



Sawbridgeworth Town Council

Policy 3.4

PETITIONS

(Communicating with Parishioners)

Adopted 10 March 2014 – Review by 31 Dec 2014

POLICY ON DEALING WITH PETITIONS

1. Introduction

Sawbridgeworth Town Council welcomes feedback from its parishioners. The preferred method is through direct contact either

- Face to face at the Council offices or events or
- Through contact with Councillors or
- By phone to the office on 01279 724537 or
- By e-mail – info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk or
- Through the website – www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk

This allows the Town Council to answer your questions quickly, and if a policy decision needs to be made it will be placed on the appropriate Committee agenda.

If a parishioner feels that their concerns have not been satisfactorily met there is a complaints procedure which is covered in a separate policy.

However the Town Council recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Town Council will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days. This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as such, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition. Paper petitions can be sent to:

Town Clerk, Sawbridgeworth Town Council,
Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9AN

2. How the Council will accept a petition

Petitions submitted to the Town Council must include:

- A clear and concise statement covering the subject of the petition, and the date it was presented. It should state what action the petitioners wish the Town Council to take.
- The name and address and signature of any person supporting the petition.
- The Town Council will take into account identifiable signatures of people who provide valid addresses, where they live, work or study in the area and may take into account other signatures.

- Petitions should be accompanied by contact details, including an address, for the petition organiser. This is the person we will contact to explain how we will respond to the petition. If the petition does not identify a petition organiser, we will contact signatories to the petition to agree who should act as the petition organiser.
- Petitions which are considered to be vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate will not be accepted.

3. What the Town Council will do when it receives a petition

- An acknowledgement will be sent to the petition organiser within 10 working days of receiving the petition. It will let them know what the Town Council plans to do with the petition and when they can expect to hear from us again. Details of the petition will also be published on our website, although the contact details of the petition organiser will not be included.
- If the petition is valid it will be placed on the Full Council agenda, and the petition organiser will be advised of this.

4. Full Council meeting procedure.

- The petition organiser will be given the opportunity to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes.
- The Town Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. It may decide to take the action the petition requests, or not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision.
- If the petition is about something over which the Town Council has no direct control (for example highways, schools or hospitals) it will consider making representations on behalf of the community to the relevant body.

5. Review of Procedure

This procedure will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it remains effective.