

# **Ceredigion County Council Petition Scheme**

## **Determination of the Proper Form of Petitions**

Ceredigion Council has made the following determination of the proper form of public petitions submitted under Section 44 of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

## **Means and format for submissions**

1. Petitions may be submitted on paper or electronically using the Ceredigion County Council online petition system, or a combination of the two.
2. People can only sign a petition once. If they sign the petition online, they will be asked to verify their e-mail address. People cannot sign both an online and a paper petition and may be removed if it is proven that a petitioner has signed twice.
3. Petitions will not be accepted from other on-line petition systems.
4. Electronic Petitions may collect signature for a maximum period of 3 months.
5. For a paper petition the petition wording should be set out in full on each sheet (or side of a sheet) where signatures and addresses are asked for

## **Wording**

1. Electronic petition wording must be set out bilingually in Welsh and in English.
2. Petitions should be submitted in good faith and addressed to Ceredigion County Council. They should call for Ceredigion County Council to take some specific action, for example:  
*'We call on Ceredigion County Council to...'*

## **Information**

The petition must clearly indicate:

1. The name of the petitioner, who may be an individual or an organisation. This includes anyone under the age of 18.
2. The petitioner's address, which must be in Ceredigion to which all communications concerning the petition should be sent.
3. A date for your petition to stop collecting signatures.

## **Admissible Petitions**

Petitions must relate to the matters which fall under the jurisdiction of Ceredigion County Council, with the exception of the inadmissible criteria below.

## **Petitions that are not admissible**

1. Petitions relating to anything which does not come under the Council's jurisdiction
2. Petitions that are the same, or substantially similar to a petition which was closed less than a year earlier
3. Petitions relating to planning or licensing applications

4. Statutory petitions, or petitions relating to Local Authority Referendums which falls under the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions and Directions) (Wales) Regulations 2001
5. Petitions asking the Council to adjudicate, arbitrate or mediate personal or commercial interests this is the role of a court or tribunal)
6. Petitions on matters that are subject to legal proceedings in the courts
7. Petitions on matters that are already subject to determination by an ombudsman (or person with similar powers)
8. Petitions that are essentially Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, comments, compliments or complaints. Please see information on the Ceredigion County Council website as follows:  
**Freedom of Information Requests**  
<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/data-protection-freedom-of-information/freedom-of-information/>  
**Submitting Comments, Compliments and Complaints:**  
<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/your-council/comments-compliments-and-complaints/>
9. Petitions which raise issues of possible councillor misconduct will be taken as complains arising under the Local Government Act 2000 and will be reported to the Ethics and Standards Committee rather than considered under this petition scheme
10. Petitions relating to the jurisdiction of Town and Community Councils.

**Petitions must not contain**

1. Language which is offensive, intemperate or provocative. This not only includes obvious profanities, swear words and insults, but any language which a reasonable person would regard as offensive
2. Potentially false or potentially defamatory statements
3. Information which is prohibited from being published by an order of a court or a body or person with similar power
4. Materials which is potentially confidential, commercially sensitive, or which may cause personal distress or loss
5. Any commercial endorsement, promotion of any product, service or publication or statements that amount to advertisements;
6. The names of officials of public bodies, unless they are part of the senior management of those organisations;
7. The names of family members of elected representatives or officials of public bodies;
8. The names of individuals, or information where they may be identified, in relation to criminal charges;
9. Issues for which a petition is not the appropriate channel (for example, correspondence about a personal issue).

In the period immediately before an election or referendum we may need to deal with your petition differently. If this is the case we will explain the reasons and discuss the revised timescale which may apply.

### **Submitting an e-petition using the Council's online system.**

The Council's online petition system can be accessed here: [xxxxxxx](#)

You will be asked to input the following information:

- a) Title and the text of the petition
- b) Your name
- c) Your e-mail
- d) Your Address
- e) A date for your petition to stop collecting signatures. Petitions may collect signatures for a maximum period of 3 months. It might be worth bearing in mind that the Council will not consider your petition until after it has finished collecting signatures.

### **Acknowledging receipt of submission of an electronic petition**

Once you have submitted your petition, you will receive an e-mail confirming that it has been received. Democratic Services will then consider it against the rules for petitioning the Council as set out above.

If your petition is admissible as you have worded it, it be published on our website within 10 working days of receipt and can begin to collect signatures. We will confirm this by e-mail and send you the link to your petition.

If your petition is inadmissible, we will let you know and tell you the reason that it cannot go forward. It might be that the issue raised by your petition is admissible in principle, but there are some aspects of the wording which fall outside the rules. In these situations the Democratic Services team will contact you to suggest ways in which you can change the wording so that it complies fully with the rules. Once you are happy with the final wording, your petition will be published within 10 working days of confirmation of the revised wording and can begin collecting signatures.

If your petition is inadmissible as set out in the rules above and cannot be rectified by means of amending the wording, we will let you know and tell you the reason that it cannot go forward. The title and text of the petition will be published online as part of the list of inadmissible petitions, along with an explanation about why it wasn't admissible.

### **Handing in your petition**

For e-petitions, the first working day following the date stipulated to stop collecting signatures will be deemed to be the 'handing in' date. The e-petition will then be forwarded to the relevant Corporate Lead Officer, or in their absence, the relevant Corporate Director.

Any paper petition should be received by a Member, Chief Executive, Corporate Director or Corporate Lead Officer.

Any petition received should be immediately forwarded to the relevant Corporate Lead Officer, or in his / her absence, the relevant Corporate Director for the topic in question.

### **Acknowledging Receipt of all petitions**

A Democratic Services Officer will acknowledge receipt of the petition within 10 working days of the 'submission date'. The admissibility of electronic petitions are verified at the outset of the process, however if any paper petition is deemed to be inadmissible for the reasons outlined in the section above, you will be informed of the reason why it cannot go forward.

**NOTE** - Petitions should be acknowledged by writing to the first signatory to the petition, or to the person submitting the petition if it is accompanied by a covering letter, or if it is submitted electronically.

### **Steps taken by the Council in response to a petition received**

The Democratic Services Officer will forward a copy of the front sheet of the petition, together with an estimate of the number of signatories, to the relevant Corporate Lead Officer / Corporate Director / Chief Executive. The Head of Democratic Services shall maintain a register of all petitions received.

The Democratic Services Officer will report receipt of the petition to the next available Cabinet meeting and will retain custody of the original petition. The exact wording of the petition title will be reported to Cabinet, along with number of petitioners. This information will appear on the Cabinet agenda.

The relevant Corporate Director / Corporate Lead Officer will take the petition into account in making any delegated decision and will refer to it in any report to Cabinet regarding the topic in question.

The relevant Corporate Director / Corporate Lead Officer will notify the person submitting the petition of any outcome resulting from the petition.

### **Other Engagement Opportunities**

The relevant Cabinet Member will be made aware of the petition, and where the subject matter affects particular wards, the councillors representing those wards will also be notified of the receipt of the petition.

This will provide an opportunity for those Members to connect with the petitioner and to consider alternative or complimentary methods of dealing with the matter, such as submitting a letter requestion consideration of parking restrictions in a particular area or referring a matter to Scrutiny for consideration.

### **Equality and the Welsh Language**

In implementing the Petition Protocol, Ceredigion County Council will make regard to the statutory duties in respect of equalities, Welsh Language and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

### **Data protection and GDPR**

We will keep all petitions for 6 years. After that time it will be safely and securely destroyed.