



NORTH TAWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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This is a document that sets out North Tawton Town Councils approved and agreed practices. Any deviation must be by resolution of the full Council.

DOCUMENT NAME:	Parishioner Petition Policy
Approved and Ratified date:	5/5/26
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Version	Point(s)	Description of Change	Date
2	4	Census data updated	
	9	Reference to Council policies rather than a named policy	5/5/26

THIS IS A CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

Whilst this document may be printed, the electronic version maintained on the North Tawton Town Council website is the controlled copy. Any printed copies of this document are not controlled.

North Tawton Town Council welcomes petitions and recognises that they are one way in which people can let us know of their concerns and requests to improve their parish.

The Town Council will only act on parishioner requests where it is proven, by way of a petition, that it has the support of a minimum number of parishioners. All petitions sent or presented to the Town Council will receive an acknowledgement which will set out what action we plan to take.

1. Powers and Duties of Parish Councils

The Town Council is the first tier of local government. The Council consists of 12 councillors who are elected every four years by the residents to represent their interests. Councils have a wide range of powers and duties.

- 2. Duties:** A duty is an activity that must be carried out (Mandatory) e.g. local councils must appoint a chair and a clerk.
- 3. Powers:** Statutory powers granted by Parliament give local councils the choice or opportunity to act and are therefore discretionary. The powers have been vested in Parish, Town and Community Councils by Acts of Parliament.

Like all powers given to public bodies the powers of local councils are defined in detail in legislation and these details may include a requirement to obtain the consent of another body i.e. the Borough Council. Local Councils must also exercise their powers subject to the provisions of the general law.

4. Requirements:

Petitions submitted to the Council must be about an issue the Town Council have some control or influence in accordance with our regulated powers 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 and written/electronic signature of any person supporting the petition.
- Only the names of those who live, work or own property in the Parish will be accepted.
- Have a minimum of 5% (106) of the ward population valid signatures (ward population 2116 - census 2021).
- Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including the postal address of the petition organiser.

This is the person 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.

5. 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>.

6. How do you submit a petition?

Petitions can be sent to the Town Council at the following postal or email address:

North Tawton Town Council, 14a The Square, North Tawton EX20 2EP
townclerk@northtawtontowncouncil.gov.uk

You can submit a hard/paper copy or digital format. 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 Clerk.

7. When to submit a petition

If you would like to present your petition to the Council and have it discussed at a future meeting, please submit it to the Clerk at least eight calendar days before the meeting so it can be included on the agenda. The dates of meetings are published on the Council website:

<https://northtawtontowncouncil.gov.uk/>

8. What will the Council do when it receives your petition?

An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 5 working days of receiving the petition.

It will let them know what we plan to do with the petition and when you can expect to hear from us again.

If the Council can do what the petition asks, the acknowledgement may confirm:

- that we have taken the action requested and the petition will be closed.
- If the petition is to be decided at a Council meeting, 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.
- If your petition is about something over which the Town Council has no direct control (for example, poor state of roads) we will consider making representations on behalf of the petitioners to the relevant council or organisation. This might consist of simply forwarding the petition to the other body but could involve other steps. In any event we will notify you of the action we have taken.

To ensure that people know what the Town Council is doing in response to the petitions we receive, the details of all the petitions submitted to us and the action taken in response to them 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 (in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations). The Council will check the petitioner's details and erase/strike off any duplicated or invalid petitioners listed.

9. Discussion of a Petition at a Council Meeting

The petition organiser will be invited to speak via the public forum prior to the meeting. Following the presentation, the petition will then be discussed by Councillors during the appropriate agenda item. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. It may decide:

- A petition may be "Accepted" and the item may be actioned by the Council i.e. to take the action the petition requests.
- A petition may be "Rejected" because it fails to gain the support of at least 5% of parishioners or has a higher proportion of parishioners registering a rejection than supporting the petition.
- or the Council takes a collective view opposite to the petition's organiser and decides not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate.
- A petition may also be rejected by the Council if it is materially the same as a petition already received and considered by the Council in the previous 12 months.

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

Petitions which are vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate in accordance with the Council's policies will not be accepted and our reasons for refusal will be included in the acknowledgement letter.

If your petition does not follow the guidelines set out above, the Council may decide to reject it and we will write to you to explain the reasons.

10. 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 Council's Complaints Procedure.

Adopted: 5/5/26

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Review Date: May 2028