

I am in my second term as a parish councillor for Horton Kirby and South Darent. I have been in business for some 50 years for the most part self-employed, for 35 of those as an owner of a successful public relations and marketing company based in London. During that time I have been a significant force in establishing three multi-million pound businesses from startup in my role as consultant. My current business, the National Centre for Micro Business, has acted as a deliverer of business support for the last seven years working with local authority Economic Development Officers and previously the MOD supporting personnel in transition to self-employment.

I was a member of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) for some thirty three years. I became deeply involved with the issues of small business and was Kent Regional Chairman and also the FSB Southeast Policy Chairman for several years. As an amalgam of these roles I have worked in great detail with KCC and District Councils as a business representative and "critical friend". My national role took me to Brussels, Downing Street and Westminster and generally with local authorities across the southeast. In that period I was also elected Vice-Chairman of the Southeast Regional Assembly (where I first engaged with NALC). I have also worked with the MOD as a member of the SERFCA Board (Southeast Reserve Forces and Cadets Association).

I was a long serving member of the Kent & Medway Economic Board and Business Advisory Boards and more recently an alternate member of the LEP Board. Over a six year period, I was given up to two pages a month to produce by The Kent Messenger on business issues. I have facilitated many MP liaison meetings over the years and produced quarterly briefing notes for MPs across the southeast. I was a Board member of the West Kent Partnership for several years and continue after twelve years as a member of the Kent Ambassadors group which provides access to many influential individuals and gateways.

As a parish councillor I have seen the need for better recognition for our layer of government and as with small business have now become focused on small councils. I became KALC Sevenoaks Area chairman three years ago but feel there is much more I can contribute working in a higher profile position. I believe strongly that we need greater collaboration between the authority tiers and where appropriate more recognition, responsibility and authority as the grass roots of the community. We need to increase the profile of both parish councils and in particular the role of KALC that supports them.

Roger House