



Reform councillor pictured in Blackface and Rasta hat

## Description

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Reform UK councillor Geoff Shaw in Blackface

Geoff Shaw is one of the new crop of Reform UK councillors who were [elected to office in May 2026](#). And like many of his new colleagues, Shaw is already attracting all the wrong sort of attention:

Reform UK's Councillor Geoff Shaw, black face with 'rasta wig'.

Theydon Bois, Epping Forest District Council.

Any comment [@EFReform](#) or [@MclvorJaymey](#)? [pic.twitter.com/WpepSiD7Ky](https://pic.twitter.com/WpepSiD7Ky)

'Reform Party UK Exposed' 🇬🇧 (@reformexposed) [June 2, 2026](#)

## Disgraceful

Shaw is [one of 11 Reform politicians](#) who won a seat on the Epping Forest District Council. This gave Reform a majority of the 18 seats available. Given the rate at which Reform [loses councillors](#) however, the party may struggle to hold on to that majority - especially with politicians like Reform's Shaw in the mix.

In the offending picture, Shaw appears to have *Black and White Minstrel*-style face paint on:

From 1958 to 1978 the BBC here in the U.K. broadcast the Black and White Minstrel show  
🙄 [pic.twitter.com/YjBYqh80AU](https://pic.twitter.com/YjBYqh80AU)

â?? MAGA deserves everything they voted for 🗳️ (@nogg\_the) [May 24, 2026](#)

Reporting on the history of the show, David Hendy [wrote for the BBC website](#)

Whatâ??s harder to fathom is why, in an era in which tens of thousands of black people had long been settled in Britain or were trying to make it their home, a BBC which had already managed to reflect something of the reality of black British lifeâ?! took so little account of the offence caused by white performers blacking-up their faces on a peak-time TV show.

Hendy added:

For the best part of the next twenty years it didnâ??t seem to occur to anyone in a position of authority at the BBC that the series really was offensive to more than just a few â??killjoysâ?\*. This failure to even see any racism was a measure of the BBCâ??s real problem: the archival record of its behind-the-scenes thinking during this period is far from flattering.

On that record, one BBC executive wrote that the showâ??s airing:

The best advice that could be given to coloured people by their friends would be: â??on this issue, we can see your point, by [SIC] in your own best interests, for Heavenâ??s sake shut up. You are wasting valuable ammunition on a comparatively insignificant targetâ?\*.â?\*

While itâ??s obvious to most why itâ??s offensive to portray Black people as cartoonish caricatures, people like Shaw still arenâ??t getting it. To make it completely clear, then, we need to go back to the start.

## The history of minstrelry

The tradition of Black minstrelry began in the US, and it emerged at a time when Black people lacked the rights of white American citizens. As the National Museum of African American History & Culture [reported](#)

The first minstrel shows were performed in 1830s New York by white performers with blackened faces (most used burnt cork or shoe polish) and tattered clothing who imitated and mimicked enslaved Africans on Southern plantations. These performances characterized blacks as lazy, ignorant, superstitious, hypersexual, and prone to thievery and cowardice. Thomas Dartmouth Rice, known as the â??Father of Minstrelsy,â?\* developed the first popularly known blackface character, â??Jim Crowâ?\* in 1830. By 1845, the popularity of the minstrel had spawned an entertainment subindustry, manufacturing songs and sheet music, makeup, costumes, as well as a ready-set of stereotypes upon which to build new performances.

In other words, the practice emerged as a means for white Americans to ridicule and denigrate their Black countryfolk. And it persisted because enterprising racists figured out how to turn a profit from it.

You can't separate the act of Blackface from the history of Blackface. And while you can utter phrases like "it's just face paint" or "I don't mean any offence", in doing so you sound like a fucking idiot.

## Getting away with it

We're not sure what Shaw's excuse will be yet, but we'd be very surprised if it contains the word "sorry." After all, he's a member of the party which happily tolerated the following:

- [Reform activist worries growth of Jewish population could ruin UK culture](#)
- [Media silent as antisemitic Reform activist spotted campaigning](#)
- [Another Reform candidate praises Oswald Moseley - A rite of party initiation?](#)
- [Reform has put a suspended racist in charge of campaign finances](#)
- [Reform candidate wants to "tear down" the NHS](#)
- [Video emerges of Reform's "Nazi salute" candidate drink driving](#)

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By [Willem Moore](#)

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