

# Michael Winstanley — Conservative Candidate

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**Update 10 Jun:** Telegraph profile: "It's lonely in Makerfield when your odds are 1,000-1" (8 Jun) — canvassing in Orrell, effectively a spectator. HuffPost: "Tory Humiliated By Makerfield Poll" — Conservatives "nowhere in sight." Cons polling ~1% in Survation — total collapse. BBC 14-candidate Q&A published (10 Jun). Kemi Badenoch endorsement (20 May) still circulating but irrelevant., Makerfield By-Election 2026

| **Last updated:** 27 May 2026 (new: full candidate list confirmed; Blair endorses Burnham setting context for Tory absence) **By-election date:** Thursday 18 June 2026

## Bio

| Detail               | Info               |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Full name            | Michael Winstanley |
| Party                | Conservative       |
| Constituency         | Makerfield         |
| First-time candidate | Likely             |

## How They Got Selected

Named as Conservative candidate on 20 May 2026. Selected amid questions over Kemi Badenoch's approach to the by-election — the Conservatives have been largely absent from the campaign narrative, with the race dominated by Labour vs Reform.

# Polling

| Date   | Pollster                 | Winstanley % | Notes                               |
|--------|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 23 May | Survation / Sunday Times | 2%           | Trailing far behind main contenders |

## What It Means

The Conservative vote in Makerfield has collapsed. Once a Labour-Conservative marginal, the party is now a fringe presence — polling at just 2% and being squeezed by both Reform UK (right) and Labour (centre-left). The Tories are effectively spectators in this by-election.

## Twitter/X Discussion

“ Source: Nitter search, May 2026

Winstanley gets modest Twitter coverage, mostly from Wigan locals and Conservative accounts. Key themes:

- **Former Mayor of Wigan:** "Michael Winstanley, he's a former Mayor of Wigan and a really good candidate to have. Sadly he'll be squeezed out of the picture by a bloke with questions to answer about how he refers to women and a bloke who is only doing this to further his career. It's all so wrong." — a local defending him against the national circus
- **Conservative Party promo:** Conservative accounts tweet about him positively — "Michael Winstanley, Conservative candidate for the Makerfield by-election, is sending the right message loud and clear — we are the party with the best plans and the serious vision for Britain"
- **Squeezed candidate narrative:** Widely predicted to come 5th or 6th, with one tweet predicting him to be "ahead of Labour" only as a joke. Multiple tweets question why Tories should even bother: "Shouldn't you as a Conservative be supporting Michael Winstanley?"
- **Loony Party comparison:** "Do you think that the Tory party in the by election in Makerfield will get more votes than the Monster Raving Loony Party?" — the fact this is a genuine question reflects how far the Tory vote has collapsed
- **"DESTROYED over Tory immigration record"** (22 May, reshared 24-25 May): A Vox Populi video showed Winstanley being challenged on the Conservative immigration record by activist Will Coleshill — shared by right-wing populist media

- **Kemi Badenoch's promo** (20 May, still circulating): The Conservative leader tweeted directly promoting Winstanley: "Makerfield deserves a credible voice in Parliament, someone focused on delivering proper border security, lower taxes and a government that is actually on your side."
- **Polling joke**: One user's prediction had "every other candidate (Jake Austin, Michael Winstanley, Alan 'Howlin' Laud Hope) ahead of Labour" as a set — lumping Winstanley in with the Loony Party candidate
- **Conservative Party promo** (still circulating 26 May): "Michael Winstanley, Conservative candidate for the Makerfield by-election, is sending the right message loud and clear — we are the party with the best plans and the serious vision for Britain"
- **26 May Nitter confirmations**: No new Winstanley-specific developments. The Conservative campaign remains invisible in the race. Some Tory accounts continue to promote him quietly but with negligible engagement.
- **27 May — full candidate list confirmed**: Winstanley is one of 10 candidates on the ballot. Former PM Tony Blair's intervention (backing Burnham but criticising Starmer's Government) dominated the day's political news — further squeezing the Conservative campaign out of headlines. Blair's essay on the Labour Government being in its "comfort zone" offered Tories little comfort as a rallying point for Winstanley's campaign.

## Reddit Discussion

Barely discussed on Reddit. When mentioned, it's usually in the context of how far the Conservatives have fallen in their former heartlands. The "2% polling" figure is cited as evidence of the party's existential crisis in the North.

- [BBC — Conservatives name Michael Winstanley](#)
- [The Telegraph — Questions over Kemi Badenoch's approach to Makerfield](#)
- [PollCheck — Makerfield By-Election](#)

## 5 June 2026

- Appeared on BBC Question Time Makerfield special (4 Jun) as Conservative candidate
- Survation #2 poll: 1% (-1 from first poll)

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