

COUNCILLOR TRAVEL AND SUBSISTANCE POLICY

Reference	SNTC/FI008	Adopted by	Policy and Governance
Prepared by	Town Clerk	Adopted date	28 January 2025
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1. LEGAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Councillors Allowances

- 1.1.1 In accordance with the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003; parish councils have the discretion to introduce a members allowances scheme in addition to a travelling allowance and a subsistence allowance.
- 1.1.2 A parish or town council is able to pay a parish basic allowance for each year to its chairman only or to each of its elected members (regulation 25). The amount payable to the chairman may differ from that of other members (i.e. a higher sum could be paid because of the extra duties that may be required of the chairman) but otherwise the sum shall be the same for each member. The allowance is not a salary. It is a figure which is calculated to cover the expenses, which are normally associated with the basic duties of being a local councillor.
- 1.1.3 St Neots Town Council has not introduced a scheme for basic parish councillor allowances. An allowance is budgeted for the Mayor to support the Councillor fulfilling the role in meeting to costs often involved.

1.2 Travel and Subsistence

- 1.2.1 Travelling and subsistence allowances are treated separately (see below). There is no set figure and figures may differ from region to region for a variety of reasons.
- 1.2.2 Travel and subsistence allowances can be set by the Council however a parish basic allowance (which St Neots Town Council has not introduced), can only be set by the Council after it has considered the recommendations of the parish remuneration panel of the principal authority. It is recommended where such schemes exist, they must be outlined in a formal policy adopted by the Council. Should St Neots Town Council ever resolve to introduce a scheme for basic parish councilor allowances, it should refer to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) legal topic note LTN 33 on 'Councillors Allowances'.

1.3 Dependents' Carer's Allowance

Parish and town councillors are not entitled to claim this allowance under the regulations and yet it is available under the new regulations, for example, to those district councillors with dependent children.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

- 2.1 This policy sets out the rates, procedures and rules which must be observed for the submission of claims for travelling and subsistence allowances.

3. CLAIMS FOR TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCE

- 3.1 The council will pay to both elected and co-opted members allowances in respect of travelling and subsistence, including an allowance in respect of travel by bicycle or other non-motorised form of transport, undertaken or incurred in connection with the performance of any duty the councillor is appointed to attend on behalf of the Council, within the following categories:

- A. The attendance at a meeting of the council or of any committee or sub-committee, of the council, or of anybody to which the council makes appointments or nominations or of any committee or subcommittee of such a body; which takes place outside of the St Neots boundary.
- B. The attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the council is a member; if held outside the St Neots boundary.
- C. The performance of duties in connection with a tender process which requires travel outside the St Neots boundary.
- D. The performance of any duty (outside the St Neots boundary) which requires the inspection of any Premises.
- E. The carrying out of any other duty approved by the council, or any duty of a class so approved, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the council or of any of its committees or sub committees, outside of the St Neots boundary.

4. TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE RATES

- 4.1 For any functions authorised in line with above, travel and subsistence can be authorised for journeys by public transport, car, or non-motorised device will be made to members and co-opted members. Payment will not be paid for travel within the St Neots boundary.

- 4.2 The approved HMRC travel rates will be paid as follows:

- Bus or rail travel cost of journey subject to receipt or ticket being provided to the RFO
- Car £0.45 per mile (HMRC rate)
- Motorbikes £0.24 per mile (HMRC rate)

- Non-motorised transport (eg: bicycle) £0.10 per mile (HMRC rate)
- Taxi - The cost of taxis will be paid in exceptional circumstances only authorised in advance by the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer on behalf of the Council.

5. CLAIMS FOR USE OF THE ST NEOTS CAR SHARE SCHEME WITHIN THE PARISH

- 5.1 Due to the temporary relocation of meetings of the Town Council, its committees and sub-committees to the Eatons Community Centre, Councillors are permitted to claim expenses to use the St Neots Car Share Scheme to travel from their residence to the Eatons Centre to attend those meetings and to return to their residence following the meetings.
- 5.2 The Local Authorities (members allowance) (England) regulations 2003, Part 5, Section 26 gives Councils the power to reimburse Travel expenses. This includes; "... attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;"
- 5.3 The purpose of permitting an expense claim to use the Car Share Scheme to attend meetings within the parish boundary is to ensure that no Member is disadvantaged by the necessary temporary relocation of meetings while the Priory Centre is redeveloped, ensuring continued involvement in the democratic and decision-making process.
- 5.4 Use of the St Neots Car Share Scheme from a Councillor's residence to the Eatons Community Centre to attend a Council meeting, and to return to their residence following a meeting are the only expenses for travelling within the parish boundary for which a travel claim can be submitted. All other travel claims must be in line with section 3.1 of this policy.
- 5.5 Costs for claims will be limited to the St Neots Car Share Scheme fees, set at £2 per journey plus 0.45p per mile.
- 5.6 The allowance to claim expenses to use the car share scheme is temporary and is intended to be in place until Council meetings return to the Priory Centre or that Council resolves otherwise. The impact of this policy change will be reviewed by the Council 6 months after the policy is approved.

6. OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION

- 6.1 Where the nature of the duties being undertaken result in a Councillor/Co-opted member being absent from his/her usual place of residence (more than 2 hours away), overnight accommodation will be booked and paid directly by St Neots Town Council. The overnight accommodation allowance is payable, normally to cover bed and breakfast, where you are required to stay away from home overnight.
- 6.2 There are two types of allowance, one for accommodation in London, and one for accommodation outside London. These allowances are subject to a maximum, which will be reviewed annually.

- Overnight accommodation outside of London £100.00
- Overnight accommodation in London £130.00

6.3 There may be exceptions where the cost of overnight accommodation exceeds the maximum allowance due to availability. In these circumstances the Town Clerk can authorise the additional expenditure.

7. SUBSISTANCE EXPENSES

7.1 Expenses may also be paid to cover food and drink (non alcoholic) when associated with a journey outside St Neots boundary as in section 3.1.

7.2 Receipts must be produced for all claims made and permission must be sought in advance in writing from the Town Clerk.

- Breakfast Allowance £6.00
- Lunch Allowance £8.00
- Tea/Coffee Allowance £4.50
- Evening Meal Allowance £20

8. CLAIMING EXPENSES

8.1 Claim forms can be obtained from the Town Council office.

The following applies when completing claim forms:-

- Enter your name, date and reasons for the journey and destinations
- Enter the mileage for each journey plus expenses claimed and totals
- Where you can provide a VAT receipt for the petrol purchased shortly before the date of the journey then the Town Council can reclaim the VAT at the appropriate vat mileage rate
- The form should be signed by the claimant and then authorised by the Town Clerk & RFO

8.2 When the Clerk is unavailable the Deputy Clerk or RFO can fulfil the duties assigned to the Clerk.