Seascale Parish Council

Allowance and Expenses Policy

Purpose

This policy sets out the Council's rules on how councillors and employees can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Council.

It is the policy of Seascale Parish Council that councillors and employees should not be either financially advantaged or disadvantaged because of genuine council business expenses.

This policy will apply to all councillors, including co-opted members, and any non-councillor members of a committee or sub-committee of the Council.

Councillor Allowances

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

General procedure

The Council will reimburse you for actual expenditure that is incurred wholly, necessarily and exclusively in connection with authorised duties that you undertake in the course of your employment or duties. To claim for expenses, you must use the Council's expenses claim form and set out the reasons why the expense was incurred on the claim form. If you are unsure whether an expense can be claimed, you must seek prior written authorisation from the Clerk, or the Clerk must seek authorisation from the Personnel Committee.

Expenses will not be paid unless supporting evidence is provided, together with a completed expense claim form. This should include original receipts or invoices with the date and time of the transaction (unless you are claiming for mileage).

Once completed and signed, you should submit your expense claim form to the Clerk for inclusion on the next agenda for approval.

In general, you should not incur expenses other than in the categories listed below.

Any queries in relation to this policy should be directed to the Clerk.

Travel

Consider whether or not travel is necessary or if there are more appropriate means (for example Teams or Zoom meetings). Only travel outside of the parish will be reimbursed.

<u>Rail</u>

You may claim for standard class rail fares only. Where possible, rail journeys should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounts for early booking.

Use of your own car

It may be appropriate and cost-effective to use your own car when travelling on business, for example if you are travelling with others, or where there is limited public transport to your destination, or the journey time is significantly shorter than using public transport.

To claim for mileage costs you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form. The Council will pay you a mileage allowance of 45p per mile for mileage under 10,000 miles and 25p per mile for mileage over 10,000 miles, or such other rate as set out from time to time by HM Revenue and Customs. The Council will pay for tolls, congestion charges and parking costs incurred, where applicable.

Use of bicycle or Motorcycle

If use of your bicycle or motorcycle is approved, you can claim a mileage allowance of 20p or 24p per mile respectively.

Taxis

Any use of taxis will require prior approval and only in limited circumstances. These are:

- where taking a taxi would result in a significantly shorter travel time than using public transport;
- where there are several people travelling together; or
- where personal security and safety is an issue.

You must obtain a receipt with details of the date, place of departure and destination of the journey.

Overnight accommodation

As a guideline for travel on council business you should book 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.

Meals

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

- £10 for breakfast (if this is not included in the hotel room rate);
- £15 for lunch;
- £20 for dinner.

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 meal expenses.

Expenses that will not be reimbursed

The Council will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel within the parish;
- the cost of any travel undertaken for personal reasons;

- the cost of any travel for your partner or spouse;
- any fines or penalties incurred while on council business for whatever reason, including penalties for not paying for a rail ticket in advance of boarding the train and penalties or fines associated with motoring offences, including speeding or parking fines, clamping or vehicle recovery charges;

False claims

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;

The Council will take any action it considers appropriate, which may include treating a breach of this policy by employees as gross misconduct, which may result in summary dismissal, or a breach of the Code of Conduct for councillors and report the abuse to the Monitoring Officer. In addition, the Council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.