

# PETITIONS POLICY

Reference	SNTC/AD013	Adopted by	Full Council
Prepared by	C Robson (Town Clerk)	Adopted date	25 October 2022
Monitored by	Town Clerk	Minute reference	TC-98-22-33
Monitoring Review	Every four years	Review date	October 2026

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 St Neots Town Council (SNTC) welcomes and encourages its community to provide feedback to the council and wishes to offer different opportunities and ways to do so as a matter of course. The Council recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let the council know their concerns. Members of the public may get a quicker answer by asking a question of the Town Council, or one of its Committees first, which might get an immediate response.
- 1.2 The Council will treat something as a petition if it is identified as such, or if it seems that it is intended to be a petition. A petition will be treated as such if it has at least 10 signatories or petitioners.
- 1.3 Petitions should be addressed to the council and submitted to:
 

The Town Clerk  
Council Offices  
Priory Lane  
St Neots  
Cambridgeshire PE19 2BH  
[enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@stneots-tc.gov.uk)
- 1.4 Petitions should be submitted to the Town Clerk, who will schedule a debate at a future meeting, if the petition meets the criteria below.
- 1.5 Petitions can also be presented at any of the scheduled council meetings during Public Participation. *(Insert link to Public Participation policy once adopted)*
- 1.6 For most petitions, signatories to petitions will only be considered valid if they are resident within the parish of St Neots. Signatures from non-residents will only be relevant to a petition on a service provision that would affect non-residents. The Town Clerk will determine if non-resident signatures are appropriate.
- 1.7 SNTC can only act on petitions which relate to SNTC services and decisions. For issues such as Huntingdonshire District Council, or Cambridge County Council matters, a petition should be addressed directly to the decision-making body.

1.8 Petitions submitted to the council must include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition and the action the petitioners wish the council to take
- The name, address and signature of any person supporting the petition
- For online petitions a signature is not required. However, full name and addresses are required to allow names to be verified. E-Petitions should include a mechanism to prevent automated or fraudulent signatures, such as e-mail address validation.

1.9 Petitions must be accompanied by contact details, including either a postal or e-mail address, for the petition organiser. This is the person the council will contact to explain how it will respond to the petition. If the petition does not identify an organiser, the council will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the organiser.

1.10 Where possible, qualifying petitions will be debated in public. Should the subject of a petition be deemed confidential or inappropriate, the Town Clerk, Town Mayor, and relevant members (e.g., the appropriate committee members), will decide how best to respond to the petition.

## 2. PETITIONS WITH 100 + SIGNATURES

2.1 A petition with 100 or more identifiable signatures will be put forward for debate, as a separate agenda item, at the next suitable meeting of the Council or the relevant committee.

2.2 Where a petition is debated by committee, the Chairperson of the committee shall report on this to the next Town Council meeting.

2.3 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.

2.4 The council will determine how to respond to the petition at this meeting; usually this shall be to:

- action the petition requests (if within the authority of the committee to do so)
- make a recommendation to Full Council (if the petition is considered by a committee)
- refer the matter to the appropriate committee for further consideration
- refer the matter to another authority or organisation (if appropriate)
- not action the petition requests for reasons put forward in the debate
- commission further investigation and/or consultation into the matter

2.5 The petition organiser will receive a written **confirmation and explanation of the outcome**.

### 3. PETITIONS WITH 10 – 99 SIGNATURES

- 3.1 A petition with between 10 and 99 signatures shall be reviewed by the Town Clerk, Town Mayor, and relevant members (e.g. the appropriate committee members or ward members) to determine the appropriate course of action.
- 3.2 At the discretion of the Town Mayor, a petition may be referred to Council or the appropriate committee for debate as per petitions with in excess of 100 signatures.
- 3.3 The petition organiser will receive a written **confirmation and explanation of the outcome.**

### 4. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 A petition will not normally be considered if a similar petition was considered within the previous six months.
- 4.3 When more than one petition is received seeking the same outcome, they will be treated separately.
- 4.4 If the petition is about something over which the Council has no direct control it may consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body.
- 4.5 Petitions will not be presented to the Annual Meeting of the Council nor to extra-ordinary meetings which are not called for the purpose of receiving the petition.
- 4.6 Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted.