# Reform UK transforms Blackpool pub into political hub as movement gains momentum



Tucked away on a residential street in Blackpool, The Talbot pub has undergone a remarkable transformation, emerging as the world's first Reform UK pub. This rebranding effort, initiating a vibrant turquoise-blue aesthetic, has drawn significant attention, attracting thousands of ardent Nigel Farage supporters from across the UK, even as far as Scotland and Northern Ireland. The long-established venue, once a Conservative social club, now serves as a political hub, inviting patrons to share their thoughts over a pint of inexpensive lager while immersed in the buzz of GB News on multiple screens.

As patrons enter, the warm afternoon sun fades into the subdued lighting of the pub, where the sounds of a bustling jukebox mix with the jovial chatter of locals, some defining it as a “real boozer.” Carling Export is served at an attractive price of £2.60, contrasting sharply with European brands like Stella and Madri, which are priced significantly higher at £4.50. The decor features informal 'Vote for Reform' posters crafted with a nostalgic flair, reminiscent of 90s Microsoft clip art, alongside promotional notices for entertainment events, reinforcing a sense of community and tradition.

The Talbot's rebranding is not merely cosmetic; it represents a strategic move designed to reinvigorate a declining establishment. Landlords Nicholas Lowe and Peter Flynn, who have been at the helm for over 15 years, saw a decline in footfall and rising operating costs over the past six months. Their decision to rebrand follows the Reform UK party's notable electoral success, where it garnered an impressive 677 council seats in local elections, reinforcing the party’s emerging influence. This rebranding of The Talbot marks the first of its kind, as Reform UK branches out into local venues, signalling a strategic challenge to traditional Conservative strongholds in the area.

Among the patrons is Raymond Head, an 86-year-old from Stevenage, who drove 200 miles to support the newly rebranded venue after seeing it featured on GB News. He stated, “I thought, if I'm going to support anyone, I want to support this guy,” highlighting the pub’s role as a gathering space for like-minded individuals. Mark Butcher, the regional Reform UK chairman, also emphasised the pub’s significance as a “bold statement” within what he referred to as the Labour heartlands of Blackpool. He articulated the party's aim of creating a narrative where “every voice matters,” demonstrating Reform UK's commitment to engaging the community in dialogue.

Though the establishment has drawn in a diverse crowd, it also faces challenges. The local atmosphere was sharply contrasted when a nearby patron, Barry, openly expressed troubling views on immigration. In response, co-owner Flynn distanced himself from such sentiments, indicating his disapproval of extremism within the pub’s patrons. This confrontation underlines a tension inherent in political identity and community discourse, particularly in a space that appeals to many who feel alienated by mainstream politics.

While the menu competes favourably on price—from hearty sausage sandwiches to affordable Sunday roasts—the quality appears reflective of a bygone era. Dishes such as a £3.50 chicken curry served up an experience reminiscent of nostalgic school dinners, with the texture and presentation evoking both humour and a tinge of concern. Such offerings seem to align with the pub's ethos of remaining accessible to the local community, although they also invite critique about culinary standards.

Critics have emerged alongside supporters, suggesting that while Reform UK appears to be gaining ground in regions traditionally dominated by Labour, its populist strategies may mask deeper issues. Comments from patrons at another local pub reveal apprehensions regarding the party’s long-term plans, particularly concerning its relationship with the National Health Service and broader immigration policies. Lenny Thompson, a local, articulated a common concern, suggesting that the party exploits fears around immigration without offering substantive solutions.

