

**HATE**  
**HOPE**  
**HATE**

# BRITAIN FIRST

## DYSFUNCTIONAL, DANGEROUS AND IN OUR COMMUNITIES





# CONTENTS

Executive Summary	<b>4</b>
Introduction	<b>6</b>
The Leadership	<b>11</b>
Paul Golding	<b>11</b>
Ashlea Simon	<b>13</b>
Timothy Burton	<b>14</b>
Anti-Migrant Activism	<b>15</b>
A History of Grifting: Britain First Fundraising	<b>17</b>
Stealing From the Elderly	<b>21</b>
In Their Own Words	<b>22</b>
Britain First and Northern Ireland	<b>24</b>
Jayda Fransen and the British Freedom Party	<b>28</b>
Britain First Defence	<b>29</b>
Regional Branches	<b>31</b>
Rogues' Gallery	<b>36</b>
Putin's British Mouthpiece	<b>43</b>

## CONTRIBUTORS

- **Matthew Collins**
- **Gregory Davis**
- **Patrik Hermansson**
- **Safya Khan-Ruf**
- **David Lawrence**
- **Joe Mulhall**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Britain First is one of the UK's most active far-right organisations. Between standing in elections and other campaigns, the group is active on the streets most weeks.
- The party experiences a near-constant churn of activists and organisers, with leader Paul Golding being among the very few who have remained with the organisation since its founding. While at one point it gained millions of followers on social media, Britain First has always struggled to convert its online following to offline activism. At present, the group has over 20,000 subscribers on Telegram, but we estimate it has roughly 100 committed activists that attend offline activities.
- A number of Britain First members have extensive criminal histories, with leader Paul Golding himself carrying multiple convictions. Among the group's current key members is one of the UK's most notorious football hooligans who has dozens of convictions for violence and other offences, and is also a former member of the Nazi terror group Combat 18 and the British chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. One activist had prior convictions for stamping on his ex-partner's head before joining the group.
- Britain First's activist base is awash with racism and conspiracy theories, with many members posting racial slur-ridden rants on social media.
- Paul Golding and Britain First never miss an opportunity to ask their supporters for money. At times the group has raked in thousands of pounds via merchandise and donations. Recently Britain First has used the money to acquire three minivans, an HQ in Manchester and a training gym in the South East, making it one of the best equipped far-right groups in the UK.
- Paul Golding and Britain First has a long history of pro-Putin propagandising. Golding has visited Russia at least three times, said he is a "great admirer of President Vladimir Putin", denied Russian involvement in the Salisbury poisonings, defended state persecution of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny, praised Putin and Assad for their actions in Syria and said "I think Crimea and the Donbas should be part of Russia."
- Britain First members regularly harass asylum-seekers and personnel in migrant accommodations. According to HOPE not hate analysis, the group accounted for 41% of the recorded anti-migrant accommodation visits since the start of 2021 and has posted 79 anti-migrant accommodation videos on their website.
- Britain First has long been active in Northern Ireland and seeks to portray itself as close to paramilitary loyalist groups, but it has largely been shunned by the movement and it struggles to retain members. Its small activist base in Northern Ireland does however contain individuals with violent pasts. Multiple members have been let into the group despite convictions relating to terrorism and extreme domestic abuse.



Britain First leader Paul Golding poses in front of a banner. Andy Brown stands on the left

- Paul Golding was convicted under terrorism law in 2020 after refusing police access to his phone on his return from Moscow. Other individuals linked to Britain First have even more serious terrorism convictions:
  - Anthony Barraclough was sentenced to six years behind bars in June 2022, after admitting to three counts of disseminating terrorist publications and seven counts of distributing materials to incite racial hatred between November 2020 and February 2021. During this period he was an active member of Britain First, protesting outside of migrant accommodation and attending other actions.
  - Mason Yates was convicted in June 2022 for, on multiple occasions, downloading instructions on how to construct explosives and was given a 30 month sentence. Yates has attended protests against hotels housing migrants with Britain First.
- Desmond Lundy has a conviction on terror charges after he admitted to possessing documents in preparation for an act of terrorism that included the UDA code of conduct in 2016. Lundy had multiple prior criminal convictions for threatening to kill his ex-girlfriend, stamping on her head and choking her with a shower hose.
- Marek Zakrocki, a Britain First supporter in London, said he wanted to “kill Muslims” before he drove his van at a restaurant owner in London in 2017. He told police it was to “help” Britain and that he was doing it “for Britain”. Zakrocki had two Britain First magazines at his home.
- Darren Osborne was jailed for life for killing one and hurting twelve others after he drove his van into a crowd gathering outside of a mosque in Finsbury Park in London in 2017. Osborne had regularly read material from Britain First.

# INTRODUCTION

In May 2011, some 40,000 current and former British National Party (BNP) members, supporters and donors received an unsolicited email from a new group calling itself Britain First. A further 5,000 people received a glossy mailshot introducing the new group and its Chairman, Paul Golding.

Formed by Jim Dowson and led by Golding, both formerly of the BNP, the group began its confrontational political activities by promoting actions designed to intimidate and ignite violent responses from Muslim communities.

While always struggling to get more than a few dozen people on the streets, Britain First rose to become one of the best known far-right groups in the UK, in large part due to its success on social media. At its peak, the group's Facebook page had over 1.9 million

likes and in November 2017, President Trump retweeted three anti-Muslim videos posted by then-Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen.

However, since then Britain First has been deplatformed by Facebook and Twitter, hugely reducing the group's reach, leaving it to rely on smaller platforms such as Telegram on which it has only managed to amass a little over 20,000 followers.

For many people in the UK, Britain First will forever be linked to the tragic assassination of Labour MP Jo Cox by far-right extremist Thomas Mair in June 2016. Despite having no apparent connection to the group, he reportedly shouted the words "Britain First" during his attack. This placed the organisation under the microscope and indelibly linked it with far-right violence in the minds of the British public.



Andrew Edge,  
Ashlea Simon  
and Geoff Miles

In the summer of 2017, a Polish-born Britain First supporter called Marek Zakrocki drove his van at the owner of a restaurant in North London. He told police at the scene: “I’m going to kill a Muslim, I’m doing this for Britain” and when they later searched his home they found two Britain First magazines. Darren Osborne, the terrorist who killed one after he drove a van into pedestrians near Finsbury Park Mosque in 2017, had also consumed Britain First content. Mark Rowley, former Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, said of Osborne: “He had grown to hate Muslims largely due his consumption of large amounts of online far-right material including, as evidenced at court, statements from former EDL leader Tommy Robinson, Britain First and others.”

Britain First has had a resurgence in recent years, and whilst it remains beset by numerous issues, it currently stands as one of the most active and best organised far-right groups in the country.

## **POLITICS**

Since forming over a decade ago, Golding has regularly changed the style and focus of Britain First in the hope of finding a winning formula that, so far, remains elusive.

In its early years, Britain First sought to differentiate itself from other anti-Muslim street protest groups active at the time, such as the English Defence League (EDL), by adopting the trappings of a paramilitary organisation, such as pseudo-military titles, uniforms and armoured vehicles, drawing influence from such organisations in Northern Ireland, where Britain First was formed. Paradoxically, the tactic only served to mark the group out as extremists, and even led to convictions under the Public Order Act 1936.

The group first made headlines for its so-called “Christian patrols” and “mosque invasions” that saw activists descend on areas with large Muslim populations and storm into Muslim places of worship. Famously, driving military Land Rovers, Golding and a dozen other Britain First activists carried cans of lager and intimidated Muslims in East London in a desperate attempt to draw out Islamist groups ‘Muslim patrols’ for confrontation.

These tactics attracted supporters enamoured by confrontational direct action and stunts, in particular targeting Islamist extremist Anjem Choudary’s network. Through directly confronting opponents on camera, Britain First soon attracted support on social media.

However, for some, including the founder Jim Dowson, the tactics proved too controversial and he subsequently left the group.

One element of Britain First’s politics, which marks it out from the rest of the UK far right, is its emphasis on Christianity. In its early years, the group was heavily influenced by Dowson’s brand of radical evangelical Protestantism and became known for carrying large crosses on demonstrations. Since the departure of Dowson, and then Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen, the religious aspect of the group’s politics has become less pronounced, though has not disappeared. One of Britain First’s key principles remains a commitment to “maintaining and strengthening Christianity as the foundation of our society and culture”, and the group continues to be vocally anti-abortion.

Britain First’s brand of far-right Christianity explains in part its obsessive Islamophobia, seeing Muslims as a fundamental threat to British traditions and identity and subscribing to the idea of an ongoing clash of incompatible civilisations. However, while anti-Muslim politics has been at the forefront of the group since its beginning, it has a wider and more traditional far-right platform than some of their rivals within the so-called “counter-jihad” scene. In many ways, the group has more in common with fascist political parties like the BNP than it does with primarily anti-Muslim street organisations like the EDL.

This became much clearer with the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK in 2020. For a period, Britain First pivoted away from Islam and Muslims and talked more explicitly about race and whiteness. The group released numerous images of Lee Rigby, Emily Jones and Charlene Downes – all white murder victims – with text overlaid reading “White Lives Matter”. It also held demonstrations that focused on race and organised to “defend” various statues and memorials, in response to protests about their links to slavery and colonialism. Ashlea Simon, the party’s current Chair, has even said, “English people can’t be black, English blood is white.” The group has also pushed the racist “Great Replacement” conspiracy theory that alleges that white Europeans are being “replaced” by a sustained influx of immigrants, for example claiming in a 2021 article that “white Westerners” are being subjected to an “pernicious and evil campaign” that amounts to “genocide”.

One area that Golding has shied away from is open and explicit antisemitism. However, he has been happy to collaborate with well-

Britain First's minivans in Wakefield, West Yorkshire



known antisemites both during his time in the BNP, for example once enjoying a close relationship with then-leader Nick Griffin, but also while leader of Britain First. As part of his efforts to establish links to the international far right, he twice invited the strongly antisemitic Polish hate preacher, Jacek Międlar, to speak at rallies in 2017. In both instances, he was prevented from entering the UK. Another figure invited to speak at a Britain First rally was Piotr Rybak, previously indicted for inciting hatred after he burned an effigy of an orthodox Jew at a protest.

Over the past three years, Golding has once again pivoted the focus of Britain First in the hope of garnering mainstream traction. With cross-Channel migration by boats hitting the headlines, he made opposing it a core element of Britain First's activism. Emulating the mosque invasions that made the group notorious, Golding and his activists continue to storm into migrant accommodation and confront people with cameras. Unfortunately

for Golding, this tactic has not secured the same wide dissemination on social media as the group experienced in its early years.

## ELECTORAL POLITICS

While the group made its name through confrontational street protests, it has regularly focused its energy on electoral politics. In the early years, Britain First launched the National People's Party as its electoral vehicle, but subsequently registered Britain First itself in January 2014.

According to accounts at the time the party had a total income of £159,516 in 2014 – three times what it raised the previous year – but spent nearly all of that on campaigning. A total of 286 parties reported having gross income and total expenditure of £250,000 or less in 2014. Three parties reported income and spending between £100,000 and £250,000. This made Britain First the best funded of all small parties registered with the Electoral Commission. In these



accounts, the party claimed a membership of 15,072- up from 3640 the previous year. To put this into context, at its peak with two MEP's, sixty plus local councillors and a full time staff of around a dozen, in 2009 the British National Party (BNP) had only around 15,000 members themselves. However, many believe Britain First's membership claims have always been hugely exaggerated.

At the 2014 European elections, the group registered the phrase "Remember Lee Rigby" so that it appeared on the ballot paper, though the move backfired after it was widely criticised for exploiting the murder.

Britain First's next electoral outing came in November of that year when then-Deputy Leader, Jayda Fransen, ran in the Rochester and Strood by-election. The group hit the headlines again when the Royal Mail refused to deliver her leaflet, believing it to be illegal. Fransen received just 56 votes, another embarrassing electoral performance.

Golding then stood himself in the 2016 London mayoral elections, polling just 1.2%. During the victory speech of Labour's Sadiq Khan Golding turned his back on the winning candidate and Britain First later tweeted "ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS NOT WELCOME!".

After this string of disastrous results, the party was eventually deregistered by the Electoral Commission in 2017 after Golding failed to renew its registration in time. This did not stop the Electoral Commission fining the group £44,200 in 2019 for "multiple breaches" of electoral law, including its failure to keep accurate donation and financial records.

Golding worked hard to ensure the party was re-registered and, after numerous failed attempts and legal challenges, the group finally succeeded in 2021. However, prior to this success he had already begun to reorganise Britain First into a more serious electoral machine. In early 2019, the group restructured into more formal regional branches and refocused on local politics, more closely emulating the old BNP. Golding hoped this would revive the group's fortunes, with a March 2019 article claiming: "Such a network, comprising scores, then hundreds, of active, connected branches, will make Britain First unstoppable!"

