

**NALC**

**MANIFESTO**

**COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL**

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REALISING THE POTENTIAL OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

# INTRODUCTION

Town and parish councils are the backbone of our democracy and at the heart of many communities in England.

They provide our neighbourhoods, villages and towns with a democratic voice and a structure for taking action – real people power at grassroots level.

We need more local democracy with more empowered people and places.

The 2015 general election provides an opportunity for politicians of all parties to support our most local level of governance.

A chance to demonstrate their commitment to citizen-led action, which protects local assets and services and delivers responsive services based on local priorities – all of which improves lives and enhances communities.

This manifesto sets out our positive offer to the next Government.

It outlines how we can help the next Government realise its ambitions for community empowerment, localism and devolution.

This manifesto also arms the next Government with a range of policy ideas to unlock the power and potential of communities by helping town and parish councils flourish.

Our vision is to improve the quality of life for local communities through having vibrant, dynamic and effective town and parish councils.

NALC wants to work with the next Government to turn this vision into a reality.

# ● OUR ● OFFER

Provide the community with effective, accountable and democratic representation

Be fiscally responsible, using our statutory powers and resident levy to take action on locally determined priorities

Use our grassroots knowledge to work in partnership with other councils and bodies to deliver public services, taking on more responsibility where this is appropriate

Plan for the future by protecting local assets and shaping development such as new homes and shops

Work with local businesses and other partners to support local economic growth and regeneration

Modernise how we operate, ensuring town and parish councils are resilient, efficient and effective, including driving up standards of practice

# OUR ASK: STRONGER LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Promote and support the creation of new town and parish councils, introducing a community 'right of appeal' where a request to set up a new council is rejected

Strengthen the standards regime governing councillor behaviour by allowing town and parish councils to impose sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct

Support the sector to create an improvement and development strategy, providing a framework for good governance, community engagement and council improvement

Work with the sector to encourage more people to become councillors, making it easier for people to stand and serve, promoting contested elections and establishing a national democracy fund

## OUR ASK: FAIRER FUNDING

Ensure council tax support funding from the Government is passed on to town and parish councils by principal councils

Reform the business rate system to provide a 5% share for town and parish councils to help them support local economic development, regeneration and growth

Remove the Government's power to require local councils to hold referenda on precept changes they determine as excessive

Ensure communities benefit from development through stronger measures to provide town and parish councils with a share of Community Infrastructure Levy, New Homes Bonus and underground exploration funding

# OUR ASK: MORE POWERS

Introduce a Parish Councils Bill to reform outdated laws governing the administration of town and parish councils, which will include new powers to deliver local services

Promote use of the general power of competence and remove barriers to the use of this 'right to innovate'

Strengthen the role of town and parish councils in the planning and licensing system, introducing a statutory 'right to be consulted' and 'right of planning appeal'

Introduce a 'right to engage' which will help town and parish councils work more equitably and effectively with principal councils and other public services



**NALC AND ITS COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS  
ARE THE VOICE OF TOWN AND PARISH  
COUNCILS**



**25% OF ENGLAND IS PARISHED**





**THERE ARE 9,000 TOWN AND  
PARISH COUNCILS IN ENGLAND...**



... AND **80,000** COUNCILLORS  
MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN  
THEIR COMMUNITY



**1 BILLION IS INVESTED IN  
COMMUNITIES EVERY YEAR**



**16 MILLION PEOPLE ARE REPRESENTED  
BY TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**



**500,000** MORE PEOPLE REPRESENTED  
OVER THE LAST DECADE AND **100**  
**COMMUNITIES** CURRENTLY IN PROCESS  
OF SETTING UP A NEW TOWN OR  
PARISH COUNCIL



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