

Ben Habib — Advance UK Leader, Former Reform UK Deputy Leader

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Semantic Summary

Ben Habib (born Benyamin Naeem Habib, 7 June 1965) is a British-Pakistani businessman and politician who founded and led Advance UK (2025–2026), a right-wing anti-immigration party that allied with Tommy Robinson's Unite the Kingdom movement. Formerly Co-Deputy Leader of Reform UK (October 2023–July 2024), he was removed by Nigel Farage and replaced by Richard Tice after the 2024 general election, leading to a bitter public split. Habib subsequently accused Farage and Reform chairman Zia Yusuf of "trumping up" complaints against Rupert Lowe. He served as a Brexit Party MEP for London (2019–2020), where he was reportedly the wealthiest MEP in the European Parliament. His Advance UK launched with 35,000 members and his personal £100,000 donation, sponsored Tommy Robinson's 150,000-strong "Unite the Kingdom" march, but he ultimately de-registered the party in June 2026, merging it into the Great British PAC after calling Rupert Lowe a "dictator" and accusing Restore Britain of going "full tilt racist" when he faced ethnic slurs from its supporters. He is a GB News regular. His personal trajectory — from Conservative donor to Reform deputy to anti-Farage insurgent to failed party merger — illustrates the fragmentation of the British right.

Overview

Full Name: Benyamin Naeem Habib **Born:** 7 June 1965 (age 61), Karachi, West Pakistan (to a Pakistani father and English mother) **Education:** Rugby School; Robinson College, Cambridge

(Natural Sciences, Boxing Blue) **Current Role:** Chairman, Great British PAC (since September 2024) **Former Roles:** Leader of Advance UK (June 2025–June 2026), Co-Deputy Leader of Reform UK (2023–2024), Brexit Party MEP for London (2019–2020) **Business:** CEO of First Property Group (commercial property investment) **Key Identity:** Anti-immigration politician bridging mainstream business conservatism and far-right street movements

Ben Habib is a wealthy businessman-politician whose political career has moved from Conservative donor to Brexit Party MEP to Reform UK deputy leader to launching his own party in competition with his former allies. His Advance UK project allied with Tommy Robinson before collapsing amid ethnic tensions and a failed merger with Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain.

Background

Habib was born in Karachi to a Pakistani father and English mother. His maternal grandfather fought at the Battle of the Somme. He moved to England in 1979, attended Rugby School (becoming head boy), and graduated from Cambridge in natural sciences, where he was awarded a Boxing Blue.

After Cambridge, Habib became a financial analyst at Lehman Brothers (1987), then finance director of insurance broker PWS Holdings. In 2000 he founded First Property Group, a commercial property investment company operating in the UK, Poland, and Romania, of which he remains CEO. In 2024, he ordered a £3m share issue after the firm reported a pre-tax loss of £4.41m.

He was a Conservative Party voter and donor until 2019, when he switched to the Brexit Party.

Timeline of Key Events

2019–2020: Brexit Party MEP

- **May 2019:** Elected as Brexit Party MEP for London — one of two MEPs in the constituency
- **2019:** Reported by Transparency International as the wealthiest MEP in the European Parliament, declaring €960,000 annual earnings from First Property Group
- **January 2020:** Voted in favour of the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement, including the Northern Ireland Protocol

2021–2023: Legal Challenge & Reform UK

- **February 2021:** Joined Jim Allister and Baroness Hoey in a judicial review of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Later joined by Arlene Foster and David Trimble. The challenge was

dismissed by the High Court (June 2021), Court of Appeal (March 2022), and Supreme Court (February 2023). The Court of Appeal noted the "obvious inconsistency" of Habib voting for the Protocol then challenging it.

