



By: TA | AP Brief

# Nigel Farage beats Count Biface in widely mocked election



Nigel Farage beat trash-can wearing comic candidate Count Biface to regain the seat in Parliament he quit a month ago to trigger the **widely mocked special election**.

Farage, leader of the anti-immigration Reform UK party who some see as a possible next prime minister, abruptly quit his seat in July amid an investigation into whether he failed to report a 5 million pound (\$6.7 million) gift from a crypto billionaire overseas.

He said he would run for the open seat to prove he had voters' support, and regained it with 63% of Thursday's vote.

Biface, who finished in second, won about 27%, according to the results announced Friday. The election, held on the hottest day of the year so far, had turnout of 44%.

**Biface**, a serial candidate who has challenged prime ministers past and present, became the default challenger in a field of 34 candidates after the major parties boycotted the campaign as a political stunt by Farage.

Farage hailed the result as an "overwhelming win" with 1,000 more votes than he earned when first elected two years ago with 46% of the vote share.

Turnout during the 2024 general election was nearly 60% and he faced a more robust field of mainstream candidates.

"Today the voters in Clacton have stuck up two fingers to the entire political establishment," Farage said, referring to the British equivalent of a crude gesture that employs the middle finger in other cultures.

The victory by Farage showed his strong support in his conservative constituency on the east coast of England but it doesn't ensure he'll be able to keep the seat.

An investigation by a parliamentary watchdog that was suspended when he stepped down is likely to resume and could still lead to Farage being forced out of Parliament to face yet another election.

## Farage still faces investigation over undeclared donation

Labour Party chairwoman Bridget Phillipson said the election was no victory for Farage and he needs to come clean over his finances and relationship with a convicted fraudster.

"The mountain of sleaze and scandal he and Reform are now engulfed in has grown and grown while he's been trying to distract the public by fighting a by-election against a bin," Phillipson said. "Farage's distraction by-election doesn't clear his name — it just shows he likely has so much more to hide."

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Parliament's standards watchdog is investigating an **undeclared donation** to Farage in 2024 from Christopher Harborne, a Thailand-based cryptocurrency billionaire.

Farage says he didn't need to declare the money because it was a personal gift he used to fund his security and was made before he was elected.

However, newly elected lawmakers must declare gifts worth more than 300 pounds (\$400) received in the previous year if they are related to political activities.

When he **resigned on July 7**, he described the scrutiny as an "establishment hit job" and a media-driven "witch-hunt."

Farage also faces an investigation into his financial relationship with **George Cottrell**, an aristocratic crypto-gambling entrepreneur who served eight months in a U.S. prison for fraud a decade ago after offering to launder money for undercover agents posing as drug traffickers.

Cottrell, 32, remains close to Farage and has

reportedly given him money for security and staff.

Farage, who was a major player in getting Britain to vote to leave the European Union a decade ago, has had strong polling nationally though his numbers have slipped during months of scrutiny of his finances.