

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL – EXPENSES POLICY

For more information, please see the Councils Expense Policy

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

**This Policy was adopted at a meeting and will be reviewed in two years.
Adopted on 10th May 2023 by The Full Council**

ALLOWANCES, EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

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1. Councillors

1.1 Council Commitment

Whilst there is no provision in law enabling parish councils to pay individual councillors a wage commensurate with work done by that individual, nevertheless the council notes and recognises the time commitment of councillors as well as the incidental costs they incur in carrying out council business.

Such incidental expenses include:

- a) the use of their homes.
- b) telephone calls from home and mobile phones.
- c) stationery printing and IT costs.
- d) use of car, motorcycle or bicycle.

Please note that this is indicative and not meant to cover every circumstance in which incidental expenses may be incurred.

East Peckham Parish Council will pay a basic members allowance to “elected” members intended to compensate for time taken on council business and the above incidental costs. Travelling expenses incurred on council business as specified below can be subject of a specific claim.

1.2 Legal Context

The provision of members allowances is made under section 100 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Part 5.

The Provision of an allowance paid to the Chairman, if a co-opted member is made under S15 of the Local Government Act 1972.

1.3 Parish Basic Allowance

The Parish Basic allowance, as set by East Peckham Parish Council at its Annual Parish Meeting in May is paid to each elected Councillor.

An elected member may choose not to receive all or part of a basic allowance to which they would otherwise be entitled by submitting this request in writing (Emails Allowed) to the Clerk. The allowance is paid quarterly in arrears through the council’s payroll system. To comply with HRMC taxation rules.

1.4 Chairman’s Allowance

East Peckham Parish Council makes a differential payment to the Chairman of the Parish Council. The payment is to reflect the additional costs that will be incurred by the Chairman in fulfilling his/her civic duties. And paid in accordance with 1.3 above.

A Chairman’s Allowance as set by East Peckham Parish Council at its Annual Parish Meeting in May is paid to each elected Councillor.

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1.5 Travelling Allowance

An elected Councillor shall, in addition to their entitlement to a Basic Parish Allowance or Chairman's Allowance, will only in exceptional circumstance be paid a travelling expense in respect of travelling undertaken in connection with the duties set out below and only for journeys outside of the parish of 75 miles or more (one way).

A co-opted Councillor shall, be paid a travelling expense in respect of travelling undertaken in connection with the duties set out below only for journeys outside the parish boundary.

Councillors may be reimbursed for expenses for travel when carrying out duties approved by the council, or anything of a class so approved for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the council or any of its committees or working parties. This also includes attendance at training courses.

Approval for the attendance at events referred to above shall be approved in advance at a full council meeting.

Councillors will not receive expenses for attendance at any meeting of East Peckham Parish Council or work within the parish.

1.6 Councillor Suspension

If a Councillor is suspended or partially suspended from her/his responsibilities or duties as a member of an authority in accordance with part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that part, then:

the part of the basic or Chairman's allowance payable in respect of the period for which he/she is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by or repaid to the council.
and

any travelling allowance payable to him/her in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he/she is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the council.

1.7 Councillors elected for part of a year

Where entitlement to an allowance is based on a part of a year, allowances shall be paid on a pro rata basis.

1.8 Publication of allowances and expenses paid

The council will publish the allowances and expenses paid as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year by posting on its notice boards and publishing on the council's web site.

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2. Travel

Employees and Councillors should consider whether or not travel is necessary or if there are more appropriate means (for example tele-conferencing or video-conferencing).

2.1 Rail

You may claim for standard class rail fares only and where possible, rail journeys should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

2.2 Use of your own car

It may be appropriate and cost-effective to use your own car when travelling on business, for example if you are travelling with other staff or councillors or, where there is limited public transport to your destination, or the journey time is significantly shorter than using public transport. Any use of your own car on business is subject to all councillors or employees providing details of the following information prior to using your own car (or when requested) to the Clerk or Chairman:

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

Prior authorisation should be sought from the Clerk or the Chair in the case of the Clerk, before using your own car on business. The Council accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey that you make on business.

The Council will pay a travel allowance in accordance with the following:

Cars: 45p per mile, plus 5p per mile for each additional passenger

Motorcycles: 24p per mile

Bicycles: 20p per mile

Public Transport: lowest available second-class fare only, ticket receipts required.

Parking costs: actual cost with a receipt.

2.3 Taxis

The use of taxis should be avoided.

3. Overnight accommodation

As a guideline for travel on council business you should book accommodation equivalent to three-star standard or less. You may book hotel accommodation of up to £120 maximum in a major city and £100 elsewhere. It is your responsibility to ensure that any hotel reservations are cancelled within the required cancellation period if they are no longer required.

