

Eldon Parish Council

26th March 2019

Parish Council Basic Allowances and Other Allowances

Report of Clerk

Introduction

On 24th October 2018 the CDALC Executive Officer reported to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) of Durham County Council to ask if they would review and provide a recommendation on basic and other allowances for parish councils. This was a welcome and unexpected move as, for many years previously, the Panel had not addressed this issue.

The intention was to replace the outdated district council remuneration panel recommendations which have been in use since the unitary authority was created and to provide a standardised set of recommended allowances for use by all parish councils across County Durham.

Details provided included the inflation rate since the last review (pre 2009) and the current basic allowance paid to Durham County Councillors. Both of these were taken into consideration during the recommendation on our basic allowances.

POPULATION	AMOUNTSUGGESTEDBYINDEPENDENTREMUNERATIONPANEL
Population of 15,000 and over	10% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £1,330
Population between 10,000 & 15,000	7.5% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £1,000
Population between 5,000 & 10,000	5% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £665
Population between 3,000 & 5,000	2% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £270
Population between 2,000 & 3,000	1.5% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £200
Population between 1,000 & 2,000	1% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £135
Population of under 1,000	0.5% of the county basic allowance up to a maximum of £65

The population of Eldon falls into the lowest threshold.

These rates will now be increased in line with any future increases to the basic allowance rates paid to County Councillors.

In addition, the IRP agreed to approve the following other allowances:-

- The rate for travel by a Member's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family or otherwise provided for his use, will be paid at 45.0p a mile
- Standard Class rail travel is the approved class of travel, although first class rail can sometimes be the cheaper option dependent upon the time of booking.
- The cost of travel by air shall not exceed the cost applicable to travel by appropriate alternative means of transport. Unless in circumstances where the saving in time is so substantial as to justify payment of the fare for travel by air.

Overnight Accommodation

Overnight allowance		Rate £
London	Up to a maximum claim on production of receipts	£124.76
Outside London	Up to a maximum claim on production of receipts	£109.39

SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES - DUTIES PERFORMED WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM

When carrying out approved duties "Out of Region", Members may claim up to the approved rates as follows on production of receipts:

Allowance	Minimum absence from home	Rate £
Breakfast	2 hours which must be before 11.00am	6.75
Lunch	2 hours which must be between 12 noon and 2.00pm	9.27
Tea	3 hours which must include 3.00pm to 6.00pm	3.65
Evening Meal	3 hours which must be after 7.00pm	11.48

Members may claim full reimbursement of the reasonable cost (including VAT) of a main meal (full breakfast, lunch or dinner) taken on a train. Members wishing to claim must submit receipts. Where full reimbursement is claimed the allowance for the meal provided cannot also be claimed, i.e. breakfast, lunch, dinner, etc

This recommendation brings the parish council sector into line with the allowance rates provided by DCC.

The majority of Parish Councils in County Durham do not pay allowances to members either in relation to basic allowances, for subsistence, or for travelling locally, although there is sometimes a public misconception that Parish Councillors are paid.

However, the Council may wish to consider whether it should adopt any of the allowances. For instance, there may be occasions when travelling greater distances i.e. to regional or national conferences or to events such as the Royal Garden Parties to which the Council nominates attendees where a claim might reasonably be made.

There are four practicalities which must be followed once the Parish Council has considered the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel:

- A copy of the Members' Allowances Scheme must be available for public inspection on reasonable notice.
- A notice must be published in a conspicuous place for a period of at least 14 days which:
 - states that the Parish Council has received the Independent Remuneration Panel recommendation;
 - describes the main recommendations and specifies the recommended amounts of each allowance; and
 - states that copies of the panel's report are available for inspection upon giving reasonable notice and give details of how a request to inspect should be given.
 - A reasonable fee can be charged for the provision of a copy of the report.

- The Parish Council must maintain records of payments made in respect of the allowances, specifying the name of the recipient and the nature of the allowance. These records can be inspected by any local government elector for the parish without payment of a fee and upon giving reasonable notice. Copies must be provided if so requested and a reasonable fee can be charged.
- At the end of each financial year the Parish Council must publish a notice in a conspicuous place for a period of at least 14 days stating the total amount that it has paid for the parish basic allowance and for the parish travelling and subsistence allowance.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Councillors consider whether to pay basic allowance to parish councillors, on the basis recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
2. Councillors consider whether to set other allowances on the basis recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel.

The views of the Council are sought in relation to this matter.

Tom Bolton
Clerk to the Council