UK Headlines — 29 Oct 2026

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Thursday 29 October 2026 — UK & world news sweep

? Top Story: Healey's First Budget Dominates Every Front Page

Chancellor **John Healey** delivered his first Autumn Budget yesterday (Wed 28 Oct), and Thursday's papers are wall-to-wall reaction — verdicts ranging from "for the many not the few" (Mirror) to "a snoozer" (Mail) and "cold comfort" (Times). The centrepiece: a **£100 Household Energy Payment** for ~20 million households in council tax bands A–D from January, funded by tax rises on banks, savers and landlords. The Metro asks whether the pre-Halloween announcement is "a £100 trick or treat?"

Healey framed the Budget as offering "breathing space" for struggling families, "built on fiscal discipline" — deliberately modest, kicking the big welfare and defence spending decisions to next autumn. A senior government figure told the FT: "not radical, but we don't think the markets would have worn something bigger." Healey also warned of "global economic storms", including the war in Iran, keeping the cost-of-living crisis alive.

?? UK Politics

Budget 2026 — the key measures (Commons Library / OBR)

Measure	Detail
Energy	£100 Household Energy Payment (bands A–D, England, from Jan 2027, ~£2.6bn); gas standing charges to be removed by end-2027; zero VAT on domestic energy extended to July 2027

Measure	Detail
Tax on banks	Corporation tax surcharge up 3pts to 6% for 15 months from Jan 2027
Savers & landlords	Income tax on property & savings income: 24%/44%/49% from April 2027 (Telegraph: "£4.3bn tax raid on savers and landlords")
Fuel duty	Frozen until 1 July 2027; 5p cut then fully reversed + RPI rise (angry reaction from £30k earners: "no fuel duty cut")
Minimum wage	NLW/NMW up 3.9% from April 2027
Housing	+£1.5bn Social & Affordable Homes Programme (~10,000 homes); new First Time Buyer ISA (April 2029); "Your First Home" equity loans; cash ISA £20k allowance cut scrapped
Pubs & business	Rate relief for pubs/live music venues up from 15% to 35%; RHL relief more generous than non-RHL in 2027–29
Gambling	Machine games duty to 25% from April 2027
Carers	Earnings limit reformed — no more losing all benefit for small overruns
Welfare	Healey promises reduction in the welfare bill before next election; "moral duty" to help young people out of work
Devolution (England)	Fiscal devolution roadmap — some income tax revenues assigned to mayors

OBR forecasts: 2027 GDP growth cut from 1.6% → **1.0%**; inflation raised from 2.0% → **3.4%** (Middle East conflict energy costs). Current budget surplus still pencilled in for 2029-30, but smaller. Departmental budgets may need cutting to fund defence spending pledges. The Times front page: "Tax rises needed to plug £35bn gap."

Political reaction

- **Kemi Badenoch** (Conservative): Budget "not bold enough" — government is "overspent, overborrowed, overtaxed and drowning in an out-of-control welfare system". Express front page: "Really, is that it?"
- **Sir Ben Wallace** (ex-Tory defence sec): Healey put "benefits before bullets".
- **PM** rules out a snap general election, hits back at "not bold enough" claims: "the economy will improve" (i Paper).
- **Nigel Farage** claims he skipped the Commons on Budget day to avoid a "physical altercation" with another MP over seating — his green reservation slip had been removed (Guardian: it wasn't properly date-stamped).
- **Chris Mason (BBC):** Budget "felt cautious despite its range of small measures". Sun: "all the chancellor had to offer was the sound of the cans being kicked down the road". Mirror's Kevin Maguire asks if Healey could have been braver with a bigger raid on banks and oil & gas.

- Think tank verdict: Healey delivered a "scattergun" Budget that failed to tackle the UK's challenges.
- **Ofcom** outlines ways social media platforms can verify users' ages, as the UK social media ban for under-16s approaches.

? World

- **Spain train disaster:** At least **68 killed** and dozens injured when a Madrid–Seville high-speed train collided with a stationary train south of Madrid — Spain's deadliest rail crash in 13 years. Three days of national mourning begin. Transport minister blames an "inexplicable" order from a command centre after an initial computer failure. The Independent leads: "Spain is grieving".
- **Israel's election deadlock** — a sign of the country's deep divisions; messy result; Netanyahu shares AI image of Arab voters during the election.
- **North Korea** fires around 10 ballistic missiles toward the sea off its east coast, Seoul says.
- **US sanctions Rwanda's defence ministry** over the DR Congo conflict.
- **El Salvador sends 2,000 troops to Haiti** to rescue four missing soldiers.
- **Flávio Bolsonaro denies fleeing Brazil** after landing in Miami.
- **Tanzania** accused of weaponising counterterrorism laws; demands for post-poll justice.
- **RFK Jr** to expand US access to unapproved peptides.
- **King Charles** shows off dance moves in the streets of Nassau on day two of his Caribbean tour, having acknowledged the "suffering of the past" of slavery at its start.
- US conservative activists charged with unlawful voting in an election stunt; Hayden Panettiere's death ruled accidental; Hello Kitty maker Sanrio cuts ties with a Japanese spy drama after China backlash.

