more than 55,000 teenagers. The funding will form part of the youth contract, announced in November, and use a payment-by-results scheme.
- Contracts worth up to £2,200 will be awarded to organisations with a history of putting young people back into work apprenticeships or training
- Charities and businesses will receive an initial payment for taking on a young person, followed by additional funds for when they start an apprenticeship, progress through a training programme or stay in a job for a sustained period of time.

⇒ Mps Vote against Lords Amendments

- House of Commons has overturned objections to the so-called "Bedroom Tax". Where housing benefit payments by more than £600 a year for families living in council homes with at least one spare bedroom.
- Those judged to have one extra bedroom would lose 14% of housing benefit a week, those with two or more extra rooms would lose 25%, if they do not move to a smaller property.
- Last week the House Of Lords voted by a majority of ten to one introduced a new amendment to the Bill, which would still exempt many families in social housing with a spare bedroom from the cut in benefits.

*patriotism
appeal to voters*

Council Prayers Before Meetings

- Local councils now have a power that should enable them to continue to include prayers as part of the formal business at council meetings
- The Coalition's Government's Localism Act 2011 that gives councils a "general power of competence" to do anything individuals can do that is not illegal.
- Prime Minister in December, asserted: "We are a Christian country and we should not be afraid to say so".
- Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government: "We will stand for freedom to worship, for Parliamentary sovereignty, and for long-standing British liberties."

Iran

- Iran will only continue exporting oil to the European Union if the member states give a guarantee to pay the price and sign medium- and long-term oil purchase contracts.
- Tehran says that it is entitled to the peaceful use of nuclear technology as a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It does however, have the right to develop and acquire nuclear technology
- Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey said any Israeli attack on Iran as "destabilizing." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is slated to pay an official visit to the United States where he shall talk to US officials about the situation in Iran



NHS



News of the Week



The Budget

- Clegg 'tycoon tax dodgers'
- Ahead of the budget next week the Lib Dems want to speed up plans for tax cuts for those on lower incomes and more repercussions introduced for tax avoiders.
- "The Budget in 10 days' time must offer concrete help to hard-pressed, hard-working families....I want the Budget to show how we are anchoring this government in the centre ground. Credible - but fair."
- The party's top priority is raising the income tax allowance, so that the first £10,000 of income is free from tax.
- Miliband - and top earner tax breaks
- Labour have urged the government to "reverse" cuts to child tax credits and working tax credits by cutting tax breaks on the pensions of Britain's highest earners.
- Shadow chancellor Ed Balls said tax relief on pensions of those earning more than £150,000 a year should be reduced from 50% to 26% in the Budget.

Nick Clegg

Tax Avoidance by high Council earners

- Almost 100 permanent posts at local councils are being filled by people paid through limited companies
- Dozens of high-earners are allowed to make their own tax arrangements rather than be paid through the PAYE system.
- Some officials may be paying PAYE through their limited companies but they have the option to pay themselves via dividends, which are taxed at a lower rate. The arrangements also mean they can pay national insurance contributions at a lower rate.

'Rogue' American Soldier

- A US soldier, believed to be a staff sergeant, left his base in Kandahar in the early hours of Sunday.
- Locals say he broke into three homes. Eleven people were shot dead at one house in the village of Najeeban, and some of their bodies had been set alight
- The soldier returned to his base after the shootings and apparently turned himself in to military authorities.
- There has been widespread anger in Afghanistan after the shootings.
- President Hamid Karzai called them "unforgivable", while the country's MPs have warned Afghans "have run out of patience" with foreign troops.
- Militants in Afghanistan have launched an attack on a government delegation visiting the site where the US soldier killed 16 civilians.
- Two of Afghan President Hamid Karzai's brothers and several top security officials were in the delegation in Panjwai in Kandahar province.
- One Afghan soldier was killed and three other people injured but the delegation is heading back to Kandahar city.

Cameron and Obama talks in Washington

- As Cameron flies out to Washington ahead of Nato and G8 summits they address issues such as the 'next phase of transition' in Afghanistan, tensions over Iran and the Syria violence.
- In a joint interview with the Washington Post they were quoted to say they were:
- "a partnership of the heart, bound by the history, traditions and values we share".
- "But what makes our relationship special - a unique and essential asset, for our nations and the world - is that we join hands across so many endeavours.
- "Put simply, we count on each other and the world on our alliance."



