



Newhaven Town Council

PETITIONS POLICY

Purpose of this policy and procedure	2
The scope of this policy	2
Procedure	2
Petitions with 500 or more signatures	2
Petitions with 10-499 signatures	3
General provisions	4

Purpose of this policy and procedure

Newhaven Town Council (NTC) is committed to community engagement and is keen to ensure that residents have opportunities to express their views in order that they can be considered as part of its decision-making process.

As part of this commitment, NTC welcomes petitions from local groups and members of the public as one way of expressing views on issues. This policy and procedure will establish the guidelines and provide the instructions for following them.

The scope of this policy and procedure

It applies to all staff, whether full time, part time or temporary workers and residents of Newhaven.

Procedure

1. NTC will treat something as a petition if it is identified as such, or if it seems to them that it is intended to be a petition. A petition must have at least 10 signatories. All signatories must be residents of Newhaven.
2. Petitions should be addressed to NTC and submitted to:
The Clerk to the Council
Newhaven Town Council
18 Fort Road
Newhaven
BN9 9QE
or
admin@newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk
3. Petitions can also be presented at any of the scheduled council or committee meetings during Petitions and Public Questions.
4. Petitions submitted to the Town Council must include:
 - a) A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and the action the petitioners wish NTC to take
 - b) The name, address and signature of any person supporting the petition
5. Petitions must be accompanied by contact details, including either a postal or email address, for the petition organiser. This is the person NTC will contact to explain how it will respond to the petition.
6. Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted.

Petitions with 500 or more signatures:

7. A petition with 500 or more identifiable signatures will be put forward for debate, as a separate agenda item, at the next suitable meeting of NTC or the relevant committee.
8. The petition organiser (or an appointed deputy) will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by members for a maximum of 15 minutes.
9. NTC or the relevant committee will determine how to respond to the petition at this meeting; usually this will be to either:
 - a) Action the petition requests; or
 - b) Not action the petition requests for reasons that are put forward in the debate; or
 - c) Commission further investigation into the matter
10. The petition organiser will receive a written confirmation of the decision.

Petitions with 10-499 signatures

11. A petition with between 10 and 499 signatures will be reviewed by the Clerk, the NTC Mayor and committee Chairs to determine the appropriate course of action.
12. Following review, at the discretion of the Clerk the petition may be referred to Council or the appropriate committee for debate as in 7-10 above.

General Provisions:

13. An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within ten working days of receiving the petition, which will explain what the council plans to do.
14. A petition will not normally be considered if a similar petition was considered within the previous year.
15. When more than one petition is received seeking the same outcome, they will be treated as one petition. Where relevant only the organiser of the first petition to be received will be invited to address the meeting. However, the organisers of all the petitions will receive written confirmation of the decision.
16. If the petition is about something over which NTC has no direct control it may consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body.
17. Petitions will not be presented to the Annual Meeting of NTC nor to extraordinary meetings which are not called for the purpose of receiving the petition.

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