# Reform UK councillor faces training after incendiary posts sparked racism and Islamophobia allegations



James 'Jimmi' Lee, recently elected as a member of Reform UK to represent Acle at Broadland Council, is facing significant controversy over incendiary posts made on his X (formerly Twitter) account. These posts, which have since been deleted, have drawn accusations of racism and Islamophobia, prompting council officials to announce that Lee will undergo training to ensure adherence to the council’s code of conduct.

The concerns began shortly after Lee's election, which followed the resignation of Conservative Councillor Lana Hempsall. Despite winning the seat with a comfortable lead—322 votes against his nearest rival, Conservative Vincent Tapp, who secured 208 votes—his election has been overshadowed by the nature of his online comments. Critics on the council, which currently operates under a coalition of Liberal Democrats, Labour, and Green Party members, have described Lee's posts as deeply troubling and unrepresentative of the broader community in Broadland.

Among the most controversial content shared by Lee was a comment he made in April, in which he endorsed a tweet referring to Islam as a "divisive, fundamentalist hate cult," describing it as a "lovely and accurate post." Furthermore, he reacted to images of politicians of black and Asian heritage—including Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and London Mayor Sadiq Khan—by asserting that they represented an "infiltration" of the UK’s heritage, labelling them as "the enemy in waiting." His statements escalated in June when he responded positively to a suggestion that Islam should be made illegal in the UK.

Natasha Harpley, leader of the Labour group on the council, pressed concerns regarding Lee's candidacy, arguing that "these views are not representative of the majority of people in Broadland." She further emphasised doubts about Reform UK's vetting processes for candidates, highlighting a perceived negligence that could undermine the party's integrity.

Despite the backlash, both Lee and Reform UK have refrained from commenting publicly on the issue. A spokesperson for the council confirmed that Lee would soon begin the compulsory training for all new councillors to ensure compliance with expected standards of behaviour.

This incident sheds light on larger issues surrounding political discourse and candidate vetting across various parties, particularly as Reform UK attempts to solidify its presence in local politics. Just prior to Lee's election, the party had enjoyed a notable surge in Norfolk, including a recent victory in Thetford West, marking David Bick as its first Norfolk county councillor. However, these wins were juxtaposed by painful losses, including a narrow defeat in Norwich to Labour, reflecting the uneven nature of electoral success for the party.

Jimmi Lee’s election and the ensuing controversy demonstrate the complexities and challenges faced by emerging political parties as they navigate the intricacies of local governance and public sentiment. The response to this incident will likely influence not only Lee’s political future but also the broader reputation of Reform UK in the Norfolk community and beyond.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25173014.reforms-jimmi-lee-faces-scrutiny-social-media-posts/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25173014.reforms-jimmi-lee-faces-scrutiny-social-media-posts/?ref=rss> - James 'Jimmi' Lee, elected to represent Acle for Reform at a Broadland Council by-election, faces scrutiny over his social media posts. Officials are aware of concerns and plan to provide training to ensure adherence to the council's code of conduct. Both Lee and Reform UK have declined to comment, and his X (formerly Twitter) account has been deleted. Opponents describe his messages as 'racist and Islamophobic,' questioning Reform UK's candidate vetting process. Lee's posts included controversial comments about Islam and politicians of black and Asian heritage. The by-election was called after the resignation of Conservative Lana Hempsall, with Lee winning 322 votes, ahead of other candidates. A council spokesman stated that Lee will undergo training to fulfill his responsibilities and adhere to the code of conduct.
3. <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/elections/upcoming-elections/acle-ward-by-election> - The Broadland District Council has scheduled a by-election for the Acle Ward on 15 May 2025, following the resignation of Councillor Lana Hempsall. The election timetable, notices, and results are available on the council's website. Voters are encouraged to register and familiarize themselves with the voting process, including the requirement for voter ID. Information for candidates and agents is also provided to ensure a fair and transparent election process.
4. <https://broadland.greenparty.org.uk/2025/03/29/out-in-acle-today/> - On 29 March 2025, Broadland Green Party members conducted canvassing in Acle, engaging with local residents and promoting their political agenda. The event was part of the party's ongoing efforts to increase visibility and support in the area ahead of the upcoming by-election. The Green Party's activities in Acle are part of a broader strategy to strengthen their presence and influence in local politics, particularly in areas where they see potential for growth and representation.
5. <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/person/122705/jimmi-lee> - Jimmi Lee is a Reform UK candidate in the Acle ward for the Broadland local by-election scheduled for 15 May 2025. The website provides basic information about Lee's candidacy, including the election date and party affiliation. However, it notes the absence of contact information and encourages users to contribute additional details, such as social media accounts, policy statements, or contact information, to enhance the profile. The platform relies on user contributions to provide comprehensive information about political candidates.
6. <https://broadland.greenparty.org.uk/2025/04/27/campaigning-in-acle-today-for-the-district-ward-by-election-due-on-15-may-2025/> - On 27 April 2025, Broadland Green Party members were out campaigning in Acle for the upcoming District Ward By-Election scheduled for 15 May 2025. The event aimed to engage with local residents, promote the party's platform, and encourage voter participation. The Green Party's active campaigning reflects their commitment to increasing their presence and influence in local politics, particularly in areas where they see potential for growth and representation.
7. <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/elections/local.broadland.acle.by.2025-05-15/acle/> - The 'Who Can I Vote For' website provides detailed information about the Broadland local by-election in Acle, scheduled for 15 May 2025. The page lists the five candidates running for the Acle ward: Peter Carter (Green Party), Emma Jennifer Covington (Labour Party), Jimmi Lee (Reform UK), Philip Matthew (Liberal Democrats), and Vincent Bruce Tapp (Conservative and Unionist Party). The website offers guidance on the voting process, including instructions on how to vote and information about the electoral system used in the election.