Reform UK Headlines — 10 Oct 2026

?? Reform UK — NewsNow Topic Sweep — 10 October 2026

Source: NewsNow topic hub `UK / Politics / Reform UK` — 12 story clusters, 26 latest-feed cards, 7 most-read items (fetched 09:00 BST, Saturday). Compiled by Emrys □□ for the daily-headlines pipeline. Article bodies resolved via `newsnow.co.uk/A/3/<id>` and read directly unless marked headline/snippet-level.

? Latest Developments

? "Fartgate": Farage sidesteps as councillor admits the deed (09 Oct, Lancashire Telegraph / BBC)

On an Accrington high-street meet-and-greet for his **"Britain is broken"** tour (flanked by security, posing with barbers and vape shops as props), Nigel Farage was asked about the Blackburn with Darwen council meeting where a Reform councillor allegedly **deliberately broke wind in the direction of a political opponent** during a four-hour session of "constant interruptions and disrespect". Farage: "*It's a very good question, one that I'm going to do my absolute best to sidestep completely... I don't think, as leader of a national party with thousands of elected councillors, I can be asked really to comment on the alleged behaviour of one individual.*" Reform **Cllr Andy Mahon has admitted responsibility for the flatulence but denied aiming it** at the independent 4BwD group member who levelled the accusation. Farage says Reform will "rise above" the stink.

? Jenrick: a Tory pact would be "like being handcuffed to a zombie" (09 Oct, PA via Nation.Cymru)

Reform's Treasury spokesman **Robert Jenrick** rejected a deal with the Conservatives — "*The Tories ruling out a deal with Reform is like me saying to Thomas Tuchel that I'm ruling out being selected for the England squad versus Croatia*" — **one day after Farage himself refused to rule one out**: a pre-election pact is "extremely unlikely", but "*After an election, who's to say?*" This directly contradicts Kemi Badenoch's conference line ("*To those who say '**unite the right**', we are not uniting with that*"). Jenrick also **declined to answer whether he regards Badenoch as English** after Braverman's Question Time remarks, calling the Englishness row "overblown" while repeating his ethnicity/culture/citizenship tripartite framing. Meanwhile on the other side of the fence, veteran Tory MP **Sir John Hayes** (South Holland & The Deepings, since 1997) said his politics are "pretty close" to Reform's, that they are "on the same side… in terms of Labour", has been "approached many times" to defect and was "tempted" — openly at odds with Badenoch's "neck deep in scandal" ruling-out (BBC Radio Lincolnshire, 09 Oct).

? "The Reformer": Reform's own newspaper to 15m households (09 Oct, Spectator)

Reform is launching its own **eight-page free newspaper, *The Reformer***, distributed to **15 million households** within weeks — a claimed reach exceeding the Metro. **Mick Hume** (ex-Times columnist, former Spiked editor, Reform employee) leads production; the party claims the "biggest paper order in the world this year". Content: policy features, announcements, Farage comment pieces. **"Reform TV"** is being talked down as a broadcast channel — long-form interviews instead of 24/7 rolling coverage — plus recruitment ads for journalists to write party-website content engineered to rank in Google. Context: this media build-out runs in parallel with the party's **Derbyshire ban on the Local Democracy Reporter** (see Controversy) — press freedom pointed both ways in the same week.

?? Widdecombe murder / Farage terror plot: suspect named, "extreme left-wing" motive alleged (09 Oct, court reporting cluster of 10+)

The man accused of **Ann Widdecombe's murder**, named in court reports as **Joshua Kerry**, also allegedly **targeted Nigel Farage's home**; prosecutors told the court the killing was "inextricably linked" to the Farage terror plot and that the defendant is an "**extreme left-wing terrorist**" who was "**particularly hostile towards Reform**" (Metro, Leeds Live, Mirror, Evening Standard, MailOnline, Independent, ITV, Yorkshire Post). He appeared at crown court charged with preparing

acts of terrorism.

?? Suffolk backs exploring an asylum-housing referendum (09 Oct, BBC / Great Yarmouth Mercury)

Suffolk County Council voted **39–13 (13 abstentions)** to explore an **advisory referendum** on housing asylum seekers, to run alongside the 6 May 2027 elections. Tabled by Reform deputy leader **Philip Faircloth-Mutton** over Home Office plans to convert **RAF Barnham** into asylum accommodation — with warnings Norfolk could face a **£30m bill** if the camp goes ahead. Opposition: the vote could cost **£2m**, is **not legally binding**, and would come too late to change anything.

? Polling: Reform 24%, six behind Labour (Survation, 2–5 Oct)

Labour **30 (+1)**, Reform UK **24 (+1)**, Conservatives **19 (=)**, Lib Dems **9 (=)**, Greens **8 (−1)** — Labour's recovery extends ahead of its first Budget; separate HuffPost coverage notes Reform's slump continues while Labour hits a near two-year high. Most-read also carries the Holborn & St Pancras by-election result: **Tories third, with Restore Britain eating into the Reform vote** (09 Oct).

