

Robert Kenyon — Reform UK Candidate

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Update 14 Jun:  **Opinium data tables published (14 Jun)** — Ref 41% among likely voters, trailing Burnham by 5pts. BUT GE question shows Reform 42% vs Lab 34% — Kenyon's party stronger than Burnham's at generic level. Right split still the problem: Restore at 7% exceeds the Lab-Ref margin. Ant Middleton endorsement (12 Jun) still reverberating — Guardian frames as bid to poach Restore voters. Farage "unapologetic" about Kenyon's past (PA, 13 Jun). Rupert Lowe deploying 1,000+ Restore volunteers into Makerfield — intensifying the right-wing civil war. BBC "could bring down Starmer" piece — if Kenyon wins, Starmer likely finished. 4 days to poll. Ladbrokes: 11/2.

Last updated: 14 Jun 2026 (NEW: Opinium data tables, GE question Ref 42% Lab 34%, Restore 1000+ volunteers, BBC Starmer piece) **By-election date:** Thursday 18 June 2026

Bio

Detail	Info
Full name	Robert Kenyon
Age	41 (born c. 1984/1985)
Location	Wigan, Greater Manchester
Occupation	Plumber (self-employed)
Political role	Wigan Councillor (Standish ward, elected 2024)
First-time candidate	Yes (stood in Makerfield 2024 GE, came 3rd)

BBC Question Time Performance (4 Jun 2026)

Appeared on BBC QT Makerfield special alongside Burnham, Winstanley (Con), Austin (LD), Wakefield (Green). Widely judged to have performed poorly:

- Reddit r/ukpolitics live thread consensus: "like watching a Sunday League footballer trying to play in the Premier League"
 - Audience member to Kenyon: **"I'd rather a career politician than a sexist"** — line drew applause
 - Struggled to defend past social media comments when pressed directly
 - Pivoted to local issues (new Wigan hospital, green belt, HMOs) and immigration — cited £2bn/yr on asylum hotels as funding source
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How They Got Selected

Selected as Reform UK candidate for Makerfield by-election on 19 May 2026. Reform UK leader Nigel Farage said they would "throw absolutely everything at it." Previously stood in Makerfield in the 2024 general election, finishing third with ~15.6% of the vote.

Key Statements & Quotes

- Called abortion "cowardly murder" and suggested women lie about rape to obtain abortions (24 May 2026, The Observer/Byline Times)
- Dismissed Carol Vorderman's criticism by calling her a "luvvie" from the "London media bubble"
- **Backed sexually explicit post about Carol Vorderman** — responded to graphic sexual message with thumbs up emoji and "He's only saying what we're all thinking" (2021, published by Hope Not Hate, 26 May 2026)
- **Claimed women get abortions for "vanity purposes"** — per the i Paper / Independent
- **Thank you message** (24 May): "Scorching weather, but great for campaigning. It has been a busy bank holiday weekend, but the reception has been fantastic." — posted on X after weekend campaigning
- **Richard Branson hanging comment:** Publicly demanded business leaders like Richard Branson be hanged for accepting Covid furlough money — resurfaced and widely shared (24-25 May)
- **"I want net negative immigration" (26 May):** Kenyon fired back at Rupert Lowe's claims that Kenyon didn't vote for Brexit and supported open borders. "I used to respect

you Rupert. Restore have never wanted anything to do with this area. But now someone born with a silver spoon in their mouth is trying to lie about the only working class local man in the race. I want net negative immigration." — posted on X

