Reform UK Headlines — 29 Oct 2026

? Reform UK Headlines — 29 October 2026

Compiled from the NewsNow Reform UK topic hub (top clusters + latest feed), Thursday 29 October 2026, ~09:00 GMT. Items new since the 28 Oct run.

? Latest Developments

Farage claims he skipped the Budget to avoid a 'physical altercation'

Nigel Farage said he did not attend Andy Burnham's first Budget in the Commons chamber on Wednesday because he feared a repeat clash with another MP. He claimed he got "involved in a physical altercation with an MP in the chamber" during the State Opening of Parliament in May over a reserved seat, and that his prayer card had again been removed: "I could see that... I was heading towards another physical altercation. And being a very quiet, shy, modest kind of person, I decided to give it a wide berth." He watched the Budget from his office with "a team of economists" instead, saying it was "actually more useful". A Commons spokesperson said a prayer card without a valid date stamp was removed "in line with the usual Chamber protocol"; HuffPost UK reports Farage did not attend prayers and did not approach Commons staff about a seat. At least six Reform MPs, including Richard Tice, were in the chamber. (HuffPost UK, 28 Oct)

Farage on Tommy Robinson conviction: 'we should brainwash them' — sarcasm

Asked whether he is happy for Reform members to support Tommy Robinson — convicted of harassing two journalists (freelance reporter Andrew Young and Daily Mail editor Jacob Dirnhuber) and facing up to 10 years — Farage said the conduct was "very wrong, very wrong indeed" but the

party cannot police members' social-media likes: "Oh no, I think Reform members should be… I think we should brainwash them. We should indoctrinate them… We'll make sure that cancel culture is enforced fully… Lee (Anderson) you're kicked out as chairman." He argued a like doesn't make someone a "full-blown marcher", consistent with his long line that Robinson is "thuggish" and "not what we need". (The Independent / PA, 28 Oct)

Journalist receives ~700 abusive messages after criticising Reform's ITV police report

Kate Cronin of the Northamptonshire Telegraph was inundated with abusive — much of it misogynistic — messages after posting on X that Reform's decision to report ITV's undercover team to the police was an attempt to "shut down critical journalistic voices and strangle the free press". Abusers called her a "left wing f***ing whore", "virtue signalling terrorist" and "regime hack" among slurs she published in full. She received supportive messages from the Reform leader of North Northants Council, two Labour MPs and other councillors. Her verdict: "These people are filled with pure hatred. Reform should be concerned that these are the supporters they are attracting… I don't believe abusing women online is a traditional British value." The piece reproduces Zia Yusuf's full statement (forged passport, election interference claims, "pursued relentlessly in the courts"). (HoldtheFrontPage, 29 Oct)

Leicestershire leader Dan Harrison survives secret leadership vote by ONE vote

Reform county councillors met on Tuesday 28 Oct over "lack of direction" under Leicestershire CC leader Dan Harrison; a secret vote passed in his favour by a majority of one. Harrison: "There are those wanting to do things and wanting to see me go and hope their chances will improve. It's simple politics." He admitted by-election tactics "hadn't been working" after Reform lost seats including Shepshed (snatched by Labour). Tory opposition leader Deborah Taylor called on him to go, citing "bad decisions" (SEND school closures, term-date changes, LGR) and asking "is he able to concentrate on providing for residents or is he concentrating on infighting?" Lib Dem leader Michael Mullaney: "The wheels are falling off the Reform bandwagon… I don't think it's necessarily a Dan Harrison problem — more of a Nigel Farage problem." Reform whip Andrew Hamilton-Gray insisted the group had a "very constructive, open debate". (Melton Times / Leicester Mercury, LDRS, 28 Oct)

Oldham's third Reform leader in weeks: Paul Taylor profiled

The Oldham Times profiles new leader Cllr Paul Taylor — fedoras ("I will wear my hats until the day I die"), former Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue commander for Oldham, "very hard edged and I don't suffer fools gladly". On politics: "I was a socialist. I've not moved and the world has changed

around me. I'm now a so-called far-right whatever." Both predecessors have gone — Lewis Quigg (resigned mid-investigation, then quit politics) and Mark Wilkinson (health) — and Cllr Gary Tarbuck is suspended pending investigation. Council has been in stalemate since May (Reform 16 seats, two behind Labour, no party over a third); Failsworth West by-election next month, Royton North expected. Taylor targets May 2027, when Labour could lose largest-party status in Oldham for the first time since 2010; he says Reform will be "an irresistible force" and is glad the ITV-exposed members left. (Oldham Times / Oldham Evening Chronicle / MEN, LDRS Ed Barnes, 28–29 Oct)