However, the group's first test at the ballot box since being reregistered, in May 2022, proved as unsuccessful as before. Britain First stood just three candidates, who were variously exposed by HOPE not hate for antisemitism, conspiracy

theorising and past membership of fascist groups. All three performed poorly, despite an organised and active campaign.

Britain First's dreadful results have not stopped the group from persevering with electoral politics, however, and at the time of writing Ashlea Simon is standing at the upcoming Wakefield by-election.

## CONVICTIONS AND CRIMES

One contributing factor to Britain First's failure to grow significantly or garner success at the ballot box is its public image as incompetent extremists. Over the last decade leading figures have been dogged by legal issues, criminal trials, periods in prison and bitter internal disputes.

For example, in August 2016, Golding and then-deputy leader Jayda Fransen were banned from entering Luton and, later, all mosques and Islamic centres in England and Wales. In November 2016, Fransen was convicted and fined by a court in Luton for abusing a Muslim woman, and also fined for wearing a political uniform. On the same day, Golding was charged with having entered premises in Wales against a court order instructing him not to do so. After breaking the court order Golding



Jim Dowson and  
Jayda Fransen

was sentenced to eight weeks in prison in December 2016 and on his release published a video in which he stated: “I can promise you, from the very depths of my being, you will all meet your miserable ends at the hands of the Britain First movement. Every last one of you.”

Despite his big talk upon release, in March 2018 Golding and Fransen were both jailed again for 18 weeks and 36 weeks respectively for religiously aggravated harassment. Then, again, in 2020 Golding was charged under the Terrorism Act for refusing to provide access to his digital devices following an arrest.

### SPLITS AND SCHISMS

The group has also been hindered by internal splits and acrimonious schisms. In 2014, founder Jim Dowson left the group and blasted Golding, publicly stating that the “group is being overrun with racists and extremists,” and that “it has just become a violent front for people abusing the Bible.”

Then in 2019, the Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen, who was arguably the group’s best known figure, left the party claiming that Golding

was a domestic abuser. A BBC Spotlight documentary uncovered recordings of Golding admitting to assaulting Fransen and another woman. In 2022, Golding and his associates were ordered to pay Fransen £75,000 in damages. The revelations that Golding hits women has severely undermined his claims to be a protector of women from Muslims.

Despite internal issues and a disastrous record at the ballot box, Britain First remains one of the most active far-right groups in the UK, undertaking weekly activities, such as leafleting, recruitment drives, banner drops, hotel visits and other stunts. The group also has the best infrastructure on the far right, with three mini-vans, an office and a training centre for its “Defence Force”.

The group demands a lot of its activists and as a result has a very high turnover, with people often quickly dropping out. However, those who remain are usually highly motivated and willing to travel and to turn out for actions most weekends, meaning that while the group continues to be very small in terms of actual active members, it has an outsized ability to negatively impact its target communities.



Paul Golding (left) with Jayda Fransen (right)

# THE LEADERSHIP

## PAUL GOLDING

Paul Golding is the co-founder and leader of Britain First. Hailing from Dartford, Kent and now residing in Salford, Greater Manchester, Golding has spent over two decades in UK far-right politics and is the dominant personality in Britain First.

### The British National Party

Golding first emerged into prominence in 1999 as a teenage member of the fascist British National Party (BNP), and was quickly appointed editor of the youth publication *Excalibur*. Given the title of Director of Publicity, Golding also briefly took the reins of the BNP's flagship magazine, *Identity*, having established a close relationship with then-leader Nick Griffin.

As a party propagandist, Golding pushed the BNP's brand of racial nationalism, seeking to cloak the party's fascism under a guise of false patriotism. As he later told a party meeting: "We have hi-jacked the Union Flag, now we must hi-jack the word 'British'".

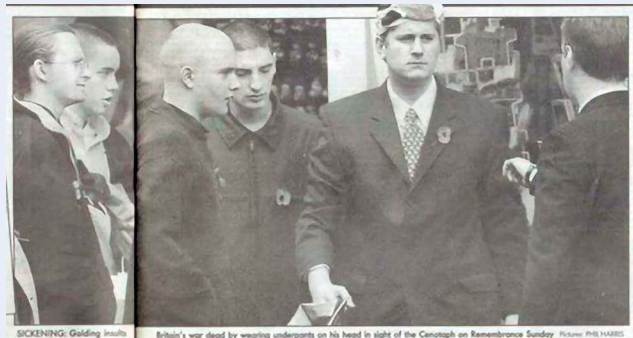


Paul Golding and Jean-Marie Le Pen, Holocaust denier and then-leader of the Front National, 2000.

Golding's exploits generated both internal rancour and bad press, however, and his rise in the party soon slowed. Notable instances included his drunken arrival at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday with a pair of women's underwear on his head, and a violent altercation with future BNP councillor

Lawrence Rustem. Golding was demoted in 2002, in part due to the manoeuvring of Mark Collett, the current leader of the fascist group Patriotic Alternative.

Golding re-emerged as a force within the party in the late 2000s, adopting the role of "projects coordinator". He was elected as a BNP councillor in Sevenoaks District Council, Kent in 2009, but within months was accused of having "done nothing" by residents in the local newspaper. Having helped to arrange the purge of various high-ranking BNP officials, Golding followed the influential party fundraiser Jim Dowson to Northern Ireland, belatedly quitting both the BNP and his council post in 2011.



Paul Golding arrives at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday sporting underpants on his head

### Britain First

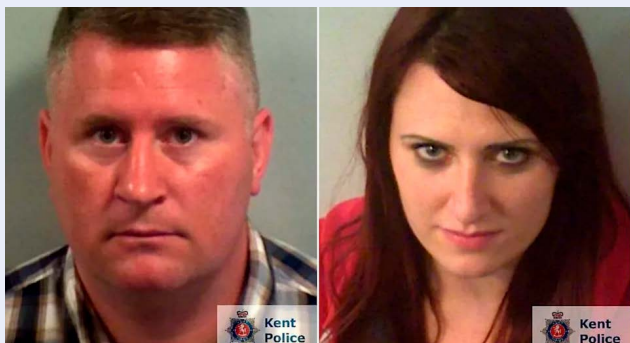
In Belfast, Golding helped Dowson launch Britain First, returning to England in 2013 in the hopes of building links with the English Defence League and various splinters.

Now at the helm of a confrontational new vehicle, Golding quickly gained notoriety for his extreme worldview, relentless fear-mongering and inflammatory actions, leading Britain First's "patrols" and attempts to intimidate opponents. Examples include threatening to bury a pig at the site of a planned mosque in Dudley in order to "contaminate" the land and prevent its construction. Branded a "narcissist" by a prominent former member, Golding's temperament and tactics have been at the centre of many rifts within the group, including

with Dowson, who quit the group in 2014, describing Golding's "mosque invasions" as "provocative and counterproductive", as well as "unacceptable and unchristian".

Golding, who for a time was in a relationship with the now-former Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen, was recorded in December 2015 admitting to having violently attacked her, as well as another woman. Fransen told the BBC in 2019 that the abuse went on for five years, and "didn't take long to start" after she joined Britain First in 2014. She said: "There were incidents that could have gone so badly wrong. I could have ended up really hurt or worse. I guess that is where the fear came in because I thought I am going to end up dead".

Golding stood in the 2014 European elections in Wales, with he and Britain First's three other candidates receiving 0.9% of the vote, and also for London mayor in 2016, polling just 1.2% and attracting press coverage for turning his back during the victory speech of Labour's Sadiq Khan.



Police mugshots of Paul Golding and Jayda Fransen, March 2018

## Legal Issues

Britain First's aggressive approach soon landed both Golding and Fransen in legal hot water. For example, in 2016 the pair were banned from entering Luton and all mosques in England and Wales. In December that year, Golding was jailed for eight weeks for breaching the injunction, having attempted to enter a mosque in Cardiff, temporarily handing the leadership of the group over to Fransen.

On his release in January 2017, six months after the MP Jo Cox's murder by a far-right terrorist, Golding released a startling video in which he claimed his time in prison had made him "even more angry, more determined and more bitter". He went on to issue a chilling threat to politicians and journalists who have committed "crimes against our nation", claiming they would "succumb to this movement eventually and

endure a day of reckoning for your crimes", continuing:

"Every lie, every act of treachery, will be revisited on you tenfold. I can promise you, from the very depths of my being, you will all meet your miserable ends at the hands of the Britain First movement. Every last one of you."

In March 2018, Golding and Fransen were both jailed again for 18 weeks and 36 weeks respectively for religiously aggravated harassment; the incident would play into Fransen's official resignation from Britain First in January 2019. Later that year, Golding, who was based in Belfast at the time, was sentenced to three months imprisonment, suspended for two years, for producing material intended to stir up hatred in Ballymena, Northern Ireland. In March 2020, Golding was charged under the Terrorism Act for refusing to provide access to his digital devices, following an arrest on his return from one of his trips to Russia in October.

By Britain First's own count, by October 2021 Golding had "been arrested twenty times, been in three different prisons and prosecuted ten times", as well as facing trial on further occasions. Golding has made his own feelings about the police clear, stating: "You've got to remember – the police are not on our side. They're a bunch of self-serving, corrupt, jobsworths. I've got no sympathy and no love for the police."

## Last Man Standing

Golding is one of the few constants throughout Britain First's turbulent history, having led the group through numerous reorganisations, strategic shifts and splits. He continues to travel the country to speak at branch meetings, head protests, harass opponents, target hotels and undertake other inflammatory stunts.

However, whilst Britain First once looked set to occupy the space left by the BNP and the English Defence League, Golding's own gaffes and legal issues have overshadowed the group's victories. His leadership style and volatile character have burned numerous bridges, and he has been at the centre of a number of conflicts in the UK far right.

Despite his desperate attempts to keep the venture afloat, Golding bears a large amount of personal responsibility for alienating much of Britain First's potential activist base and driving the group further into the political fringes.



Ashlea Simon at a Yellow Vests UK event

## ASHLEA SIMON

Ashlea Simon (AKA Ashlea Robyn) is Chair of Britain First, the North West Regional Organiser and, after leader Paul Golding, the group's most visible and influential activist. Since joining the group in 2019, Simon has led numerous actions and headed Britain First's recent electoral efforts, as well as taking on much of the group's organisational duties.

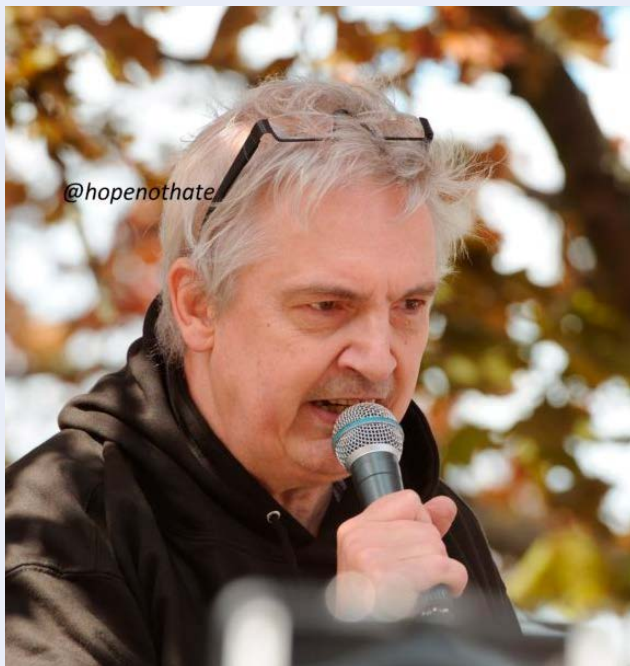
Claiming to be motivated by Brexit, Simon first emerged on the political fringes in early 2019 through her involvement in a UK "Yellow Vests" style movement, which was dominated by far-right activists and conspiracy theorists and gained notoriety for harassing Remain-supporting MPs and journalists around Parliament Square. During this time she was close to James Goddard, then the face of the Yellow Vests UK and a political rival of Golding. Simon also wrote for the far-right clickbait site Politicalite under the name "The Great Unsaid".

Simon sided with Britain First in the summer of 2019, during a period of conflict within Manchester's far right. In step with her new organisation, she became increasingly extreme and conspiratorial, for example, writing in October 2019 that "the great replacement is real and deadly for the white brit", referring to the bunk far-right theory that white Europeans are being "replaced" by a sustained influx of immigrants. Simon wrote the following year that "White people are being erased, defend your people and your homelands before you become a hated minority"; she also claimed in 2020 that "English people can't be black, English blood is white".

Simon has led Britain First activists to harass asylum seekers in their temporary accommodation, banging on hotel rooms and filming those living there. In 2021, she was tricked into leading activists to protest hotels where no asylum seekers were being housed, after being supplied a bogus list by members of the public. As explored elsewhere in this report, the group has links to Russia, and Simon herself travelled to the country with Golding for a “political visit” in October 2019.