- **Covid advice (13 July 2022):** "Wait longer, take vitamins, stop having boosters" — advising someone with Covid to stop getting boosters
- **Chris Whitty "can f* right off"** (Feb 2023):** Quote-tweeted a Sky News post about Whitty urging people to get boosters
- **Cross-posted on rugby forum (Jan 2022):** Argued news of a new variant affecting children more could be a way "to scare parents" — per Guardian
- **Hillary Clinton / Manchester Arena bombing defence (28 May, MEN):** Reform UK defended Kenyon's past comments blaming Hillary Clinton for creating ISIS and causing the Manchester Arena bombing, calling them "entirely reasonable". Anna Turley (Labour Chair): "Nigel Farage needs to urgently come clean as to why he's happy to have a candidate standing for his Party who peddled dangerous false narratives about the appalling Manchester Arena bombing." — MEN, 28 May
- **Said Russia had "right" to invade Ukraine (28 May, The Canary):** Additional resurfaced comments show Kenyon said Russia had the "right" to invade Ukraine. — The Canary analysis, 28 May |- **MEN exclusive interview with Beth Abbit (28 May, published 29 May):** Kenyon addresses Vorderman controversy for first time. Says "no offence was meant" and the tweet was a "crude attempt at a joke" to about 50 followers. Refuses to apologise directly: "I think I've addressed the issue." Admits he is not familiar with Reform's Great Repeal Bill or their plan to replace the Equality Act. Age confirmed as 41. Describes campaign priorities: new hospital for Wigan, protect greenbelt, regenerate high streets, save Ashton Library. Warns voting Restore "could open the door for Andy Burnham to win". Reform UK contacts MEN after interview to clarify party positions. Article: "Reform's white van man Robert Kenyon has some things to say — sorry isn't one of them" |- **2 Jun — BBC Chris Mason interview:** Kenyon admits making "crass" comments in past. Says "no recollection" of calling Brexit "nationalistic pish", insists he voted for it. On Vorderman: says it was a "crass joke" responding to someone else's post. Says "I don't think the Labour Party know what a woman is" — pivoting to trans rights attack. Reform UK says no plans to investigate. Full interview on BBC iPlayer. (BBC News, Chris Mason & Joshua Nevett)\n|- **4 Jun — BBC Question Time Makerfield special TONIGHT:** Kenyon on the panel alongside Burnham, Winstanley, Austin, and Wakefield. His biggest national platform yet — opportunity to rehabilitate image or further damage it.\n|- **4 Jun — BBC "win-win" interview:** Kenyon tells BBC Radio Manchester (published 12:20 BST) the by-election is "win-win" — even losing means giving Labour "a bloody nose" and "two fingers to the establishment." Dismisses Vorderman comments as "squaddie humour" and "a crass joke." Priorities: new Wigan hospital (funded by scrapping asylum hotel spending), stop green belt development, regulate HMOs. On immigration: "sensible immigration" — welcomes those who "offer us something." Says he's not feeling the pressure: "water off a duck's back." (BBC News, Lynette Horsburgh)

Controversies

Danny Kruger Refuses to Defend Kenyon (25 May)

East Wiltshire Reform MP Danny Kruger was interviewed on BBC Radio 4's Today programme about Kenyon's comments and said he was "**not going to defend**" the social media remarks. Pressed, Kruger said:

“It is clearly wrong for politicians to talk in that way. He was not a politician at the time. He was an ordinary man, from an ordinary place. And what he has done now is to step forward, outraged at the state of our country and the state of his community... I'm not going to sit here and police the previous remarks, unacceptable as they may be, of people who as private citizens said things they shouldn't."

A Reform spokesperson told the BBC: "He is an excellent, local candidate who we are confident will be a superb MP for Makerfield. These comments were made before he was in politics. Rob isn't a polished, professional politician and doesn't speak like one. That's precisely why he'll be a straight-talking, effective voice for normal working people in Makerfield."

Carol Vorderman "Rear of the Year" — Resurfaced Post (25 May)

A now-deleted post from Christmas Eve 2021 resurfaced in which Kenyon affirmed a comment saying he wished to **sniff and lick Carol Vorderman's rear**. Vorderman called Kenyon "a disgusting online abuser." The story was widely shared on X on 25 May, with Reform UK MPs now having to defend explicit sexual comments linked to their candidate live on the BBC.