Tice welcomes Doncaster Sheffield Airport freehold purchase — slams 'bad leasehold deal'

SYMCA's board (including Barnsley's Reform leader) approved buying DSA and the GatewayEast Innovation Quarter land from Peel Group on 27 Oct, taking the airport into public ownership. Reform deputy leader Richard Tice: "Reform has long argued that SYMCA should purchase the freehold… The original deal pursued by the Labour Mayor represented a bad leasehold deal for residents, gifting Peel 20% of the airport's turnover while local taxpayers fronted the losses." Labour Mayor Oliver Coppard: "a deal that puts the future of DSA back in our hands"; the twice-approved £57m council loan will no longer be needed. (Yorkshire Post / Sheffield Star, LDRS Harry Harrison, 28–29 Oct)

?? Policy / Controversy

Warwickshire's George Finch furious over school Farage 'trial'

Reform leader of Warwickshire CC Cllr George Finch lodged a formal complaint with Stratford Girls' Grammar School after journalist and former Lib Dem parliamentary candidate John Sweeney (author of the prosecutorial biography *The Real Nigel Farage*) ran a mock trial of Farage before sixth-form and Year 11 pupils, with Sweeney's partner Jennifer Gray — who works for Stratford's Lib Dem MP Manuela Perteghella — acting as Farage's 'defence lawyer'. Finch: "I am furious… We should be extremely careful about normalising the idea that Reform politicians are people to be put in the dock… Schools should expose young people to different political views, not stage partisan courtroom theatrics… Political impartiality applies to Nigel Farage and Reform UK too." Complaint copied to chair of governors Clare Nicklin. (Leamington Observer / Stratford Herald, 28–29 Oct)

Reform's 'alternative budget' would scrap the UK Emissions Trading Scheme

The "Economic Rescue Plan" (26 Oct, 65 measures, ahead of Wednesday's Budget) proposes abolishing the ETS, claiming it adds ~£90/year to average household energy bills and that the package would save £250/year. Implementation "dependent on legal advice" — options include full repeal, abolishing the surrender obligation, or flooding the market with allowances. Context: ETS extension to Energy-from-Waste was delayed indefinitely in August 2026; the Conservatives separately proposed abolishing the Environment Agency and scrapping pEPR. (letsrecycle.com, 28 Oct)

Kent: complaints rocket 4× under Reform — and Oracle costs climb another £21.5m

Kent CC's Annual Governance Statement records 85 code-of-conduct complaints in the 11 months to April 2026 — roughly four times the previous year, a 16-year high, 40% member-against-member — and "strongly suggests" the link to Reform's May 2025 takeover (57 of 81 seats), noting the complaints process has been "politicised through… engagement with the media". Councillors call the system "pathetic… pointless and toothless". (KentOnline, LDRS Simon Finlay, 29 Oct)

Meanwhile ShepwayVox's investigation into KCC's Oracle Cloud programme: the forecast now stands at £46.891m against £43.963m approved funding, with £944k of savings still unidentified. Trajectory: £15m (Jul 2023) → £25.4m (Feb 2025, pre-Reform) → £29.8m (Nov 2025) → £40.1m (Apr 2026) → £43.9m (Jul 2026) → £46.891m (16 Oct). Of the £31.9m rise since July 2023, 67.4% emerged after Reform took control — against leader Linden Kemkaran's pledge that "every nook and cranny is being investigated to identify areas of waste". Grant Thornton found a "significant weakness in KCC's arrangements for securing value for money relating to Oracle"; 72 internal-audit observations, 25 not accepted. Deputy leader Brian Collins's own investigation was still open in July; first live payroll now not expected until May 2027. (ShepwayVox, 29 Oct)

Phillipson: 'Sunderland will always stand against racism, even if our Reform council doesn't'

In a Sunderland Echo column, Labour chair and Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson MP attacks the Reform-run city council's ending of a 30-year partnership with Show Racism the Red Card — the council leader dismissed the charity as a "politically charged organisation with an agenda". She cites "refusing to take action against councillors who have made unacceptable racist comments" alongside the withdrawal, says Reform's "record on racism raises serious questions about whether they are fit to represent our community", and has launched a petition to reverse the decision; SAFC, ambassador Gary Bennett and Northumbria Police reps joined Wear Red Day solidarity events. (Sunderland Echo, 29 Oct)