Simon was one of Britain First’s three candidates in the 2022 local elections, standing in her home ward of Walkden North, Salford. After a sustained campaign in the ward, which was the party’s key target, Simon placed second with 508 votes (21.6%), beating the Conservative candidate but losing handily to Labour’s 51%. At time of writing, Simon is set to represent Britain First in the Wakefield by-election, taking place on 23 June.

### TIMOTHY BURTON



Timothy Burton addressing an EDL demonstration in May 2015

Timothy Burton, based in Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham is Britain First’s West Midlands Regional Organiser and has held numerous leadership roles at the organisation, including Chairman, Treasurer and Campaigns Officer.

Having spent a career in the oil and IT industries, Burton started an anti-Muslim blog and social media accounts in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Taking a conspiratorial

view of Islam, Burton has described the religion as “a genocidal totalitarian death cult” and Muslims as “aggressive parasitic invaders”, and became a supporter of the English Defence League (EDL), speaking at an EDL rally in May 2015.

Burton joined the tiny anti-Muslim group Liberty GB in 2013, presenting the group’s radio show and interviewing leading figures in the international “counter-jihad” scene, such as Robert Spencer. He also wrote racist rants for the Liberty GB blog, for example claiming that:

“Islam has been allowed to expand, unchecked and unrestrained, and through a programme of aggressive and irresponsible breeding is now on course for swamping and overwhelming the native population through sheer force of numbers within two generations, something that our native population never wanted and never voted for.”

Burton represented Liberty GB in Birmingham Ladywood in the 2015 General Election, receiving a paltry 0.6%.

In April 2017, Burton was sentenced to 12 weeks for the religiously aggravated harassment of Fiyaz Mughal OBE of Tell MAMA, an anti-hate organisation that counters Islamophobia, after a four-year harassment campaign against him. The judge described Burton’s campaign as “premeditated, it was determined, it was deeply unpleasant, and it was part of a campaign by you and your associates to tar all Muslims as Islamists”, claiming that Burton was “seemingly incapable of distinguishing between Muslims and violent Islamists.”

Burton subsequently left Liberty GB and found a home in Britain First, quickly rising to a leadership position. Burton accompanied Paul Golding and Ashlea Simon to Russia in 2019, in order to aid “their promotion of Britain First to our Russian friends.” Burton also accompanied the pair to the Belgian Parliament the same year.

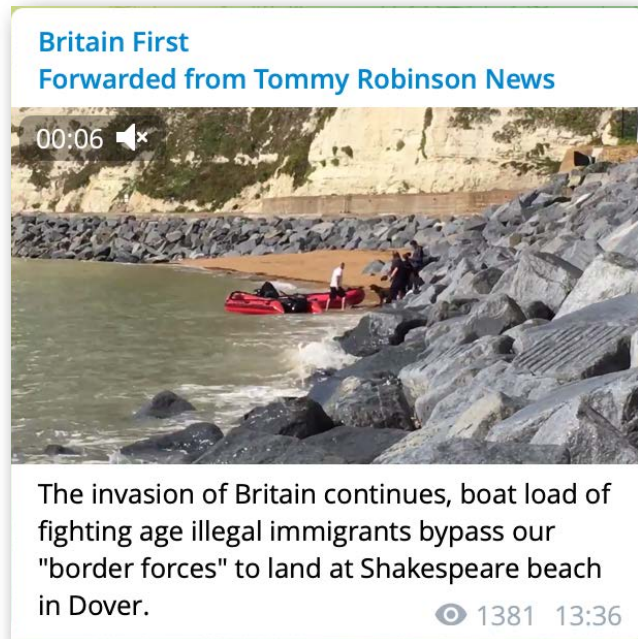
In December 2019, Britain First claimed that Burton had been accepted into the Conservative Party, as the group encouraged its activists to join to “make Boris Johnson’s leadership more secure”; the group was subsequently condemned by the Tories. Burton, who is an Aikido practitioner, has also delivered training to the Britain First Defence group.

# ANTI-MIGRANT ACTIVISM

This year, a record number of migrants will attempt to cross the English Channel to get to the UK. According to Border Force Union officials, this could reach 60,000 – more than double last year’s figure. While the number of immigrants arriving in the UK is a fraction of those who flee to Europe, Britain First has long attempted to convince the electorate that the country’s social and economic problems are all due to mass migration, especially non-white and Muslim migration. The group’s ideal solution is to reduce immigration drastically, deport all illegal immigrants and asylum seekers and encourage legal immigrants to leave the country. Its tactic, however, is to film activists harassing asylum-seekers and security guards to create social media content.

The camera jolted across the Christmas tree in the foyer at the Holiday Inn before moving swiftly towards the canteen where asylum seekers were quietly eating their breakfast. The Britain First member behind the camera accosted several people, asking them where they came from, whether they were waiting for housing and how long they had been in the hotel. Some of the asylum seekers smiled, others simply answered before a security guard intervened and the activist was told to leave the premises.

This is a typical scene in the 79 videos that members of Britain First filmed at hotels they suspected of housing asylum-seekers since the start of 2021. The UK government is responsible for housing migrants while their asylum claim is processed and they are placed in various types of accommodation, including hotels and bed & breakfasts across the country. Often, the Britain First activists attempt to get into the accommodation by not identifying themselves accurately, and shouting phrases such as “We’re just reporting!” However, their hate of migrants is evident on the group’s social media channels, which are awash with language describing asylum-seekers as “fighting age men”, “invasion”, “rapists”, “swarm” and “criminals”. One message on Telegram reads: “Ready for battle! Defending British children against migrant rapists!”



Immigration has always been a central issue for the British far right and various supporters have been active in this area. According to official statistics, there are currently up to 16,000 asylum seekers in temporary accommodation including hotels, hostels and disused military barracks across the UK while they await longer-term housing.

Britain First messaging focuses on painting asylum-seekers as potential terrorists or sexual predators. The group uses Islamophobic narratives about a “Muslim takeover of Europe” and regularly refers to the “Great Replacement” – a white nationalist conspiracy theory that states the ethnic white population is being demographically and culturally replaced with non-white and specifically Arab and sub-Saharan Muslim populations through mass migration and demographic changes.

Britain First supporters have held multiple demonstrations in front of migrant hotels – including several at the Britannia Hotel in Standish near Wigan. However, most of their hotel videos are a smaller group of Britain First members entering the migrant accommodation without permission and harassing the personnel.



Britain First protest in front of migrant accommodation

The videos are posted on its website and Telegram channel under the title “BRITAIN FIRST EXPOSES...” featuring orchestral film music as background. The posts always include details on how to follow, join and donate to the group. On Telegram, these videos are some of the most viewed posts on the Britain First channel – regularly accruing 15,000 to 25,000 views. Other posts usually garner a few hundred to a thousand views.

Britain First Leader Paul Golding, Chair Ashlea Simon and Regional Organiser Geoff Miles are some of the regular figures leading this harassment campaign. Britain First accounted for 41% of the recorded anti-migrant visits since the start of 2021. The group carried out 54 of the 125 anti-migrant hotel visits recorded in 2021, and 25 of the 69 visits from January to June 2022.



Paul Golding in front of migrant accommodation

The level of harassment at migrant accommodations varied depending on the anti-migrant activist and how the hotel staff handled the confrontation. A Britain First activist was arrested, and later convicted of assaulting a security guard at a hotel housing asylum seekers after an altercation in 2020 (a retrial was ordered this year). At the Fairfield York Manor Hotel in April 2021, Simon and a gaggle of activists entered the hotel, shouting phrases like “Are you pleased with your job... you disgusting white liberals.” Hotel staff are routinely branded traitors by Britain First members, both online and in person for protecting asylum seekers.

Dover remains one of the key areas for migrant arrivals from across the channel, often arriving in small unsafe dinghies or rescued by the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Dover is therefore one of the most popular destinations for anti-migrant activists. For several in the far right, filming the arrivals of migrants makes up the bulk of their online content. Golding and Simons have both produced video content from visiting Dover which is then shared widely on various messaging boards accompanied by hundreds of angry and racist comments.

The issue of cross channel migration will likely continue to garner headlines and cause debate and discussion as crossings increase. Due to the boost in views that hotel harassment videos give to anti-migrant activists, and the level of public information available on where asylum-seekers are residing, this harassment is likely to go up in 2022.



# A HISTORY OF GRIFTING: BRITAIN FIRST FUNDRAISING

Paul Golding and Britain First never miss an opportunity to ask their supporters for money. At times the group has raked in thousands of pounds via merchandise and donations. Recently, Britain First has used the money to acquire three minivans, a HQ in Manchester and a training gym in London, making it one of the best equipped far-right groups in the UK. However, not all of their funds have been raised ethically.

A previously loyal British National Party (BNP) apparatchik, Paul Golding was considered by his former colleagues as having been promoted above and beyond his capabilities. In every role (even as a district councillor for the party) he'd been considered lethargic at best. By the time the BNP's political fortunes and money ran dry, Golding had been earning a very healthy stipend as both director of



Fundraising “guru” Jim Dowson

BNP publicity and overseeing its plummeting online donations.

With the simultaneous launching of the National People's Party (NPP) and Britain First, Golding was written off as little more than a gullible front man, a puppet for the BNP's controversial and hated former fundraising “guru” Jim Dowson.

His much-vaulted conversion to thunderous and rapturous Presbyterianism was seen as another necessity Golding had undertaken, primarily to earn a living without (hard) work. But after a year in Northern Ireland, embedded with Dowson's family, businesses and religion had a profound effect on Golding. He was tutored in the financial benefits of proselytising end of the world scenarios, the deathly panic of impending doom and personal and political financial distress to those susceptible to keep coughing up small and regular donations.

A founding member of the Protestant Coalition which brought thousands of angry Loyalists into conflict with Belfast City Council, Golding saw first-hand the emotions a few flags and angst could raise.

Here's some of the ways Britain First have raised money over the years:

## MERCHANDISE

Thanks to Dowson, Facebook became a veritable cash-cow that would make Britain First among the most popular political parties on social media. Through that medium Britain First would sell thousands upon thousands of t-shirts, pin badges and mugs.

In 2015, The Daily Express “exposed” Britain First's “Patriot Store” for claiming it sold “Best of British” clothing:

“The clothing, sold by the Patriot Store website in a section dedicated to the far-right group, also used the image of the Royal Crown without permission. Shoppers who bought hoodies, fleeces, sweatshirts and polo shirts with slogans

like ‘Taliban Hunting club’ were told the products were UK-made. The Advertising Standards Authority also ruled the website had not been granted permission to advertise images of the Royal Crown. It added that consumers would consider the ‘Let’s Buy British’ wording on the website to mean the cloths marked Britain First had been manufactured in the UK.”

## FAKE SOLDIERS

In April 2014, police in the Essex seaside town of Southend responded to complaints from concerned locals and ex-service personnel: “Two police officers and a street ranger spoke to people who visited the stall run by Britain First which asked people to sign a petition calling for better conditions for Armed Forces and to donate £3.” The police spokesman added: “We would advise anyone who has been asked to donate money to charity or sign the petition to ensure they are fully aware of the organisation’s aims.”

Britain First had sent men in paramilitary garb to pose as soldiers or ex-soldiers to blur a line between their own fascist beliefs and the charitable activities and fundraising by charitable organisations such as Help For Heroes and The Royal British Legion.

Golding’s mentor, Dowson, using the name John Wilson, defended the group’s actions by claiming they were not doing anything illegal and were in fact “doing this all over the country.” Britain First had sidestepped permit rules by simply handing out badges to anybody who signed their petition and (inadvertently) made a donation of more than £3 to Britain First.

## EMERGENCY, LEGAL AND EVERYDAY APPEALS

To be signed up to Britain First’s email list is to be slowly tortured for money by hysterical appeals. Britain First’s emails are a constant emergency appeal to keep Golding and Britain First in a lifestyle that is neither earned or deserved. In 2018, the party’s Chief of Staff quit the party citing the party was “rotten to the core, with sleaze and depravity.”

After the Electoral Commission published its shameful findings into Britain First’s fraudulent accounting and conduct, Britain First made no mention of the findings (that we can find). Instead, having waited only a few months, Britain First told its supporters it was suing the Electoral Commission “Socialist pigs”



because it was a “gaggle of politically-correct leftist Remainers” out to “obstruct our party from standing in elections.” This was not the case, obviously, but so began a series of emails demanding and begging supporters for money. No totals were given for how much the party raised from twenty plus begging and dubious emails claiming they were taking the Commission to the High Court.

The last email on the subject from the party to its supporters was on 26 June 2021, when on top of his twenty plus previous begging emails on the subject of suing the Electoral Commission, Golding launched a new and final “Electoral Commission Attack Fund”. This appeal was for another £12,000 to fight the Electoral Commission in the High Court.

Further back in January 2020, Britain First asked supporters for £5,000 to add to existing funds to “to power our legal action” against the Commission, bragging proudly that since 2011 “we have endured and survived around fifteen different legal battles!”

