Reform UK Headlines — 04 November 2026

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? Top Story: Hampshire's Reform leader charged with 35 offences including 12 counts of rape — Farage asked "what he knew, and when"

George Madgwick, 37, Reform UK's group leader on **Hampshire County Council** and a Portsmouth city councillor, has been charged with **35 offences including 12 counts of rape** (HuffPost, ITV Meridian, The News Portsmouth, Meon Valley Times, BBC, Mirror, Standard, Daily Star, Wales Online, Sky, Guardian, Telegraph — 3 Nov).

- **The charges (CPS):** 12 counts of rape; two of sexual assault; two of assault by penetration; two of making and one of distributing indecent images of a child; one of causing or inciting sexual exploitation of a child; eight of assault occasioning actual bodily harm; two of controlling or coercive behaviour; one each of stalking, making threats to kill, false imprisonment, theft and criminal damage.
- **The allegations** relate to **four victims, aged 16–17 at the time**, and allegedly took place **between 2008 and 2021 in Portsmouth and Wales**. Hampshire & Isle of Wight Constabulary opened its investigation on **24 July 2025**; Madgwick was **arrested in Wandsworth, London, on 6 January 2026** and stepped down as Portsmouth Reform leader six days later. He is **bailed to appear at Portsmouth Magistrates' Court on 25 November**.

- **His position:** Reform UK suspended him "with immediate effect"; he **resigned as Hampshire group leader** and will sit as an independent "until I'm cleared". His statement: "*I am shocked and dismayed at the charges... I will say unequivocally that I am innocent... Due process must take its course... I will not make any further statement now, or in the future... I will deactivate my social media shortly.*"
- **His Reform CV:** elected to Portsmouth City Council in 2021 (initially Portsmouth Independent Party, defected to Reform July 2025); elected to Hampshire CC in May 2026; per LinkedIn a **campaign leader at party HQ** / senior campaign manager. He **featured in ITV's Exposure documentary *Undercover: A Year In Reform*** — the same undercover investigation that prompted the EHRC's formal letter to Reform (yesterday's story) — voicing support for the anti-immigration group **Portsmouth Patriots**, and afterwards accused ITV of "electoral interference" and **reported the broadcaster and its undercover reporters to the police**. The News publishes a picture of **Farage with Madgwick at The Wellington, Old Portsmouth, 10 March 2026**.
- **Political fallout:** Labour chair **Bridget Phillipson**: "*These charges are truly shocking. Nigel Farage must urgently tell the public whether he was aware of councillor Madgwick's arrest... If he was, the Reform leader must explain why he thought it was appropriate for Madgwick to stand for his party, hold a local leadership role, and to work as a Reform member of staff... Nigel Farage and Reform UK are drowning in sleaze and scandal... completely unfit for public office.*" Portsmouth North MP **Amanda Martin**: Farage must explain "*what the party knew, when it knew it and what safeguarding and vetting checks were carried out*"; Portsmouth South MP **Stephen Morgan** echoed her.
- **Hampshire CC:** "Being charged with a criminal offence does not in itself disqualify a councillor from office" (Local Government Act 1972). The CPS reminded all parties proceedings are active and there should be no commentary prejudicing a fair trial. *Charges are not convictions.*

?? Leicestershire: acting leader Crook promises "stability and continuity" after Harrison exit

BBC (3 Nov): New acting Reform leader **Kevin Crook** took the top post at County Hall after **Dan Harrison quit Monday** over the leaked audio (76 solicitors "incompetent"… "what I want to look at now is the women").

- Crook: "*While the leadership has changed, I want residents and staff to know that our commitment to Leicestershire has not... sound finances, low council tax, making every pound go further, fixing potholes.*" He pointed to last week's government announcement of a **new mayoral strategic authority** and the **withdrawal of the city boundary expansion**.

- Labour group leader **Jewel Miah**: Harrison's resignation "marks the inevitable end of a **chaotic, deeply divided, and thoroughly unstable administration**".
- Harrison told the BBC there had been "disenchantment" within the 23-strong group; he apologised for the leak (remarks made "in the expectation of privacy and confidentiality", taken out of context) and rejected "any suggestion that staffing decisions are being taken based on gender" — **but declined to explain or clarify what his remarks about women meant**.

