

Winteringham Parish Council

Petitions Policy

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

The purpose of this policy 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.

1. 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.
2. A petition must include:
 1. A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Council to take.
 2. 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.
 3. 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.
3. 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.
4. The Parish Clerk will acknowledge receipt of the petition in writing to the person submitting the petition within 7 working days.
5. The Petition organiser will be informed of the date, time and venue of the meeting at which the petition is to be considered.
6. No petition will be accepted if they are defamatory, improper, vexatious, abusive, otherwise inappropriate or relate to a matter of a personal nature.
7. 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.
8. 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" if 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.

9. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of the final decision of the Council within 7 working days.
10. Should a resident wish to raise any objection or comment about a petition received by the Council then these concerns must be reported to the Parish Clerk prior to the meeting. Residents are also free to raise a counter petition if they wish to do so prior to the meeting.