Britain First was re-registered by the Electoral Commission on 27 September 2021, not as a result of a High Court battle between Britain First and the Electoral Commission, but according to *The Independent*: “Its official registration as a political party was announced hours after Golding, 39, and his former deputy Jayda Fransen, 35, agreed to pay “substantial damages” to settle a libel case.” The High Court

heard that they falsely claimed the Halal Food Authority and two employees were involved in funding terrorism in February 2017, and offered no defence to the resulting defamation claim.

Fransen, who was estranged from Golding and Britain First at the time of the settlement, lost her home.

## **SUING FACEBOOK, SUING EVERYONE**

Although it is almost impossible to keep track of the number of appeals Britain First launches to help pay for the myriad of either self-inflicted or totally pointless causes, HOPE not hate recorded between February 2018 and February 2019 appeals for legal challenges and legal fees for a total of £210,800.

Another battle the party undertook was an appeal for funds to sue Facebook. Kicked off the social media platform in March 2018, Britain First attempted to use articles guaranteed under the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland (where Britain First were temporarily domiciled).

The party launched an appeal for £35,000 to fight Facebook in June 2018 and an appeal for £15,000 for its “Facebook Freedom” fund two months later. Despite a temporary reprieve

granted for Britain First Northern Ireland and threats and updates detailing court cases, no court cases known to us eventuated and Britain First remains barred from the social media platform.

In January 2019, Golding wrote to supporters suggesting they “chip in” to also help him take legal action against YouTube. He wrote “At present, Britain First is engaged in civil legal action against Facebook for political discrimination in Belfast High Court. Once this case is concluded – at some point in February or early March – our next legal action will be against YouTube, which is owned by Google.” HOPE not hate is unaware of any legal actions by Britain First against either YouTube or Google.

## **ANDREW EDGE LIFTS THE LID**

During 2020, Britain First’s ‘Chief of Staff’ Andrew Edge blew the whistle about fundraising by the group.

Edge claimed it was known and accepted policy among the leadership for Britain First to remove monies from unsuspecting peoples’ bank accounts and that Paul Golding used the endless appeals made by the party to fund a

Andrew Edge



lavish lifestyle for Golding, his family and close friends.

He revealed how a 2017 trip around Europe he attended with Golding and Fransen was funded by appeals under the pretext the pair were on the run. Before Golding and Fransen feigned smuggling themselves back into the country, appeals to fund their flight of fantasy paid for five star hotels, expensive nights out and even flashy jewellery purchased for Fransen when hers and Golding's notoriously volatile relationship turned violent.

Certainly no angel himself, Edge profited from Britain First's louche lifestyle and found himself central to many of the party's and Golding's interesting accounting. For three years Edge lived a cashless lifestyle, complete with housing, meals, alcohol and travel – that is until he found himself lumbered with large debts. Edge claims he had been named as the driver of Golding's vehicle whilst Golding himself committed numerous driving offences.

A legal opinion sought by HOPE not hate about a number of claims made by Edge about Golding, suggested Edge, who had mild learning difficulties on account of Dyslexia, had been the victim of coercive control by Golding.

Edge's flight from Britain First led to another appeal from Golding and his new partner, Ashlea Simon. Simon, who describes her occupation as "political", is a full-time activist for Britain First and houses the party from her rented semi in Manchester.

Simon was appointed a Director of Patriot Books in 2020. The company has twice faced compulsory strike off by Companies House.

Simon launched a security appeal in November 2020 to fit alarms at her home/party offices, for £7,000.

Simon wrote *"This is such a serious situation confronting our movement that Paul has promised to write to everyone personally who chips in and helps make our 'Security Action Plan' a reality."*

By 21 November, Simon claimed they had already raised £4880 for a "HQ SECURITY OPERATION". The resultant security features, according to someone who viewed them, looked like little more than cheap, £60 self-install alarms purchased from Skrewfix.

Golding claimed in an email that HOPE not hate had paid Andrew Edge to murder Golding and his family. Despite visits and complaints to the police made by Golding, no charges eventuated.

## DID BRITAIN FIRST ROB TOM FOLEY?

One of Edge's most damning allegations about Britain First concerns the fortunes (or lack of fortune) of former serviceman Tom Foley. In March 2019, Foley undertook to walk in protest about his homelessness and all round generally hopeless situation.

In March 2019 Britain First reported: *"Homeless veteran Tom Foley is at present on a lone protest walk from Lincoln to London. This long-serving ex-soldier has been made destitute by the leftists in Lincoln Council."*

Britain First launched an appeal to help the former soldier, writing *"Britain First is currently trying to raise £1,500 for Tom so he can get a one bedroom flat when he finishes his protest walk in a few days."* By March 17th 2019, Britain First claimed it had raised £1130 of their target.

Andrew Edge claims the figure raised was between £17000-£17,400. The party duly paid Foley his £1500, but little or nothing was ever seen or heard about him from Britain First.

That was until Britain First's commercial rivals, migrant hunters Alan Legget (AKA Active Patriot) and the "Little Veteran" Nigel Marcham, found Foley destitute and homeless again in February 2022.

Foley attacked Britain First in a series of interviews claiming Britain First were obsessed with money, "it's all about money with Mr Golding" he said in a YouTube address that month. Addressing Golding, Foley said "I know how much money you raised, I know where it is."

Foley also alluded to an open rumour that Golding and Ashlea Simon keep monies in bank accounts at the Wells Fargo bank in New York. Foley also claimed Golding's erstwhile former "Chief of Staff" Andrew Edge had offered to sell Foley's story for "twenty or thirty grand" to the newspapers.

Addressing Golding again, Foley demanded the other £15,000 he believes he is owed by Britain First from the monies they raised on his behalf.

Britain First responded hysterically claiming Foley had been staying with members of HOPE not hate staff who had fed him drugs and alcohol. Nobody from HOPE not hate has ever had any contact with Foley – as Golding and Britain First well know.

# STEALING FROM THE ELDERLY

Faith is in her eighties. And very sprightly for her age. During lockdown, she admits to becoming very desperate and depressed.

A born again Christian, she looked around for something or somebody that would inspire her and shared her beliefs. She felt compelled to join Britain First.

She felt joining, or supporting the crusading party was her gift to future generations of British people. Most importantly, the Sussex based Great-Grandmother wanted to stop young women “in the north” from being dragged into prostitution.

Faith felt Britain First spoke to her fears. In return for £25 (which Britain First took for a membership fee) and two further small donations, Faith received an envelope full of tat that was no use to her. She had not realised the party was so extreme.

She was further unimpressed when after stressing her state pension was no longer covering her minimal everyday living expenses, she discovered further “donations” had been taken from her bank account without either her knowledge or consent.

Thinking there was an ongoing mix up, Faith rang and emailed the party a number of times without response.

In one desperate email to Britain First she wrote:

*“My pension is below the poverty limit. Yet you have been taking sums out of my account as set [out] below.*

*“I was wondering just why I was so [financially] desperate, and then with some help searching the source of the loss, I found this.”*

Faith listed for Britain First the consecutive and random amounts the party had taken from her bank account without her consent and knowledge. In total, Britain First deducted some £305 over a six-month period until February 2022 when Faith contacted her bank to stop the payments.

Faith isn't the only person to make one-off donations to Britain First and later find the party has deducted further monies. HOPE not hate is aware of many others – many of whom are low income pensioners that have fallen victim to Britain First's dubious and fraudulent practices.

## 1. CHOOSE AMOUNT

The screenshot shows a donation form with a grid of red buttons for donation amounts: £5, £10, £15, £20, £25, £30, £50, £75, £100, and OTHER. Below the grid are three buttons: a currency selector (£), a grey 'ONE-TIME' button, and a red 'MONTHLY' button.

Britain First donation form

Most of Britain First's victims are too scared or intimidated to be identified publicly. Many believe, as does HOPE not hate, that Britain First used computer software available on their platforms to sign unsuspecting donors up to a direct debit or standing order.

And once these unsuspecting debtors realised regular amounts of money was leaving their accounts, the party simply ignored their pleas for help until such a time they contacted their own bank themselves to stop payments.

For the person donating to Britain First, it's a simple mistake to make. For Britain First deliberately make their donation buttons confusing. Banks think withdrawals are being made as a standing order, whilst the donor thinks they have just made a one-off donation.

One former staffer at Britain First has told us how, when the party bothered to answer their phone, literally dozens of people would be complaining, some desperately, that Britain First had taken money from their account without (what they thought) was their consent. “Little old ladies, some of them, begging us to stop taking the payments. Britain First didn't care and nor did we tell them it was up to the person to contact their bank themselves.

“There were literally hundreds of people having as little as £5 per month taken from their accounts.”

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Below is a selection of quotes from Britain First activists. This section provides insight into the extreme content posted by Britain First members, and includes offensive text. Racial slurs have been starred out by us.

## LEE BISHOP

**Activist, Eastern**

“If Turks are white, why is the term Turkish soap-dodger a thing? They are d\*rkies plain and simple”

*Telegram, 29 May 2020*

“It’s not a c\*\*n, not an Arab or ch\*nk or p\*ki so yes, he’s a white man”

*Telegram, 17 June 2020*

## CARL BURGESS

**Regional Organiser and candidate, Wales**

“Jews wanna take over the world I watched a documentary [...] Did you see Europa the last battle? I dont hate jews really but they do seem extra quiet... a little too quiet.”

*Telegram, 30 April 2020*

“So there bringing people over to massacre us? British politicians are more than happy to let them do this obviously. Time to get armed people, seriously now”

*Telegram, 23 August 2021*

## TIM BURTON

**Regional Organiser, West Midlands**

“What is it about Islam that turns all Muslims into total cunts? Islam seems to bring out the worst in the human spirit.”

*Twitter, 31 August 2012*

“NOT just because they’re Muslims, it’s because they are aggressive parasitic invaders, as Muslims are everywhere.”

*Twitter, 13 October 2012*

## DAMIAN BYNG

**Activist, West Midlands**

“M\*zrats need exterminating”

*Telegram, 12 May 2021*

## TOMAS DOWNING

**Activist, North West**

“And I’m pushing a ni\*\*er out my arse whilst I took that pic.”

*Telegram, 28 June 2021*

## PHILIP KELLY

**Activist, North West**

“It’s not the country, its the government that should be finished. All the black and brown gimmigrants are fighting age and Muslim. At least the Ukrainian refugees are mainly Christian 🇺🇸 OCS”

*Telegram, 7 March 2022*

“A civil war has to happen soon before we become the minority, if we aren’t already”

*Telegram, 29 April 2022*

## GEOFF MILES

**Regional Organiser and candidate, Eastern**

“I find watching the Winter Olympics so refreshing . Haven’t seen one Black competitor and therefore zero whinging Negroes crying into their fried chicken that they’ve been racially abused.No Muslim screaming Allah Akhbar and beheading a child.But then all the events require skill and dedication and brainwork so that counts the Black and P\*ki out.They are far better suited to the summer olympics where all they have to do is run in straight line.”

*VK, 11 February 2022*

“British justice is great if you’re a murdering P\*ki.”

*VK, 16 February 2022*

“Oswald Mosely...a man before his time and a Great one!”

*VK, 02 April 2022*

## NICK SCANLON

**Candidate, South East**

“You can ban as many knives & films as you wish. The reality is nothing is going to change until the primitive culture which has been bought to our shores & allowed to flourish is #remigrated from our once tranquil and harmonious nation. Resist the Africanization of our cities!”

*Twitter, 25 November 2019*

[Of Black Lives Matter activist Sasha Johnson, who had suffered severe brain injuries from a gunshot to the head]: “ideally she should be remigrated back to her native homeland – but none the less watching “right wingers” wishing her a speedy recover is quite frankly, pathetic.”

*Twitter, 24 May 2021*

## DONALD SOUTHWORTH

**Activist, North West**

“Rothschild Jew Rats”

*Telegram, 26 May 2021*

## MIKE TAYLOR

**Activist, East Midlands**

“Patel is a Hindu so is not helping her own but obeying the requirements of NWO in conjunction with the Kalgari [sic] plan. The believers of which are very dangerous to the future of the white Christian people.”

*Telegram, 15 March 2022*

“[a Portsmouth council official] is apparently devoid of what the New World Order are doing regarding the Kalgari [sic] plan where white people will be eliminated and make it easy for them to control mixed race communities. It’s people like Soros, Rothschild’s etc the money people who want to rule everything. Ironically making people slaves again [...] ”

*Telegram, 26 March 2022*

## SEAN WILSON

**Activist, North East**

“No place for Islam in the west. The next war, will be a Religious War. We’re at war with Islam, and It’ll only get worse.”

*Twitter, 30 October 2020*

“God Bless the #RoyalFamily. May Prince Harry and Meghan Markle hang from lamp posts #Traitors.”