??????? Wales: Meta probes Reform MS's paid "content"; deputy leader wins debate slot, tables no topic

Nation.Cymru (3 Nov) — Meta investigation: Meta has launched an investigation into the Facebook and Instagram accounts of Gŵyr Abertawe MS **Francesca O'Brien** after she declared in the Senedd register of interests (28 Sep) that she is **paid by Meta Platforms Ireland Ltd** (Band 4: £1,001–£2,500/yr, <5 hrs/week, from 31 Aug) — despite Meta policy **prohibiting politicians from its monetisation programmes**. Context: ex-Tory councillor and staffer to Tom Giffard; backed by far-right **Voice of Wales**; following has grown to 12,000+ (FB) since defecting; anti-immigration content draws huge engagement (260k views on a face-coverings-ban speech video; 160k on an overseas-nurses complaint) — including **silent clips** (one <15s video of her walking into FMQs in a flowery dress). Nation.Cymru asked whether click-chasing on contentious issues undermines trust in democracy; O'Brien did not respond.

Nation.Cymru (3 Nov) — empty debate slot: Reform's Welsh deputy leader **Laura Anne Jones** (Sir Fynwy Torfaen) won the Llywydd's ballot for this Wednesday's short debate but **failed to submit a topic by the deadline** — the agenda simply reads "No topic tabled". Trefnydd **Heledd Fychan**: "*It is one thing to ask for time, but when the Member has that time to table a debate... and doesn't do that, then I have to question why ask for statements in government time when she can't even table her own short debate.*" In the business statement Jones had demanded statements on spending for "foreign aid, foreign people and foreign projects" and on Welsh men and women who "fought to suppress the slave trade".

??????? Scotland: Reform forces burqa-ban vote at Holyrood today

The Scotsman (3 Nov): Reform has tabled an **opposition debate for Wednesday afternoon (today)** on banning the burqa/niqab in public places — unlike members' business, **MSPs must vote**. Deputy leader **Thomas Kerr** claims parties "conspired" to end October's members' debate

"prematurely" ("I was the only Reform MSP who had the chance to speak"); he calls the veils "oppressive" with "no place in modern Scotland". The motion is led by health spokeswoman **Helen McDade** and argues restrictions would improve "public safety, individual liberty and community cohesion". The previous debate descended into chaos, with Reform MSPs accused of racism and protests outside parliament; the Scotsman notes ten EU countries have bans or restrictions, and that s.60 CJPOA 1994 already allows officers to authorise removal of face coverings in some circumstances.

?? Suffolk: Hudson stripped of cabinet role over June Mummery deepfake

Ipswich.co.uk (3 Nov): Suffolk CC leader **Michael Hadwen** removed **Christopher Hudson** (former Reform group leader) as highways/transport cabinet member "with immediate effect" after he shared an **AI-generated image of fellow cabinet member Cllr June Mummery with enlarged breasts in a low-cut top**, alongside text about school-nursing cuts — plus a string of **sexual comments attributed to his X account**. Patti Mulcahy replaces him.

- Hudson: "shocked, surprised and disappointed"; the image was "a cartoon" he "made and sent to June" to "emphasise the excellent work Councillor Mummery had achieved in securing 62 nurses"; apologised, took it down, insists Mummery wasn't offended. On the sexual comments: his **"phone had been hacked"**; he is "a respectable, happily married man" — "*I may be far right, but I'm very liberal.*"
- Green deputy group leader **Annette Dunning**: sharing "non-consensual and sexualised AI deepfakes is a severe violation of digital safety" — the Greens want him to resign as a councillor altogether.

?? Dudley: Longhi backs Ashman after "racist and homophobic" posts apology — then counter-attacks

Halesowen News (4 Nov): Reform lead **Marco Longhi** defended Cllr **Caley Ashman**, who apologised at full council (2 Nov) over historic posts including the antisemitic term "goyslop": "*Since his election Caley Ashman has been a model councillor. He has not given me a single reason to doubt his commitment to his residents nor his integrity.*" Longhi then accused MP **Alex Ballinger** (who wrote to Farage demanding action) of hypocrisy — "happy to share a seat in parliament with antisemitic MPs" in "the only Party… to have something in common with the BNP: breaking Equality Law for having systemic antisemitism within its ranks" — and invoked Kemi Badenoch's appointment of "a person who has been to prison for inciting antisemitism". "*People in glass houses should be careful when throwing stones.*"

Express & Star (3 Nov) — planning revolt: Longhi also urged Dudley to **defy the Government's planning changes**, warning they would **'castrate' councillors**. The council nonetheless approved adopting the legislation after legal director **Aftab Razzaq** warned refusal would breach statutory requirements and expose decisions to judicial review. Tory leader **Patrick Harley** reluctantly backed it: almost all planning applications will now be decided by **officers rather than elected committees**; "Our powers to fully represent our constituents is being eroded" — he doubts the borough's 'brownfield only' plan could be re-adopted in ten years. Tory, Reform, Lib Dem and Black Country Party councillors all condemned the changes; Labour's Shaukat Ali called the criticism exaggerated.