British Bill of Rights Commissioner Resigns

- Tory, Dr Michael Pinto-Duschinsky claims the commission is deliberately ignoring the wishes of Prime Minister David Cameron.
- "We have considered the issue of parliamentary sovereignty only once"
- "The commission answers to Ken Clarke. He and Nick Clegg (deputy prime minister) set it up. His hands are everywhere."
- In recent days, the seven other commissioners wrote a letter to Mr Clarke saying Dr Duschinsky's presence on the committee was "significantly impeding its progress"
- A month previously, Mr Cameron had said it "was about time we started making sure decisions are made in this Parliament rather than in the courts".



subsidarity
→ decisions at lowest possible level

sovereignty.

→ Bill of Rights wants final decisions to be made in the UK and not in the EU court.



NHS Reforms



- Royal College of GPs, after much hesitation has agreed to help with enforcing the Bill.
- Clare Gerada, head of the RCGP stressed her group did "not agree on the need for, and potential impacts of, parts of the proposed legislation" she told the BBC on Tuesday: "We still want this flawed bill, this complicated, complex bill to be withdrawn.
- The Department of Health is opposing the FOI ruling to release the risk register.
- Labour peers said Parliament could not properly scrutinise the health bill without seeing the register
- But Minister Lord Howe said civil servants, who compile the risk register, wished to have "safe space in which to think the unthinkable" and releasing it would take that away.

General News

- MPs have blocked changes to the Commons code of conduct which would have given the standards watchdog greater powers to investigate their private lives.
- Rebekah Brookes, her husband and 4 others have been arrested in the next stage of the phone hacking inquiry for suspicion of perverting the course of justice

News of the week :D

Taylor Wright

The Queen Rededicates Herself To The UK

- The Queen has said that she is rededicating herself to the United Kingdom as part of her diamond jubilee
- Hundreds of dignitaries, including Prime Minister David Cameron, his deputy Nick Clegg, Labour leader Ed Milliband and Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams, assembled for her speech, which was greeted with a standing ovation.
- A small number of anti-monarchy protesters gathered outside Parliament during the Queen's speech.
- Supporters of the campaign group Republic, which wants a "democratic alternative" to the monarchy, said there needed to be a debate about whether a hereditary institution was appropriate for the country in the 21st Century.
- "The role of head of state is too important simply to be chosen by an accident of birth," Labour MP Katy Clark told Radio 4's World at One.
- "It should not be a hereditary position that people are entitled to. We should have a say over who it is."

UK inflation rate falls to 3.4% in February

- Consumer Prices Index (CPI) inflation fell to 3.4% in February, down from 3.6% in January, according to the Office for National Statistics
- Inflation has been falling steadily since September and the CPI rate is now at its lowest since November 2010
- The Bank of England's target for inflation - the rate at which prices are rising - is 2% on the CPI measure.
- This perhaps could be taken as evidence that government schemes for economic rebuilding are working.

2012 Budget: Tax allowances set to rise further

- The threshold below which no-one pays income tax is to rise to £8,105 next month
- The coalition government has pledged to take all those earning up to £10,000 out of income tax altogether by 2015.
- Mr Osborne, who will unveil his Budget at 1230 GMT, has also said he wants to do more to help "working people"
- Economists have said raising the threshold to £10,000 would cost billions, although it could be partly paid for by reducing higher rate tax allowances. Those not paying tax at all will not benefit.

MPs set to approve NHS bill as Labour bid fails

- Labour have failed in a last-ditch bid to delay planned changes to the NHS in England, with MPs set to approve the coalition's proposals.
- Calls for MPs to postpone their final consideration of the NHS overhaul until an assessment of the potential risks is published were defeated by 82 votes.
- The House of Lords approved the Health and Social Care Bill on Monday and MPs are set to follow suit.
- The government hopes it will now get Royal Assent and become law by Easter.

Chancellor to reveal how tax is spent

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-17442072>
- The Chancellor will set out plans in the budget tomorrow to give 20m tax payers more information about how their taxes are spent.
- They will be shown how much of their income has been taken in direct taxation and they will get a breakdown of what the government has done with the money.