*Twitter, 8 March 2021*

## KEVIN WRIGHT

**Activist, East Midlands**

“Hang these filthy rat’s 🐀 fucking muslims 🐀🐀🐀🐀”

*Telegram, 24 June 2021*

“REVOLUTION TIME GET TO LONDON DRAG THESE TREASONOUS SNAKES OUT AND HANG.”

*Telegram, 25 June 2021*

“I pray we have a Revolution I hate our government hang the lot”

*Telegram, 27 June 2021*

“When the Revolution starts we are going to come for all these treasonous bastards hang the lot 🐀🐀🐀🐀🐀🐀🐀🐀🐀”

*Telegram, 8 July 2021*

“Fuck islam and Fuck these sand monkeys 🐵”

*Telegram, 4 September 2021*

# BRITAIN FIRST AND NORTHERN IRELAND





Britain First was founded in Northern Ireland in 2011 by Jim Dowson and Paul Golding, who were both based there at the time. Since then, the organisation's activity and activist base in the region has dropped significantly, but Northern Ireland plays an important part in the organisation's history and it remains an important part of the country for the group.

Part of this relates to what Britain First believes is a strong degree of support for its cause amongst Loyalist communities in Northern Ireland. Former Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen described in an interview in 2019 how coming to Northern Ireland was "overwhelming for a patriot. It is paradise" because of the visible presence of Union Flags in Loyalist areas. However, Britain First has not received the amount of support that it had expected, amassing only a small activist base and achieving only momentary successes, instead leaving a trail of conflicts in its wake.

As a new organisation, it did however find early success in Northern Ireland. Less than

a year after the founding of Britain First, the flag protests of 2012 broke out in Belfast after the council voted to limit the number of days the Union Flag was to be flown over Belfast City Hall. Loyalist communities, including parts of the paramilitary UVF and UDA, took to the streets and held protests against the decision for several weeks.

This flashpoint was exploited by Britain First, who used it to rally activists to its new organisation. Jim Dowson became a regular speaker at the demonstrations and heavily promoted the protests online. Dowson agitated the crowds and, after a gunman targeted police in East Belfast, he showed support for paramilitary violence when he wrote on his Facebook "well, if you attack innocent Loyalists, our fighting men will respond."

## **LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES**

Britain First has, like many other far-right groups in the UK, an admiration for Loyalist paramilitaries, evident in the organisation's use



Paul Golding with a cutout of Jim Dowson at the Flag protests after Dowson was banned from all political and religious marches.

of military titles, marches and uniforms. Due to this admiration, mimicking the paramilitary style and being seen to have connections with these groups is important for Golding. Britain First's actual links with paramilitary groups was, however, primarily through Dowson. Dowson had links to paramilitaries in the 80s and 90s, before joining the British National Party, and he brought the connections with him to Britain First.

At the flag protests of 2012, Dowson often appeared alongside Loyalist activists Jamie Bryson and Willie Frazer, both of whom are alleged to have links to Loyalist Paramilitaries. All three were charged with organising illegal protests, of which Dowson, who was represented by Bryson in the courtroom, was found guilty.

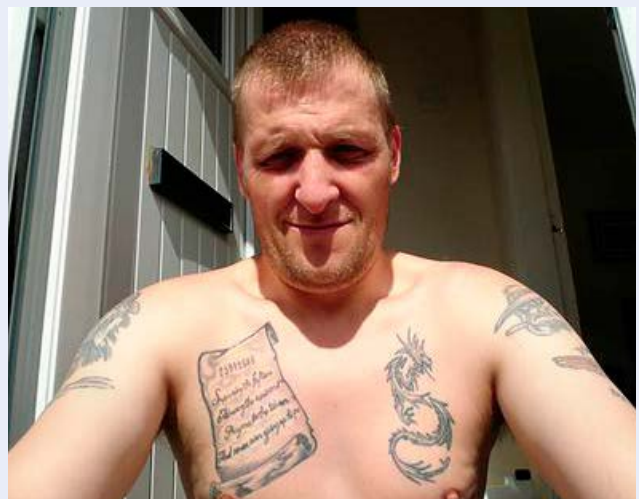
Golding has targeted Loyalist areas and met with Loyalist paramilitaries in the hopes of recruiting members, but with limited success. Several Loyalist paramilitary factions have distanced themselves from Britain First, in part because of its explicit racism.

However, Golding has made a limited number of connections to individuals with paramilitary credentials and he uses them to give the impression of close ties to Loyalist Paramilitary groups. Golding and Fransen have met and photographed themselves with former UDA Brigadier and former National Front member, Johnny Adair. Adair was the leader of a battalion within the Ulster Freedom Fighters, a cover name used by the UDA, in the early 1990s. The Royal Ulster Constabulary estimated that his unit killed up to 40 people during his time as leader. He was forced to leave Northern Ireland in 2003 after an internal power struggle. Andy Frain, currently one of the organisation's most active members, also has Loyalist credentials and connections to East Belfast UDA.



Jayda Fransen, Johnny Adair and Paul Golding

In some cases Britain First has shown itself to be exceptionally forgiving of criminal and paramilitary pasts and has recruited individuals who have been disgraced by the paramilitary groups. Desmond Lundy from Belfast was arrested during during police anti-terror raids in September 2016 targeting the North Belfast UDA. According to the Belfast Telegraph, Lundy admitted to possessing materials in preparation for an act of terrorism and that he was recruited in 2016 into the Belfast UDA to "make up numbers" after splits had left the group decimated. Lundy also has criminal convictions which include threatening to kill his ex-girlfriend, stamping on her head, and choking her with a shower hose. Lundy posted pictures of himself in front of Britain First banners as late as September 2020.



Desmond Lundy

## CONFLICTS

Today, the most prominent member of Britain First living in Northern Ireland is Sam Cochrane, who runs Britain First Defence and is technically the co-leader of the regional branch, alongside Davey Fisher. Both of these men have strained relationships with Loyalist paramilitary groups. Cochrane had prior links with Loyalist paramilitaries but was, before joining Britain First, accused by a faction of the UVF of being an informant.

Fisher fell afoul of the UDA much more recently when he protected convicted rapist Gerald Verner in 2018. Verner was jailed for seven years after a violent rape, kidnapping and assault and threatening to kill a 20-year-old woman. An UDA source was quoted in Sunday World at the time, stating that "I rather have a nice family from anywhere in the world to live beside me [...] that [sic] a violent rapist."

Conflicts are not just limited to paramilitary organisations. Golding has fallen out with other former allies in Northern Ireland too, most prominently Jolene Bunting. In 2017, Britain First started working closely with Bunting, an independent Loyalist councillor. Golding stated that Britain First was going to renew its focus on Northern Ireland, including promising that it would forward candidates in local elections. Both Golding and Fransen spoke at the anti-Muslim “Northern Ireland Against Terrorism” rally organised by Bunting outside Belfast City Hall. Bunting promoted the organisation and defended its presence at rallies when many Loyalist factions critiqued this presence.



The relationship came to an abrupt halt in 2018 when Bunting was accused by Golding of theft. Bunting then threatened to sue Golding for “reputational damage.” In early 2019, Jayda Fransen left Britain First, referencing the group’s violence and corruption in later interviews, but also violent abuse by Golding towards herself. Bunting took the side of Fransen and has continued to regularly post negative comments about Britain First and Golding on social media.

## LEGAL REASONS

There were also far more practical reasons for Britain First making Northern Ireland its base of operations for various periods. In 2018, Britain First’s hugely successful Facebook page, which had close to two million followers, was removed from the platform. In an attempt to get the page reinstated, the group launched a bid in the High Court of Northern Ireland. The

lawsuit relied on political anti-discrimination legislation provided under the Good Friday Agreement which states that, in Northern Ireland, organisations cannot be discriminated against because of their political beliefs. Golding hoped that moving the organisation’s base of operations to Belfast would strengthen the case against Facebook.

Britain First was also met with increasingly difficult challenges by law enforcement in England and Wales. In 2016, the Bedfordshire Police requested an injunction to forbid Britain First to enter any mosque in England and Wales. Golding and Fransen were also temporarily banned from entering Luton. Facing this increasingly challenging environment, the organisation hoped that basing itself in Northern Ireland would give it protection under the political anti-discrimination legislation there.

## CONCLUSION

Britain First’s relationship with Loyalists and Loyalist paramilitaries in Northern Ireland is not as straightforward as the group would like to portray. While there was acceptance and even some level of collaboration early on, most of this has dissipated. Even Fransen, who described her first visits to Northern Ireland as a “paradise” for patriots, noticed over time that Britain First’s “patriotism” was not welcomed by most of the Unionist community. She told the BBC in 2019 that “there is a level of hijacking going on with Britain First and it doesn’t sit right with me.” Compared to its central role at flag protests in 2012, the group is now almost invisible in relation to the recent Protocol demonstrations, which otherwise involve many of the same organisations.

This does not stop Golding from continuing to give a false impression of a close relationship to paramilitary groups. Britain First’s Telegram channel, now its main social media outlet, regularly posts pictures of Loyalist marches in Northern Ireland and of Golding in front of Loyalist murals. The organisation remains active in Northern Ireland and has especially focused on hotels housing migrants, but despite it launching recruitment drives in 2020 and 2021, it struggles to attract more than a handful of activists to its actions and when it does, many these travel over from England.

## JAYDA FRANSEN AND THE BRITISH FREEDOM PARTY

After a tumultuous 2018, Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen left Britain First in January 2019. At the time of her departure, she left few specific details as to the reason why she left. A BBC documentary later revealed a recording from 2015 where Golding admitted to having violently attacked her, as well as another woman. Fransen told the BBC in 2019 that the abuse went on for five years, and “didn’t take long to start” after she joined Britain First in 2014. Fransen described how Golding had controlled her and locked her in their home. Fransen won a subsequent court case at the High Court in Belfast in March 2022.

Separately, Fransen also sued Britain First representatives, including Golding, Sam Cochrane and Northern Ireland leader Davey Fisher for money owed to her. This included loans she had made to the organisation and for credit cards in her name used by them while she was in prison.

After leaving Britain First, Fransen went on to form the British Freedom Party alongside Britain First founder Jim Dowson.

Despite calling itself as such, the organisation is not registered with the Electoral Commission and Fransen has, with little success, stood in various elections as an independent candidate, including the Scottish Parliament and the Batley and Spen by-election in 2021. Fransen has travelled the country for the British Freedom Party, meeting small cadres of supporters and attempting to rile up support.

Soon after launching, former BNP leader and fascist Nick Griffin joined the organisation and became editor of its newspaper, *The Britannia*. The paper is strongly conspiracy theorist, with much of its content focused on COVID-19 and anti-lockdown themes. Griffin also uses it to attack much of the rest of the British far right.

The British Freedom Party remains a highly marginal group, however. At time of writing, Fransen is standing in the June 2022 Wakefield by-election, competing with Britain First’s Chair, Ashlea Simon, but is likely to achieve little more than splitting the far-right vote.



Nick Griffin and Jayda Fransen

# BRITAIN FIRST DEFENCE

Two years after its official launch in May 2011, Britain First announced the creation of a new and more sinister cadre within its ranks. In November 2013, the party's founder Jim Dowson told a Britain First conference in Sandhurst that he had entrusted Paul Golding to set up a "defence force" of "disciplined heterosexual Christian men" to battle against the varied ranks of "liberals, Jihadists and Communists" that he saw as the scourge of modern Britain.



A BFD recruitment graphic from 2014

Despite this very contemporary list of far-right targets, the uniforms initially adopted by this core of activists betrayed the group's roots in the sectarian obsessions of Dowson. Members appeared at a 2014 event in Kent in uniforms that drew on a range of Loyalist inspirations, from the flat caps and white bandoliers of the 1910s incarnation of the Ulster Volunteer Force along with the bandana-style masks worn by later Troubles-era paramilitary incarnations.

These paramilitary aspirations were made even clearer by their use of camouflage military-style Land Rovers, dark green uniforms and walkie talkies when out on operations, such as

that filmed by Channel 4 News in 2014, when a Britain First team invited journalists to join them as they travelled to the London home of radical Islamist preacher Anjem Choudhary. Despite their military trappings, the operation descended into farce when one of the Britain First vehicles collided with a parking barrier at high speed.

The group specialises in aggressive confrontations, such as their self-described tactic of "mosque invasions", where uniformed thugs turn up en masse at mosques, council offices and even private homes with little purpose other than to intimidate the occupants. A typically breathless report of a campaign day in 2014 described one such operation by Britain First's newly formed "Yorkshire Brigade":

"Our newly formed units descended on around 10 giant mega mosques, madrassas and Islamic centres across the town to distribute British Army bibles and anti-grooming leaflets. Our brave activists also invaded the campaign HQ of Bradford Labour Party [...] after the Mayor of Bradford declined a meeting request, the assembled patriots visited his home address only to find he was too cowardly to come out and face us."