? Essex: Journet's exit letter — "what I've seen from civil servants has shocked me"

Bishop's Stortford Independent (3 Nov): Reform's **Sam Journet** quit the education/SEND/skills portfolio to "focus" on his Basildon seat (he is mayor of the new-town authority). His resignation letter to leader **Peter Harris** questioned officers who **refused EHCP applications**: "*Some of what I've seen from civil servants has shocked me and doesn't sit comfortably with me... there have been cases where I directed officers that a decision be reconsidered and that did not happen. I wasn't asking for a particular outcome.*" **Isi Rocha** (Halstead) takes over; further cabinet shuffles involve Gascoyne, Jerome, Preston-Hall and McGill. (Journet had been in post since Reform swept County Hall in May — cf. 28 Oct: he quit cabinet over SEND/EHCP handling.)

?? Hertfordshire: Reform's Council of Sanctuary call-in fails 7–5

BBC (3 Nov): The Lib Dem-led council's scrutiny committee **rejected Reform's bid to force a rethink** of the decision to apply for **Council of Sanctuary** status (an accreditation signalling welcome to asylum seekers; ~12 months, **£2,700**, 76 councils in the network). Eleven Reform councillors + unaligned Tory Alexander Curtis called in the decision; **16,000+ signed a petition against**. Petitioner Joanna Belsey: "The decision-making process was achieved through **procedural manoeuvre** and aimed to shut out the public." Reform's Saul Jacob cited "an unsubstantiated timeline regarding local asylum numbers, an uncosted internal staff burden during an overspend". Executive member **Ajanta Hilton** (Lib Dem): officer time won't be significant "because we do the work already", and money already spent could be "spent more effectively" inside the network. Vote: 7 to leave the decision, 5 to reconsider.

? Kent: interpreter-payments motions go to full council Thursday — and another audit meeting "goes dark"

ShepwayVox (4 Nov) — "Lost in Translation, Left in Danger": KCC debates **two motions on Thursday 5 November** on translation/interpreting. **Reform's motion** (Cllr Sarah Emberson, seconded Garry Sturley): residents should **pay for their own interpreters or use translation apps** wherever possible; the supporting paper criticises the **"nanny state"**. **Restore Britain's motion** (Paul Thomas/Brian Black): full review of translation spending, **English-first policy**, annual cost publication, report within six months. Both protect BSL (Reform also Braille); neither cuts immediately — both would commission reviews. **Dr Razia Shariff** (Kent Refugee Action Network) raises serious concerns for **unaccompanied asylum-seeking children** who may have experienced violence, trafficking or exploitation: what happens when a frightened child cannot explain to a social worker that they're being abused?

ShepwayVox (4 Nov) — audit webcast missing again: For the **second time in under three weeks** (after 15 Oct), KCC's **Governance & Audit Committee met without a live webcast** (Tue 3 Nov, 10am, County Hall) — the webcast library showed only "Webcast has not started yet", with no public explanation, despite an agenda of twelve unrestricted items including **Oracle Cloud costs, internal audit, counter-fraud, corporate risks and treasury management**. The piece quotes leader **Linden Kemkaran's** 21 May pledge ("every penny of taxpayers' money is managed and spent" carefully) and deputy **Brian Collins'** "every nook and cranny is being investigated", against the constitution's s.17.6(b) requirement for "internal challenge and **public accountability** ". Two supporting enclosures were withheld.

? Bradford: first Reform budget — £50m savings, only £3.58m of it consulted on

Telegraph & Argus / LDR (4 Nov): Bradford's Executive sent Reform's first budget proposals to consultation: ~**£50m savings** for 2026/27, of which **just £3.58m goes out to consultation** — the other **£46.4m "not requiring consultation"**. Leader **Stephen Place**: "The financial challenges facing Bradford are significant... £50 million savings are needed to balance the books"; he blamed the previous Labour administration for requiring government support and **£391m borrowing**. Savings include "enhancing income" from sports/leisure and **−£500k from the localities team**; **£18.82m** comes from the Children's and Families Trust, over £16m of it from reduced **external care placements** (which can cost £300k+/child/year). Tory Cllr **Rebecca**

Poulsen called it the "smallest-ever budget to go out to consultation" and said she was "quite nervous… I haven't seen any business case… There is a history of council budgets relying on a reduction in external placements, only for the numbers to be completely wrong." Trust chief **Charlotte Ramsden**: placements are "incredibly difficult to forecast". Council Tax levels to be announced "in the coming weeks"; final budget in February. (Cf. 28 Oct: 4.99% CT rise + £50m cuts.)

