

Petitions Policy

Adopted on January 16th, 2023

1. Introduction

Fernwood Parish Council welcomes feedback from its parishioners. The Council's preferred method is through direct contact by any of the following methods:

- Face to Face at Council meetings
- Through contact with your Parish Councillors
- By phone to the Parish Council office on 01636 613024
- By email – clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Fernwood Parish Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which people can let us know of their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Parish Council will receive an acknowledgement which will set out what action we plan to take.

2. What are the guidelines for submitting a petition?

Petitions submitted to the Council must be regarding an issue the Council can potentially action and include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and what action the petitioners would like the Council to take
- The name and address (including postcode) and written/electronic signature of any person supporting the petition
- In the case of an e-petition, a signature is not required but a valid email address, name, address and postcode must be supplied by each of the petitioners.
- Only the names of those who live in the Parish will be accepted.
- Have a minimum of 100 valid signatures¹ i.e.: names, signatures, addresses and post codes of people who live in the Parish of Fernwood.
- Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including a postal address of the petition organiser. This is the person who we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. The contact details of the petition organiser will not be placed on the website. If the petition does not

¹ The petition response will include a total signature count and a count of responses believed to be valid. A list of non-valid signatures will be added as an appendix to the survey response.

identify a petition organiser, we will contact the first five signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.

The Council's Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer will decide whether the guidelines referred to above have been met and therefore whether a petition should be accepted. If the petition does not meet the guidelines, the Parish Clerk will write to the petition organiser outlining which requirements have not been met.

3. How do you create a petition?

You can create a petition to be submitted by gaining “wet” signatures on a traditional paper petition, or by using an online e-petition platform. There are numerous ready-made petition websites available on the internet, and advice can also be found on <https://campaignbootcamp.org/resources/how-to-set-up-a-petition>.

4. How do you submit a petition?

Petitions can be sent to the Parish Council at the following address:

Postal: Fernwood Parish Council, Fernwood Village Hall, Rubys Avenue, Fernwood, NG24 3RS

Email: clerk@fernwood-pc.co.uk

Parishioners who are unable to give a wet or electronic signature to the petition may write to the Council in support of the petition, which will be added by the Parish Clerk.

5. When to submit a petition

If you would like to present your petition to the Council and have it discussed at the next meeting, please submit it to the Parish Clerk at least 10 working days before the meeting so it can be included on the agenda.

If your petition is submitted to the Council at a meeting during the Public Forum it will not be discussed at that meeting but deferred to the following meeting's agenda.

The dates of meetings are published on the Council website: www.fernwood-pc.co.uk

6. What the Council will do when it receives your petition

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. It will also be published on our website.

If we can do what your petition asks for, the acknowledgement may confirm that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed. If the petition has enough signatures to trigger a Council debate then the acknowledgment will confirm this and tell you when and where the meeting will take place. If the petition needs more investigation, we will tell you the steps we plan to take.

To ensure that people know what we are doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all the petitions submitted to us will be published on our website, except in cases where this would be inappropriate. Whenever possible we will also publish all correspondence relating to the petition (all personal details will be removed).

7. Discussion of a Petition at a Parish Council Meeting

If a petition contains more than 100 valid signatures it will be scheduled for debate by the Council.

7.1 The following process will take place if the petition is listed on the Council agenda (petitions sent to the Council at least 10 working days before the Parish Council meeting will be on the agenda).

The petition organiser will be invited to speak for not more than 5 minutes. No Parish Councillor shall speak as the petition is presented other than at the discretion of the Chairman.

Following the presentation, the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes or longer if the Council agrees to extend the time. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. It may decide:

- To take the action the petition requests
- Not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate
- To commission further investigation into the matter.

The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of the decision of the Council within 21 working days.

7.2 Petitions presented in the public forum and not listed on the agenda will have the following process:

The petition can be handed to the Chairman during the public forum. The Chairman will accept the petition but there will be no discussion regarding its contents until the next Parish Council meeting when the petition will be on the agenda.

The petition will be added to the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting for the Council to discuss as detailed in 7.1 subject to it having 100 valid signatures.

7.3 Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted. If your petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the Council may decide not to do anything further with it. In this case, we will write to you to explain the reasons.

8. What can you do if you feel that your petition has not been dealt with properly?

If you feel that we have not dealt with your petition properly, you can complain to the Council, and this will be dealt with in accordance with the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure.