

TOLLER PORCORM PARISH COUNCIL

Full Parish Council Meeting | Wednesday 19 November 2025

Appendix K – Nominees for NALC's Smaller Councils Committee

Minute reference: 25/11-13.ii

John Anderson

Explain why you are standing for this position

I love to give up time for the betterment of our community and have a strong passion for the role our Parish Councils play in local affairs.

I believe in the vast amount of good that can be done by Parish Councils, by councillors that do the role purely for the love of their local area. The clerks need support in what can be a difficult and very lonely role at times. The councils often need support from organisations like their County Associations and NALC and I feel that my long experience as a Parish Chair could be useful to assist others.

I do have concerns about the limitations of sanctions in relation to breaches of Council Codes of Conduct. The integrity of Council Standards is a very important part of Local Council Governance and when breaches occur it can erode public confidence. I would be interested in involvement in lobbying for and working towards more meaningful sanctions within our sector.

I am becoming increasingly aware of the effect AI will have and is beginning to have in the future of local councils and can see many changes on the horizon. I would like to be a part of these changes and welcome them as a means of making mundane tasks less human-resource hungry.

I would like to see more public attend local council meetings. I would be very interested to have involvement in increasing public engagement by exploring ways to advertise Local Councils to their electorate.

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

I have been a Parish Council Chair for more years than I care to remember and was Chair of two Parishes for some time. Over the years I have seen many things, both good and bad and have learned to deal with it all in my stride. I am a great believer in training and have spent years encouraging new councillors to take up all offers of training.

I was nominated by our Parish and elected to our Staffordshire County Association a couple of years ago and enjoy being a part of a team that gives it's time to keep our Staffordshire Parishes running smoothly. This is a great platform from which to get to know other Parish and Town Councils and to solve problems together.

I have a lot of community involvement at leadership levels of local angling clubs, charities, education and the NHS and am possibly best known for setting up homeless charity, Burton HOPE. Burton HOPE now has 120 volunteers and assists not only homeless people but anyone in need. Burton HOPE now has town centre premises which incorporates a support centre for a range of issues and the largest food bank in East Staffordshire. Running this charity has many parallels to Local Council work in relation to Governance and leadership. I am Chair to the Trustees and the whole charity is run by unpaid volunteers. So many skills are interchangeable. I would like to offer these skills and qualifications to the world of local councils

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

I must admit, I really enjoy working with the governance that keeps us all safe and working within the bounds of the law.

Good governance is the backbone of local councils and requires regular review to ensure it is current and relevant in an ever changing World.

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AI is one area that needs to be embraced in relevant ways. It removes human error and can be a fast and effective tool for gathering information on Codes of Conduct, LGA, policies and statutory law, generally. AI can work within set boundaries to ensure the correct information is obtained. It can be utilised to write meeting minutes that need only minimal human intervention. I would like to have involvement in helping this grow in our sector to assist our councils to thrive.

I enjoy campaigning too and lobbying Government to make changes for improvement to our councils in the lower tier of Government is very important. I can see this really becoming an important part of NALC's work as the Unitary Council Reorganisation takes place and becomes established. We are being told that reorganisation of councils will have little or no effect on our small councils but I think we all realise we may have a bumpy ride ahead.

Public involvement is very close to my heart and if elected, I would dearly love to be involved in assisting NALC to assist our councils to find new and exciting ways to get more public to council meetings.

Stephen Ashfield

Explain why you are standing for this position

I am standing for re-election because I believe smaller parish and town councils are the foundation of local democracy and deserve to be properly heard at national level. During my two years on the NALC Smaller Councils Committee I have worked to highlight the real challenges faced by small councils — restricted budgets, rising compliance expectations, and the constant pressure of doing more with limited time and capacity.

As Chair of Shincliffe Parish Council and Vice Chair of the County Durham Association of Local Councils Smaller Councils Forum, I have seen how much can be achieved when local people come together with purpose. Our council has led biodiversity and recycling projects, road-safety campaigns, and the creation of a Local Nature Reserve with Natural England. These initiatives demonstrate what smaller councils can deliver when supported by clear guidance, proportionate rules, and access to shared expertise.

Through my work with NALC and CDALC I have learned that most difficulties arise not from unwillingness but from overly complex systems. I want to continue working within NALC to simplify governance, produce practical templates, and ensure that guidance recognises the reality of volunteer-led organisations.

If re-elected I will champion affordable environmental initiatives, strengthen regional support networks, and promote better communication between county associations and NALC so local experience truly shapes national policy. Smaller councils are the democratic first responders in their communities. My goal is to ensure they remain confident, well-supported, and recognised as a vital, forward-looking part of public life across the nation.

