

EASTRINGTON

PARISH COUNCIL

Minute Ref:

Adopted:

7th April 2025

380f

Review:

Annually

Expenses Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and consistent guidelines for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by members and employees of the Parish Council while carrying out their duties. This ensures transparency, fairness, and proper governance in the management of public funds.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members (councillors) and employees of the Parish Council, including volunteers and any individuals authorized by the Parish Council to incur expenses on its behalf.

3. General Principles

- **Accountability:** All claims for reimbursement must be substantiated with appropriate documentation (e.g., receipts, invoices).
- **Reasonableness:** Expenses must be reasonable, necessary, and related to official Parish Council duties. Unnecessary or lavish expenses will not be reimbursed.
- **Pre-approval:** Certain expenses may require prior approval from the Parish Council or its designated representative before they are incurred.

4. Eligible Expenses

The following categories of expenses may be reimbursed, subject to the provisions of this policy:

4.1 Travel Expenses

- **Mileage:** Councillors and employees using their personal vehicles for official Parish Council duties will be reimbursed at the approved mileage rate. The rate should be reviewed annually to ensure it aligns with HMRC guidelines or any other relevant statutory limits.
- **Public Transport:** Where appropriate, travel by public transport (e.g., bus, train) will be reimbursed. The most economical option should be used unless there is a valid reason for using a more expensive mode of transport.
- **Parking:** Reimbursement for parking fees incurred while attending official Parish Council meetings or events will be allowed, provided a receipt is provided.

4.2 Subsistence and Meals

- **Meals:** Reasonable meal costs may be reimbursed when attending meetings or events where the individual is required to be away from their normal place of residence. Alcohol will not be reimbursed.
- **Overnight Accommodation:** If overnight accommodation is necessary for official duties, the Parish Council will cover the cost, provided the accommodation is reasonable and approved in advance. Any personal costs associated with overnight stays (e.g., telephone calls, room service) will not be reimbursed.

4.3 Office Supplies and Equipment

- **Materials:** Expenses for items required for carrying out official Parish Council duties (e.g., stationery, software, printing) may be reimbursed if they have been authorised.
- **Equipment:** The Parish Council will cover the cost of necessary equipment for employees to carry out their duties. Any personal equipment used for official duties must be approved in advance for reimbursement.

4.4 Training and Development

- **Training Costs:** Reasonable costs associated with attending training courses or conferences relevant to an individual's role with the Parish Council will be reimbursed, subject to prior approval.
- **Membership Fees:** If it is agreed that membership in a professional organization is required for the role, the Parish Council may reimburse the cost of annual membership fees.

5. Non-eligible Expenses

The following expenses will **not** be reimbursed by the Parish Council:

- Personal expenses (e.g., clothing, personal phone calls).
- Fines (e.g., traffic fines or parking fines).
- Alcoholic beverages or personal entertainment.
- Any expenses that are deemed to be excessive or unreasonable.

6. Claim Process

- All claims for reimbursement should be submitted within **30 days** of the expense being incurred. Claims submitted later than this may not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Claims must be made using the official expense claim form provided by the Parish Council.
- Receipts or other supporting documentation must be submitted with all claims for reimbursement. If a receipt is unavailable, a detailed explanation must be provided.
- Claims will be reviewed and approved by the Parish Clerk or a designated officer, and payments will be processed in accordance with the Parish Council's financial procedures.

7. Approval of Expenses

- All claims for expenses incurred by the Parish Clerk or any employee of the Parish Council must be approved by the Chair of the Parish Council or another designated councillor.

- Claims for councillors will be approved by the Parish Council at a full meeting or through an agreed process.

8. Review and Monitoring

The Parish Council will review this policy annually to ensure it remains in line with current regulations and best practices. Any amendments to this policy must be approved by the full Parish Council.

9. Compliance

Failure to comply with this expenses policy may result in claims being rejected or, in the case of repeated violations, disciplinary action.