??????? Wales

- **Wales to mirror the £100 energy payment:** Finance Minister **Elin Jones** confirms Welsh households in bands A–D will get the payment (~1 million homes). But she says the extra £450m over three years for Wales is a **"real-terms cut"** below inflation; UK Treasury minister **Torsten Bell** retorts Wales already got "shed loads" in a one-off payment last year. Plaid ministers say the Budget leaves them with cuts. BBC vox pops: "It helps, but it's not enough."
- **Talks over a Plaid child poverty payment "positive"**, says the Welsh Secretary.
- Chancellor announces funding for **three projects in Wales**.
- **Roman ruins found at a school** could add £1m to its repair bill.
- **Zombie knife killing:** the killer tells court his co-accused were not involved in the stabbing; earlier he said "I'm terribly sorry".

- Three cleared of illegal dog breeding and fraud; police criticised over delayed 999 response after two young climbers died; terminally ill mum refused PIP despite being unable to talk, walk or dress herself.
- **Wales' papers:** WRU drops a rugby bombshell; Adventurer completes 400-mile expedition after losing contact with his team.

?? Crime & Courts

- **Tommy Robinson guilty** of harassing two Daily Mail journalists (Southwark Crown Court). The far-right activist (real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, 43) hired investigators in "bullyboy, intimidatory tactics"; journalists and their families fled their homes. Faces **up to 10 years** in jail.
- **Russell Brand trial:** tells the court sexual consent is "fundamental" and it was wrong to use fame to "facilitate" sex with women; key takeaways span a sex "obsession" and losing friends.
- **Huntingdon train attack trial:** the knifeman asked a passenger "do you want to die?" — he "caused terror and fear on unimaginable scale", court hears.
- **Chris Brown** given a suspended sentence over a bottle attack at a London club.
- Two in court over an alleged **Iran-linked plot at RAF Fairford**; a senior US Air Force member at the US embassy in London is being investigated over abuse images.
- Independent review announced into the murder of student **Henry Nowak**.

? Business

- **Poundland on the "brink of declaring insolvency"** (Telegraph exclusive); the Business Secretary writes to its owner as administration fears build.
- **Thames Water** creditors to vote on an emergency **£2.4bn loan** as cash runs low.
- **GSK shares dive** on weaker vaccine sales.
- Budget business reaction: retail & hospitality assess the rates relief — "there has to be a bolder shift"; Guardian: will it deliver "growth in every postcode"?
- **Toblerone owner sues** a British vegan chocolate brand over its chunky shape.
- Google outage exposes UK reliance on a handful of cloud providers — "too big to not fail".

?? Weather

- More **high winds** hit parts of the UK as **Storm Boelo** clean-up continues; drivers warned of **dangerous fog** conditions.

- Retailers report a rise in sales of radios and tinned foods after official "stock up" advice — experts and low-income families call the guidance "tone deaf at best".

? Feel-Good Roundup

- **Mum goes to Iceland as pilot of her daughter's flight** □□
- Grandmother's jewellery hoard found in a dusty Malvern attic during a house clearance **sells for £500,000+** at auction.
- **Gurkha band plays to veterans** in their new Colchester home.
- Babydoll singer says life will "never be the same again" after a **UK number one**.
- **Harry Kane**: "a dream come true" — on his Ballon d'Or win.
- Lottery winner: "I can pursue my dream".

? Quick Summary

#	Story	Key detail
1	Autumn Budget dominates front pages	£100 energy payment (bands A–D); bank tax +3pts; 24/44/49% on savings & property income from Apr 2027
2	OBR downgrades	2027 growth 1.6%→1.0%; inflation 2.0%→3.4%; "£35bn gap" (Times)
3	Spain train crash	68+ dead, 3 days of mourning; "inexplicable" command-centre order
4	Tommy Robinson convicted	Harassment of 2 Mail journalists; up to 10 years
5	Wales mirrors £100 payment	~1m homes; Elin Jones: overall package a "real-terms cut"; Bell: "shed loads" row
6	Farage Commons absence row	Claims he avoided "physical altercation" over seating
7	Poundland near insolvency	Business Secretary writes to owner
8	Russell Brand trial	Consent "fundamental", fame shouldn't "facilitate" sex — testimony
9	Ofcom age verification	Methods outlined for social media age checks
10	Storm Boelo	High winds continue; fog warnings; "stock up" advice backlash

#	Story	Key detail
11	Badenoch: "not bold enough"	PM rules out snap election: "the economy will improve"
12	North Korea missiles	~10 ballistic missiles fired toward east coast

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Compiled: Thursday 29 October 2026, 08:05 GMT — sources: BBC News (front-page review c6j470yx0nweo, UK, World, Wales), House of Commons Library Autumn Budget 2026 summary (CBP-12252), The Guardian UK, Sky News, IFS. SearXNG search via Hermes.

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