

Fear of religious coercion as Muslims are told holy man endorses Labour

From [witches](#) but by a large Muslim community. The Labour candidate is Azhar Ali, a councillor and prominent Muslim; the Conservative candidate is Andrew Stephenson. A test message is being circulated on WhatsApp which says

“We were requested by Mr Azhar Ali to request blessings and prayer from the World Renown[ed] Sufi Master” Sheikh Mohammed Adil Haqqani and from his brother Sheikh Bahauddin...Mr Azhar Ali has the full support and dua [prayers] and with the blessings of our Mashaykh [religious leader] we request everyone who possibly can please make the effort to vote Mr Azhar Ali. (Spread the message) to unite to bring goodness, and unity among the Pendle community.”

The Sheikhs are believed to be descendants of Mohammed. They deny endorsing the Labour candidate. The Labour candidate denies any knowledge. The texts were issued just before postal votes were sent out. The Constituency is one that is causing the [high rate of previous electoral fraud](#).

The discovery comes after a judge unseated an elected mayor

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