

Allowances for Members of Parish Councils.

Local parish councils and councillors make a massive difference to local people's quality of life. They are passionate about their communities and seek to make a change to help improve their residents' lives.

Becoming a councillor is a rewarding experience as you will be able to make a change in your community to help improve residents' lives.

A councillor's role can include developing strategies and plans for the area, helping with problems and ideas, representing the community, working with other local community groups, decision making and reviewing decisions and talking to the community about their needs and what the council can do to improve the wellbeing of our residents.

What do Councillors do?

Councillors have three main components to their work.

1. Decision making.

Through meetings and attending committees with other elected or co-opted members, Councillors decide which activities to support, where money should be spent, what services should be delivered and what policies should be implemented.

2. Monitoring.

Councillors make sure that their decisions lead to efficient and effective services and activities by keeping an eye on how well things are working in the community..

3. Getting involved locally.

As local representatives, Councillors have responsibilities towards their residents and local organisations and groups. These responsibilities and duties often depend on what the Council wants to achieve, and may include:

- Going to meetings of local organisations such as tenants' associations. Planning
- Going to meetings of bodies (SMBC) affecting the wider community.
- Taking up issues on behalf of members of the public.
- developing links with all parts of the community.

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Councillors are not paid a salary, but they are entitled to allowances and expenses to cover some of the cost of carrying out their duties.

Councillors are responsible for making decisions on behalf of the community about local services and budgets, including the level of council tax set by the district council. (15% of KPC Precept is Cllrs Allowance)

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

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

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

The Remunification Panel understood that printing was the substantive reason for the allowance request. Printing, as well as stationary and other expenses necessary to parish councillor duties, have been factored into the recommendation.

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Any reference in this Part -

(a) to an authority is, unless otherwise specified, a reference to a parish council;

(b) to a member is, unless otherwise specified, or the context otherwise requires, a reference to a member of a parish council, whether or not elected to such office;

(c) to a responsible authority is, in relation to a parish council, a reference to the district council or unitary county council.

Parish basic allowance

1. Parish councils may choose to pay their members an allowance, known as 'parish basic allowance', to recognise the time and effort they put into their parish duties. There is no obligation on parish councils to pay such allowances. Each parish council may make an allowance available to its chair only, or to each of its members. Where all members receive an allowance, the amount payable to the chair may be different to that paid to other members, but otherwise the amount paid to each member must be the same. Parish basic allowance is a **discretionary allowance**. It may be paid in a lump sum, or at intervals throughout the year.
2. If a parish council wishes to pay a basic allowance, it should have regard to a recommendation from its parish remuneration panel. This is a panel set up to make recommendations to parishes in its area. The membership of a parish remuneration panel will be the same as the independent remuneration panel of the district or county council within whose area the parish is situated. The panel will make a recommendation as to whom basic allowance should be paid, and the level of the allowance.

Travel and subsistence allowances

1. A parish council may also pay to both elected and co-opted members allowances in respect of travel and subsistence. **These are discretionary allowances.** They may be paid in respect of travel and subsistence both inside and outside the boundary of the parish. Allowances for travel may include allowances for travel by non-motorised transport, such as a bicycle.

2. Travel and subsistence allowances may only be paid for travel and subsistence in respect of:

- a meeting of the authority
- a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of the authority
- a meeting of some other body to which the authority make appointments or nominations
- a meeting of a committee or sub-committee of a body to which the authority make appointments or nominations
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in pursuance of any standing order requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened.
- a meeting of a local authority association of which the authority is a member
- duties undertaken on behalf of the authority in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises
- any other duty approved by the authority in connection with discharging the duties of the authority or its committees or sub-committees.

If it wishes to pay travel and subsistence allowances, a parish council must consult its parish remuneration panel. The panel will make a recommendation as to the level of allowances, and the duties in respect of which they should be paid.

Forgoing allowances

A parish councillor may choose not to receive all or part of any allowance to which they would otherwise be entitled.

Financial loss allowance

The 2003 Regulations remove the option of authorities to allow parish councillors a financial loss allowance under section 173 of the Local Government Act 1972. Parish councillors can instead be paid the parish basic allowance and travel and subsistence allowances to remunerate them for their duties on the council.

Publicity

Parish councils are required to publicise their allowances in a notice or notices conspicuous in their area. These notices must remain in place for at least 14 days. In addition, they must make a record of the allowances they have paid available for inspection at reasonable notice. They must provide copies of this record on request, and may charge a reasonable fee for this. Parishes must also publish details of the parish remuneration panel reports. Again, these are minimum requirements, and parish councils may wish to go further in making local people aware of their allowances scheme and payment levels

Parish, councillors

The Parish Basic Allowance is taxable

Non-councillors

The tax rules for Co-Optees' Allowance and Parish Basic Allowance to non-councillors are the same as for parish, town and community councillors

Conclusion

"In reaching this conclusion KPC was mindful of its guiding principle that it has sought to reduce financial barriers to being an elected member while ensuring that the remuneration and expenses received by elected members represent value for money."