

Greater Manchester Mayoral Candidates — Other Parties (Potential)

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“ The next Greater Manchester mayoral election is due in May 2028. No candidates have been formally declared by any party as of May 2026. This file profiles likely candidates based on previous elections and current party positions.

Last updated: 13 July 2026 (Sian Astley "migrant rapists" controversy, Reform urged to switch focus to Clacton, 7 candidates confirmed)

Key Developments (19-20 June 2026) — GREEN CAMPAIGN LAUNCH & CANDIDATE UPDATES

?? Polanski Claims "Two-Way Race" — Greens
vs Reform

In a major strategic intervention, Green Party leader **Zack Polanski** claimed the Greater Manchester mayoral race will be a "straight fight between the Greens and Reform" — effectively writing off Labour's chances. This is a significant escalation in Green ambitions for the mayoralty.

Green campaign launch: Polanski announced the party's formal campaign launch for Saturday 20 June, with the candidate expected to be revealed then.

Green candidate favourites:

- **Geraldine Coggins** (Trafford council Green group leader) — considered the favourite due to "extensive political and leadership experience"
- **Laurence Blackwell-Jones** (Manchester, co-founder of Greater Manchester Tenants Union)
- **Ashley Trigg** (Wigan/Leigh branch)

Green Party confidence: Their Facebook post noted "We said it was Greens vs Reform in Gorton and Denton, and we were right" — referencing their February 2026 by-election win. Polanski posted on Bluesky: "This is our moment to do something special. (Again!)"

Strategic context: The Greens see an opening due to Keir Starmer's unpopularity among left-wing voters in southern boroughs of GM. If Labour's national collapse continues, the Greens believe they can consolidate the left-wing vote.

Reform UK — Dan Barker Still Expected

- **Dan Barker** (Reform board member, 2024 mayoral candidate, former Conservative) remains the likely Reform candidate
- **Sian Astley** (leader of Reform group on Manchester council, 7 councillors) also tipped but has said "Baguley is my priority"
- Reform has made significant gains in northern GM boroughs (Wigan, Bolton, Oldham) in recent local elections

Full Updated Candidate Landscape

Party	Candidate	Status
Labour	Bev Craig	Frontrunner, applying (selection 19-26 June)
Reform UK	Dan Barker	Expected
Green	Geraldine Coggins	Favourites for nomination (launch 20 June)
Conservative	Nadim Muslim	Rumoured (Bolton council leader, GM Conservatives chair)
Lib Dem	Richard Kilpatrick	Rumoured (Didsbury councillor)

Party	Candidate	Status
Restore Britain	Marlon West	Rumoured (child exploitation campaigner)

Labour Selection Timeline

- Applications opened 19 June (5pm), close 21 June
- Longlist/interviews 22 June
- Shortlist published 23 June
- All-members ballot 24-26 June
- Result announced 26 June

Key Dates

- **20 June:** Green Party campaign launch (candidate announcement expected)
- **26 June:** Labour candidate announced
- **14 July:** Voter registration deadline
- **30 July 2026:** Mayoral by-election

Conservative — Likely Candidate

No candidate announced. In the 2024 election, the Conservative candidate was Nick Buckley, a local businessman and former police officer. He came second with 18.6%.

Likely profile: A local councillor or business figure. Given the Tory collapse in GM (polling at 2% in Makerfield), the Conservative candidate is unlikely to be competitive.

Reform UK — Likely Candidate

No candidate announced for 2028. Reform UK did not stand in the 2024 mayoral election (their candidate, Dan Barker, got 2.4%). However, Reform's surge in GM — winning all 8 Makerfield-area council wards in the May 2026 locals — means they will almost certainly field a serious candidate in 2028.

Likely profile: Could be Robert Kenyon if he doesn't win Makerfield, or another local figure. Reform will see the mayoralty as their best chance of a breakthrough in the North West.

Kenyon controversies (May 2026):

- On 26 May, uncovered old social media posts calling abortion "cowardly murder" — widely shared on r/Wigan, r/ukpolitics
 - On 27 May, the Guardian reported Kenyon previously described Brexiters as peddling "nationalistic pish"
 - Winstanley residents split on whether the posts are "disgusting" or "pub banter" (MEN, 27 May)
 - Kenyon didn't vote for Brexit, unearthed posts suggest (Independent, 27 May)
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Green Party — Likely Candidate

No candidate announced. In 2024, the Green candidate was Hannah Spencer, a local activist. She came third with 8.4%.

Likely profile: A local Green councillor or activist. The Greens have been growing in Manchester (won Gorton & Denton by-election Feb 2026) and may target the mayoralty more seriously.

Liberal Democrats — Likely Candidate

No candidate announced. In 2024, the Lib Dem candidate was Jake Austin (now the Lib Dem candidate in Makerfield). He came fifth with 5.9%.

