Reform UK Headlines — 26 Oct 2026

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> Compiled from the NewsNow *Reform UK* topic hub (top clusters + latest feed) and the underlying publisher articles. Focus: controversial statements, policy shifts and gaffes. Monday 26 October 2026.

? Latest Developments

Holyrood misogyny row: Bland's explosive first interview

The dominant story of the weekend. **Amanda Bland**, the Reform MSP for Central Scotland and Lothians West who quit the party last week to sit as an independent, gave her first newspaper interview (Sunday Post) alleging a **toxic, misogynistic culture** in Reform's Scottish branch:

- She claims Scottish leader **Lord Malcolm Offord** "strode" into her office and was "visibly angry, shouting at me" after she asked to reschedule a meeting — the "final straw".
- She says the behaviour "triggered" memories of a childhood "ruled by my father's domestic abuse", and that leaving "feels like I have escaped a **coercively controlled relationship**".
- On women in the party: "*The party at Holyrood is run by an exclusive group of four men; women MSPs don't get a look in*" — and women were "dismissed to sit in another room to eat cake and discuss womanly things while the men went off to smoke cigars".
- She says her husband is going through **stage-four cancer**, alleges a lack of empathy from the leadership, and that there was "public questioning of whether I even had cancer, which is shameful".

- A former Reform election candidate backed her, describing a "neurotic, controlling and closed-minded culture" with "no internal democracy".

Reform's response: Offord "fully rejects her accusations of intimidation", saying Bland "pushed herself further and further away", "became a recluse in her office", was "the only MSP to skip conference" and that he spent "countless hours" trying to make her "a team player". Reform MSP **Senga Beresford** called the claims "absolute nonsense" — "I could not imagine Malcolm even raising my voice".

Political fallout: Bland's exit dropped Reform from joint-second (17 MSPs, tied with Labour) to **third** at Holyrood. Scottish Labour is now the official opposition — new leader **Michael Marra** named his shadow cabinet over the weekend (Joe Fagan finance, Jackie Baillie health, Paul Sweeney energy/climate, Neil Bibby constitution; Monica Lennon excluded from cabinet, tasked with a Women's Health report). Bland refuses to stand down, saying she was "elected to serve, not to be silenced".

Budget battle lines: 'imperial measurements' and 60 pledges

Ahead of Chancellor **John Healey's first Budget (Wednesday 28 Oct)**, Reform's treasury spokesperson **Robert Jenrick** set out **60+ "job-creating measures"** it claims cost the taxpayer nothing:

- Approve the **Rosebank** oil field and other North Sea projects; scrap a "wide range of environmental regulations".
- A **return to wider use of imperial measurements**; a **ban on low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs)**.
- Cut or remove the affordable-housing requirement for new developments; support **new runways at Heathrow and Gatwick**; new cars not to need an MOT until **four years** (not three).

Jenrick branded it a "'mañana' budget", adding "*The country can't wait ten years for Andy Burnham to work out a plan.*" The Conservatives separately demanded Rosebank approval, an end to Labour's North Sea licensing ban and scrapping the energy profits levy (shadow energy secretary Andrew Bowie: bills "promised £300 off… have risen by £367"). Lib Dem energy spokeswoman **Pippa Heylings** hit back that approving Rosebank "would do nothing" for bills and that "the Conservatives and Reform have their fingers in their ears".

'Nigerian scammer': Jenrick refuses to condemn Farage ally

Raheem Kassam — former UKIP chief of staff under Farage and a long-time ally — called Conservative leader **Kemi Badenoch** a "Nigerian scammer" on X and told people not to give her

their bank details. On LBC's *Sunday with Lewis Goodall*, **Robert Jenrick repeatedly refused to call the remark racist**, dismissing Kassam as "a random journalist" who is "not someone who is employed by Reform", and said he was "not on [LBC] to talk about what a journalist has tweeted". Conservative chairman **Kevin Hollinrake** accused Kassam of "launching racist slurs" and said it was "time for Mr Farage to come clean" about his role. Kassam himself defended it as a "tongue in cheek joke", admitted he "visit[s] Reform HQ… all the time" when in the UK, but said he last officially worked for Farage "over a decade ago". The row lands in the wake of ITV's *Undercover: A Year in Reform*.