?? East Anglia: LGR "back on — but a year later", after Reform's court fights

East Anglia Bylines (4 Nov): East Anglia's biggest local-government shake-up in half a century has been "agreed, challenged in the courts, withdrawn, reviewed by a new prime minister — and now restarted, all within seven months". Key points: councils due to vanish in **2028 now survive to 2029**; the March structures are no longer guaranteed; Reform won **Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk** in May and **all three launched judicial reviews**. Suffolk leader **Michael Hadwen** said the county couldn't be forced into a "costly and chaotic reorganisation on the basis of a flawed process" and promised to "fight tooth and nail" — though Bylines examined **all ten Reform Suffolk campaign leaflets** (ElectionLeaflets.org archive) and found **no mention of LGR**, nor in Hadwen's first speech as leader: the anti-LGR crusade "appears to have emerged some time after the election". The legal action divided the council; public money is now being spent on transition work for councils that may never exist.

? Commentary & analysis

ConservativeHome — Andrew Allison: "Is it time for the right to unite?" (4 Nov): In Dudley's St James ward last week Reform took 37.9%, Tories 13.8%, Restore 6.9% — **58.6% right-wing, yet Labour won by two votes**. Allison sets out five paths: (1) status-quo "circular firing squad" → another Labour government or Lab–LibDem coalition ("Andy Burnham has already paved the way… If anyone thinks this is the right option, they need their head examined"); (2) "nod and a wink" local non-aggression; (3) standing down hopeless candidates; (4) a modern **"coupon election"** pact on the 1918 model (Badenoch gets a clear run; Tories don't field against Farage; every seat has one coalition candidate); (5) merger (parked immediately). He notes Badenoch rules out coalition with Reform while defectors **Jenrick and Braverman** rule out coalition with the Tories; fears Burnham wins a majority "on just 30 per cent of the vote"; and rebuts Rees-Mogg's "vote Conservative" duty line — in some seats "Tories will have to hold their noses and vote Reform". Preference: option 4, settling for 3. "*Blue on turquoise and turquoise on blue only make a nightmare of reds, yellows and greens the most likely winners.*"

The Saturday Read (New Statesman Review) — "Nigel Farage's bastards" (4 Nov): A long-read on the **"new, new right"** of young men orbiting Rupert Lowe's Restore Britain: Connor Tomlinson, Charlie Downes, Harrison Pitt — "radicalised by the internet, the job market, the

diversifying and declining high street… fiscally apathetic and culturally extreme". They "dress formally and call each other 'patriot' the same way a leftist might say 'comrade'", referencing "the Old Testament, Marcus Aurelius and the video game Skyrim". Tomlinson on Reform's vibe: "I don't think when we're staring down the gun barrel of complete national disaster, the Butlins and fireworks and **Andrea Jenkyns singing in sequins** is the way to go." Carl Benjamin: "our victory is inevitable, as the horrors of multiculturalism become clear." The August cooperation overture collapsed when Lowe's conditions (mass deportation "including women and children", a death-penalty referendum, excluding ex-Tory ministers) met Reform's demand that he sack Downes over "antisemitic and extreme racists at or near the top of the party" — Lowe refused to sack "a young Christian man". Tomlinson: "Interpersonally, I like Farage… but I'm just pissed off when he goes around calling my friends fascists."

The New World — "It's Posh George ©" (3 Nov): George Cottrell — the convicted crypto-gambler who gave Farage security, drivers, staff and accommodation (Sunday Times; an apparent breach of parliamentary rules) — has applied to **trademark "Posh George"** in the US (where he served 8 months in an Arizona federal prison, avoiding 20+ more years via plea deal) for merchandise ranging from e-books to "scientific, nautical, surveying, electric, photographic… apparatus and instruments". Farage's defence had been that Cottrell held no formal Reform position — despite him handing out **business cards printed with the Reform UK logo and Farage's official email address** — yet he's a regular at Millbank Tower HQ, "seemingly unfussed about being spotted". Four months after Farage announced legal action over the Sunday Times "hit job", "no legal letters are thought yet to be exchanged". (Cottrell's post-jail book: *How to Launder Money*, launched at the OWO.)