At this point, Britain First made little effort to disguise its aggression; the same reported proudly warned that it was the "first of many such operations that are due to be launched across Yorkshire against Islam. The Yorkshire brigade is finally here and has "blooded" itself in the most heavily Muslim town in Yorkshire."

As time went on, and under increasing pressure from the police, Britain First began to tone down its events, appearance and language, seeking to distance itself from the overtly militant connotations. The group dropped the word "Force" from the title, rebranding to simply "Britain First Defence", and dropped the use of military-green hats and fleeces in favour of more generic black t-shirts and baseball caps.



Britain First Defence training centre, June 2021

More recently, the BFD has been portrayed as merely a security detail for the group, its current recruitment page describing it as: “the security and protection force of our movement. BFD officers act as bodyguards for the leadership, and defend and police our events and street activities”, a far cry from the overtly aggressive language used to describe its role in earlier days.

The group is run by Sam Cochrane, an activist from Carrickfergus who has managed to keep a relatively low profile despite his ubiquitous presence. In July 2020, Cochrane was detained at Belfast airport under Schedule 7 of the Terrorism Act 2000 for refusing to hand over the pin code for his mobile phone, the same legislation used to prosecute Golding a year earlier after his trip to Moscow. In June 2021, Britain First opened a training centre for BFD members in a warehouse reportedly belonging to a Britain First member,

where activists train in boxing, Krav Maga, Aikido and knife defence under the tutelage of West Midlands Regional Organiser Timothy Burton, who claims to be a black belt in Aikido.



Britain First Defence group in the Kent training centre, September 2021. A confederate flag hangs from the wall.

# REGIONAL BRANCHES

For much of its existence, Britain First primarily consisted of a core of activists that travelled across the UK in the hopes of inflaming tensions around potential flashpoints.

In early 2019, however, the group sought to formalise its structure into regional branches and refocus on local politics, remodelling itself more closely on the BNP. Golding hoped this change would revive the ailing group's fortunes, with a March 2019 article claiming that "Such a network, comprising scores, then hundreds, of active, connected branches, will make Britain First unstoppable!"

However, whilst Britain First enjoys a large online support base, only a small number engage with the party offline. Moreover, even among the notoriously fractious far-right fringes, Britain First has a remarkably high turnover of activists, as the heavy demands made of members, the turbulent culture of the organisation and Golding's own leadership style often quickly leads to burnout, infighting and disillusionment. Regional Organisers (ROs) and other appointed officials rarely last, and new branches are announced and then lapse into dormancy with frequency.

A core of dedicated activists continue to travel to actions and meetings across the country, meaning photos of "branch" events often give a misleading impression of the group's local strength.

Below is an overview of Britain First's current active branches.

## EASTERN

### **Regional Organiser: Geoff Miles**

Over the past three years, Britain First's Eastern regional branch has been unusual in its relative stability, with Hertfordshire-based activist Geoff Miles taking leadership of the region since its official launch in April 2019.

Miles was one of two Britain First activists who ran as an independent candidate in the 2019 local elections, netting 10% of the vote in East Hertfordshire (Ware Trinity ward). Miles is also a



promoter of the "white genocide" conspiracy and makes regular racist diatribes on social media, covered in further depth elsewhere in this report.

Under Miles, the Eastern branch has proved one of Britain First's most active, and with no dedicated London branch, activists from the Eastern and South East regions have frequently collaborated and travelled to the capital to carry out stunts and campaigns. Miles has been conspicuously absent at recent Eastern branch meetings, however, indicating he may no longer hold the RO role.

Notable activists include David Moreland, the Norwich-based former UKIP Home Affairs representative, who was announced as "head of the newly formed Britain First veterans division" in December 2021. The branch also includes the Chelmsford, Essex-based Andy "Nightmare" Frain, one of the country's most notorious football hooligans. Detailed elsewhere in this report, Frain has both an extensive criminal background, holding dozens of convictions for violence and other offences, and also a long history of involvement in extreme right politics, including the Nazi terror group Combat 18 and the British chapter of the Ku Klux Klan.

## EAST MIDLANDS

### **Regional Organiser: vacant**

Britain First's East Midlands branch has been relatively inactive for some time. In February 2020, the party's youth wing leader Joseph Lydon was appointed as Regional Organiser, but appears to have moved back to his native Utah, USA by July that year after achieving little of note in the role.

No replacement has yet been announced, and aside from hotel visits, for example in Nottingham and Derby, there has been scant concrete activity from the branch. A meeting of 25-30 activists in Nottingham in February 2022 was heralded as "start of a great new regional team", although it has, of yet, failed to translate into regular activism.



**NORTH EAST**

**Regional Organiser:  
George Chambers**

Britain First’s North East branch is, at present, among its most prominent.

The branch was officially launched in September 2019 under the leadership of Sunderland’s Joe Cobb, who had defected from a rival anti-Muslim group, For Britain, after achieving a miserable 33 votes in the local elections earlier that year. The branch appeared to do little actual activism, however, and Cobb was replaced by George Chambers as RO in July 2021.



Chambers, who is also a member of Britain First’s Defence group, is an avowed Odinist and has described Christianity as “another middle eastern religion 10 times more cruel than the Muslims”. He has also complained that “most of northern Europe was ravaged by Christianity”, making him an unlikely fit with the most avowedly Christian-chauvinist group on the British far right. Chambers runs a string of Odinist Facebook pages and YouTube channels under the pseudonym “Brae Wolf”, and has used one of the Britain First “battle buses” on camping trips with his “Vargulf Clan”.

Under Chambers, the branch has seen a resurgence, holding several comparatively well attended meetings in recent months and undertaking semi-regular “recruitment drives” across the region. North East activists have also travelled to Salford and Wakefield to aid the group’s electoral efforts.



George Chambers



Ashlea Simon and Tomas Downing, 31 July 2021. Golding and Simon came to support Downing at one of his boxing matches.

**NORTH WEST**

**Regional Organiser: Ashlea Simon**

Greater Manchester has emerged as a particular focus for Britain First in recent years, being the local branch of both leader Paul Golding and his deputy, Ashlea Simon.



Having previously attempted to establish a presence in the region, for example holding a 150-strong demonstration in Rochdale in 2017, the North West branch officially launched in May 2019 in Stockport, with longstanding activist John Lawrence (AKA Big John) appointed the official RO. However, a nasty split in 2019 saw a number of activists join the rival, newly-formed Manchester Collective. Lawrence himself has since gone on to form the miniscule National Housing Party.

In July 2019, a North of England branch was launched under the Leigh-based RO Jo Tee, primarily focusing on the Greater Manchester area. However, Tee did not last long in the role, with the branch lapsing into inactivity.

Taking the reins, Simon has led the revived North West branch on numerous anti-migrant hotel visits, with notable actions including several small protests at the Britannia Hotel in Standish near Wigan, and at a nearby school, alleging that male refugees at the hotel were sexually harassing schoolgirls. Salford was Britain First’s key target in the 2022 local elections, with Simon standing in her home ward of Walkden North. After a sustained campaign, Simon placed second with 508 votes (21.6%), losing handily to Labour’s 51%.



Key active members include Wayne Tomlinson, a former BNP candidate in Salford, and Donald Southworth, from Altrincham, who has taken aim at “Rothschild Jew rats” in an antisemitic Telegram group.

Also of note is the Barrow-based Tomas Downing, who has attended numerous Britain First events, most recently photographed at a branch meeting in August 2021, and made vile racist posts on social media. Downing was sentenced to 28 weeks after committing what police described as an “unprovoked assault” on a Salford City fan at a football match in January this year, shouting “I’m Barrow’s top dog” before punching the victim in the face, and continuing to hit him after he had fallen to the floor.

## NORTHERN IRELAND

**Regional Organiser: Davey Fisher**

Despite Britain First’s close ties to Northern Ireland, its regional branch is now relatively small. Lacking an official Regional Organiser, the group has been run by the “BFNI Council” since 2019, sharing leadership responsibilities between three activists: Sam Cochrane (also head of the Britain First Defence group), Davey Fisher and Aaron McClenaghan. However, McClenaghan has not taken part in any recent activism and Davey Fisher should be seen as the group’s current leader in practice, with Cochrane also taking an active role in the group.

Other activists have included Andy Brown, a Nazi who had connections to terror group Combat 18 when he was younger and has a tattoo of a Nazi eagle on his arm. Brown was an active member up until 2020 and took part in multiple leafleting sessions and continues to be in touch with members on social media. He was also part of Britain First Defence.

The Northern Ireland branch has attracted other individuals who have violent pasts or have made extreme expressions of racism. Desmond Lundy of Belfast, who has taken part in activism for Britain First, has admitted to terrorism charges and is convicted for threatening to kill his ex-girlfriend, stamping on her head and choking her with a shower hose.

Chipper Davidson of Lurgan has posted a picture of a man in a Ku Klux Klan robe on his Facebook profile, and in other posts he is brandishing weapons to the camera. Davidson has been photographed at multiple Britain First Northern Ireland events and next to Jamie Golding.



Chipper Davidson and Jamie Golding

Having put heavy focus on Northern Ireland between 2017 and 2019, activities in the region have slowed in recent years. A smaller number of activists undertake occasional actions and recruitment drives, with activists from other branches sometimes travelling across for activities. Fisher, alongside Paul Golding and other local activists, have harassed and filmed at hotels housing migrants on several occasions this year.



Paul Golding, Davey Fisher, Sam Cochrane, Aaron McClenaghan and Andrew Edge

## SCOTLAND

**Regional Organiser: Callum Holmes**

Britain First has struggled to establish a functional branch in Scotland. The group’s first attempt was overseen by Gary Raikes, a former BNP organiser who soon left to form the New British Union, an attempted revival of Oswald Mosely’s British Union of Fascists. For a period the group’s “Edinburgh



coordinator” was Mike Coyle, another former BNP organiser and also a former candidate for the fascist National Front.

Post-Raikes activities have included targeting two Glasgow mosques in 2014, and the group also stood six candidates in Scotland during the European elections the same year. The candidates, which included Jim Dowson and Jayda Fransen, placed seventh of nine with 1% of the vote.

The current iteration of the branch launched late in 2021, with young activist Callum Holmes appointed Regional Organiser. Britain First held a day of action in Falkirk in January 2022, although many of the attendees travelled up from England. Aside from a handful of meetings, the branch has achieved little of note.

## SOUTH EAST/LONDON

**Regional Organiser: vacant**

The South East region, and the South East London/Kent border in particular, is essentially home turf for Britain First, with leader Paul Golding raised in the area and a number of his locally-born relatives having served as candidates or activists.

Former Deputy Leader Jayda Fransen also hails from Penge, meaning that surrounding areas have historically seen a high concentration of activity. Britain First’s “Christian patrols” and targeting of mosques in East London earned the group much of its early notoriety, and Golding even stood for London mayor in 2016 (receiving 1.2%).

A South East branch officially launched in June 2019, with William Stone appointed RO in February 2020. However, Stone did not last long in the role, and many activities in the region came to be led by the Eastern RO, Geoff Miles.

The relaunched branch has held several well-attended meetings in 2022, however, and the area was subject to much activity in the 2022 local election campaign, as the party put forward Nick Scanlon in Greenwich (Eltham Page ward).

Scanlon, covered in further depth elsewhere in this report, is an activist for the tiny group Identity England (IE), a rebrand of Generation Identity UK that argues for a form of racial separatism. Scanlon has cycled through a number of other fascist groups over the past decade. Heavily involved in his campaign was Charlie Fox (AKA Charlie Roberts), the leader of IE, who also spoke at Britain First national conference in 2019.



L-R: Nick Scanlon, Paul Golding, Andy Frain and Charlie Fox

## SOUTH WEST

**Regional Organiser: vacant**

Officially launched in May 2019, Britain First’s South West branch was initially led by Ken Kearsey, a Dorchester-based activist who has since left to join the New British Union, an attempted revival of Oswald Mosely’s British Union of Fascists, which is headed by another former Britain First organiser, Gary Raikes.

Next to take the RO role was Sharon Workman, a “super activist” who also served as Britain First’s Recruitment Officer. The South West branch has dwindled over the past year, however, following Workman’s apparent migration to Cyprus. Britain First also attempted to establish a South Central branch to encompass Dorset, Hampshire and West Sussex, but aside from a launch event in Bournemouth in August 2021, this has failed to materialise.

Britain First has excused its lack of support in the South West by claiming that the region is “generally unspoiled by the usual problems”. The group’s most recent meeting took place in March and was attended by only seven people, including Golding himself.



## WALES

**Regional Organiser: Carl Burgess**

Britain First initially attempted to establish an activist base in Wales under Kevin Edwards, a former BNP councillor in Llandybie who also held the title of National Nominating Officer.



However, aside from sporadic events, historically Wales has not been an area of heavy activity for Britain First. Golding and three other activists stood in the European Elections in Wales in 2014, but came eighth of eleven parties, with 0.9%.