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

As Chair of Shincliffe Parish Council and Vice Chair of the CDALC Smaller Councils Forum I have guided colleagues through planning consultations, environmental projects, and local engagement exercises. I believe good leadership means listening, building consensus, and empowering others to contribute their strengths. This inclusive approach has helped our small council deliver practical improvements despite limited resources and strengthened trust within our community. I have also supported neighbouring councils by sharing templates, advice, and experiences that help them overcome similar challenges and avoid duplication of effort, creating a stronger network of local collaboration across County Durham.

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With a Master's degree in Environmental Management and many years teaching applied science, I bring evidence-based insight to sustainable decision-making. I have led biodiversity and recycling schemes, encouraged greener procurement, and helped establish a Local Nature Reserve with Natural England. These experiences show how smaller councils can take credible climate action through realistic, low-cost measures while inspiring residents to play their part in protecting local habitats.

Serving for two years on the NALC Smaller Councils Committee has given me direct involvement in shaping national guidance, surveys, and partnership work. I've contributed to discussions on funding, training, and public safety, ensuring smaller-council realities are fully represented and that policies are practical and achievable for councils of all capacities.

Together, these achievements combine practical leadership, technical expertise, and national-level insight. They give me a balanced understanding of what smaller councils need clarity, collaboration, and confidence to deliver for their residents and to influence local-government policy effectively.

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

My vision is for NALC to be the most trusted, responsive, and forward-thinking organisation serving parish and town councils. For smaller councils this means clear guidance, fair representation, and practical help that saves time and reduces complexity.

NALC should focus on simplifying compliance, audit, and transparency requirements. Producing concise model templates, online checklists, and explainer videos would make life easier for clerks and councillors who balance council duties with other jobs. Flexible, low-cost digital training and mentoring networks should be expanded so support is available year-round rather than only through occasional events.

Sustainability must remain central to NALC's agenda. Parish and town councils are ideally placed to deliver local environmental improvements from biodiversity projects to community energy schemes but they need encouragement and access to small-scale funding. NALC should champion these achievements nationally, sharing case studies and promoting partnerships with organisations such as Friends of the Earth and Natural England.

Communication between NALC, county associations, and members should also become more two-way. Regular regional forums, open surveys, and clearer feedback loops would help members see that their experiences shape national priorities.

In short, I want NALC to act not just as a representative body but as a hands-on partner — providing tools, knowledge, and inspiration to councils of every size. By supporting collaboration, celebrating innovation, and speaking confidently for local democracy, NALC can ensure every council feels connected, capable, and proud of the difference it makes.

Joanne Beavis

Explain why you are standing for this position

I believe that I have the experience, skills and knowledge to support NALC to continue to support our town and parish councils and councillors.

I was first elected to Braintree District Council in 2003 and served continuously for over 22 years.

At this time of Local Government Reorganisation I believe that I would be able to help with the transition of work to our town and parish councils which will change from the current obligations as LGR establishes.

I am an advocate for our town and parish councils and I am currently the Chairman of Sible Hedingham Parish Council.

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At times, the work of our town and parish councils is undervalued by the upper tier authorities and the national umbrella organisations. I sit as a Lead Peer for the Local Government Association in the east of England and would be able to advocate the work of NALC at a higher level.

I believe in the power and the productivity of our town and parish councils, particularly the civic role and the local pride of identity and cultures and, I would be able to amplify the work of NALC

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

I have been a District Councillor for over 22 years at both Braintree District Council and four years at Essex County Council. I have been in the Cabinet Office for over 10 years (now retired) for people and communities and led the way in Essex to create stronger community partnerships'.

I created the Essex Livewell brand which was adopted by the Essex CCGs and ICB to promote wellbeing and partnerships across greater Essex. This is about people and communities in a place to grow partnerships.

I have held and led parish forums to bring parish areas together, particularly in isolated areas where the strength of greater numbers has allowed for local projects to start and grow.

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

My vision for NALC:

- To grown the number of town and parish councils in areas which have a deficit.
- To grow the number of town and parish councils to have a quality status.
- Grow the recognition of town and parish councils.

To better the communications between the local and county associations to ensure that the local and county associations make NALC more mainstream and more accessible to town and parish councils.

Allan Blakemore

Explain why you are standing for this position

I have served the last two years on the smaller councils and found that it's very interesting and rewarding. I would like to continue on for the next two years and see the work we have started through to the end.

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

My employment, prior to retirement, I was a Community Safety Manager with Sedgefield Borough Council. I believe that this experience gives my an incite of work in the community.

I have been a councillor since 2006 and presently chair Policy and Resources committee.

