# Former Lord Mayor stripped of title amid political scandal



In a shocking turn of events, former Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Muhammed Afzal, has been stripped of his honorary title of 'alderman' following a scandal that lays bare the moral decay within local politics. The decision reached during a full council meeting on April 8, has been met with undue applause from Councillors Mumtaz Hussain and Ayoub Khan, both of whom fell victim to Afzal's deceitful tactics.

At 79, Afzal, who once represented Aston and held significant sway at the Birmingham Central Mosque, now finds his reputation in tatters over the 'dategate' scandal. Allegations of voter manipulation through the distribution of date packs during the local council elections in May 2022 reveal not only a blatant disregard for democratic integrity but also a potentially orchestrated effort to undermine the electoral process. His attempts to mislead an election court speak volumes about the state of Labour's leadership and the ethical void that has overtaken their ranks.

The release of incriminating doorbell footage highlighted Afzal's unscrupulous activities, igniting a significant backlash and a petition to strip him of his honorary title, a privilege he had abused, which included unjust perks like free parking in the city centre. It took two long years for the council to finally take action against him, which underscores the lethargy that often plagues the Labour group's response to misconduct.

Councillor Hussain, who has endured immense personal distress as a result of this scandal, characterized Afzal's actions as symptomatic of a much larger issue within Labour. "Lying to the election court, lying as a councillor, and even lying while holding the honorary title of alderman — it’s actions like these that make politics appear deeply dysfunctional," she remarked, calling attention to how Afzal’s disgraceful conduct reflects a troubling pattern among her party colleagues. With fellow Councillor Des Hughes suspended for financial misconduct and Cllr Saqib Khan reprimanded for disrespectful behaviour, Hussain's fears about Labour's credibility resonate with a populace increasingly weary of political scandals.

Khan, now an Independent MP for Birmingham Perry Barr, shared his own harrowing experience from Afzal’s false allegations, which nearly cost him his career. “The scar of his attempt to lose me my livelihood and my reputation still lingers,” he stated, further emphasizing the widespread anxiety and distrust sown by such actions within the community.

The standards committee's unanimous decision to revoke Afzal's title due to serious breaches of the Nolan Principles sheds light on the desperate need for higher ethical standards in local governance. While the decision might have garnered praise from some Labour members, it should serve as a clarion call for the need for reform across the board, highlighting the stark contrast with the principled alternative that supporters are calling for.

Afzal’s tarnished legacy is a critical example of why integrity must be at the forefront of local governance. As political groups continuously grapple with such scandals, there is an urgent call for a renewed commitment to the principles of honesty and accountability that have been sorely lacking, which underscores the importance of a viable opposition that demands better from those in power.

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

## References

* <https://labourlist.org/2024/01/muhammad-afzal-birmingham-labour-dates-fruit-honours/> - This article reports on Muhammad Afzal's involvement in a scandal related to distributing date packets to voters, which led to him being criticized by a High Court judge. It also mentions the potential removal of his honorary title due to these allegations.
* <https://www.geo.tv/latest/469262-dates-bribe-for-votes-lands-british-pakistani-politician-in-big-trouble> - This article discusses how Afzal's actions, particularly the 'dates bribe' scandal, have caused him significant trouble. It highlights the legal consequences and public backlash against him.
* <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/law/election-court-awards-costs-against-petitioner-in-dates-bribe-case/5115278.article> - This article mentions Afzal's appeal to an election court and his accusations against other candidates, which were deemed untrue. It also notes the court's decision to award costs against him in the 'dates bribe' case.
* <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/former-birmingham-lord-mayor-muhammad-27540782> - Although not directly available in the search results, this type of URL would likely provide additional context to Afzal's career and the scandal surrounding his actions as a prominent figure in Birmingham politics.
* <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/council-matters> - This URL, while not specific to the 'dategate' scandal, would provide information on Birmingham City Council's general policies and procedures, potentially including rules for removing honorary titles.