Likely profile: Another local councillor. The Lib Dems are a minor force in GM mayoral elections but consistently stand.

Twitter/X Discussion

Very little mayoral-specific candidate discussion given the election is 2 years away. Most discourse focuses on Burnham's leadership prospects and the Makerfield by-election. The main theme is:

- **"Labour's collapse in the May 2026 locals has Reform UK surging — they're the clear favourites to snatch the mayoralty in a by-election"** — the risk if Burnham resigns

Kenyon Controversies Update (28-29 May)

Reform UK's likely mayoral candidate's controversies continue to mount:

- **"The Blood Waltz" novel revealed** — MEN reported (28 May) Kenyon self-published a WW2 thriller in 2017 with "danger, suspense, time-travel, Nazis, action, romance, and (almost) sex scenes". Available on Amazon for 99p. Reform UK quips they hope "there will be queues outside bookshops in Wigan".
- **Five social media controversies now:** calling abortion "cowardly murder", Brexiters "nationalistic pish", didn't vote for Brexit, racy Nazi thriller novel

Reddit Discussion

The mayoral election is barely discussed on Reddit at this stage. When mentioned, it's in the context of Burnham's future — if he leaves the mayoralty, who replaces him, and could that trigger a Reform breakthrough in GM.

Key Developments (30 May 2026)

SV Voting System Change — Labour Accused of "Rushing Through" Secondary Legislation

Labour is accused of rushing through the restoration of the Supplementary Vote (SV) system for mayoral elections via **secondary legislation**. Critics say this is explicitly designed to prevent Reform UK from winning a potential GM mayoral by-election if Burnham vacates the role. The move is being widely discussed on X as a Labour self-dealing measure.

Kenyon Controversies Continue

Further controversies for Reform UK's Makerfield candidate (and likely future mayoral candidate):

- **Carol Vorderman intervention:** Sending letters to female voters in Makerfield calling Kenyon a "little coward" — MEN exclusive (30 May)
- **Blamed Hillary Clinton for Arena bombing:** MEN reported (28 May) Reform UK described Kenyon blaming Hillary Clinton for the Manchester Arena bombing as "entirely reasonable"
- **Grew up in Merseyside, not Wigan:** MEN reported Kenyon attended primary school in Merseyside, not in Makerfield
- **Six controversies now:** abortion "cowardly murder", Brexiters "nationalistic pish", didn't vote for Brexit, Nazi thriller novel, Hillary Clinton blame, not local to the constituency

The growing list of Kenyon controversies has not appeared to significantly dent Reform UK's polling in Makerfield (polling at 40%, tight behind Burnham at 43%).

Grooming Gangs — Reform Attack Line Intensifies

Reform UK's chairman Zia Yusuf tweeted (30 May): "Andy Burnham had the power to stop the grooming gangs, but chose not to." The Daily Mail amplified this attack. Nick Buckley MBE (Conservative candidate in 2024 mayoral election and prominent child protection campaigner) also criticised Burnham's record: "Andy Burnham could have been the hero we needed in Greater Manchester but only continued the cover up." This is a sustained campaign against Burnham's mayoral record on child sexual exploitation, with Reform positioning themselves as the party that would have acted.

Key Developments (31 May - 1 June 2026)

No New Mayoral Candidate Announcements

No mayoral candidates have been formally declared for the 2028 election by any party. The political discourse remains focused entirely on the Macclesfield by-election.

Farage-Burnham Social Media Clash

On 31 May, Nigel Farage posted an AI-generated image linking Andy Burnham to immigration (people in a boat carrying "Vote Andy Burnham" placards). Burnham's reply — "Are you getting desperate, lad?" — dominated MEN and X coverage. The clash is indirectly relevant to the mayoral race: it establishes Burnham-Reform antagonism that would carry into any future mayoral campaign.

Grooming Gangs Attack Continues

X/Twitter discourse on 31 May-1 June continued to feature the grooming gangs attack line:

- @GRFCWoosie claimed grooming gangs were "enabled by the Mayor"
- @musicmumshoes shared a whistleblower story
- @stuegs (x2) defended Burnham, noting he initiated independent reviews into historical abuse in Manchester, Rochdale, and Oldham

The attack-and-defence dynamic continues without resolution.

