

Jon Burrows

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Role: Co-opted Aug 2025; UUP Leader; UUP MLA **Constituency:** North Antrim **Party:** UUP | **Last updated:** 20 June 2026|

Bio

Detail	Info
Name	Jon Burrows
Constituency	North Antrim
Party	UUP
First elected	2022 (current mandate)
Role	Co-opted Aug 2025; UUP Leader; UUP MLA

Key Information

- MLA for North Antrim
- Became UUP leader in January 2026 following Doug Beattie's resignation as UUP leader (Sept 2024) — Burrows was unopposed for the post, a former police officer who had been co-opted as MLA for North Antrim in August 2025
- Co-opted to the Assembly August 2025

28 May 2026: Burrows denies "planned cull" of UUP MLAs

Burrows denied there is a "planned cull" of sitting UUP MLAs amid speculation about deselections, particularly concerning former leader Doug Beattie in Upper Bann and Alan Chambers in North Down. He said candidates for next year's Assembly election would be chosen "fairly and transparently" and he would not be "intervening" in the decisions of constituency associations. He

stated all his MLAs are "valued" and they have the opportunity to go for reselection. *(Source: BBC)*

Craigavon councillor Kate Evans quit the UUP during this period, citing "strain of internal party politics."

31 May 2026: Doug Beattie resigns from UUP

Beattie resigned from the UUP with immediate effect, saying his membership was no longer "tenable." In his resignation letter, Beattie claimed Burrows told him he intended to reopen a disciplinary matter regarding historical social media posts (already dealt with four years ago), calling it a "deliberate and vindictive" attempt to drive him out. Beattie said an "insidious campaign of rumour and gossip" was waged against him and that the party no longer reflects a "moderate and progressive outlook."

The UUP responded that the party was preparing to suspend Beattie over "conduct and judgement" concerns, and that Beattie's resignation "overtook that process." The party did not accept his "characterisation of recent events."

3 June 2026: Burrows responds to Beattie fallout; MACR vote pressure; Dublin speech

||| - **Burrows "deeply disappointed" by Beattie's letter:** Burrows told BBC Radio Ulster's Evening Extra he has "a lot of respect" for Beattie but is "deeply disappointed" by his comments and doesn't "recognise his characterisation of me whatsoever." He "completely" rejected claims of an "insidious campaign of rumour and gossip" being directed at Beattie, saying it is his "responsibility to set high ethical standards" as leader. *(Source: The Irish News, Bairbre Holmes/PA)*

||| - **MACR petition of concern pressure:** Burrows refused to say whether his eight-strong MLA team will support the DUP's petition of concern to block raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) from 10 to 14. Sinn Féin, Alliance and SDLP back raising it. The DUP needs 30 signatures (has 25 DUP + 1 TUV, needs at least 4 UUP MLAs). Beattie (now independent) was in favour of raising to 12. Burrows said raising MACR would be "reckless" but that he would consult his team. *(Source: BBC News NI)*

4 June 2026: Dublin speech — "Peace is No Longer Enough"

|||- Burrows delivered a keynote address at the Hume Foundation in Dublin, arguing that while Northern Ireland is living through its most peaceful period in history, many people feel "the full promise of peace has not yet been realised." |||- He called for an era of reform, delivery and economic ambition, describing Stormont as "designed to exist, not excel." ||||- The speech was aimed at positioning the UUP as a serious party on economic issues despite the ongoing internal civil war with Beattie. (*Sources: News Letter, Love Ballymena*) | |### 15 June 2026: Burrows and three UUP MLAs back DUP petition blocking MACR raise ||||- Burrows, along with Diana Armstrong, Alan Chambers, and Robbie Butler, signed the DUP's petition of

concern blocking the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) from being raised from 10 to 12/14. The petition reached the 30-signature threshold (25 DUP + 1 TUV + 4 UUP), effectively killing the amendment. Sinn Féin MLAs walked out of the chamber in protest. ||||- Alliance deputy leader Eoin Tennyson called it "grubby, stroke politics at its worst." SF's Emma Sheerin accused Burrows of allowing himself to be "used as a pawn in the DUP's game." ||||- Burrows said the amendments were "flawed" and needed to be "fundamentally rewritten" — but the decision to side with the DUP is damaging for the party's moderate/liberal wing, already reeling from Beattie's resignation. (*Sources: BBC News NI, 15 June 2026*) | |### 17

June 2026: Burrows calls Stormont a "basket case" at Westminster NI Affairs Committee ||||- Giving evidence alongside other party leaders at the Westminster NI Affairs Committee's Stormont reform session, Burrows said most people regard Stormont as a "basket case" and described a "palpable disconnect" between the public and the institutions. ||||- He called for reform focused on delivery rather than constitutional tinkering, and said he wanted the Executive's empty ministerial seats filled and for proper functioning. ||||- His candid admission of Stormont's dysfunction came amid ongoing internal UUP tensions following Doug Beattie's resignation — further underscoring the party's weakened position ahead of the 2027 election.

(Sources: PA, Alloa Advertiser, Yahoo News) |

Twitter/X Discussion

“ Source: Nitter search, 26 May 2026

No significant discussion found on Nitter/X for this period — section created on setup.

Reddit Discussion

“ Source: Reddit, 26 May 2026

No significant discussion found yet — section created on setup.

Sources

- Northern Ireland Assembly: <https://www.niassembly.gov.uk/>
- BBC Northern Ireland: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/northern_ireland

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