??????? Wales round-up (09 Oct, Nation.Cymru)

- **By-election blank:** two **independents** won the Pontypool community-council seats in a contest where **Reform was the only party fielding candidates** — Giles Davies (224 votes, ex-Labour) and Lloyd Hughes (155, formerly of Rupert Lowe's **Restore Britain**).
- **"Left-wing books" row:** Reform MS **Cai Parry-Jones** (Caerdydd Ffynnon Taf) accused Senedd Commission staff of "actively attempting to sway children politically" over the gift shop's children's titles — including Kate Milner's award-winning *My Name Is Not Refugee*, *The Little Book of Pride* and Greta Thunberg's *The Climate Book*.
- **Smart glasses follow-up:** Reform MS **Art Wright** played down the backlash over colleague **Jason O'Connell** apparently using teleprompter smart glasses in the chamber without the Llywydd's knowledge — "all Jason did was look a little more cool than normal."
- **Rugby motion dismissed:** Reform's call for the Welsh Government to make the WRU protect the four regions was branded a "**political points-scoring exercise**" by Plaid Cymru MS John Davies, who amended it to respect the WRU's independence.

Other threads (08–10 Oct)

- **Blackburn with Darwen** formally **voted to condemn** the M65 toll plan floated by Reform county councillor **Joel Tetlow** (50p–£1.50 near Burnley to fund £15m flood-defence works); Reform has distanced itself, and the idea drew an "idiot in county hall" jab (BBC / Lancs Live / Lancashire Telegraph).
- **Oldham:** a Reform councillor accused council bosses of "**covering their a***s**" (Oldham Times, 08 Oct); the **Failsworth West by-election** date is set with Labour and Reform preparing to battle (06–07 Oct).
- **Pecksniff (10 Oct):** "The EU is back on the table: this is where our work begins" — Reform-adjacent commentary in the latest feed.
- **UnHerd (10 Oct):** "Who is Kemi kidding?" — sceptical take on the Badenoch revival vs Reform.

?? Policy & Controversy

The donations sting: self-clearance keeps echoing

Reform's **internal investigation** (published 07 Oct) cleared suspended aide **Dan Jukes** and head of policy **James Orr** of breaking electoral law over the Channel 4/Verbatim sting — Jukes was filmed suggesting a route to a **£500,000 foreign donation** via a UK-registered son and admitting he'd "done the same thing several times before"; Orr suggested the donor's father fund polling instead. The party's own verdict: words "wrong, careless and in one instance untrue", but "neither did anything that constitutes a breach of law". Labour chair **Bridget Phillipson**: "*You can find more whitewash in this report than at your local B&Q.*" The **Met Police and British Polling Council investigations continue**. New sting on the tail (Byline Times, 09 Oct): Orr — as UK chairman of the **Edmund Burke Foundation** — hosted a NatCon conference in Jerusalem co-sponsored by an Israeli NGO sanctioned by the EU and Canada, and which hosted minister **Bezalel Smotrich** (UK-sanctioned); Farage and JD Vance are past NatCon speakers, and the foundation's chairman **Yoram Hazony** once praised Meir Kahane.

"Fartgate" + Dover timing = the standards-probe frame

The New World's *Rats in a Sack* (09 Oct) asks whether Farage's **big Dover "stop the boats" event on Monday 12 October** is timed to **divert from the Commons standards commissioner's impending findings** on his **£5m "unconditional gift" from a Thailand-based crypto billionaire** — noting small-boat arrivals are actually **down ~40%** year-on-year,

undercutting the "national security emergency" framing. Stack that against the party leader publicly "sidestepping" a councillor's admitted flatulence and the week's discipline story writes itself.

Dehumanising-language cluster, now with institutional follow-through

- **Kirklees:** independent councillor **Ammar Anwar** will move a **no-confidence vote** against Reform leader **Cllr Sarah Wood** at Full Council on **21 October**, over her defence of Cllr **Tracy Clayton's** alleged "third-world animals" / "no invaders" Greece holiday post ("If that makes me a far right racist, well you know what I don't care!"). Wood told a chaotic cabinet meeting she believes people are "invading our country" bringing cultures "not aligned with British culture" (Left Foot Forward / Yorkshire Live / Telegraph & Argus / BBC).
- **St Helens:** Reform's cancellation of **Black History Month** support — leader **George Woodward** calling BHM "racist" and "divisive" and "not appropriate for celebrations to centre on one skin tone" — drew "**the worst dog whistle politics**" from Liverpool City Region mayor **Steve Rotherham**. The council also skipped Pride, cut Refugee Week funding, and initially left Holocaust Memorial Day "jury out" before reversing (LFF, 08 Oct).
- **Bradford:** the Reform-led Executive **approved the new flag policy** (08 Oct): Centenary Square flagpoles restricted to the Union Flag, St George's, UK nations' saints' days, Yorkshire/Armed Forces flags and local sports teams — **Pride and Black History Month flags axed**. Portfolio holder **Ian Eglin**: it "excludes flags of groups that would promote their own identity or interests" and will "promote patriotism". An opposition councillor warns it tells some communities they are "not welcome" (Yorkshire Live / Keighley News / Telegraph & Argus / BBC).

Press freedom: the contradiction sharpens again

The same week Reform prepares a 15m-household newspaper and a video operation, the **Derbyshire County Council ban on the Derbyshire Live Local Democracy Reporter** keeps escalating: the **Society of Editors** called for reversal ("cut-price Trump tribute act" — Derbyshire Live), **all the county's MPs united** against it (HoldtheFrontPage, 06 Oct), and the **NUJ** demands it be lifted. Building a party media machine while excluding accredited local journalists remains the cleanest contradiction in the Reform record this week.

Contradictions & points of interest

1. **Pact whiplash:** Badenoch rules it out → Farage leaves the door open ("who's to say?") → Jenrick slams it shut ("handcuffed to a zombie") within 48 hours — while Tory MP Hayes floats co-operation from the other side. Nobody's line matches anyone else's.
2. **Identity-row hedging:** Jenrick called the Englishness debate "overblown" yet refused twice to say whether his own party leader's leader (Badenoch) is English — the dodge *is*

the answer.
3. **Self-regulation everywhere:** the party cleared its own officials (donations), defends its own councillors' language (Kirklees), and builds its own press (The Reformer) — while banning other people's press (Derbyshire) and sidestepping its own councillor's conduct (Fartgate).
4. **Wales microcosm:** Reform was the **only party** to field candidates in Pontypool and still lost both seats to independents (one ex-Restore Britain) — the party's anti-establishment vote is now being out-flanked from *further* out.
5. **Polling paradox:** Reform edged **up** to 24% (Survation) in the same week as the whitewash verdict, Fartgate, "third-world animals" and flag-pole culture wars — the damage isn't showing in the topline yet, though HuffPost frames the trend as a slump.

? Source Links

- Fartgate / Accrington visit: https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/26621771.farage-says-reform-will-rise-above-fartgate-stink/
- Jenrick "handcuffed to a zombie": https://nation.cymru/news/tory-reform-pact-like-being-handcuffed-to-a-zombie-says-jenrick/
- Sir John Hayes open to co-operation: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cmwydw3pjx9qo
- The Reformer media strategy: https://spectator.com/article/revealed-reforms-new-media-strategy/ (paywall — body fetched clean)
- Dover event vs standards probe: https://www.thenewworld.co.uk/rats-in-a-sack-is-farages-big-boat-bash-a-diversion-from-his-standards-probe/
- Widdecombe/Farage plot court cluster: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326639143 (Metro) • https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326639081 (Mirror) • https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326641605 (MailOnline)
- Donations sting self-clearance: https://leftfootforward.org/2026/10/surprise-surprise-reforms-own-internal-investigation-clears-party-officials-over-trying-to-solicit-dodgy-donations/ • BBC: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326401524
- Orr / NatCon / Smotrich: https://bylinetimes.com/2026-10-09/reform-uks-james-orrs-foundation-hosted-sanctioned-israeli-minister/
- Suffolk referendum: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c84g1xv1ypy3o • £30m RAF Barnham bill: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326482501 (Great Yarmouth Mercury, consent paywall — headline-level)
- Survation poll (Lab 30 / Ref 24): https://survation.com/labour-at-30-reform-at-24-burnhams-party-extends-its-recovery-ahead-of-first-budget/ (via NewsNow id 1326439097)
- Kirklees no-confidence: https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/kirklees-council-leader-faces-no-34736928 • Clayton defence: https://leftfootforward.org/2026/10/reform-defends-councillor-calling-immigrants-third-world-animals-in-social-media-post/
- St Helens BHM: https://leftfootforward.org/2026/10/reform-councils-decision-to-cancel-black-history-month-called-the-worst-dog-whistle-politics/

- Bradford flag policy: https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/pride-black-history-month-flags-34738454 • BBC: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326549037
- M65 toll condemned: https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/possible-m65-toll-slammed-blackburn-34732728 • BBC: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326588213
- Derbyshire reporter ban: https://inpublishing.com/society-calls-for-reversal-of-reform-uk-ban-in-derbyshire/ • https://www.derbyshirelive.co.uk (consent paywall — snippet-level) • https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326294963 (HoldtheFrontPage)
- Wales: Pontypool by-election https://nation.cymru/news/reform-uk-left-empty-handed-as-independents-win-council-by-election-seats/ • "left-wing books" https://nation.cymru/news/reform-ms-accuses-senedd-staff-of-trying-to-politically-influence-children/ • smart glasses https://nation.cymru/news/reform-ms-plays-down-smart-glasses-backlash-claiming-fellow-ms-looked-cool/ • rugby https://nation.cymru/news/reform-accused-of-political-points-scoring-exercise-over-regional-rugby-debate/
- Oldham: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326550203 (Oldham Times, consent paywall — headline-level) • Failsworth West: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326378938
- Holborn by-election / Restore eating Reform vote: https://www.newsnow.co.uk/A/3/1326624198

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