Reform UK Headlines — 09 Nov 2026

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NewsNow topic-hub sweep (UK/Politics/Reform+UK) — 8 new items processed since the 8 Nov run (published after the 8 Nov ~09:15 compile), 2 duplicate twins merged (ITV/Northern Echo; Scotsman/Standard). Sources: Evening Standard, The Scotsman, The Independent, The Northern Echo, ITV News, Nottingham Post ×2, Halesowen News, Left Foot Forward.

? Top Story: Reform Scotland deputy leader Thomas Kerr says SNP is committing "genocide" against working-class people

Evening Standard / The Scotsman (Sun 8 Nov / Mon 9 Nov) — In an "extraordinary attack" on the SNP, Reform UK Scotland deputy leader **Thomas Kerr** (Glasgow MSP) claimed the Scottish Government is "deliberately killing" working-class people and committing a **"genocide"** over Scotland's drug-death crisis — and said he holds ministers personally responsible for the 2016 drugs death of his own father.

Key points from his sitdown PA interview in Glasgow's east end:

- Scotland has the **worst drug-death rate in Europe**, over 1,000 a year for nearly a decade (plus ~2,000 alcohol deaths).
- Kerr: "I don't know what else you would call that other than a systematic either failure from the Scottish government or a deliberate killing of working-class people… you're **15 times more likely to die** [from drugs] if you stay in a community like this than if you stay in the middle-class area."

- On the genocide wording: "**the wording was to make a point**" — "politicians need to start taking this issue extremely seriously." Pressed on whether it is deliberate, he said it was "either that or it's **incompetence on a mass level**."
- The ex-Tory councillor (defected, elected to Holyrood in May) claimed he has seen "**the sinister side of some of the politicians**" at Holyrood, and holds ministers "who cut funding for rehabilitations" personally responsible.

Scottish Government response: Alcohol and drugs minister **Maree Todd**: "These suggestions are **entirely untrue** and this language is **deeply irresponsible**." She said reducing deaths is her "driving mission," that families have asked to "depoliticise this issue," and that the Government has exceeded its commitment of 1,000 publicly-funded residential rehab places a year, with a new alcohol and drugs strategic plan "backed by record funding."

Contradiction watch: this is the same Thomas Kerr who last week defended his burqa-ban video set to the far-right-coopted track "L'Amour Toujours" as a "dance classic" — Reform Scotland's leadership continues to generate one controversy per news cycle.

? Polling Fallout: Farage blasts Ashcroft poll putting Reform 8 points behind Tories

The Independent (Sun 8 Nov, 16:26) — **Nigel Farage** hit out after Lord Ashcroft's poll (Lab 31 / Con 26 / **Ref 18**; 5,253 adults, 29 Oct–2 Nov) showed Reform eight points behind Badenoch's Conservatives:

- Farage on X: "**totally dishonest polling** by (a) Tory donor who isn't even a member of the British Polling Council… his polling has been proven as **bogus time and time again**." He cited a May Ashcroft poll putting Reform on 21% before the party won 28% in the local elections.
- **Ashcroft's riposte:** "I don't remember you complaining about my polls when I had Reform **9 points ahead**… And as you know from your years in polling, asking about the next general election is not the same as asking about a local council election."
- **Luke Tryl (More in Common):** the finding "broadly … aligns with (the) trend we see in other polls."
- Context the Independent notes: Reform topped polls for over a year until Burnham entered Downing Street; the party has faced the **£5m Harborne crypto donation** controversy and **two ITV undercover stings**; on Sunday Farage suggested he expects the standards commissioner to find against him over the £5m "gift."
- Badenoch is up on "notably more assured outings at PMQs and a new high-profile pledge to cut inheritance tax."

