

WENTWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Councillors Expense Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on the reimbursement of expenses. It is the Parish Council's policy to reimburse all necessary and reasonable expenses directly incurred by persons whilst on approved* Parish Council business.

The expectation is that Parish Councillors will neither gain nor lose financially, and will exercise prudent judgement to keep expenses to a minimum.

Expenses that can commonly be reclaimed are detailed below. This is not an exhaustive list.

If in doubt Parish Councillors should consult with the Clerk or Chairperson of the Parish Council before incurring an expense.

Travel Expenses

Parish Councillors may claim travel expenses when carrying out approved duties on behalf of the Parish Council. Examples of such duties may include attending training courses and/ or representing the Parish Council at meetings held outside the parish.

Parish Councillors should seek to choose a mode of transport that is both cost-effective and environmentally responsible, making an appropriate judgement between cost and convenience.

Own Vehicle

To claim for petrol expenditure, you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form. The Parish Council will pay you a mileage allowance of 45p per mile for mileage under 10,000 miles and 25p per mile for mileage over 10,000 miles, or such other rate as set out from time to time by HM Revenue and Customs.

The starting and finishing point for any journey made by a Parish Councillor shall be from the Parish Council's normal meeting venue which is The Mechanics Hall at Wentworth.

Any use of your own vehicle on business is subject to you:

- hold a full UK driving licence.
- ensuring that your vehicle is roadworthy and fully registered.
- hold comprehensive motor insurance that provides for business use.

Parking and toll charges - may be claimed providing they were necessarily incurred.

Public Transport - standard class return fare or any available cheaper fare.

Taxis – will only be paid in exceptional or urgent circumstances.

Hotels and accommodation - will not be paid without prior approval. Parish Councillors are expected to research hotel costs to ensure expenses are kept to a minimum.

Entertainment/gifts

The Parish Council has strict rules about offering or receiving both entertainment and gifts.

Any gifts, rewards or entertainment offered to a Parish Councillor must be reported immediately to the Clerk, or the Chairman.

False claims

If the Parish Council considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the Parish Council, it may request further details from you.

The Parish Council will thoroughly investigate and check any expenses claim as it sees fit. It may withhold payment where insufficient supporting documents have been provided.

Where payment has been made to you prior to the discovery that the claim was not legitimate or correct, it will request that the expenses are paid back.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- false expenses claims;
- claims for expenses that were not legitimately incurred;
- claims for personal gain;
- claims for hospitality and/or gifts without them having been declared; and
- receipt by you of hospitality and/or gifts from contacts that may be perceived to influence your judgment.

Any abuse of the Parish Council's expenses policy will not be tolerated.

The Parish Council will take disciplinary action where appropriate and, in certain circumstances, may treat a breach of this policy as gross misconduct, which may result in your summary suspension.

In addition, the Parish Council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

Expenses that will not be reimbursed

The Parish Council will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel to and from your home to The Mechanics Hall at Wentworth.
- the cost of any travel undertaken for personal reasons;
- the cost of any travel for your partner or spouse;
- any fines or penalties incurred while on Parish Councils business for whatever reason, including penalties for not paying for a rail ticket in advance of boarding the train and penalties or fines associated with motoring offences, including speeding, or parking fines, clamping or vehicle recovery charges.
- alcohol.
- cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.

Reimbursement Procedure

Expense claims can be made by completing the Expenses Claim Form, available from the Parish Councils Clerk, within 3 months of the date the expenses were incurred.

ALL Claims, other than mileage, must be supported by the relevant VAT receipts or tickets.

If it is not possible to produce a receipt, an explanation must be written on the claim form.

The Parish Council reserves the right not to reimburse an expense in the absence of a receipt.

All approved expense claims will be reimbursed by bank transfer.

Breach of this policy, or fraudulent expense claims, may result in disciplinary action.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

*Approval should be obtained in advance from the Parish Council, an appropriately delegated Committee or the Parish Clerk's delegated authority.

Adopted by Council May 2024

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