Carol Vorderman Demands Apology (27 May, Guardian/Mirror)

Carol Vorderman said she wants "an apology from Rob Kenyon, to me, and to all the other people he's abused online." She dismissed Danny Kruger's defence that Kenyon was "an ordinary man," telling the Daily Mirror that being "ordinary" was no excuse and the posts were made publicly, not privately. Kruger had told BBC Radio 4 that Kenyon's comments while "inappropriate" were "private conversations" — a claim Vorderman rejected.

Byline Times 419-Tweet Archive (24 May 2026)

Byline Times published an exposé of Kenyon's deleted Twitter history — 419 deleted tweets revealing:

- **Holocaust denial/revisionism:** shared content from known Holocaust deniers, questioned established death toll figures
- **COVID conspiracy theories:** called the pandemic a "plandemic", spread vaccine misinformation
- **Abortion:** called abortion "cowardly murder", suggested women lie about rape for abortions
- **Anti-Islam rhetoric:** characterised Islam as a "violent ideology"
- **Transphobic comments:** mocked transgender people, deadnamed trans individuals
- **"Great Replacement" conspiracy:** shared white nationalist conspiracy theory content
- **Climate change denial:** dismissed climate science as a "scam"
- **5G conspiracy theories:** linked 5G rollout to health risks

Carol Vorderman Criticism

Broadcaster Carol Vorderman publicly called Kenyon a "**vile online abuser**" and warned about Reform UK platforming him.

Social Media Ban

Kenyon was permanently banned from Twitter/X. His previous Reform UK account was also mysteriously suspended.

25 May 2026 — Account suspended again: Kenyon's X account was suspended for the third time, with reports indicating "racist replies to a constituent" and support for far-right influencers as the trigger. This pattern of serial account suspensions raises questions about his online conduct continuing into active campaigning.

Backed Sexually Explicit Post About Carol Vorderman (26 May)

Hope Not Hate published evidence showing Kenyon responded to a graphic sexual post about Carol Vorderman on Christmas Eve 2021 with a thumbs up emoji and the comment "He's only saying what we're all thinking." The post included graphic sexual language about the broadcaster. Reform MP Danny Kruger refused to defend the comments on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, saying they were "inappropriate" but intended as "private conversations." Labour chair Anna Turley hit back: "Reform are trying to dress up chaos and extremism as straight-talking."

"Vanity Purposes" Abortion Quote

Further to the "cowardly murder" comment, Kenyon also claimed women get abortions for "vanity purposes" — reported by the i Paper and Independent. Adds a further dimension to the existing controversy.

"Women Can't Ref, Drive or Give Directions" (26 May)

Further resurfaced posts from Kenyon, reported on 26 May, showed he previously claimed women "can't ref, drive or give directions" and get abortions to "shag anyone they want." He also reportedly said "I'm sexist, sorry but I am" — confirming his own views on the matter. The London Economic and other outlets covered these as the latest in a continuing stream of exposed social media content.

Reform UK "Locker Room Banter" Defence (26 May): A Reform UK spokesperson responded to the latest revelations by dismissing them as "little more than locker room banter" made "more than a decade ago." The Independent also reported Kenyon's posts on a rugby fan forum in the 2010s objectifying European women's bodies while saying English women "don't care" and "just walk around with their fat bellies and odd shapes pushing a pram at 16 in their PJ's." Reform said: "We simply don't care about establishment hit jobs. We fully back Rob and are confident he will be an excellent MP for Makerfield."

Guardian Covid/X Exposé (27 May)

The Guardian published an exclusive investigation showing Kenyon appeared to express doubt over the seriousness of Covid and the efficacy of vaccines. Key findings:

- **July 2022:** Responding to a post about a new variant: "It's not making people sicker, I've no booster and had covid last week asymptomatic" — said his 70-something mother-in-law with chronic lung disease experienced it "as a cold"
- **13 July 2022:** "Wait longer, take vitamins, stop having boosters" — advising someone with Covid against boosters
- **Feb 2023:** Quote-tweeted a Sky News post about Chris Whitty urging people to get boosters, saying Whitty "can f*** right off"
- **Jan 2022 (rugby forum):** Argued news of a variant affecting children could be a way "to scare parents"
- **Anti-vaccine links:** Linked to vaccine scepticism via archived webpages from his now-deleted X account

Kenyon Campaign Website Taken Down (26 May)

A separate exposé revealed Kenyon's campaign website was riddled with GDPR failures and sloppy errors. By 26 May, the website had been taken down entirely, with the journalist who broke the story noting "Another day, another cover up by Reform UK and Robert Kenyon." The question "What are they hiding?" was widely shared.