?? Councillors & Courts

Suspended Sunderland Reform councillor faces trial over "melt them all down" Nigerians post

The Northern Echo / ITV News (Mon 9 Nov) — **Glenn Gibbins**, 66, Sunderland City Councillor (elected May, suspended by Reform), went on trial today at South Tyneside Magistrates' Court, **denying** posting a grossly offensive message in March 2024 (pre-election): having complained about the "amount of Nigerians in town," he allegedly wrote "**Should melt them all down and fill in the pot holes!!**" (later deleted). District Judge Zoe Passfield: "The issue is very straightforward, was the message offensive, **which Mr Gibbins agrees it was**, or was it **grossly** offensive?... Was it sufficiently offensive to override his Article 10 rights?" Northumbria Police investigated after the post emerged in May; a three-hour trial was scheduled, Gibbins on unconditional bail.

Lee Anderson demands mass resignations at Ashfield after Zadrozny conviction

Nottingham Post (Mon 9 Nov, 06:00) — Reform MP for Ashfield **Lee Anderson** says the 11 Ashfield Independents who left the group after ex-leader **Jason Zadrozny's** conviction (nine counts of fraud, four of income tax evasion; sentencing 27 Nov — a term of 3+ months would disqualify him) should "**step down today — the lot of you. Trigger by-elections in every single ward**," including "all those that voted to put Jason on planning three weeks ago." Notes:

- The 11 defections (10 into the new District Alliance opposition group) leave the remaining 18 Ashfield Independents with a **majority of just one**, vulnerable to no-confidence motions — but Anderson rules out Reform's three councillors propping up District Alliance.
- District Alliance's **Kier Barsby**: mass resignations would be "a **waste of money**, money that they say they want to be saving" — and accuses Anderson of "doing the same thing that Jason has done and **telling his councillors how to vote**."
- One 2025 by-election cost taxpayers £25,000; 11 would cost far more. Anderson: Reform is "going through our selection process... **we're going to take that council over**" in May.

?? Reform in Power

Nottinghamshire: 31 road schemes added to programme — funded by parking/bus-lane fines

Nottingham Post (Sun 8 Nov, 16:09) — Reform-run **Nottinghamshire County Council** added **31 smaller road-improvement schemes** to this year's programme, "mainly funded through **traffic management revenue** — the money councils generate through enforcement activities like **parking and bus lane fines**." The council's highways partner Via East Midlands completed **1,055,086 m² of surface dressing** — "the largest programme ever delivered by Via." November alone carries 25+ major resurfacing/patching schemes (A57 Markham Moor, B600 Alfreton Road, B6033 Bath Lane/Ravensdale Road Mansfield); up to 50 maintenance teams at winter peak. Most notable scheme: a **pedestrian crossing outside HMP Ranby** after a campaign by the widow of Phillip Tetley. Cabinet member **Bert Bingham**: "the scale of work being delivered demonstrates our commitment." (Also on the list: 'fowl' warning signs at Main Road, Westwood.)

Dudley: Reform group demands council publish CSE report

Halesowen News (Sun 8 Nov, 16:24) — The **Reform group on Dudley Council** wrote to chief executive Balvinder Heran demanding the findings of the council's investigation into **child sexual exploitation allegations** (reported by the BBC earlier this year) be made available to elected members: a timeline of who knew what, confirmation children were protected, and scrutiny-committee consideration. The letter targets Labour leader **Cllr Patrick Harley**: he "publicly referred to an investigation in March and indicated that officers' work could be concluded **within a week or so**… This delay has occurred under his leadership." Harley's response: an **external independent review** has been undertaken, a special scrutiny committee is being established for later this year, and "the review found **no evidence that any substantiated allegations of CSE were ignored** by Dudley Council."

? Comment & Analysis

Scotsman (Christine Jardine, Lib Dem MP): Trump's midterm disaster is bad news for Reform and Tories

The Scotsman (Mon 9 Nov, 06:00) — Edinburgh West MP **Christine Jardine**'s column: the Democrat wave ("so many… firsts for women, black and Native American politicians") was "a warning shot across the bows of the right wing." On Farage — "Trump's cheerleader-in-chief" — she

says he moved within 24 hours to distance himself (claiming Trump broke promises by going to war with Iran; criticising dependence on Musk money) after having "denied the Republicans would get smashed in the midterms before a vote was cast… a rapid 180-degree turn." Her verdict: Farage's pivot is "less a case of seeing the light than **protecting his own house of cards from collapse**." On the Tories: they "did not do enough to distance themselves from Republican ideology" — "from North Sea drilling, climate change denial and immigration to diversity and inclusion – both the Conservatives and Reform UK can be seen as expressing a British version of a **Trump-lite philosophy**."

