



Petitions Scheme

This policy sets out the procedure that the Town Council will use to deal with petitions that are presented to the Council.

Approved by Council 22 April 2024

Introduction

North Petherton Town Council recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their views. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition or, if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

Who can organise a petition?

Anyone who lives, works or studies in North Petherton can organise a petition.

Who can sign a petition?

Anyone who lives, works or studies in North Petherton can sign a petition.

What are the guidelines for preparing the petition?

Petitions **must** include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and what action the petitioners wish the council to take on **each** page.
- A declaration at the foot of **each** page stating that the signatures have been collected without any form of intimidation or coercion and that the statement at the head of the petition was read out clearly to each person before they agreed to take part.
- The name, address (including postcode) and signature of any person supporting the petition.
- At least 50 people who live, work or study in North Petherton have signed the document in order for the Council to accept it as a petition.
- Wherever possible, petitioners of paper petitions, are encouraged to use North Petherton Town Council template (Appendix 1).
- Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including postal address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition.
- Personal information, including the name and address of the petition organiser and petition signatories, will not be placed on the website or used for any purpose other than verification.

How is the petition given to the Council?

- A) The petition can be presented at any meeting of North Petherton Town Council or one of its Committees. Please note that consideration of the petition will not take place at the same meeting.
- B) The petition can be handed in to the Town Council offices during its usual opening hours (10:00hrs – 12:00hrs Tuesdays)
- C) The petition can be posted to:
North Petherton Town Council
The Small Hall
Fore Street
North Petherton
Somerset
TA6 6QA

What Will the Council do when it receives the petition?

1. Acknowledgement

- A) If the petition is presented to a meeting of the Town Council or one of its Committees its receipt will be recorded in the Community Time section at the start of the minutes – no other written acknowledgment of receipt will be sent
- B) If the petition is handed in to the Town Council offices or sent by post an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent to the petition organiser within 20 working days.

2. Notifying Councillors

If the petition is handed in to the Council offices or sent by post its receipt will be formally reported to the next full Town Council meeting (provided that the agenda has not been published)

3. Vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate petitions

No further action will be taken in regard to any petition that the Council considers to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate. Petitions should not disclose matters that are personal or confidential.

4. Duplicate or similar petitions

Any petition that is a duplicate or near duplicate of another petition that the Town Council has already received will not normally be considered within a 12 month period of the original petition being received.

5. Verification of signatures

The Town Council reserves the right to verify signatures; this may be done by variety of methods including reference to the electoral roll and direct contact with the named signatory.

6. Consideration of the petition

A) If the petition is about something which is not within the Town Council's responsibility or direct control the Town Council will consider (either at a full Council or Committee meeting) what action to take e.g. if it should make representations to the appropriate body on behalf of the community or forward the petition. The petition organiser will be informed what action the Town Council agrees to take.

B) If the petition relates to a subject where consultation by the Town Council is currently being undertaken or due to be undertaken in the next six months we will ensure the petition is included as part of the consultation and contact the petition organiser to give them details of the consultation.

C) If the petition is about something which is within the Town Council's responsibility or direct control and which is due for consideration (either at a full Council or Committee meeting) within the 6 months of the petition being received the petition will be included as part of the Council's deliberations.

D) If the petition is about something which is within the Town Council's responsibility or direct control but is not scheduled for consideration or consultation, the petition will be put on an appropriate Council agenda for discussion; the Council's decision may include one or more of the following:

- Delegating consideration and action to a relevant committee
- Delegating consideration to a relevant committee for them to make a recommendation to full Council
- Undertaking further research into the petition subject (which may include consultation)
- Holding a public meeting on the topic
- Holding a meeting with the petitioners;
- Writing to the petition organiser setting out the views of the Council on the petition topic.

E) If the petition is about something which the Council or one of its Committees has discussed and made a decision about in the previous 6 months the petition will be put on an appropriate Council agenda. In order for the petition subject and / or decision to be revisited it would need a Council resolution; such a resolution must be agreed by the majority of Councillors present at the meeting and in addition at least eight Councillors must vote in favour of the resolution

In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with petitions differently – if this is the case we will contact the petition organiser to explain the reasons.

APPENDIX 1

Petition to North Petherton Town Council

Petition Check List

Any petition must meet the Council's Petition Scheme requirements and be signed by at least 50 people.

Individuals signing this petition must be persons who either live, work or study in North Petherton.

Each page must include a clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and what action the petitioners wish the council to take.

Each page must include a declaration stating that the signatures have been collected without any form of intimidation or coercion and that the statement at the head of the petition was read out clearly to each person before they agreed to take part.

Contact Details of the Lead Petitioner

(This is the person the Council will respond to)

Name (please print)

Address (please print)

.....

Telephone No

Email Address

I live/work/study in North Petherton (please indicate)

.....

Signature

Statement covering the subject of the petition and what action the petitioners wish the Town Council to take.