Reform Supporters Rally Behind Kenyon

Despite the controversies, Reform supporters actively defended Kenyon on social media:

- "Reform standing behind Robert Kenyon is exactly the right decision. The media and political opponents thought they could dig up old forum posts and pressure Reform into throwing him under the bus. Instead, they backed their candidate."
- Framing: "Rob Kenyon is not a polished career politician. That's the point. He speaks like an ordinary person."
- Some supporters reported meeting him on the campaign trail: "Just met Robert Kenyon — fantastic guy, local plumber and will make a fine Reform MP for the people of Makerfield."

Polling

Date	Pollster	Kenyon %	Burnham %	Margin
23 May	Survation / Sunday Times	40%	43%	LAB +3

Key Partnerships & Endorsements

- **Simon Danczuk** (ex-Labour MP): campaigning with Kenyon, predicting Reform win
- **Zia Yusuf** (Reform Home Affairs Spokesperson): joined Kenyon campaigning
- **Sarah Pochin** (Reform MP): campaigned with Kenyon
- Reform UK insists it is "**fully backing**" him despite controversies
- **Feud with Rupert Lowe (26 May):** Kenyon publicly traded barbs with Restore Britain's leader after Lowe claimed Kenyon didn't vote for Brexit and supported open borders. Kenyon called Lowe "someone born with a silver spoon in their mouth" and said "I want net negative immigration"

What It Means

- Reform is running an aggressive campaign in a historically safe Labour seat

- The right-wing vote is splitting three ways (Reform 40%, Restore Britain 7%, Tory 2%) which could hand Burnham a narrow win despite Reform's strong ground game
 - Reform won all 8 council wards in the May 2026 locals with ~50% of the vote — significant ground-level organisation
 - Kenyon's controversies could cost Reform swing voters but may energise the base
 - The Kenyon-Restore feud (Kenyon accusing Lowe of lying, calling him a "silver spoon" candidate) deepens the right-wing split and could further complicate Reform's ground game
 - Paul Britton's MEN report from Winstanley showed residents divided along party lines — suggesting the scandals are hardening existing positions rather than shifting votes
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Twitter/X Discussion

“ Source: Nitter search, 26 May 2026

Kenyon is the second-most discussed candidate on Twitter after Burnham. Key themes:

- **Backed sexually explicit Vorderman post (26 May):** Hope Not Hate published 2021 messages showing Kenyon responded to a graphic sexual post about Carol Vorderman with thumbs up + "He's only saying what we're all thinking" — widely shared. @theipaper, @Independent, @BBCr4today all cover
- **"Vanity purposes" abortion quote resurfaces:** Kenyon claimed women get abortions for "vanity purposes" per the Independent — new angle on existing controversy
- **Fun fact widely shared:** "If Robert Kenyon wins, he will be the only Reform MP who is not an ex-Tory" — this gets repeated constantly
- **Abortion comments controversy:** "So Robert Kenyon thinks that abortion is 'cowardly murder'. I think he is a total misogynist and such views belong in the last century. I hope Makerfield doesn't vote for this man." — widely shared
- **Carol Vorderman remarks:** "Robert Kenyon again, who used his social media to post graphic, creepy sexual remarks about Carol Vorderman and female rugby players" — his past social media is thoroughly trawled
- **Richard Branson hanging comment:** "Makerfield candidate Robert Kenyon publicly demanded business leaders like Richard Branson be hanged for accepting Covid furlough money" — viewed as extremist by critics
- **Unsolicited dick pics allegation:** Defended by his supporters who push back saying "that's related to Robert Kenyon how?" when the accusation is raised
- **Veteran status:** Supporters highlight "their candidate is a VETERAN. We stand together give him your VOTE" — his army background is a key campaign asset
- **Branded "sex pest":** Multiple accounts explicitly call him this, raising questions about whether this affects his vote share