The evolution of The Talbot pub into a Reform UK venue highlights a broader trend of political rebranding within the UK, reminiscent of Nigel Farage’s earlier transformations from Ukip to the Brexit Party. As the party secures more political footholds, the future trajectory of establishments like The Talbot intertwines with a complex narrative of local identity, party politics, and community engagement. With members proclaiming that “Reform is more than just a political party, it’s a movement,” the question remains whether this rebranding will resonate positively with the electorate or simply be viewed as a superficial makeover of an outdated establishment.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/reform-uk-pub-the-talbot-blackpool-review-farage-b2752198.html), [[2]](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/reform-take-over-its-first-conservative-club/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/reform-uk-pub-the-talbot-blackpool-review-farage-b2752198.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/reform-take-over-its-first-conservative-club/), [[6]](https://www.gbnews.com/politics/reform-uk-blackpool-council-nigel-farage)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/sand-artist-creates-portrait-of-nigel-farage-on-blackpool-beach-as-reform-uk-leader-visits-resort-4675385), [[3]](https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-visits-lancashire-this-is-how-the-reform-uk-leader-was-greeted-and-what-he-had-to-say-5076180)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/reform-uk-pub-the-talbot-blackpool-review-farage-b2752198.html), [[3]](https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-visits-lancashire-this-is-how-the-reform-uk-leader-was-greeted-and-what-he-had-to-say-5076180)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/reform-uk-pub-the-talbot-blackpool-review-farage-b2752198.html), [[4]](https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/farage-roared-on-by-refom-candidates-in-fleetwood-as-party-faces-up-to-big-county-election-test-5086282)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/reform-uk-pub-the-talbot-blackpool-review-farage-b2752198.html), [[6]](https://www.gbnews.com/politics/reform-uk-blackpool-council-nigel-farage)
* Paragraph 8 – [[7]](https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/uk-news/2024/07/05/reform-secures-first-elected-mps-including-nigel-farage-on-eighth-attempt/)

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/reform-uk-pub-the-talbot-blackpool-review-farage-b2752198.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/reform-take-over-its-first-conservative-club/> - Reform UK has rebranded The Talbot pub in Blackpool as the 'Reform UK Club,' marking its first takeover of a Conservative social club. This move signifies the party's expansion into local venues, aiming to challenge traditional conservative strongholds in the region. A senior party source emphasized that this is just the beginning of their efforts to replace Conservative establishments with Reform UK venues.
3. <https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/politics/nigel-farage-visits-lancashire-this-is-how-the-reform-uk-leader-was-greeted-and-what-he-had-to-say-5076180> - Nigel Farage visited Lancashire as part of a nationwide campaign tour ahead of local elections. In Ormskirk, he received warm greetings from locals and discussed the challenges facing Lancashire County Council, criticizing the current Tory administration and expressing concerns over proposed changes to local authorities.
4. <https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/farage-roared-on-by-refom-candidates-in-fleetwood-as-party-faces-up-to-big-county-election-test-5086282> - Nigel Farage received a rousing reception at Fleetwood's Strawberry Gardens pub during a campaign tour. He met with Reform UK county council candidates and discussed the challenges facing the fishing industry, highlighting the party's commitment to addressing local issues in the upcoming elections.
5. <https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/sand-artist-creates-portrait-of-nigel-farage-on-blackpool-beach-as-reform-uk-leader-visits-resort-4675385> - A sand artist created a portrait of Nigel Farage on Blackpool beach during his visit. The artwork, shared by the campaign group Led By Donkeys, featured Farage's face with the message 'Friend of Putin. Enemy of the NHS,' highlighting the group's critical stance towards the Reform UK leader.
6. <https://www.gbnews.com/politics/reform-uk-blackpool-council-nigel-farage> - Reform UK achieved a significant victory in Blackpool's Marton by-election, securing 38.8% of the vote and surpassing Labour, which saw a 23% decline in support. This result underscores the party's growing influence in traditionally Labour strongholds and its potential impact on future elections.
7. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/uk-news/2024/07/05/reform-secures-first-elected-mps-including-nigel-farage-on-eighth-attempt/> - Reform UK secured its first elected MPs, including leader Nigel Farage in Clacton, Essex. Farage's victory marked his eighth attempt to win a parliamentary seat, signaling a significant milestone for the party and its growing presence in UK politics.