

Winteringham Parish Council

Petitions Policy

Name of Organisation	Winteringham Parish Council
Location	Frost Close, Winteringham
Purpose of organisation	To serve the community at the first level of local government

Introduction

Winteringham Parish Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which people can let us know of their concerns. 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. A petition is not a complaint to the Council and the Council adopts a separate procedure for the handling of complaints about Councillors or members of the Council's staff.

It is anticipated that (in the future) petitions may be submitted to the Council either directly in a paper format or electronically (ePetition) via the Council's web site (<http://www.winteringhampc.gov.uk>), the same procedure will apply to either form of submission. However, currently, there is no system in place either by this Council or by North Lincolnshire Council on our behalf for the handling of ePetitions so, at the moment, we request that all petitions are submitted in a paper format until this situation changes.

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the Council is regarded as being open and transparent as possible in its processing of resident's petitions and handling of the issues that the petitions raise.

All petitions received by the Council will be registered by the Clerk and will be brought for consideration by the Council as a separate agenda item at its next meeting by the Parish Clerk. Petitions must be submitted the Clerk directly - either by letter, e-mail or by handing the clerk the petition. A petition must be submitted in writing and be supported by a minimum of 10 parish residents.

A petition must include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
- The name, address and signature of any person supporting the petition. The Council will take into account identifiable signatures of people who provide valid addresses (i.e. residents) where they live in the Parish or work or study in the area.

- Petitions must be accompanied by contact details including an address for the petition organiser. This is the person the Council will contact to explain how it will respond to the petition.
- Petitions must be submitted to the Clerk of the Parish Council and must be received within 7 clear working days before the meeting to which it is being presented.
- When a petition has been received and registered by the Parish Clerk other residents may support, reject or comment on the petition. The petition's organiser may collect signatures, the names and addresses of the petition's supporters and provide these directly to the Parish Clerk. Rejection of the petition's proposals and other comments that other residents may provide must also be collected (if applicable) and noted within the petition's documentation and be collected by the petition organiser when gathering support for the petition.
- The Parish Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the petition in writing to the person submitting the petition within 7 working days.
- The Petition organiser will be informed of the date, time and venue of the meeting at which the petition is to be considered.
- No petition will be accepted if they are considered to be defamatory, improper, vexatious, abusive, otherwise inappropriate or relate to a matter of a personal nature.

The petition organiser will be invited to speak for not more than 5 minutes at which the petition is presented. No Parish Councillor shall speak on a petition at which the petition is presented other than at the discretion of the Chair. Following the presentation, the petition will then be discussed by the Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide: 1. A petition may be "Accepted" and the item may be actioned by the Council i.e. to take the action the petition requests. 2. A petition may be "Ultra Vires" i.e. be beyond the scope of the Parish Council's powers. However, the Council may decide to take up the issue reported with another relevant authority. 3. A petition may be "Rejected" because it fails to gain the support of at least 10 other residents, or has a higher proportion of resident's registering a rejection than supporting the petition or the Council takes a collective view opposite to the petition's organiser and decides not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate. A petition may also be rejected by the Council if it is materially the same as a petition already received and considered by the Council in the previous 12 months. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of the final decision of the Council within 7 working days.