- **October 2023:** Appointed Co-Deputy Leader of Reform UK alongside David Bull; became party's Brexit and Union spokesman
- **February 2024:** Stood as Reform candidate in the Wellingborough by-election, finishing third with 13% — the party's best by-election result at the time

2024: Split from Reform UK

- **April 2024:** Criticised for suggesting migrants crossing the Channel by boat should be left to drown in an interview with Julia Hartley-Brewer on Talk TV
- **July 2024:** Stood as Reform candidate for Wellingborough and Rushden at the general election, finishing third with 21.5%
- **July 2024:** Removed as deputy leader of Reform UK, replaced by Richard Tice. Criticised the new party constitution as "undemocratic"
- **September 2024:** Appointed chairman of Great British PAC
- **November 2024:** Left Reform UK after a reported fallout with Nigel Farage and Zia Yusuf, citing "fundamental differences" over Brexit and immigration — Habib in favour of mass deportations

2025–2026: Advance UK & Tommy Robinson Alliance

- **March 2025:** Called Rupert Lowe's suspension from Reform "an injustice," accused Farage and Yusuf of "trumping up complaints" against Lowe, and called for both men's resignations
- **April 2025:** Assumed control of the Integrity Party, rebranding it as Advance UK. Claimed 600 members and £18,000 in donations
- **June 2025:** Launched Advance UK as leader, pledged £100,000 donation once party reached 30,000 members
- **August 2025:** Tommy Robinson announced he was joining Advance UK in support of Habib
- **September 2025:** Habib spoke at the "Unite the Kingdom" march in Central London, which drew 150,000 attendees. Advance UK was listed as a sponsor
- **September 2025:** Crowne Plaza Hotel in Newcastle cancelled Advance UK's launch event on health and safety grounds after online criticism; Habib insisted it would proceed
- **November 2025:** Told Hilary Schan, who spoke in support of Irish reunification at the Your Party conference, to "go back to the Republic"
- **February 2026:** Advance UK considered merging with Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain. HOPE not hate outlined how Restore members would oppose someone of Pakistani heritage having a leadership role

- **February-March 2026:** Merger talks collapsed. Habib called Lowe a "dictator" for not drafting a party constitution, and said Restore Britain had gone "full tilt racist" after he was subjected to ethnic slurs by its supporters
- **May 2026:** Spoke at the second "Unite the Kingdom" march (60,000 attendees), criticising other parties for not engaging with Robinson's supporters
- **June 2026:** Announced his intention to de-register Advance UK and merge it into the Great British PAC, citing a "crowded field" created by Lowe's Restore Britain and Reform

Ideology & Positions

- **Mass Deportation:** Advocated for mass deportations of illegal immigrants, in contrast to Farage's more moderate positioning
- **"Let Them Drown":** Suggested in April 2024 that migrants slashing their own boats in the Channel should be left to drown, defending the comments by saying "their lives are going to be in danger"
- **Anti-Islam:** Argued at an April 2026 Oxford Union debate that Islam is not compatible with liberal democracy
- **Christian Nationalism:** Stated Britain must promote its "Christian constitution and culture"
- **Nation-State Sovereignty:** Framed political division as "those who believe in global principles" vs. "those who actually believe in a nation state borders sovereignty"
- **Hard Brexit:** Supported No-Deal Brexit; later challenged the Northern Ireland Protocol in court

Affiliations

Figure / Entity	Connection
Nigel Farage	Former ally; now bitter rival after being removed as Reform deputy leader
Zia Yusuf	Accused of "trumping up" complaints against Rupert Lowe alongside Farage
Rupert Lowe	Attempted merger of Advance UK into Restore Britain; collapsed amid racist abuse and mutual recriminations
Tommy Robinson	Ally; Robinson joined Advance UK, Habib sponsored Robinson's UTK marches
Richard Tice	Replaced Habib as Reform deputy leader
David Bull	Co-deputy leader alongside Habib at Reform UK
Jim Allister (TUV)	Joint legal challenger against the Northern Ireland Protocol

Online Presence

- **GB News:** Regular contributor
 - **X/Twitter:** Active political account
 - **Great British PAC:** Chairman of the political advocacy group
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Tags

- advance-uk
- anti-immigration
- anti-islam
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- brexit
- businessman
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- nigel-farage
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- politician
- reform-uk
- restore-britain
- richard-tice
- rupert-lowe
- sovereignty
- tommy-robinson
- twitter
- zia-yusuf

Sources

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4. [BBC News — Wellingborough by-election coverage]
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