? Quick Summary

Story	Status	Key line
Madgwick charged (35 offences, 12 rapes)	Suspended by Reform; resigned Hants leader; bail 25 Nov	Phillipson: Farage "must urgently tell the public whether he was aware"
Leics: Crook acting leader	"Stability and continuity"	Miah: "chaotic, deeply divided, thoroughly unstable"
O'Brien (MS) paid by Meta	Meta probe launched	Monetisation banned for politicians
Laura Anne Jones debate slot	"No topic tabled"	Fychan: "she can't even table her own short debate"
Burqa-ban vote	Holyrood, today (4 Nov)	Kerr: parties "conspired" to end last debate
Hudson deepfake (Suffolk)	Cabinet role removed	"I may be far right, but I'm very liberal"
Longhi/Ashman (Dudley)	Backed after apology	"People in glass houses…"
Dudley planning defiance	Motion approved regardless	Longhi: changes will 'castrate' councillors

Story	Status	Key line
Journet (Essex SEND)	Resigned; Rocha in	"What I've seen from civil servants has shocked me"
Herts Council of Sanctuary	Call-in failed 7–5	16,000-signature petition against
Kent interpreter motions	Full council Thu 5 Nov	Reform: apps/pay-your-own; Restore: English-first
Kent audit webcast	Missing again (2nd in 3 wks)	Oracle Cloud, counter-fraud on unseen agenda
Bradford £50m budget	Consultation opened	Only £3.58m of it consulted on
East Anglia LGR	Restarted, 1 yr later	No LGR mention in any Reform leaflet
Posh George trademark	US application filed	Merch from e-books to defibrillators

Compiled 04/11/2026 ~09:20 GMT by Emrys □□ from the NewsNow Reform UK hub (28 latest cards + 12 top clusters; 22 items fetched, 7 recovered via Playwright :8090, 2 ShepwayVox items via WordPress RSS). All items are allegations/charges/council proceedings as reported; Madgwick denies all charges and proceedings are active.

? Source Links

- HuffPost: https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/reform-council-leader-charged-35-offences-rape_uk_6aea12c5e4b0a3d44580a2b9
- ITV Meridian: https://www.itv.com/news/meridian/2026-11-03/reform-councillor-george-madgwick-charged-with-12-counts-of-rape
- The News (answers demanded): https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/answers-demanded-after-leading-reform-councillor-is-charged-with-rape-9328612
- The News (speaks out): https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/politics/george-madgwick-speaks-out-after-being-charged-with-35-offences-9328698
- Meon Valley Times (resignation): https://meonvalleytimes.co.uk/george-madgwick-resigns-as-hampshire-reform-uk-leader-after-sex-offence-charges/
- BBC (Leics stability): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news (NewsNow card 1328813279)
- Nation.Cymru (Meta probe): https://nation.cymru/news/meta-launches-probe-into-reform-mss-social-media-accounts/
- Nation.Cymru (debate slot): https://nation.cymru/news/reform-wales-deputy-leader-wins-debate-slot-but-fails-to-come-up-with-topic/
- Scotsman (burqa vote): https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/reform-uk-to-force-msps-to-vote-on-burqa-ban-in-scotland-9327885
- Ipswich.co.uk (Hudson): https://www.ipswich.co.uk/hudson-stripped-of-cabinet-role-amid-mummery-deepfake-row/
- Halesowen News (Longhi/Ashman): https://www.halesowennews.co.uk/news/26696955.reform-lead-no-reason-doubt-councillor-racist-posts/
- Express & Star (planning): https://www.expressandstar.com/news/dudley/reform-councillors-urge-dudley-council-to-defy-government-over-planning-changes-9327765

- Bishop's Stortford Independent (Journet): https://www.bishopsstortfordindependent.co.uk/news/departing-essex-county-council-executive-member-shocked-by-9489774/
- BBC (Council of Sanctuary): NewsNow card 1328807171
- ShepwayVox (interpreters): https://shepwayvox.org/2026/11/04/lost-in-translation-left-in-danger-kents-proposed-interpreter-cuts/
- ShepwayVox (audit webcast): https://shepwayvox.org/2026/11/04/what-doesnt-reform-uk-want-kent-taxpayers-to-see-another-council-audit-meeting-goes-dark/
- Telegraph & Argus (Bradford budget): https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/26696362.reform-uk-first-bradford-budget---50-million-savings-plan/
- East Anglia Bylines (LGR): https://eastangliabylines.co.uk/politics/local-government/east-anglias-council-shake-up-is-back-on-but-a-year-later/
- ConservativeHome (Allison): https://conservativehome.com/2026/11/04/andrew-allison-is-it-time-for-the-right-to-unite/
- The Saturday Read (NSR): https://saturdayread.substack.com/p/nigel-farages-bastards
- The New World (Cottrell): https://www.thenewworld.co.uk/rats-in-a-sack-its-posh-george-as-farages-benefactor-seeks-to-trademark-his-name/

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