

Petition Guidelines 2023

MARCH 2023

Introduction

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist people in the writing of a petition and explain the process of having the petition presented to Council. The intent of the petition needs to be clear and in a form that is easily read and understood.

In this guide the term Council also refers to a Committee of Council and the Hastings District Council.

A petition is a paper or electronic document addressed to the Council. It asks the Council to act on or address a local or private concern.

Anyone can petition the Council including corporations and unincorporated bodies with sufficient identity as organisations. If the petition is from a corporation or unincorporated body, a duly authorised officer of the body must sign the front page of the petition on behalf of the body.



Guidelines for preparing petitions

- Petitioning the Council should ideally be your last course of action. You may petition the Council when no other remedies are available, or where other statutory remedies have been exhausted.
- Petitions must contain at least **20 signatures** and consist of fewer than **150 words** (not including signatories) regarding the issue to be addressed. Petitions should state the name, physical address and signature of the lead petitioner.
- Unless incapacitated, a person must sign a petition personally (a person signing on behalf of a person incapacitated must state this fact beside the signature).
- Signatures must be original (not photocopied, faxed, scanned, pasted or otherwise transferred onto sheets of the petition).
- The Petitioner should ensure the petition is addressed directly to the Hastings District Council.
- Petitions must not be disrespectful, use offensive language or include malicious statements (*Council Standing Orders 17.1*) and must ask the Council to take a defined action.
- A petition presented to Council may be in English, Te Reo Māori or Sign Language. Petitioners planning to make a petition in Te Reo Māori or Sign Language should advise the Chief Executive at least **two (2) clear working days** to allow the translation services to be arranged.
- The Council petition template contains a privacy note stating that the petition when presented at the Council meeting becomes public information. For matters concerning privacy or the use of personal information contained in a petition please contact Council's Legal Services.
- Each page of the petition shall be addressed to the Council by writing or typing the words "To the Council" on the top of each signature sheet. Each page should also contain the petition statement.

The Council may refuse any petition that:

- is not in the proper form,
- is repetitious, disrespectful or uses offensive language or statements made with malice,
- is similar to an earlier petition that has already been considered by the Council.
- if it is not in the proper form it will be returned to the submitting Petitioner.

Petition receipt and presentation to council



1. A petition must be received by the Chief Executive at least five (5) clear working days before the date of the meeting at which it will be presented.

2. Where a petition is received later than the required five (5) clear working days before the next notified Council meeting the petition will be referred to the following scheduled Council meeting.

3. The petition is presented by staff to the next relevant Council or Committee meeting. The lead petitioner will be advised of which meeting the petition will be presented to.

4. A petitioner who presents a petition may speak for five (5) minutes (excluding questions).

5. Please note, that Council and Committee meetings are open to the public, including the media.

6. Where the Chairperson has reason to believe that the petitioner is disrespectful or offensive, or has made statements with malice, the Chairperson may terminate presentation of the petition.

7. Following the presentation of the petition the Council may, by resolution, formally accept the petition and if necessary, by resolution, request staff to prepare a report for the next scheduled meeting addressing the action requested by the petition.

8. Council notifies the lead petitioner of Council's decision.



Petition receipt and presentation to council

The Council provides the petitioner the opportunity to reinforce or elaborate on the points made in the petition by presenting the petition at a Council meeting.

The petitioner's presentation at the Council meeting must be conducted in accordance with the following procedures.

PROCEDURES AT THE COUNCIL MEETING

1. The Democracy & Governance Services Team will contact the petitioner to advise the date and time the petitioner must be available to attend the Council meeting. The Democracy & Governance Services Team will also discuss protocols for the meeting and ascertain expected numbers of supporters to attend. Please ensure that the petition covering letter includes the lead petitioner's contact details.
2. The presenting petitioner must arrive at least 15 minutes before the beginning of the meeting to confirm that he/she will be addressing the Council.
3. When the Council is ready to hear the petition the Chairperson will welcome the presenting petitioner to the meeting and invite them to stand at the presenter's lectern.
4. The presenting petitioner should introduce themselves and any persons in support. A maximum of **five minutes** is provided for the presenting petitioner to speak to the petition. This time must be adhered to.
5. Councillors may ask questions of the presenting petitioner.
6. Addressing the Council provides the presenting petitioner the opportunity to reinforce or elaborate on points in the petition.
7. The lead petitioner cannot question Council officers or Councillors or enter into debate.
8. The lead petitioner must provide copies of any material including photographs to be tabled at the meeting in support of the petition to the Democracy & Governance Services Team two working days before the meeting.
The material will be made available to Councillors and the public.
No additional issues may be added to the original petition.
9. If at any time you have questions on these guidelines or when you present your petition, be assured that there will be Council staff at the meeting to provide assistance.

[Date]

Chief Executive
Hastings District Council
Private Bag 9002
Hastings 4156

To the Chief Executive

We, the residents of [town/locality] wish to petition the Hastings District Council on the following: [state grounds or concerns on the issue] (**Note: the petition must comprise fewer than 150 words (not including signatories⁵ and contain at least 20 signatures.**) (If you are representing an organisation, give brief details of the purpose of your organisation, membership and structure and the people consulted in the preparation of the petition).

PETITION
GROUNDS OR
CONCERNS
MUST COMPRISE
FEWER THAN
150 WORDS

FOR PRIVACY REASONS, THESE
DETAILS COULD BE INCLUDED IN A
SEPARATE COVERING LETTER.

THE CONTACT PERSON FOR THIS PETITION IS:

NAME:	
EMAIL:	
POSTAL ADDRESS:	
PHONE:	

Privacy Notice: Petitions received by the Council are public documents and along with the name of the petitioner will be released to persons who may request a copy. The contact details of the signatories such as telephone numbers, email address will be withheld unless the lead petitioner indicates that they do not object to those contact details being released.

EACH PAGE OF PETITION TO BE
ADDRESSED TO THE COUNCIL AND
CONTAIN THE PETITION STATEMENT

SAMPLE PETITION
STYLE

To: Hastings District Council

Statement: *[Purpose of petition and defined action sought from Council]*

SIGNATORIES – PLEASE
PRINT CLEARLY

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HASTINGS DISTRICT COUNCIL

207 Lyndon Road East, Hastings 4122

Private Bag 9002, Hastings 4156

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