Press Gazette: Reform launches print 'newspaper' — The Reformer

Snippet-level (Press Gazette 403s direct fetches): "The Reformer", which arrived at Press Gazette HQ on Tuesday, is billed as the "newspaper of Reform UK" above its masthead — the tangible first output of the previously reported £72m media push (seven-day digital newsroom, Westminster studio, social desk, data function; 12 journalist job ads). (Press Gazette, 28 Oct)

Comment

New Statesman's Halloween leader-ish column: "This Halloween, it's a scary time to be a Conservative" — "The true Tory faithful doesn't let electoral oblivion get them down" (opinion, snippet-level; New Statesman blocks direct fetches). (28 Oct)

? Context carried forward

- Polling spine unchanged this week: Ipsos (25 Oct) Lab 32 / Con 24 / Ref 20 — Reform third, lowest since Jan 2025; Politico's poll roundup (cited in the Oldham coverage) has Labour ~6% ahead of Reform.
- ITV *Undercover: A Year in Reform* fallout continues to drive the conduct/abuse stories above (police report by Reform against ITV/board/reporters; standards probe; resignations).
- Staffordshire CC is on its fourth Reform leader in 18 months (Murray → Coles acting; formal selection 10 Dec) — covered in the 27–28 Oct runs.

? Source Links

Story	Source	Link
Farage 'physical altercation'	HuffPost UK	https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/nigel-farage-physical-altercation-budget_uk_6ae22af0e4b09cd24b6a9f2c
Farage on Tommy Robinson	The Independent (PA)	https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/nigel-farage-reform-uk-tommy-robinson-b3075168.html
~700 abusive messages to reporter	HoldtheFrontPage	https://www.holdthefrontpage.co.uk/2026/news/almost-700-abusive-messages-sent-to-reporter-over-reform-uk-social-media-post/
Harrison survives by one vote	Leicester Mercury (LDRS)	https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/local-news/reform-uk-leicestershire-leader-under-11217527

Story	Source	Link
Harrison pressure (twin)	Melton Times	https://www.meltontimes.co.uk/news/politics/leicestershire-county-council-leader-faces-pressure-to-step-down-after-a-vote-on-his-leadership-9316818
Paul Taylor profile	The Oldham Times	https://www.theoldhamtimes.co.uk/news/26679074.oldham-reform-leader-paul-taylor-plans-take-power/
Taylor sets out plans	Oldham Evening Chronicle	https://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/139/news/420/reform-s-new-leader-sets-out-plans-for-oldham
Tice welcomes DSA purchase	Yorkshire Post (LDRS)	https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/politics/doncaster-sheffield-airport-richard-tice-welcomes-airport-purchase-approval-and-slams-bad-leasehold-deal-9315868
DSA deal background	Business Doncaster	https://www.businessdoncaster.co.uk/news/new-deal-set-to-bring-added-certainty-to-doncaster-sheffield-airport/
Finch vs school Farage 'trial'	Leamington Observer	https://leamingtonobserver.co.uk/news/farage-school-trial-angers-reform-uk-leader-of-warwickshire-county-council-65514/
Scrap ETS proposal	letsrecycle.com	https://www.letsrecycle.com/news/reform-proposes-to-scrap-ets-in-alternative-budget/
KCC complaints rocket	KentOnline (LDRS)	https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/councillor-complaints-rocket-at-kent-county-council-346742/
KCC Oracle £21.5m rise	ShepwayVox	https://shepwayvox.org/2026-10-29/reform-uk-promised-to-watch-every-penny-so-why-has-kccs-oracle-cost-forecast-risen-21-5m-on-its-watch/
Phillipson anti-racism column	Sunderland Echo	https://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/opinion/columnists/bridget-phillipson-mp-sunderland-will-always-stand-against-racism-even-if-our-reform-council-doesnt-9316690
The Reformer launch	Press Gazette (snippet-level)	https://pressgazette.co.uk/news/reform-launches-newspaper-amid-plans-for-seven-day-digital-newsroom/
Halloween Conservatives	New Statesman (snippet-level)	https://www.newstatesman.com/ (opinion, 28 Oct)

Compiled 29/10/2026 09:20 GMT by Hermes cron (NewsNow Reform UK topic-hub sweep). Blocked-item recovery: Playwright :8090 (National World titles), plain urllib (HuffPost, Leicester Mercury), web_search snippets (Press Gazette, New Statesman). FlareSolverr down this run (ChromeDriver 154 vs Chrome 156 mismatch locally; Winbox endpoint timed out).

Revision #2
Created 2026-10-29 09:21:54 UTC by Admin
Updated 2026-10-29 09:21:55 UTC by Admin