The current branch is headed by the Cardiff-based activist Carl Burgess, who took the RO position in December 2020, with his partner, Danielle Martin, a key activist in the region. As explored in further depth elsewhere in this report, Burgess is a conspiracy theorist who has claimed that “Jews wanna take over the world” and has repeatedly recommended the notorious, highly antisemitic documentary, *Europa: The Last Battle*, on social media.

Having led Britain First activities in Newport, Bridgend, Tenby and elsewhere, Burgess was also one of Britain First’s three candidates in the 2022 local elections, standing in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Bryanna and Llanharan ward), but came in last place with 191 votes, beaten handily by all of the other seven candidates.

Prominent activists include James Cole, a former UKIP candidate and Britain First’s current Policy Development Officer. Cole also stood for the Abolish the Welsh Assembly Party in Swansea West in 2021, attracting negative press for defending golliwogs and likening Black Lives Matter to the Ku Klux Klan, ultimately receiving 4% of the vote.

**WEST MIDLANDS**

**Regional Organiser: Timothy Burton**

Britain First’s West Midlands branch is among its largest and most active.

The group has long been active in the region, campaigns including an attempt to prevent the construction of a mosque in Dudley in 2015, with Golding threatening to bury a pig at the site in order to “contaminate” the land. Britain First also held demonstrations in February and June 2017 in Telford and Birmingham respectively, at which the antisemitic Polish hate preacher, Jacek Międlar, was scheduled to speak; in both instances, he was prevented from entering the UK. Also due to speak at the Birmingham demonstration was Piotr Rybak, previously indicted for inciting hatred after he burned an effigy of an orthodox Jew at a protest.

Officially launched in 2019, the West Midlands branch was initially helmed by Paul Rudge,



who stood as an Independent candidate in the 2019 local elections in Sandwell (Rowley ward), gaining 26% of the vote. On Rudge’s death in March 2020, the branch was handed to Timothy Burton, who has held various leading roles at the organisation.

The group has visited hotels alleged to be housing migrants, for example in Birmingham and Coventry, and also often holds its national conferences in the region.

Prominent figures include Simon Mayhew-Sanders and Tom Richardson, who, aside from Golding himself, are the group’s two longest-serving activists, and Martyn Williams, an activist from Tipton who has conducted online harassment campaigns against a number of Twitter users, some of whom have felt forced to leave social media and even report him to the police. Activists have also included Damian Byng, who claimed that “M\*zrats need exterminating” on social media [slur words starred out by us].

**YORKSHIRE**

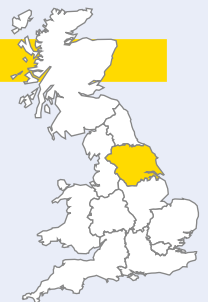
**Regional Organiser: vacant**

Whilst Golding has stated that “Yorkshire should be one of the strongest regions in Britain First”, the group has struggled to establish an active membership in the county.

In 2018, a West Yorkshire branch was formed under Sean Pett, but proved short-lived. In 2019, Leigh-based activist Jo Tee was appointed RO for a new North of England branch, ostensibly encompassing both Lancashire and Yorkshire; however, the activities were mostly concentrated in Greater Manchester, and it eventually lapsed into dormancy.

The current Yorkshire branch was launched in January 2022 at a small meeting in Pontefract, and the group has conducted hotel visits in Rotherham and Scarborough this year. However, Britain First’s most recent branch meeting, which took place in Pontefract in March, saw roughly 12 activists – including leaders Golding and Simon – in attendance, indicating that it is still struggling to find activists here.

Britain First’s profile stands to be boosted in Wakefield, however, with the group pouring considerable resources into Simon’s candidacy in the June 2022 by-election.



# ROGUES' GALLERY

## ANTHONY BARRACLOUGH

On 10 June 2022, Anthony Barraclough (AKA Ant Barra), based in Shoreditch, East London, was jailed for six years for terrorism and public order offences, having admitted to three counts of disseminating terrorist publications and seven counts of distributing materials to incite racial hatred between November 2020 and February 2021.

HOPE not hate can reveal that during this period, Barraclough was an active member of Britain First's Eastern branch, protesting outside of hotels alleged to be housing migrants and accompanying leader Paul Golding to the Millwall stadium in December 2020 to support fans who booed the taking of the knee by their team. Barraclough was a regular at Britain First's activities up until May 2021, even donning the black uniform of the Defence group. He continued to post on Britain First's chat group after he stopped public activity.

The extremist continued post terror-related content on a number of fascist Telegram groups after his arrest. For example, in May 2021 he posted a meme featuring Dylann Roof, the white supremacist who murdered nine



Black worshippers in a Charleston church in 2015, which made reference to “total n\*\*ger death” [slur words starred out by us]. In July that year, he posted a video that appeared to show Muslims worshipping in a park, writing: “Wheres daren Osborne when u need him ☺”, referring to the terrorist who drove a van into a crowd outside a mosque in Finsbury Park, London, in 2017, killing one. Barraclough has also described the rapper Eminem as a “n\*\*gerlover” and posted images featuring anti-Black stereotypes.

When searching his home, police found a black flag bearing a Celtic Cross symbol, widely used by white supremacists around the globe. Detective Chief Superintendent Dominic Murphy, of the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, said: “Barraclough posted appalling racist material online, with the intention of encouraging others to adopt his extremist views and hatred of black people.”

Barraclough has also expressed support for Patriotic Alternative (PA), the UK's largest neo-Nazi organisation, and was active in fascist fitness groups on Telegram, including PA's own chat. Attending the January 2022 demonstration headed by Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson) in Telford, West Midlands, Barraclough wrote: “Meet some good lads from PA today was a pleasure boys”, expressing his disappointment at the lack of violence at the event.



Anthony Barraclough (left) alongside Britain First leader Paul Golding, in April 2021

## CARL BURGESS

Carl Burgess is Britain First's Wales Regional Organiser and one of its three candidates in the 2022 local elections, standing in Rhondda Cynon Taf (Bryanna and Llanharan ward), ultimately coming in last place.

Burgess, who took the RO role in December 2020, is also a conspiracy theorist who has repeatedly recommended the notorious, highly antisemitic Holocaust denial documentary *Europa: The Last Battle* on social media.

In April 2020, Burgess wrote on a far-right chat group on Telegram: "Jews wanna take over the world I watched a documentary". He continued: "Did you see *Europa the last battle?* I don't hate jews really but they do seem extra quiet... a little too quiet." Three weeks earlier, he had written in the same group: "I recommend you go to [the video sharing site] bitchute and watch *Europa: the last battle*. Shit is crazy, its scarily accurate to what the modern world is becoming right now. It's a 12 part series but honestly give it a go".

In May 2020, he took to the social media platform VK to again promote the video, which claims that both world wars were part of a Jewish plot and exculpates the Nazi regime. This time, Burgess wrote: "it's a real eye opener to what is happening today from books which were written 100 years ago. THIS IS WHATS HAPPENING IN OUR WORLD TODAY!!!"

In April 2020, Burgess also posted a clip from

the 1998 film *American History X* in which a gang Nazi skinheads embark on an appalling racist rampage in a grocery store, brutally assaulting the staff. Alongside the video, Burgess wrote: "I'm no nazi but I'm sure a few of us can relate. I watched this yesterday for the first time in about 10 years. This is now happening here fucking crazy". He continued:

"Instead if blacks its muslims over here who are a major problem [... ] the time for talking is over it's not getting us anywhere. I really wouldnt want to go around hurting people its disgusting but what else could we do to send a message. We need to make suggestions that will really make a difference because protesting seems a waste of time to me".

More recently, in August 2021, while an appointed official within Britain First, he wrote: "So there bringing people over to massacre us? British politicians are more than happy to let them do this obviously. Time to get armed people, seriously now".

Burgess has elsewhere reposted conspiratorial screeds outlining a supposed plot to usher in a "New World Order" via vaccines, 5G technology and "herds of immigrants" entering the UK, ultimately facilitating the "mass extermination of us, introduction of a one world government, introduction of nanochip injections and total financial control of YOU and a Marxist style ruling done by credit worthiness".



Carl Burgess (left) alongside party leader Paul Golding

## ANDY FRAIN



Britain First activist Andy Frain

In recent years, Andy Frain has emerged as one of Britain First's most active members. A member of the Britain First Defence group, the Chelmsford, Essex-based activist has attended numerous actions across the country and campaigned in during the 2022 local elections, even attending the vote count alongside Golding and Simon in Salford. His activity in Britain First earned him an "Elite Activist" award at the 2021 annual camp.

However, for many years Frain was one of the UK's most violent and notorious football hooligans. A leading member of the infamous Chelsea Headhunters gang, Frain has dozens of convictions, mostly for violence and drunken behaviour but also importing drugs, burglary, assaulting a police officer and other offences.

Nicknamed "Nightmare", Frain has been associated with the Headhunters since the early 1980s. Earning a fearsome reputation, by 1995 he was one of only two hooligans in Britain to be banned from travelling abroad to watch Chelsea and England.

Frain was also immersed in the UK's extreme right during a particularly violent period in the 1990s, joining the Nazi terror group Combat 18 (C18) on its inception. Named after Adolf Hitler (the digits 1 and 8 representing his initials), the group terrorised minoritised communities and political opponents for a decade. Frain

was also a member of the British chapter of the Invisible Empire of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), even travelling to the US for training, only to be deported for violence. Frain was also at the centre of a brawl at an event organised by Blood & Honour, the Nazi skinhead music scene.

Frain featured prominently in a 1999 BBC documentary into the Headhunters, in which he was covertly filmed boasting about slashing an off-duty police officer with a knife. Jason Marriner, another Chelsea hooligan, was filmed claiming that he and Frain had travelled to the death camp Auschwitz and posed for a photo performing Nazi salutes. In Marriner's words: "I quickly took the photo [of Frain saluting] and a Polish geezer started crying. I think I put the final nail in the coffin when I tried to get into the oven."

In December 2000, Frain and Marriner were handed seven and six year sentences respectively for planning violence at a football match and attempting to disrupt a march to commemorate Bloody Sunday, alongside C18 thugs; the pair were described by the judge as "dangerous" men who "relish violence". Marriner has also been photographed with Britain First leader Paul Golding in recent years.

Throughout the 2000s, Frain continued his far-right activity and maintained contact with Charlie Sargent, the former leader of C18 and a convicted murderer. In 2006, Frain was jailed again after he was hired to threaten a victim of assault with violence if he did not drop charges. In 2011, Frain was yet again convicted for violent disorder for his involvement in a clash between Chelsea and Cardiff hooligans, turning up to court swigging a bottle of vodka. In 2013, Frain found himself behind bars once more for his organising role in a mass brawl in Glasgow.

He now travels the country as a key member of the Britain First Defence team.



Frain (left) in Belfast



L-R: Simon Mayhew-Sanders, Paul Golding, Jason Marriner, Jamie Golding

## **JAMIE GOLDING**

It is a mainstay of Britain First’s rhetoric that immigration, multiculturalism and liberal values are the primary drivers of crime and violence in the UK. However, this narrative is somewhat undermined by leader Paul Golding’s own family history, especially that of his younger brother Jamie.

Among the group’s regular activists and a member of the Britain First Defence security team, Jamie Golding has travelled the country in support of Britain First activities, regularly appearing in the Britain First Defence uniform at public events. Yet the younger Golding’s history of criminality is shocking in its scale, occurring at a time when his brother was a rising star in the BNP and lived just a few streets away from him.

The younger Golding made national news in

2002 when he and five accomplices, part of a gang known as the “Slade Green Massive”, were served with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders for a two-year reign of terror against residents of the Slade Green area that included carjackings and violent assaults. Having spent months on the run after skipping bail, he would later be sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison for his role in a crime ring that stole vehicles and property to the value of £300,000 over a five month period.

Shortly after his release, Golding would immediately embark on another staggering crime spree. In 2006, he and an accomplice pled guilty to 171 burglaries on homes across South East London and Kent, carrying out up to six burglaries per day and netting an estimated £1.9 million pounds worth of property, of which only £1.2 million was recovered by police.

## GEOFF MILES

Geoff Miles is perhaps Britain First’s longest-serving Regional Organiser, having helmed the Eastern branch since 2019. Miles has travelled across the country for Britain First actions, and was also one of two Britain First officials selected to stand as a candidate in the 2019 local elections. Miles’ status as a trusted activist was such that he accompanied Golding on one of his trips to Russia in October 2020.

Miles is also a hardline racist, promoting the bunk “white genocide” conspiracy theory on social media, using the slur word “P\*ki” and much else. In a particularly vile rant in February this year, he wrote [slur words starred out by us]:

“I find watching the Winter Olympics so refreshing . Haven’t seen one Black competitor and therefore zero whinging Negroes crying into their fried chicken that they’ve been racially abused. No Muslim screaming Allah Akhbar and beheading a child. But then all the events require skill and dedication and brainwork so that counts the Black and P\*ki out. They are far better suited to the summer olympics where all they have to do is run in straight line.”

