

Councillor Allowance and Expenses Policy

This policy was formally adopted by

St Cleer Parish Council

on

25.09.2024

Review Date 25.09.2026

ST CLEER PARISH COUNCIL

Councillor Allowances & Expenses Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. It is the policy of St Cleer Parish Council (“the Council”) that Councillors should not be either financially advantaged or disadvantaged because of genuine council business expenses.

1.2. This policy will apply to all Councillors, including co-opted Members.

2. Councillor Allowances

2.1. The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 apply to those parishes that pay members’ allowances. St Cleer Parish Council makes no provision for allowances, but does make provision for reimbursement of expenses as detailed below.

3. Chairman’s Expenses

3.1. Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides for town and parish councils to pay its Chairman “for the purposes of enabling him to meet the expenses of his office such allowance as the council think reasonable”.

3.2. A budget of £500 is set aside for the Chairman each year to cover:

(a) Reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to attend events to which the Chairman has received an official invitation through the Council office. (Mileage rates are paid according to 4.2 below.)

(b) Small gifts, tokens of appreciation and donations to charity where this is considered to benefit the local community, for example the purchase of a poppy wreath.

(c) Telephone, stationery and printing.

(d) Other such expenses as the Council thinks reasonable.

3.3. If the Chairman is unable to attend an event to which they have received an official invitation through the Council office, the Vice Chairman (if there is one) may be requested to attend as a substitute. In these instances, the Vice Chairman will be reimbursed according to 3.1(a) above. The expenses will be charged against the Chairman’s budget.

3.4. If any of the allowance is left unspent at the end of the financial year, the balance is to be returned to the Councils general reserves.

3.5 All expense claims must be made promptly (within 2 months of expenditure being incurred) using the Travel and Expenses Claim form (see appendix 1) and MUST be accompanied by receipts. VAT invoices should be obtained where relevant

4. Councillor Expenses

4.1. Members of Council attending training courses, meetings or other events which the Council has requested they attend as the Council’s representative(s) may have their travel expenses reimbursed, provided that such expenses have been approved by the Council.

4.2. Mileage for travel outside the parish (only) will be reimbursed according to the HMRC approved rates in force at the time, currently 45p per mile for private vehicles. You may claim for standard rail fares only, tickets should be booked in advance to obtain the best value for money. Any use of Taxis will require prior approval.

4.3. The Council will reimburse Members for reasonable expenses wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in connection with its business, provided that such expenses have been approved by the Council.

4.4 Overnight accommodation As a guideline for travel on council business the Clerk should book the accommodation equivalent to three-star standard or less. It is your responsibility to ensure that any hotel reservations are cancelled within the required cancellation period if they are no longer required.

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

- £10 for breakfast (if staying away from home the night before and it is not included in the hotel room rate)
- £15 for lunch
- £20 for dinner (only if staying the night away from home)
- a daily allowance of £5 per night for general incidental costs such as a newspaper

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 expenses.

4.6. All expense claims must be made promptly (within 2 months of expenditure being incurred) using the Travel and Expenses Claim form (see appendix 1) and MUST be accompanied by receipts. VAT invoices should be obtained where relevant.

4.7. Where there is a compelling business reason, Councillors may be reimbursed for purchases made on behalf of the Council. Orders should be placed in the name of the Council and a VAT invoice obtained in accordance with Section 6.

4.8 Printing and Stationary. Printing can be claimed at 5p per sheet for black and white printing and 10p for colour if requested by the Clerk.

4.9. Payment of expenses claims is subject to approval by the Council.

5 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.

Any abuse of the Council's expenses policy will not be tolerated. 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
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- receipt by you of hospitality and/or gifts from contacts that may be perceived to influence your judgement.

The Council will take action where appropriate by reporting the member to Cornwall Council for a potential breach of the Code of Conduct and, In addition, the Council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution

6. Value Added Tax

5.1. Although Councillors are elected members of the Council they are, for VAT purposes, treated as an employee when carrying out their official duties. As a result any VAT incurred in the course of their official duties can be recovered subject to the following conditions:

- (a) the Council accepts responsibility for the actual expenses incurred and includes them in its normal accounts
- (b) the goods or services are ordered in the name of the Council and invoices are addressed to it, and
- (c) adequate documentation is retained to support the claim for refund of the VAT.

5.2. VAT cannot be recovered where it is incurred through expenditure of a flat rate allowance provided in the form of money placed freely at the disposal of the councillor.

Appendix 1 St Cleer Parish Council Expense Claim Form

Name	Date
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Journey From/ To	Purpose of Journey	Date	Miles Claimed	Amount at 45p per mile
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Total Mileage Claim				

Other Expenses (Please attach receipts for all stationary and miscellaneous expenses)

Item	Date	Details	Amount
Total Expenses Requested			

I Confirm that the above expenses were incurred on Council Business
Signature Councillor

For Office Use Only
Approved :
Chairman of Meeting
Date
Payment Method

Other Notes