# Reform UK's Joel Tetlow faces backlash for Hitler meme on VE Day



# Controversy Stirs after Reform Councillor's Hitler Meme on VE Day

Calls for disciplinary action are mounting against Reform UK councillor Joel Tetlow following his posting of a contentious meme featuring Adolf Hitler during the 80th anniversary of VE Day. This incident has sparked outrage amid ongoing concerns about the party's image and the implications of such comparisons.

Tetlow, recently elected to Lancashire County Council representing Accrington North, shared an image that controversially likened Nazi attempts to invade Britain in 1940 to the current crisis of migrants crossing the Channel in small boats. In the post, aides of Hitler suggest that the invasion could unfold "slowly" with small boats carrying a few individuals at a time, a narrative that Tetlow supported with the comment: "Let's be grateful this idea was never put to him. Or the world as we know it would be a whole lot different."

This incendiary statement was shared just a day after King Charles led the VE Day commemorations in London, a time of reflection on the sacrifices made during the Second World War. Following backlash from journalists and the public, Tetlow swiftly deleted his post, later insisting that he meant no disrespect and was merely drawing parallels in an exaggerated manner.

The reactions to Tetlow's meme have not been muted. Sarah Sands, the Labour MP for Hyndburn, condemned the post, stating that it trivialised the sacrifices made during the war: "If he had any regard for this country's traditions... he would not be downplaying Hitler's attempts to invade Britain to score political points." She called for his suspension, asserting that as an elected representative, Tetlow needs to exhibit greater responsibility.

While Reform UK leader Nigel Farage and his senior aides are attempting to reposition the party, striving for a more professional approach through rigorous candidate vetting, this incident raises questions about the effectiveness of such measures. Previous scandals involving other party members, including extreme remarks linked to xenophobia and offensive historical comparisons, continue to challenge the integrity of the party's transformation efforts.

In recent months, the party has faced criticism over the extremist content shared by its members. One recent incident involved another candidate, Ian Gribbin, who controversially suggested that Britain might have been better off accepting Hitler's offer of neutrality rather than engaging in the war. Gribbin’s comments, which he later clarified as misstatements, reflect deeper issues within the party related to its affiliation with far-right rhetoric.

As the Reform party navigates its identity ahead of upcoming elections, the fallout from Tetlow's meme illustrates the precarious tightrope it walks: attempting to attract a broader internal base while guarding against the extremism that has historically tainted its image. This incident not only puts pressure on Farage to manage party discipline but also underscores the need for more defined boundaries regarding acceptable political discourse.

With the political landscape constantly shifting, especially as reform discussions grow louder in response to pressing social issues, the stakes are high. Clear accountability and introspection may be necessary for Reform UK to shed the shadows of the past and secure a place in Britain’s evolving political arena.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14690789/Fury-Reform-councillor-Hitler-small-boats-meme-VE-Day.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1ff8e6cd-27e0-43ac-9665-d869a5f306de)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14690789/Fury-Reform-councillor-Hitler-small-boats-meme-VE-Day.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjmmrwexv4ko)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14690789/Fury-Reform-councillor-Hitler-small-boats-meme-VE-Day.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1ff8e6cd-27e0-43ac-9665-d869a5f306de)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1ff8e6cd-27e0-43ac-9665-d869a5f306de), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/jun/10/reform-uk-defends-candidate-over-hitler-neutrality-comments)
* Paragraph 5 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjmmrwexv4ko), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp39zvnx9p3o)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14690789/Fury-Reform-councillor-Hitler-small-boats-meme-VE-Day.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/nov/11/farage-ukip-armistice-hitler-german-surrender-first-world-war)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14690789/Fury-Reform-councillor-Hitler-small-boats-meme-VE-Day.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/1ff8e6cd-27e0-43ac-9665-d869a5f306de> - Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, is striving to professionalize and broaden its appeal ahead of upcoming elections by implementing stricter candidate vetting processes. Despite these efforts, the party continues to grapple with extremist content and affiliations among its members, including support for far-right figures and Islamophobic rhetoric. Incidents involving suspended or controversial councillors challenge the party's image, highlighting ongoing tensions within Reform UK's transformation efforts.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjmmrwexv4ko> - A Reform UK candidate, Ian Gribbin, apologized for claiming that Britain would be 'far better' if it had 'taken Hitler up on his offer of neutrality' instead of fighting the Nazis in World War Two. Gribbin also made controversial remarks about women and praised Russian President Vladimir Putin. Initially declining to comment, he later withdrew his statements unreservedly, expressing upset over their misinterpretation, especially given his mother's Jewish heritage.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/nov/11/farage-ukip-armistice-hitler-german-surrender-first-world-war> - Nigel Farage, leader of UKIP, argued that Britain should have continued World War I for an additional six weeks to achieve an unconditional German surrender, even at the cost of more casualties. He believed this approach would have prevented the rise of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, suggesting that a complete defeat of Germany would have denied Hitler the narrative of being 'stabbed in the back' by politicians.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/jun/10/reform-uk-defends-candidate-over-hitler-neutrality-comments> - Reform UK defended candidate Ian Gribbin, who claimed Britain should have 'taken Hitler up on his offer of neutrality' instead of fighting the Nazis. The party stated that Gribbin's views were not endorsements but shared by a significant portion of the British establishment, including the BBC of its time, and were 'probably true.' Gribbin had also criticized Winston Churchill and praised Russian President Vladimir Putin.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cp39zvnx9p3o> - Nigel Farage announced that Reform UK candidates for local elections in 2025 would undergo 'vetted' processes following controversial comments made during the General Election. He referred to Bexhill and Battle's candidate, Ian Gribbin, who suggested Britain would be 'far better' if it had 'taken Hitler up on his offer of neutrality.' Farage acknowledged the need for improved vetting procedures within the party.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/videos/c0ddklmekzzo> - Nigel Farage was questioned about claims made by Reform UK candidate Ian Gribbin, who suggested that Britain would be 'far better' if it had 'taken Hitler up on his offer of neutrality' instead of fighting the Nazis. Gribbin also made remarks about women being the 'sponging gender' and should be 'deprived of health care.' Farage's response to these claims was scrutinized in this BBC video.