The same month he also wrote “British justice is great if you’re a murdering P\*ki”, and in April this year, referred to people of dual heritage as “Wooly haired Hybrids”. He also claimed that Oswald Mosely, leader of the British Union of Fascists, was “a man before his time and a Great one!”

Miles has a history of such outbursts. For example, in May 2020 he reposted propaganda bearing the words “Destroy Islam, save



L-R: Brian Tilbury, Andy Frain, Geoff Miles and Anthony Barraclough



A screencap from Miles’ social media

humanity”, and the same month a picture of Theresa May hanging from a gallows, alongside pictures of former Prime Ministers David Cameron, John Major, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, writing: “Traitorous Bastards. Hanging is too good for this scum.”

Expressing his contempt for law enforcement, he wrote in November 2020:

“Britain’s Police Force....What a pathetic bunch of useless impotent Monkeys. Expert at persecuting innocent members of the White English Community but complete Cowards when it comes to arresting knife wielding Africans and Murdering Muslims. Yellow Wankers!”

Miles has been conspicuously absent from Britain First events since January this year, indicating that he may no longer hold an organising role, although he has previously claimed, in a 2020 video: “I’ll always be a member of Britain First, long after I’ve stopped being an activist”, continuing: “I believe in Britain First and I believe in Paul Golding”. His current profile on the social media platform VK continues to declare: “I stand with Paul Golding and all members of Britain First in fighting oppression and injustice against our own people.”





Nick Scanlon (left) alongside former BNP leader Nick Griffin in 2020

## NICK SCANLON

Nick Scanlon, a relative newcomer to Britain First, represented the group in the 2022 local elections, ultimately placing sixth of seven candidates in the Eltham Page ward of Greenwich. However, the South London-based activist, who is now at the forefront of Britain First in the South East, has cycled through a number of fascist groups over the past decade.

In 2014, Scanlon stood as a candidate for the BNP in Greenwich (Middle Park and Sutcliffe ward), placing 11th of 12 candidates. Scanlon appears to have maintained his affection for the fascist group, writing in 2018 that the party had been the “real deal”. In February 2020, he even met the disgraced former leader and notorious Holocaust denier, Nick Griffin, for a beer.

Scanlon was also a core member of Generation Identity UK (GI UK), a now defunct far-right youth group active between 2017 and 2019 that advocated for a form of racial segregation. Scanlon was more extreme than many of his GI contemporaries, for example repeatedly promoting propaganda from the neo-Nazi Mark Collett during this time.

In May 2019, Scanlon attended the white nationalist American Renaissance conference in the hope of forging links between US racists and GI UK, and also attended events by the Traditional Britain Group, a far-right pseudo-intellectual conference and key networking event for the UK far right.

After GI UK folded in January 2020, Scanlon claimed on Telegram that that he had joined Patriotic Alternative (PA), a highly antisemitic, fascist group headed by Collett, and joined the internal chat of the group’s South East branch. Scanlon has since joined Identity England (IE), a microscopic GI splinter group that launched in October 2020. He remains active in the racial separatist organisation, despite his role in Britain First.

Scanlon has produced a steady stream of racism on social media, for example writing in 2019:

“You can ban as many knives & films as you wish. The reality is nothing is going to change until the primitive culture which has been bought to our shores & allowed to flourish is #remigrated from our once tranquil and harmonious nation. Resist the Africanization of our cities!”

In May 2021, he also wrote of Black Lives Matter activist Sasha Johnson, who had suffered severe brain injuries from a gunshot: “ideally she should be remigrated back to her native homeland – but none the less watching “right wingers” wishing her a speedy recovery is quite frankly, pathetic.”

After HOPE not hate exposed his comments in the local press this May, Britain First polled its followers, asking: “Do you agree with Britain First candidate Nick Scanlon that BLM leader Sasha Johnson should be deported?”, with 98% answering yes.

## **MASON YATES**

Mason Yates from Widnes, Cheshire pleaded guilty to terrorism charges in June 2022 for possessing instructions on how to make explosives from Telegram. Yates, now 19-years-old, was in the Prevent programme at age 13. According to a support worker, Yates claimed: “I have not been radicalised, I would be the one radicalising other people” and “I am as far-right as you can be”.

Yates was an active member in Britain First and is pictured at protests outside of hotels housing migrants in Warrington and in the North West of England.

Yates explicitly identifies himself as a Britain First activist and is friends with several high ranking Britain First members on social media, including Ashlea Simon, Paul Golding, Geoff Miles and Sam Cochrane.

In addition to the terror offences, Yates was convicted of possession of an extreme pornographic image.



Mason Yates (middle) at Britain First action with Ashlea Simon and Geoff Miles

# PUTIN'S BRITISH MOUTHPIECE

BRITAIN FIRST LEADER PAUL GOLDING'S LONG HISTORY OF PRO-PUTIN PROPAGANDISING



Paul Golding  
in Moscow

Since Russia's bloody invasion of Ukraine, many on the far right who had spent years venerating President Putin have suddenly sought to distance themselves from the Kremlin. Britain First, for example, has been keen to emphasise the fact that its main Russian links are with an opposition party called the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR).

As the group hurriedly posted on Telegram in February: "Our friends in Russia are an OPPOSITION party to Putin, the LDPR. The LDPR are a patriotic, nationalist party that has nothing to do with Putin or his United Russia party. Britain First has only ever visited Moscow to see our friends, the LDPR".

The LDPR is often described as part of the "controlled opposition" or "systemic opposition" and, according to the BBC, "The party does not tend to criticise either Mr Putin or Mr Medvedev explicitly." However, a HOPE not hate investigation has found that leader Paul Golding and Britain First's links to Russia and support for Putin go far beyond what they are now claiming.

### **PRAISING PUTIN AND OPENING ACCOUNTS?**

Britain First has a long history of praising Putin. As far back as 2014 its magazine, *Sovereignty*, had a whole article praising him. "We are facing an epic struggle between those who espouse sacred values such as justice, decency, nation, identity, traditions, culture versus those who wish to destroy such values, and Putin is on the frontline", it read. The article also argued that "Crimea is and always has been a part of Russia." Similarly, in 2015 the group described Putin as "Good old Vladimir!" in a Facebook post.

It is perhaps unsurprising then that Golding has sought out contacts in Putin's Russia. HOPE not hate can reveal that Golding has visited Russia at least three times on behalf of Britain First. The earliest two trips came in 2019, first in June and again in October, with a third trip a year later in October 2020.

The first trip, in the summer of 2019, saw Golding, accompanied by Sam Cochrane and Andrew Edge, attend a gathering of far-right figures from around the world. The "International Conference of Peace-loving Forces" was organised by the LDPR and was attended by extreme figures such as Bartosz Bekier of Falanga in Poland, Karl Richter and Florian Stein from the neo-Nazi German National Democratic Party and Kimura Mitsuhiro from Issuika in Japan.

Golding gave a short speech to the gathering

in which he made his thoughts on Putin very clear: "I am a great admirer of President Vladimir Putin and what he has achieved for your sacred motherland. [...] I applaud President Putin for condemning Western liberalism at the G20 summit last week."

He also criticised how the West:

"subject Russia and President Putin to an avalanche of lies, distortions and economic pressure to turn Western populations against Russia, which is our natural ally. The propaganda war against President Putin and Russia is the same diabolical pressure that our movement, Britain First, and many others, have been subjected to. Smear campaigns, character assassination, false criminal charges, media lies and poison, these are the weapons the globalists use against our sacred and noble cause."

Golding then finished his speech by once again "praising and applauding the patriotism of the Russian people and your President, Vladimir Putin."

As well as using the trip to network with other far-right extremists and to heap praise on Putin, it is also alleged that Golding used it to deposit huge sums of money in Russian bank accounts. According to the *Sunday World* newspaper, "Golding has reportedly deposited over £100,000 in Russian bank accounts." When asked for a comment, Golding replied: "Good grief, we wish we had money stashed away in Russian accounts."

Similarly, the *New York Times* spoke to a source who claimed to have had a dinner with Golding and fellow far-right extremist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (AKA Tommy Robinson), during which they discussed how to move money to Russia. NYT's source claimed that "Golding had already opened accounts there linked to his far-right group."

### **RETURN TO MOSCOW**

Later in 2019, Golding returned to Moscow, this time with his partner Ashlea Simon and Britain First's Communications Officer Tim Burton. The trip was written up by Burton in a punishingly detailed diary that has decidedly creepy sections where he talks at length of his attraction to Russian women, and claims that Simon has a "sylph-like figure that would be the envy of many a catwalk model."

While in Moscow they met with Edward Chesnokov from the *Komsomolskaya-Pravda*



Paul Golding  
Interviewed on  
Russian TV

newspaper, who subsequently set up a TV interview for Golding on the state-owned news channel Russia-24. Golding hit all of his usual talking points, praising the freedom and openness of Russia while condemning Britain's supposedly totalitarian police state, multiculturalism and political correctness.

The main purpose of their trip was supposedly to meet again with the LDPR, who provided them with a tour around the Duma before welcoming them at their office on Basmanny Lane, where they discussed how "we in Britain First could work together with the LDPR. It was agreed that we should keep in touch, meet regularly, and explore ideas leading to mutual co-operation." Golding then handed the LDPR representatives signed copies of his own book.

It was on their return from this trip that Golding was arrested and questioned by SO15 counter-terrorism police at Heathrow airport. He was charged and subsequently convicted of an offence under the Terrorism Act after he refused to provide the police with access to his digital devices. Interestingly though, Burton's diary of the trip states that police asked "Were there any financial transactions carried out involving Britain First finances?", suggesting that the police were seeking to find out more about the widespread rumours of Golding's hidden Russian money.

## **MYSTERIOUS THIRD TRIP**

Of all Golding's trips to Russia, we know the least about his third in October 2020. As with his previous visits, he placed a Britain First

poppy wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Kremlin, this time accompanied by their Eastern Regional Organiser, Geoff Miles.

Golding also did a series of media interviews. In one broadcast interview, he parroted the same lines as on previous trips. He called for greater Anglo-Russian cooperation and argued that the reason for Western sanctions against Russia is that it is a: "proud, traditional country, that kind of thing, they don't like it in the western world. So, they're constantly trying to portray Russia as some kind of violent dictatorship that's a threat to Europe and the West, which it is not. We are kindred peoples."

However, in another interview with the Federal News Agency, Golding revealed just how far he was willing to go to defend Putin and the crimes of the Russian state. When asked about the poisoning of Sergei Skripal in Salisbury and the Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny in Russia, Golding responded, "Every time something happens in the UK they blame Russia, whenever there is a power cut in the UK, they blame Russia, they blame Russia for everything"

Later, in January 2021, Britain First posted, but later deleted, a message on its Telegram channel reading: "Russian opposition Alexey Navalny has been detained by police, however the British and American mainstream media fails to acknowledge he has been detained for breaching the terms of his probation from a previous criminal case & are instead using it as a chance to attack Putin.....".

However, Golding's denial of Russian involvement in the Skripal poisoning, and

defence of state persecution of Navalny, is just part of his wider pro-Putin propagandising. Just weeks before the Moscow trip in 2020, but years after the horrifying chemical attacks in Syria in 2018, Britain First posted on Telegram: “God bless Syria and Russia. Assad and Putin has stood for the 100,000’s of persecuted people in Syria at the hands of the Islamic State.....”

Most damaging for Golding, in light of the current war, is what he said during the Federal News Agency interview when asked about situation in Ukraine in 2020, prior to the current Russian invasion:

“I think that throughout the last hundred years a lot of artificial borders have been made around Europe and one of those artificial borders was to include the Donbas region, which is populated by ethnic and cultural Russians, historically as well, and the Crimea [...] and I don’t see why the Ukraine is holding on to areas that are populated with Russians so determinedly. [...] So places like the Crimea, places like the Donbas, that are populated by Russian people, should be part of Russia.”

Interestingly, at roughly the same time as this interview, in October 2020, Britain First’s

Telegram channel shared an article titled: “Time to defund NATO? Defending the West from Russia is so ‘last century.’”

Far from Britain First’s claims to have only really been involved with an opposition group in Russia, it is clear that Golding’s links to the country are deep, as is his commitment to spreading Kremlin lies and misinformation. The question is: why?

## BRITAIN FIRST LEADER PAUL GOLDING HAS:

- **Visited Russia at least three times**
- **Said he is a “great admirer of President Vladimir Putin”**
- **Denied Russian involvement in the Salisbury poisonings**
- **Defended state persecution of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny**
- **Praised Putin and Assad for their actions in Syria**
- **Said “I think Crimea and the Donbas should be part of Russia”**



Paul Golding and Ashlea Simon in Moscow





HOPE not hate Ltd  
Registered office: Suite 1, 3rd Floor,  
11-12 St. James's Square, London SW1Y 4LB, UK