I am also an active member within the County Association and have the position on treasurer

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

I believe the development of the new website is key to improving services to members . Since the launch there has been a significant increase in members activity. Continue the zoom meetings in order to increase the number of attendees. Not having to travel to London is a huge benefit especially for members from provinces.

Ronnie de Burle

Explain why you are standing for this position

I believe I can constructively contribute to the stated aims and objectives of the smaller Councils committee, during what is clearly going to be a period of considerable change.

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Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

1. An intimate knowledge gained from doing "the job" of how a smaller Council works from both sides of the fence, the issues and challenges faced on a daily basis.
2. The experience gained from a lifetime working at a senior level in a people facing environment.
3. The ability to receive a problem, split out the challenging components, and determine a workable solution.

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

Simple. but I will save my thoughts, for now.

John Cowan

Explain why you are standing for this position

The reason I am standing again for the Smaller Councils Committee is because I wish to build on the work that has taken place during the past 2 years I served on the Smaller Councils Committee.

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

Served on the National Association of Local Councils Smaller Councils Committee 2023-25 Councillor of 29 years service.

Served 12 years on the Executive of the Norfolk Association of Local Councils during which time I chaired the Communications Sub Committee.

Current member of the Board of the Norfolk Association of Local Councils.

15 years running Spirit Motorsport Ltd as Director and Team Principal

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

First I would like to see the profile of NALC raised through a proactive communications.

Neil Farmer

Explain why you are standing for this position

Devolution and Double Devolution will mean that all councils, including smaller parish councils will need to be prepared to adapt to change, whatever that change maybe. Now I believe is the time to start a conversation both nationally and locally about what change might look like and how we might prepare for that change.

Conversations about whether smaller parishes should do nothing, cluster or group need to be had.

I would, if elected, strive to continue to influence change across our sector and get that conversation started. I would also be a champion for smaller councils and the work they do.

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

I worked in local government for over 40 years, the last six as a deputy Chief Executive implementing change in the way services were delivered. That change involved merging two workforces, whilst working to support two different elected bodies.

As lead officer for Place I had a close working relationship with local town and parish councils.

For a number of years I was Trustee of a national professional body supporting the Sport and Recreation Industry. I held both the positions of Treasurer and President.

Since retirement in 2016, I have chaired a Community Interest Company (Active Dorset) and a local charity (Walford Mill Education Trust) before becoming a parish councillor for Toller Porcorm in 2019 and its chairman in 2022.

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I joined the Dorset Association of Town and Parish Council (DAPTC) executive in 2023 becoming vice chair and chair of its staffing committee in 2024. In my time with the DAPTC it has moved to Limited Company status and undertaken a staff review bringing higher skilled and experienced staff to support the Chief Executive making it more fit for purpose

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

NALC has an important role to play in a rapidly changing sector. It needs to continue supporting smaller town and parish councils through training, advice and guidance and by influencing and leading change.

It needs to work closely with County Associations to avoid duplication of effort and ensure councillors and clerks have the skills to tackle change in whatever form it takes.

To do that it needs to adopt a vision for change through inspirational leadership.

Its engagement with its stakeholders needs to resonate with their interests and act as a motivator.

NALC needs to review its communication plan to ensure its gets its messages across effective.

In terms of addressing change in our sector it needs to set realistic targets and set those targets in conjunction with county partners.

In all it does involving change it needs to strive to motivate and overcome resistance to change.

Benjamin Harris

Explain why you are standing for this position

I'm standing for this role because I want to help local councils thrive by bringing a fresh perspective. Starting as a young councillor, I've seen how different voices and approaches can really make a difference, and I want to share that insight more widely.

One challenge I'm keen to address is councillor retention. From my experience, it can be hard to keep people involved in parish and town councils, but there is a lot that can be done to support and improve this. Local councils have so much potential to shape their communities, yet they often don't get the attention or resources they need.

I want to help change that by showing what is possible at the parish and town level and encouraging more people, especially younger voices, to get involved and stay involved. This role offers the chance to influence positive change from the ground up, and that is where my experience and passion lie.

In short, I believe local government can be a powerful force for good, and I want to help make sure it works better for everyone now and in the future

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

I have been actively involved in local government for over seven years, serving on Town, Community, and Parish Councils across England and Wales since I was 18. This experience has given me a strong understanding of how local councils function and the challenges and opportunities faced by communities at the grassroots level.

As Chair of my Parish Council, I led the development of a comprehensive four-year strategy. This process was driven by public consultation, ensuring that the voices and needs of our community shaped the plan. It was important to me that the strategy not only identified priorities but also set clear, achievable goals for improving local services and wellbeing.

In addition to my work at the parish level, I collaborate closely with other Parish Councils across the ward. This has strengthened my ability to engage stakeholders effectively, build consensus, and deliver practical outcomes that benefit a wider area. I am skilled at navigating different perspectives and bringing people together to find shared solutions.