Left Foot Forward: RBL refuses to buckle under Boam's anti-LGBTQ+ "tirade"

Left Foot Forward (Sun 8 Nov, 13:00) — "Woke-Bashing of the Week": the **Royal British Legion** stood by its Pride badges after Leics CC Reform councillor **Joseph Boam** (Whitwick) wrote on Facebook: "This is an insult to every veteran who wore the poppy with pride… Who else has had enough of this **woke virtue signalling crap**!" The RBL explains the badge shows solidarity with LGBTQIA+ service personnel who faced discrimination (the ban on gay personnel serving openly was lifted in 2000; the charity apologised for historic discrimination in 2022 after Peter Tatchell's campaign). LFF notes Boam "was sanctioned following multiple breaches of the council's code of conduct" — ordered to apologise over "reckless" and "disingenuous" social-media posts and an "**insidious form of public pressure**" on a former council employee. *(Tracker regulars: this is Boam's fourth appearance this month — stripped of committee roles to May 2027 on 6 Nov.)*

? Quick Summary

#	Story	Source	Angle
1	Reform Scotland deputy Thomas Kerr: SNP "genocide"/"deliberately killing" working-class people over drug deaths; holds ministers responsible for his father's death; Todd: "entirely untrue… deeply irresponsible"	Standard / Scotsman	Major gaffe row
2	Farage brands Ashcroft poll (Con +8 over Reform) "totally dishonest… bogus"; Ashcroft: "didn't hear you complain when I had Reform 9 ahead"	Independent	Polling fight

#	Story	Source	Angle
3	Suspended Sunderland Reform cllr Glenn Gibbins on trial over "melt them all down" Nigerians post — admits message was offensive, disputes "grossly"	Northern Echo / ITV	Court
4	Lee Anderson demands 11 Ashfield ex-Independents resign and trigger by-elections post-Zadrozny conviction; Barsby: "waste of money"	Nottingham Post	Local fallout
5	Nottinghamshire Reform council adds 31 road schemes — funded mainly by parking/bus-lane fines	Nottingham Post	Reform in power
6	Dudley Reform group demands publication of CSE report; Harley says review found no substantiated allegations ignored	Halesowen News	Reform in opposition
7	Jardine: Farage's Trump pivot is self-preservation; Con+Reform = "Trump-lite philosophy"	Scotsman	Comment
8	RBL refuses to bow to Boam's Pride-badge "woke virtue signalling crap" post	Left Foot Forward	Conduct

Poll tracker: Ashcroft (29 Oct–2 Nov, n=5,253): **Lab 31 / Con 26 / Ref 18** — Farage disputing methodology; More in Common's Tryl says it aligns with the trend. (Yesterday's YouGov twin: Lab 26 / Con 24 / Ref 21.)

Discarded/merged: ITV News version (1329276229) of the Northern Echo Gibbins trial story — same copy, cited once. Scotsman version (1329270344) of the Kerr "genocide" story — Standard twin fetched in full (Scotsman itself 403'd; Playwright recovery used for the Jardine column). No false positives this run — all eight cards genuinely Reform-party related.

Compiled 9 Nov 2026 ~09:10 GMT by Hermes cron (NewsNow Reform UK topic-hub sweep). Fetch notes: Northern Echo, Standard, Independent, Halesowen News (Newsquest), LFF clean via plain urllib on /A/3/; both Nottingham Post items returned HTTP 202/0-byte (Reach trap) and the two Scotsman items 403'd — all three recovered via Playwright :8090 with content anchored past ~3–10KB of nav junk.

Revision #2
Created 2026-11-09 09:14:55 UTC by Admin
Updated 2026-11-09 09:14:56 UTC by Admin