Key Developments (2 June 2026)

Guardian On-the-Ground: Reform Momentum Unaffected by Kenyon Controversies

The Guardian's 31 May on-the-ground reporting from Makerfield (prominent on 2 June) reveals that Reform's campaign is undamaged by Kenyon's controversies:

- The constituency is **covered in Reform banners** — "Makerfield Needs Reform" signs are ubiquitous
- Voters are aware of Kenyon's extreme past statements (calling abortion "cowardly murder", describing gay people as "poofs", saying "I'm sexist") but **not deterred**
- A former railway worker and trade unionist with a Reform flag said she backs the party because she wants "change" and Kenyon is "a local lad" — dismissing his online activity as "his opinion, we've all got opinions"
- **Immigration and disenchantment with Labour** — not Kenyon's character — are the primary drivers of Reform support
- Restore Britain polling at **7%** (Survation) is the main threat to Reform's chances, not Labour

MEN: Green Candidate Profile — Sarah Wakefield

MEN published "The Green candidate in Makerfield is betting on hope in an age of anger" — profiling Green candidate Sarah Wakefield. Her campaign is scaled back in a seat dominated by Labour-Reform dynamics, positioning herself as an alternative to anger-driven politics from both main contenders.

Política Central: Mandelson Files Dominate — No Mayoral-Level News

No new mayoral candidate announcements or developments for the 2028 election. All political focus is on the Makerfield by-election and the Mandelson files scandal.

Key Developments (4–8 June 2026)

?? 2028 Mayoral By-Election Now Possible

The Commons Library clarification (CBP-10853, 21 May) confirms that if Burnham wins Makerfield on 18 June, the mayoralty is **immediately vacated**, triggering a GM mayoral by-election — likely late 2026 or early 2027, well before the scheduled May 2028 election. This significantly changes the timeline for all parties' candidate selection.

Survation Poll #2 — Reform Stuck at 39% (4 June)

Second Survation poll (4 June, 518 adults) shows Reform UK stuck at 39% while Labour surges to 49%. The Kenyon controversies have not hurt Reform but they've hit a ceiling. Restore Britain at 7% is splitting the right-wing vote.

Question Time Panel (5 June)

The BBC Question Time Makerfield special (5 June) featured:

- Michael Winstanley (Conservative) — described by Facebook commenters as coming across "far better" than expected despite less airtime than Burnham
- Jake Austin (Lib Dem) — new name; not previously profiled
- Sarah Wakefield (Green) — profiled previously; campaign scaled back

Reform Campaign — Facebook Push (5 June)

Conservative Facebook ads attacking Burnham (5 June): "Our candidate for the Makerfield by-election Michael Winstanley destroyed Andy Burnham" — suggests the Tories are running an aggressive social media campaign despite polling at 2%.

Key Developments (29 June – 13 July 2026) — CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY & CONTROVERSIES

7 Candidates Confirmed

|| Party | Candidate | Background | ||---|-----|-----|-----| ||  Labour | **Bev Craig** | Manchester City Council leader; Burnham's preferred successor; OBE | || ➔ Reform UK | **Sian Astley** | Leader of Reform group on Manchester City Council; replaced Dan Barker | ||  Green | **Geraldine Coggins** | Trafford councillor; Green group leader; published academic | ||  Conservative | **Phil Eckersley** | Local businessman & councillor; replaced earlier name Nadim Muslim | ||  Lib Dem | **Richard Kilpatrick** | Stockport councillor; GM Police/Fire/Crime Panel member | ||  Restore Britain | **Marlon West** | Child exploitation campaigner backed by Rupert Lowe | ||  Independent | **Marcus Farmer** | Stood previously in 2017 and 2021 mayoral elections |

Notable:

- **George Galloway** (Workers Party) — confirmed NOT standing
- **Dan Barker** — Reform's 2024 candidate was expected but not selected
- **Gary Neville** — ruled himself out

Sian Astley "Migrant Rapists" Controversy (10 July)

Reform UK candidate Sian Astley sparked a major controversy:

- **The Guardian** (10 July): "Greater Manchester candidate says non-Reform voters should house 'migrant rapists'"
- Astley doubled down, saying it was a "statement of fact"
- Refused to apologise despite widespread condemnation
- Reflects Reform UK's hardline immigration campaign strategy

Reform UK Focus Switches to Clacton (10-11 July)

- Reform HQ urged activists to switch from the GM mayoral campaign to focus on **Nigel Farage's Clacton by-election**
- Farage faces questions over a £5m crypto donation from Christopher Harborne
- This suggests Reform may not be going all-in on the GM mayoralty despite their strong local election performance (106 councillors won in May 2026 locals)
- However, Reform retains a formidable local ground operation in GM

Bev Craig Campaign

- "Really confident" Starmer's resignation will return protest voters to Labour
- Policies: **Free bus travel for 11- to 18-year-olds**, new town centres fund
- Backed by Burnham directly — joint campaign events expected
- Trans rights: has NOT backtracked from "trans women are women" unlike Burnham

Green Campaign

- Polling: distant third, but Greens claim "it's Green or Reform"
- Geraldine Coggins launched **20,000 affordable homes** pledge
- Supplementary Vote system may benefit Greens via second preferences from Labour voters

Voter Registration

Date	Event
14 July	Voter registration deadline
17 July	Burnham declared Labour leader
20 July	Burnham becomes PM
30 July	Mayoral by-election

End of file.

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