?? Policy / Controversy

Dudley councillor's 'vile racist and homophobic rhetoric'

Alex Ballinger, Labour MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis, called on Nigel Farage to take "immediate action" against Reform **Councillor Caley Ashman** (Cradley North and Wollescote) over social-media posts made *before* his May election — including the antisemitic term "goy-slop", an apparent claim that "you shouldn't let foreigners look after the young or old as they don't care about you", and an offensive post about commentator Douglas Murray. Ballinger says he, **Cat Eccles** and **Sonia Kumar** (fellow Dudley Labour MPs) wrote to Farage in May and received **no response**. Reform's Dudley opposition leader **Marco Longhi** counter-attacked, saying only "the BNP and Labour" have been condemned by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission for antisemitism and that Ballinger "continues to sit on the same benches as… Diane Abbott".

Bradford Reform leader defies his own party on rail

Stephen Place, Reform leader of Bradford Council, said he will challenge Reform's *national* opposition to **Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)** after the government confirmed a new station at Bradford Interchange (part of the £45bn scheme). Deputy leader **Richard Tice** had said a Reform government would scrap NPR and told bidders "not bother". Place: "*Maybe I'm going to have to speak to Mr Tice… put our case to them and see if we can change their minds.*"

Reform MSPs vs a Scottish charity funder

Reform MSP **Jamie Langan** and six colleagues (Thomas Kerr, Angela Ross, Amanda Lindsay, Mark Simpson, Senga Beresford, Max Bannerman) wrote to the **Corra Foundation** questioning its grants to **Project Esperanza**, an Edinburgh charity supporting migrant women and families, and criticised "race-obsessed political activist groups". Corra chief executive **Carolyn Sawers**

defended the grants, citing OSCR guidance and Scottish charity law that political campaigning is "a legitimate way for some charities to achieve what they were set up for", and offered to meet the MSPs.

Lord Ashcroft polling: the net-zero battleground

New Ashcroft research ("After You…") frames net zero as a major election battleground — with the **Conservatives and Reform pledged to drop the 2050 target**. It finds five voter "tribes"; a majority agree households "cannot afford higher costs at the moment, even if that means we put off net zero"; large majorities of Conservative and Reform voters prefer postponing net zero to keep costs down; and nearly seven in ten think net zero will mean higher household costs. A large majority across all groups agree "the costs of net zero fall hardest on the wrong people".

Oldham: first Reform leader quits politics entirely

Lewis Quigg, Reform's first leader in Oldham, announced he is leaving politics *altogether*, citing "immense pressure" on his family over "the past 48 hours" — days after resigning from Reform UK **mid-investigation**. Originally elected as a Conservative, he led the group into the 2026 locals (13 of 20 seats, most votes, but no overall control). A **Failsworth West by-election** is set (Reform candidate Chris Baddeley), and a second by-election is now expected for Quigg's Royton North seat.

? Marginal — flagged for accuracy

Oxford talk protest (name conflation)

The Morning Star reports that Stand Up to Racism is calling a protest against a 17 November Oriel College talk by **Nathan Cofnas** — a US researcher sacked from a Cambridge post in 2024, whose allegations are linked by campaigners to the death of Prof **Jason Arday** — invited by the **"University of Oxford Reform Society"**. SutR co-convener Weyman Bennett ties this to "the far-right nature of Reform UK". ⚠ **Caveat:** the *University of Oxford Reform Society* is a long-standing student debating society, organisationally distinct from **Reform UK** (founded 2019); the paper's framing conflates the two. Reported here as a claim by the source, not as established fact about the party.