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4. Meals Allowance

If you are required to be away from home on council business, you may claim up to:

- £10 for breakfast (if this is not included in the hotel room rate);
- £15 for lunch
- £20 for dinner
- a daily allowance of £5 per night for general incidental costs such as a newspaper or telephone calls.

The maximum amounts above are inclusive of drinks. Alcohol cannot be reclaimed under any circumstances.

You should supply receipts and invoices for all hotel and meal expenses other than for the daily allowance, where no receipt is required.

5. Staff Commitment

East Peckham Parish Council will ensure that no employee is financially disadvantaged when representing the council. In this respect the council will make reimbursement of the expenses incurred by the clerk or employees while performing duties required by the council as per section 2,3 & 4 above, subject to having prior authorisation.

Some training can be very expensive and as a condition for funding training, the council requires full repayment of all costs incurred for any training course in excess of £50 should an employee not complete the training or leave the council within a year of completion. Repayment of costs reduces to 50% reimbursement in the second year.

6. Entertainment/Gifts

The Council has strict rules about offering or receiving both entertainment and gifts. Any gifts, rewards or entertainment offered to you should be reported immediately to the Clerk or the Chairman in the case of the Clerk. As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, for example flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees or Councillors.

7. Social Events

The Council may decide to hold a social event, such as a Christmas meal or other celebration, except were agreed to the contrary, attendance is not compulsory, Councillors, Clerk and staff are responsible for paying for their share. The parish council will not be liable for any of the costs incurred.

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8. Procedure for Reimbursement of Expenditure.

The Council will reimburse staff and councillors for items purchased specifically at the direction of the council and the purchase authorised by the whole council, in accordance with the councils Financial Regulations.

To claim for expenses, you must use the Council's expenses claim forms and set out the reasons why the expense was incurred on the claim form and details of authorisation, i.e., Chairman, Clerk or full council.

If you are unsure whether an expense can, be claimed, you must seek prior written authorisation from the Clerk or the Chairman.

Expenses will not be paid unless supporting evidence is provided, together with a completed expense claim form (appendix 1). This should include original receipts or invoices with the date and time of the transaction (unless you are claiming for mileage). When claiming for travel expenses on public transport, you should enclose the tickets showing the departure point and destination of your journey. Credit and debit card statements will not be accepted. Where you are submitting a VAT receipt, you should ensure that:

- all receipts are in the name of the council.
- the name and VAT registration number of the retailer or service provider;
- the goods and services provided; and
- the amount of VAT payable.

Once completed and signed, you should submit your expense claim form to the Clerk or in the case of the Clerk, the Chairman for approval. Once approved the claim form should be sent to the RFO for payment.

Expenses claims must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred.

The Council reserves the right to withhold any payment where prior written approval has not been given.

The Council may return an expense claim form to you without payment if it is completed incorrectly or lacks supporting evidence.

The Council will pay claims for authorised expenses to members of staff by BAC's transfer into the same bank account into which your salary is paid and for Councillors, by BAC's transfer to your personal bank account.

In general, you should not incur expenses other than in the categories listed above. However, if you have claims for expenditure other than for those categories listed above, you should seek written approval from the Clerk or the Chairman before incurring the expense. The Council will accept email as written approval where it is required in this policy.

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9. Expenses that will not be reimbursed

The Council will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel between your home and usual place of work (except in exceptional circumstances for early morning/late night transport as set out above);
- 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 council 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; and
- cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.
- hotel mini bar and prime tv services.
- car insurance

You are required to pay for any travel costs incurred by your partner or spouse in the event that he or she accompanies you on business. Your spouse or partner must have adequate travel insurance for that journey.

10. False Claims

If the Council considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the Council, it may request further details from you. The 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. In the case of staff, it may deduct the value of that claim from your salary. The 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 dismissal. In addition, the Council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

In the case of a councillor, they will be requested to repay the value of the claim and in addition, the Council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

Any abuse of the Council's expenses policy will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to:

- false expenses claim.
- 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 queries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Clerk or the Chairman.

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CLAIMS FORM		
From:		
Date:		
Period of Claim:	From:	To:

Date of Purchase	Item	Approved by Minute-Clerk	Cost	VAT	Total
TOTALS:					

Details of Expenses:

Mileage:

Start Postcode	Destination Postcode	Reason for Travel	Approved By	Total Miles	Cost
TOTALS:					

Total Claim Amount:	

Signature:

Date:

Please attach all receipts. This form must be fully completed for claims to be processed.

For Office Use Only:

Date Approved	Payment Date	Payment Method	Signed By