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My experience has equipped me with valuable skills in leadership, communication, and strategic planning, all of which I would bring to this role. I am committed to ensuring local voices are heard and that practical, meaningful improvements are made to benefit communities. I believe my background and approach would allow me to contribute positively to this organization's continued success

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

I'm standing for this position because I believe NALC plays a crucial role in supporting parish and town councils across the country. I want to help make sure it listens closely to the real challenges that local councils face every day, such as keeping councillors engaged and involved, and helping them connect with their communities.

Having served on Town, Community, and Parish Councils in different parts of England and Wales since I was 18, I understand how much local councils can achieve when they have the right support. But I've also seen how easy it is for that potential to be limited by a lack of resources or recognition. I want NALC to be more than just a national voice. I want it to provide practical help and advice that councils can use straight away.

I am especially passionate about supporting councillors, especially young and new members. I know how important it is to feel confident and valued in these roles. I would like to see NALC invest more in leadership development and create more opportunities for councillors to learn from each other.

Finally, I believe NALC should be bolder in national discussions, making sure parish and town councils are seen as essential partners in shaping policy and serving communities. If elected, I will bring energy, fresh ideas, and a collaborative spirit to help NALC support councils better now and into the future.

Mike Holt

Explain why you are standing for this position

I have been a Town Councillor since 2012.

I have been actively involved in the Yorkshire Local Councils Association (YLCA) since 2014. I have been a member of the YLCA Joint Executive Board, (JEB) for almost three years.

I am now the North Yorkshire representative on the NALC General Assembly

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

I have been the Mayor, and Chair of the Council on three occasions. I am the Chair of our Councils finance committee.

I am a sub committee member on our Mayors Fund committee, Millennium Green committee, Human Resources committee and I am one of our Councils representatives on the YLCA.

As a member of a small Council, that has been subject to unitary devolution I believe that I can bring some real life experiences to the table.

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

i have been a deputy representative for North Yorkshire on the National Assembly for just over a year. At our YLCA / JEB meeting on the 19th of July I was elected as the primary North Yorkshire delegate, therefore I'm very much the 'new boy'.

I am applying for this position because in the meetings that I have attended I have felt that smaller Councils are not well represented. In my opinion too much time at the Assembly meetings revolve around Councillors from larger Councils and County Association officers dominating the debates.

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I believe that NALC should be concentrating more on the smaller Councils, simply because the impact on these Councils with Government cutbacks and Unitary Devolution leave these small communities much more susceptible to 'Parish Bankruptcy' and / or 'Parish Poverty'.

Claire Winfield

Explain why you are standing for this position

Having been a parish councillor for two and a half years, I feel I have gained knowledge and experience through serving my community. This has been augmented, in addition to being an active and passionate councillor locally, by also being actively engaged and participating with councillors, clerks and others who share a common interest and goal, to bring good Governance, appropriate accountability and full transparency to the sector.

I am actively involved with the NALC women's councillor forum, a frequent contributor to discussion on a range of matters, and also participate in discussions on the Councillors Corner group on Facebook and other platforms and with other groups that seek to improve the performance and quality of councils and councillors across England.

If elected I hope to both bring valuable inputs to the committee through my contributions and to influence as well as bring away knowledge that will benefit my local community and my colleagues both locally and nationally within the sector.

Smaller Council's committee (Direct Cllr) Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for

Since joining the council in 2023, I have successfully managed to have the council embrace streaming our council meetings. This was not without challenges and objections - including the defence of the legislative position on filming and streaming meetings.

Having relentlessly pursued Transparency, the council now makes public more of its committee meetings (there remains work to do)

In concert with the community, I was materially involved in the calling of a by-election, which elected the first non-co-opted councillor to the council since 2011. The turnout, for a 'parish only election' creating a record for such an election (more than a quarter of the electorate voted).

Set out your vision for NALC and how it can improve the service(s) it provides to members

Greater emphasis placed on supporting COUNCILLORS. Councillors hold the reins of subscription to NALC/local ALCs, they commit public funds to continuing membership. Yet my experiences show that support and loyalty are not equally provided to Councillors, in the manner that Officers are supported. There is, as yet, not a body that Councillors can fully trust, and in the absence of such, I believe NALC must address the vacuum. It needs to hear councillors, and be part of the solution, or at least recognise that Councillors are pretty much isolated, and many will walk away from the sector, if a solution to this cannot be found and recognised.

Perhaps through recognising its own limitations, and endorsing the formation of an outside entity to undertake that task. I would be interested to hear NALC's position on Councillor support - and to influence its position from 'inside the tent', if I were to be elected.