



WAREHAM
Town Council

WAREHAM TOWN COUNCIL PETITION POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

Wareham Town Council is the first tier of local government it acts as an advocate for the needs, wants and concerns of the people of Wareham to partners.

Wareham Town Council welcomes engagement from our residents, visitors, businesses and other members of the community in a variety of ways and embraces that the submission of petitions is a core element of civil engagement in our democracy.

WHAT IS A PETITION?

A petition is a formal, written request for the Town Council to act in a certain manner or to conduct or cease a specified activity. This policy sets out how Wareham Town Council handles and responds to petitions received.

Petitions submitted to the Town Council must include the following elements:

- **A clear purpose or request, which allows itself to be easily interpreted.** What does the petitioner want the Town Council to do or consider?
- **Contact information for the person organising the petition.** This allows the Town Council to liaise with this person regarding the progress and outcome of a petition.
- **The names, addresses and a clear signature.** Petition signatories must live within the Wareham Town council electoral area. Petitioners must ensure that signatories understand where the petition will be submitted and consent to their information being used for this purpose.

Residents considering a petition are encouraged to engage with the Town Council for guidance around petitioning appropriately and to understand if an issue could be resolved without a petition.

Petitions must be submitted to the Town Council in writing and should be addressed to the Town Clerk. This can be done either by;

- Submitting a petition via email: office@wareham-tc.gov.uk

Or

- Submitting a petition via normal post or personally to the Town Hall

**Town Clerk
Wareham Town Council
Town Hall
East Street
Wareham
BH20 4NS**

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF A PETITION?

Petition outcomes will vary depending on the nature of the petition but may take the form of one of the following outcomes. This list is not exhaustive, and the Council may take other appropriate action.

- Taking the action requested in the petition

- Considering the petition at an appropriate Town Council meeting
- Holding an enquiry into the matter
- Undertaking research into the matter
- Holding a public meeting
- Holding a public consultation
- Holding a meeting with petitioner(s)
- Calling a referendum
- Responding to the petition organiser explaining the Town Council's position, or providing more information
- Reject the petition if deemed appropriate in accordance with this policy
- Referring the petitioner to another organisation which holds responsibility for the matter

Once a petition has been considered by the Town Council, its outcome will be shared with the petition organiser.

HOW DOES THE TOWN COUNCIL HANDLE PETITIONS IT RECEIVES?

The Town Council will confirm receipt of a petition to the petition organiser, within 10 working days. The Town Council will investigate whether the petition is eligible for consideration in line with this policy within that 10 working days.

If the Town Council requires clarifications from the petition organiser to understand a petition, it will seek to make any required clarifications within a further 10 working days.

The Town Council will arrange for eligible petitions to be considered by the relevant Council Committee which holds responsibility for the matter as an agenda item.

The nature of a petition may require the Town Council to gather more information to ensure Council can properly consider the petition. The petition organiser will be informed of the expected timeline for the petition's consideration, and which Council Committee holds responsibility for the matters raised in the petition.

Petitioners may attend the relevant Committee or Council meeting and speak about the petition in accordance with the public section of that meeting.

The Town Council will maintain either a copy or original copy of all submitted petitions for its records in line with its Retention of Documents and Records policy, Data Protection Policy and General Data Protection Regulations.

Once a petition has been considered by Council or an appropriate Committee, the petition organiser will be informed of the outcome and Council's decision will be implemented.

The Town Council's decision regarding a petition is democratically made and further petitions on the same matter will not be accepted and nor may it be appealed.

WHICH PETITIONS WILL THE TOWN COUNCIL REJECT?

In line with this policy, the Town Council will reject petitions which are considered not suitable by the Town Council, this may include but is not limited to:

- Requests for action which are illegal or unlawful.
- Petitions whose purpose remains unclear despite attempted clarifications.
- Petitions which are a complaint against an individual Town Council officer, or group of officers. Complaints against officers must be submitted in line with the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- Petitions which are a complaint against an individual Town Council Councillor, or group of Councillors. Complaints against Councillors must be made to the Monitoring Officer in line with Council's Complaints Procedure.
- Petitions submitted by members of the public who are not residents within the Wareham Town electoral area.
- Petitions whose signatories appear to not live within the Wareham Town electoral area and cannot be authenticated.
- Petitions which are malicious, abusive, vexatious or intended only to cause harm or distress.
- Petitions whose request is outside of the Council's power.
- Petitions whose basis is misleading for signatories.
- Petitions requesting action which Council handles through an alternative, established process. I.e. A request to respond to a planning application in a particular manner.
- Petitions which have been considered in the last 6 months or are materially similar in nature to another petition considered within this period.

Should the Town Council reject a petition, the petition organiser will be informed of the petition's rejection along with the reason for the rejection within 10 days.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I FEEL MY PETITION HAS NOT BEEN ADDRESSED OR WAS UNFAIRLY REJECTED?

If a petition organiser has concerns that a petition has not been given due consideration by the Town Council or Council Officers or believes that a petition has been unfairly rejected in line with this policy, a complaint may be submitted in line with the Town Council's Complaints Procedure.