

Thornhackett Parish Council

Petitions Policy

This policy outlines the action to be taken by Thornhackett Parish Council upon the receipt of a petition from residents.

1. Introduction

Thornhackett Parish Council (the Council) recognises that petitions are a valid way in which residents are able to request the Council to take action on particular matters.

As the Council is a group council comprising of the Civil Parishes of Thornford and Beer Hackett & Knighton this policy reflects that in some circumstances variation in policy are needed.

2. Guidelines for submitting a petition

A petition must be presented to the Council through the Clerk to the Council and must be received at least seven (7) working days prior to the date of the meeting at which it is to be discussed. A petition may be submitted in paper or electronic formats either by post, email or by handing a copy to the Clerk.

To be accepted by the Council a petition must include

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition. It should state what action the petitioners would like the Council to take.
- Relate to a function for which the Council has a responsibility for or which may affect the residents of the Councils administrative area.
- The name, address, postcode and email address (if available) of the petition organiser who will be the person with whom the Council will communicate in dealing with the petition. These details will NOT be published on the website.
- The name, address and postcode of any person supporting the petition.
- Any person signing the petition must be able to demonstrate that they have a local connection to the Council's area. A local connection may be living, working, studying or having family connections in the Council's area.
- Signatures of persons not able to show a local connection will not count towards the signature count.

3. What forms a valid petition

A petition will normally require at least 50 signatures for it to be considered as valid except that if a petition applies solely to Beer Hackett & Knighton a lower number of 20 signatures will be considered valid.

A petition may be considered valid provided it complies with the provisions of Section 2 above.

A petition will **not** be considered valid if

- It is defamatory, improper, frivolous, vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate.

- It relates to the same or substantially similar concern or subject of a petition or a decision of the Council taken in the last six (6) months.
- It is '*ultra vires*' (beyond the scope of the Council's powers) except that the Council may consider taking up the issue with another relevant authority.
- It relates to any lease, contract or permit of the Council.
- it relates to any officer of the Council or other confidential staffing matter.
- It requests the Council to do something that conflicts with any of their other policies.
- It relates to any person's individual circumstances or where there is a right of appeal to the Courts, a Tribunal or Government Minister.

A petition if it does not meet the provisions of Section 2 above or is deemed invalid for any of the reasons outlined in this Section 3 cannot be considered by the Council. The petition organiser will be informed of the reasons for rejecting the petition.

4. Presenting your petition

The petition organiser may present the petition to the Clerk to the Council prior to a meeting (see Section 2 above). Alternatively the petition organiser may wish to present the petition and / or make representation to the Council regarding the petition at the meeting and they will be given up to 5 minutes to speak in support of the petition.

If required suspension of the Council's Standing Orders for that agenda item may be necessary to allow this to take place.

5. How we will deal with your petition

When a petition is received by the Council the organiser will be sent an acknowledgement of receipt informing the organiser of how the Council will deal with the petition.

Valid petitions will normally be considered at the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

If a petition is presented to the Council without prior notice then discussion of that petition will be deferred to a later meeting of the Council.

Following discussion of a petition the Council will within 21 days inform the organiser of the action the Council will take.

Without prejudice or limitation as to any person's legal rights or redress the Council's decision on a petition will be final.

Review date: Within 3 years of adoption by Council

Initial Policy Draft: February 2025; Adopted by Council: May 2025