? Polling context (carried from 25 Oct run)

The weekend's spine remains the **Ipsos poll (25 Oct): Labour 32 / Conservative 24 / Reform 20** — Reform in **third**, Labour's biggest lead since June 2025, and Tories leaking only ~16% of their 2024 vote to Reform.

? Source Links

Story	Source	Link
Bland interview (toxic culture)	Sunday Post	https://www.sundaypost.com/fp/msp-amanda-bland-says-toxic-treatment-forced-her-to-quit-party/
Bland 'coercively controlled'	The Herald	https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/26668287.ex-reform-msp-accuses-leadership-intimidation-misogyny/
Bland / Offord 'shouting'	The National	https://www.thenational.scot/news/26668443.ex-reform-msp-i-driven-toxic-party-shouting-offord/
Bland misogyny row	MailOnline	https://c.newsnow.co.uk/A/1328008407
Marra shadow cabinet	Scottish Daily Express	https://www.scottishdailyexpress.co.uk/news/politics/michael-marra-names-shadow-cabinet-37808406
Imperial measurements / 60 pledges	The Independent	https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rosebank-jackdaw-reform-labour-conservatives-andy-burnham-b3072970.html
Rosebank / Budget pressure	The Scotsman	https://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/opposition-parties-step-up-pressure-on-government-to-back-rosebank-9308557
Imperial measurements	The National	https://www.thenational.scot/news/26668783.reform-uk-plan-bring-back-imperial-measurements/
Jenrick / Kassam 'Nigerian scammer'	LBC	https://www.lbc.co.uk/article/robert-jenrick-refuses-condemn-nigerian-scammer-remarks-kemi-badenoch-racist-5HjdkQF_2/
Dudley councillor slurs	Express & Star	https://www.expressandstar.com/news/mp-calls-for-action-to-be-taken-against-dudley-councillor-over-race-and-gay-slurs-9308005
Bradford NPR defiance	BBC News	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5vgjr4vkv80o

Story	Source	Link
Corra Foundation vs Reform MSPs	Third Force News	https://tfn.scot/news/foundation-defends-funding-following-reform-msps-challenge
Net-zero tribes polling	Lord Ashcroft Polls	https://lordashcroftpolls.com/2026/10/after-you-why-people-agree-about-climate-change-but-nobody-wants-to-pay/
Quigg quits politics	Manchester Evening News	https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/oldhams-first-reform-leader-says-34810730
Quigg family pressure	The Oldham Times	https://www.theoldhamtimes.co.uk/news/26667644.lewis-quigg-resigns-oldham-councillor-quits-politics/
Oxford Cofnas protest (see caveat)	Morning Star	https://morningstaronline.co.uk/article/anti-racists-call-protest-against-white-supremacist-talk-oxford-university
ITV exposé 'rings true' (Epping Forest)	ConservativeHome	https://conservativehome.com/2026/10/26/holly-whitbread-itvs-expose-of-reform-uk-rings-true-of-our-experence-in-epping-forest/

? Quick Summary

Theme	Headline	Status
Holyrood	Bland alleges misogynistic "coercively controlled" culture; Offord denies	□□ Major, developing
Opposition	Reform drops to 3rd at Holyrood; Marra names Labour shadow cabinet	□□ Confirmed
Budget	Reform unveils 60+ pledges incl. imperial measures, Rosebank, LTN ban	□□ Ahead of Wed Budget
Race row	Jenrick won't call Kassam's "Nigerian scammer" jibe at Badenoch racist	□□ Controversy
Local	Dudley MP demands action over Cllr Ashman's "goy-slop"/homophobic posts	□□ No Reform response
Local	Bradford Reform leader defies Tice to back Northern Powerhouse Rail	□□ Internal split

Theme	Headline	Status
Charities	Reform MSPs challenge Corra grants to migrant charity; Corra defends	◫ Dispute
Polling	Ashcroft: net-zero cost backlash; Reform/Con to drop 2050 target	◫ Context
Oldham	First Reform leader Quigg quits politics entirely over family pressure	◫ By-elections due

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