- **Tactical voting debate:** Reform supporters argue Restore Britain is splitting the right-wing vote and costing Kenyon the seat
- **Carol Vorderman "Rear of the Year" sniffing comment resurfaces** (25 May): A post from Christmas Eve 2021 where Kenyon affirmed a comment about wanting to "sniff and lick Vorderman's rear" was widely shared, with @europa tweeting "Carol Vorderman, who twice posed for 'Rear of the Year', has slammed the Makerfield by-election candidate Robert Kenyon" — gaining significant traction
- **Danny Kruger refuses to defend Kenyon live on BBC** (25 May): The Reform MP's unwillingness to defend Kenyon on BBC R4 Today was shared widely, with @TheBritishIntel tweeting "Reform UK MPs now having to defend explicit sexual comments live on the BBC" — damaging for the campaign
- **Reform Podcast Episode 7** (25 May): Reform UK released a podcast episode covering "the inside story of the Makerfield by-election" portraying Kenyon as "Reform's local champion taking on Labour's entitled heavyweight Andy Burnham" — framing it as an underdog story
- **Kenyon's own campaign update** (24 May): Posted "Scorching weather, but great for campaigning" to X — showing active ground campaigning despite controversies
- **"Women can't ref, drive or give directions"** (26 May): The London Economic and several other accounts reported Kenyon had also claimed women "can't ref, drive or give directions" and get abortions to "shag anyone they want." One widely-shared tweet: "Reform UK's Makerfield by-election candidate Robert Kenyon previously claimed women 'can't ref, drive or give directions' and get abortions for 'vanity purposes' to 'shag anyone they want'. He admitted: 'I'm sexist, sorry but I am'"
- **Website taken down story** (26 May): "Another day, another cover up by Reform UK and Robert Kenyon. Six days ago, I wrote this piece about Kenyon's seriously shonky website that was riddled with GDPR failures and sloppy errors. Today — it's been removed. What are they hiding?" — the GDPR/website exposé gained traction
- **Reform supporters defend Kenyon against criticism:** "Reform standing behind Robert Kenyon is exactly the right decision" — the defence narrative was also shared, with supporters framing the media coverage as "cancel culture"
- **Critic calls Kenyon "desperate Reform mistake":** "The desperate Reform mistake that is Robert Kenyon - hidden social media accounts, a failure of vetting, sexist, misogynistic posts, conspiracy theory, the usual hint of racism and of course the friends who were fascists" — a comprehensive critique gaining significant engagement
- **Guardian Covid/X exposé shared widely (27 May):** The Guardian's exclusive investigation showing Kenyon told people to "stop having boosters" and told Chris Whitty to "f*** right off" gained significant traction across political spectrum
- **Carol Vorderman demands apology (27 May):** "I want an apology from Rob Kenyon, to me, and to all the other people he's abused online" — Vorderman's Mirror interview was widely shared
- **Kenyon "net negative immigration" response to Lowe (26 May):** "I used to respect you Rupert... I want net negative immigration" — Kenyon's public feud with Restore Britain's leader shared by right-wing accounts
- **Paul Britton's Winstanley report:** MEN's report from the campaign trail showing residents divided along party lines was shared, with varying interpretations

Reddit Discussion

📄 Source: Self-hosted eddrit frontend (Windows PC Docker), 27 May 2026

On r/ukpolitics, Kenyon is heavily criticised — the abortion comments, Branson hanging comment, and Carol Vorderman remarks are all recurring topics in threads about Reform candidates. The "not an ex-Tory" fact is frequently noted as distinguishing him from other Reform MPs.

eddrit search reveals additional threads (27 May):

