

DIRECT ELECTION TO THE SMALLER COUNCILS COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Candidates should complete the nomination form by 8 November 2019 and send it to NALC at **nalccommittees@nalc.gov.uk**.

Title	Mr
First name	Stephen
Surname	Rickitt
Home address	
Contact number	
Email address	
County association	Northumberland
Council name	Meldon Parish Council
Precept	£2500 (2019/2020)
Electorate	238 (as at August 2019)

Explain why you are standing for this position (250 words max)

I have clerked Meldon PC since December 2012. Meldon is a small council, with a scattered population and few services. I also clerk four other rural parish councils all with 2019/2020 precepts below £8000 and electorates below 500. In addition, I work as the part-time chief officer for the Northumberland CALC.

My vision is for the national body to stop providing one-size-fits-all approach but recognise that the smaller councils need practical and workable templates. This may not always be possible because of external factors. There is real danger that unwieldy policies will be only nominally adopted leading to greater problems should something go wrong.

I am acutely aware that local councillors are expected to shoulder an ever-increasing burden of the work involved in the activities which kept vibrancy in a community. Clerks will be paid for a handful of hours each month and many local councils do not have the resources to increase their hours. These two aspects combine to mean that the smaller councils need as much assistance as can be given in reducing the bureaucratic elements of our work.

There is then the positive side of the diverse nature of English local councils. I am a firm believer in encouraging innovation if that is the wish of the Council and their community.

My experience will enable me to feed in my perceptions of being the clerk to five diverse small rural councils for nearly seven years.

Please outline three key achievements, skills or experiences that are relevant to the position applied for (250 words max each)

To the best of my knowledge, Meldon was the first local council in Northumberland to adopt the general power of competence. This power enabled the Council to commemorate its status as a Thankful Village on the centenary of the Versailles Treaty. I am aware that another Northumberland local council had severe issues with the then external auditors when they commissioned a new War Memorial.

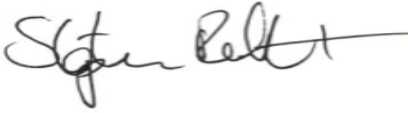
I have been the Northumberland CALC Chief Officer since April 2016, a position which enables me to draw on the experiences of the other local councils in both Northumberland and Newcastle ranging from small urban or rural councils to the larger urban or semi-rural town councils. I altered the style of our communication with our Members to produce an Enews, recently commended to other CALCs by the NALC Chief Executive

Prior to taking early retirement in 2012, I was a principal lawyer with Northumberland County Council having joined in 1984. From 1990 until 2012 I advised on highway and rights of way matters together with common land and village greens issues. For significant periods I was the main legal adviser on constitutional issues and was heavily involved in reorganisation of local government in Northumberland in 2009.

I chaired the national Law Society's Local Government Group in 2002/3. I remain an honorary member.

I hold the University of London's Diploma in Public Administration and Solent University's Postgraduate Certificate in EU Law (which or may not be relevant to our sector.) I also have the Certificate in Local Council Administration

I no longer practice as a solicitor.

Declaration	
I declare that to the best of my knowledge the information given on this form is correct and can be copied and distributed to other NALC members.	
Signature	
Date	7 November 2019

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