

Nominations received for Smaller councils' committee (Assembly)

Smaller (Assembly)
5 vacancies
Elected
Graham Ford
Bob Blezzard
Lillian Burns

SMALLER COUNCILS COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Title	Mr
First name	Bob
Surname	BLEZZARD
County association	Isle of Wight
Council name	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newchurch 2. Havenstreet and Ashey
Precept	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. £18,680 2. £11,874
Electorate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2,178 2. 723

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

I have over 30 years' experience of the first tier of local government including over 20 years experience as a parish or town clerk in different parts of the country. I have served as national chair of SLCC and on the NALC/SLCC liaison committee. I have over 16 years experience as a town or parish councillor, much of it on smaller councils and I have served as chair of a smaller council. I served as an Isle of Wight councillor for four years where I chaired the Planning Committee. During the early part of my career I worked in HR for a large metropolitan council. I was elected to the Smaller Councils Committee a year ago and recognise that it must develop as an effective vehicle to promote and support the interests of particularly the very small councils (precepts under £25K). To this end I support the current policy of the committee to increase the number of directly elected members from outside the National Assembly) on the committee. As a councillor serving on two smaller councils I would welcome the opportunity to promote the interests of smaller councils as described above.

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

During my service as national chair of SLCC in 1993/94 I was instrumental in re-designing and re-negotiating the clerks' recommended salary scales to bring all part-time clerks onto the main pay scales to ensure that they were paid pro-rata to their full-time colleagues. Previously so called "other" part-time clerks were paid on an arbitrary basis linked to the number of electors which did not recognise the hours actually worked. My earlier HR experience with a principal authority was of benefit in this respect.

Over the years I have developed reasonably good advocacy and negotiating skills. As Secretary of the West Berkshire Association of Local Councils in the late 1990s I assisted a member council where the principal authority was proposing to split the parish against the wishes of most residents. I assisted the parish council in putting a case together which resulted in the principal authority backing down.

As Town Clerk of Yarmouth (Isle of Wight) Town Council (population c. 800) I was part of a campaign to save the local primary school from closure which involved circulating a draft letter of objection to every household in the parish. This resulted in an 85% response and the school being saved from closure at the time.

SMALLER COUNCILS COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

To be eligible for a seat on the Smaller Councils Committee you need to be a councillor on a council with an electorate of under 6,000.

Title	COUNCILLOR
First name	LILLIAN
Surname	BURNS
County association	Cheshire
Council name	Prestbury
Precept	£79,008
Electorate	2,870

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

Smaller Councils make up the vast majority of County Association membership around the country and their challenges and frailties are well understood at that level. Regrettably, they are not so well understood at the national level and they are certainly not well understood by a large percentage of the wider public. Popular TV series such as 'The Vicar of Dibley' and books such as 'The Casual Vacancy' by J. K Rowling, which mix up Parish Councils with Parochial Church Councils and inaccurately meld them together and viral phenomena such as the infamous Handforth Parish Council meeting might be amusing but they are not typical or fairly representative. I want to assist with the task of making them better understood and to give smaller councils a voice both within and outwith of NALC. I would like to see more of NALC's officer capacity directed at smaller councils as well as having a larger membership of the Smaller Councils Committee. Having served on the Smaller Councils Committee for a few years now, I have witnessed how it has struggled through having a small membership, very limited access to officer and technical support and to there being no database to assist work on smaller councils. There is a desperate need for increased capacity and for a proper database of all Town and Parish Councils.

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

I would like to use my journalism training and my interest in carrying out research to assist smaller councils. Ideally, I would like to identify a project I could get my teeth into which would go towards assisting and informing them and/or raising their profile and getting out the right messages about them.

I would like to use my experience of public relations and marketing to achieve the same ends identified immediately above. My services could be used more than they have been to date by NALC to write articles and to do research and write publications.

As a very experienced Parish Councillor of over 22 years' standing on a small to medium-sized Parish Council, I totally appreciate the frustrations, limitations and problems that such councils constantly face. One very recent development that has moved smaller parish councils forward by leaps and bounds has been the familiarisation of them with remote technology. I would like to see this being used more to share information, train, stimulate and encourage small councils.

SMALLER COUNCILS COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

Title	Cllr
First name	Graham
Surname	FORD
County association	Cornwall
Council name	Illogan Parish Council
Precept	£182,844.00
Electorate	4484

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

My direct experience as a Member of a Smaller Local Council since its inception in 1985 after a limited (very) local government re-organisation with no transfer of any assets to speak of and its evolution into a pro-active body identifying and delivering (as far as it is allowed) the support, service and leadership required. I have tried to encourage this attitude and experience within the Committee after election as Chair in February last year as corporately we have worked hard in the now closing cycle to find a structure and role that will reflect more appropriately the very varied activities and aspirations of the part of the sector that is the overwhelmingly largest element of the NALC membership. This will be a crucial consideration in the internal Review commencing next January : it would be unrealistic to lose any insights and benefits already achieved by the extensive formal and informal debates and discussions we have had over the last twenty months. Smaller Councils deserve the assurance of a voice and advocacy of their hope and concerns within the whole association and a prompt, dedicated and well-focused response to the shift in service provision that can and should be expected.

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

No 1: developing the self-identity and confidence of a new Local Council essentially made up of left-over bits with no transfer of any assets to speak of to the point of about to complete the development of a large park after wide and extensive consultative with the facilities expected and constructing a new and bespoke office for the Council in the middle of the main population block. The project will total about £ 1 M and all the funds have been raised directly by the Council. This followed about fifteen years ago the taking over and creation of one of the first Community

Woodlands in Cornwall of the derelict and large former garden of the previous Rectory and in the centre of the village. This was linked to installing a bordering and open visible path way linking a residential area to the village school at the end of a busy road spasmodically lacking paved footways .

No 2 : achieving the re-design/ re-defining and then repeated social survey of the Civil Parish by the then County Council and University of Bristol onto a new basis of sub-divided ward analysis to reveal hidden social deprivation and needs. [For instance: Millionaires' Row (as locally known) literally backs onto a challenging housing estate.]

No 3 : The resurrection of a well-received community magazine developed into a full colour format with fully funded delivery to all residences from a simple and limited size monochrome bulletin to bind together three separate and distinct settlements in an administrative area that encompasses an AONB with open cliffs, a large publicly-owned Countryside Park, a large golf links, an Heritage Mining Area, two strips of intensive residential over-spill from the two neighbouring towns and including two large former Council Housing estates .