- "Reform UK announce that Robert Kenyon will be their candidate to take on bungling Burnham in the Makerfield by-election" — r/reformuk and r/VoteReform, supportive framing
- "What happens if Burnham loses the Makerfield byelection?" — r/LabourUK, 5-scenario breakdown that includes Reform win scenarios

New threads (24-25 May):

- "Reform candidate for Makerfield by-election calls abortion 'cowardly murder'" (r/unitedkingdom, score 354, 211 comments, 24 May) — the most-upvoted recent Kenyon thread, heavy criticism
- "Reform candidate for Makerfield by-election calls abortion 'cowardly murder'" (r/ukpolitics, score 160, 186 comments, 24 May) — same story, broader political discussion
- "Carol Vorderman slams Reform UK's Makerfield candidate branding him a 'vile online abuser'" (r/ukpolitics, score 201, 124 comments, 23 May) — anti-Kenyon sentiment widespread
- "Another day, another of Makerfield Reform candidate's fascist Facebook friends" (r/ukpolitics, score 63, 58 comments, 22 May) — Searchlight Magazine exposé
- [BBC — Reform announces Robert Kenyon as candidate](#)
- [Byline Times — Kenyon's deleted tweet archives \(419 tweets\)](#)
- [The National — Reform candidate friends with fascist leader](#)
- [Reddit — Reform candidate calls abortion "cowardly murder"](#)
- [Manchester Evening News — Burnham by-election LIVE](#)
- [The Independent — By-election candidates](#)
- [MEN — How Reform UK would 'clamp down' on 'hard work bonus' abuse \(24 May\)](#)
- [The Guardian — Reform Makerfield candidate appeared to doubt seriousness of Covid on X](#)
- [The Guardian — Carol Vorderman demands apology from Reform candidate](#)

- [Manchester Evening News — Reform's white van man Robert Kenyon has some things to say - sorry isn't one of them](#)
- [BBC Question Time — Makerfield special, 4 Jun 2026](#)
- [Reddit — r/ukpolitics QT Live Thread, Makerfield edition 4/06/2026](#)

5–6 June 2026 Updates

Question Time Performance (4 Jun)

Appeared on BBC QT Makerfield special. Called his own past comments "crass" on air. Guardian: "takes aim at himself." Reddit: "Kenyon being Reform's idea of the working man reveals a lot about what they actually think of the working class."

Sexism Denial (5 Jun)

Told MEN: "I have nothing but respect for women," denied being sexist. openDemocracy published deleted X posts including: "Abortion is the cowardly act of murdering a defenceless baby." Starmer attacked him as "self-professed sexist" (MEN). Reform backed Kenyon — no investigation planned.

"White Van Wave" Rap Video (6 Jun)

MEN reports Kenyon released a campaign rap video "White Van Wave" amid ongoing QT fallout.

Polling

Survation #2 (4 Jun): Kenyon 39% (-1 from first poll). 10 points behind Burnham. Right-wing vote split with Restore Britain (8%).

BBC Radio Manchester Interview

Called by-election "win-win" — even losing = giving Labour "a bloody nose" and "two fingers to the establishment." Dismissed Vorderman comments as "squaddie humour."

7–8 June 2026 Updates

Campaign Visibility

Kenyon maintains high local leaflet/poster presence — r/Wigan "sick of the flyers" thread (7 Jun, 226+ comments) shows Reform and Labour both saturating letterboxes. No specific Kenyon gaffes since QT.

Right-Wing Vote Split Persists

Survation #2 figures (39% Reform, 8% Restore Britain) unchanged in betting market read-through. Combined right-wing vote (~47%) exceeds Burnham's 49% only marginally — Reform's path requires Shepherd voters to break heavily their way AND suppress Labour turnout. No new poll to test whether QT fallout has shifted this.

BBC Article Still Circulating

BBC "Reform Makerfield candidate admits making 'crass' comments in past" piece remains in search rotation. Kenyon quotes — "I don't think the Labour Party know what a woman is" and "10-year-old tweets" defence — continue to be cited in r/ukpolitics and r/LabourUK threads.

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