# *Great Tey Parish Council*

## Expenses Policy

### Purpose:

This policy sets out the Council's rules on how employees and Councillors can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Council. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that employees and Councillors are properly reimbursed for legitimate business expenses and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes.

### 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 when acting as a Parish Councillor. To claim for expenses, liaise with the Parish Clerk who will be able to action the Expenses Claim Form. You will 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 / the RFO / 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). When claiming for travel expenses on public transport, you should enclose the tickets showing the departure point and destination of your journey, where possible. Credit and debit card statements will not be accepted. Where you are submitting a VAT receipt, you should set out:

- the name and VAT registration number of the retailer or service provider;
- the goods and services provided; and
- the amount of VAT payable.

Send the request for any expenses to the Clerk who will add the payment to the Payment Schedule for approval. Once approved the RFO will arrange for the payment to be made.

Expense claims must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred. If this is not practical, written approval for any extension will be required from the Clerk or the Personnel Committee. The Council reserves the right to withhold any payment where prior written approval has not been given.

The Council will pay claims for authorised expenses by BACS transfer into the same bank account into which the Clerks salary is paid or the RFO requesting your banking details.

In general, you should not incur expenses other than in the categories listed below. However, if you have claims for expenditure other than for those categories listed below, you should seek written approval from the Clerk, the RFO or the Personnel Committee before incurring the expense. The Council will accept email as written approval where it is required in this policy.

Any queries in relation to this policy should be directed to the RFO the Personnel Committee.

### Homeworkers:

If you are a Homeworker, your normal place of work as stated in your contract will be your home. The council will reimburse all reasonable expenses incurred by homeworkers in the course of their duties upon receipt of satisfactory claims.

The council will provide the following equipment necessary to enable homeworking employees to do their job.

- Desk with lockable drawer (or separate secure document store)
- Laptop or personal computer
- Printer

Alternatively, the council will agree with homeworkers a suitable sum to cover use of their own equipment.

The council should also pay the employee for the costs associated with heating, lighting, etc. HMRC rules allow for some of these expenses to be paid tax-free (see HMRC guidance: www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking/whats-exempt).

**Training:**

When attending training courses all employees and be able to claim travel expenses for the difference in the usual home to work costs. Where the training takes place outside contracted daily hours, part-time employees should be paid on the basis as time spent on training is working time.

Some training can be very expensive and as a condition for funding training, the council requires full repayment of all costs incurred for any training course in excess of £500 should an employee not complete the training or leave the council within a year of completion.

**Travel:**

Employees and Councillors should consider whether or not travel is necessary or if there are more appropriate means (for example tele-conferencing or video conferencing).

Rail

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 other staff or councillors or, where there is limited public transport to your destination, or the journey time is significantly shorter than using public transport. Any use of your own car on business is subject to you:

- holding a full UK driving licence;
- ensuring that your car is roadworthy and fully registered; and
- holding comprehensive motor insurance that provides for business use.

Prior authorisation should be sought from the Personnel Committee in the case of the Clerk and Councillors before using your own car on business. The Council accepts no liability for any accident, loss, damage or claim arising out of any journey that you make on business. The Council will not pay for the cost of any insurance policy on your own car.

To claim for petrol expenditure, you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form. The Council will pay you a mileage allowance as set by the UK Government per mile for mileage under 10,000 miles and 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. Any use of your own motorcycle on business is subject the same requirements as a car (see above).

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 employees travelling together; or
- where personal security and safety of employees is an issue, for example taxis may be permitted after 9.30pm.

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. You may book hotel accommodation of up to £120 maximum in a major city and £100 elsewhere. 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; and
- a daily allowance of £5 per night for general incidental costs such as a newspaper or telephone calls.

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 other than for the daily allowance, where no receipt is required.

**Entertainment/gifts:**

The Council has strict rules about offering or receiving both entertainment and gifts. Any gifts, rewards or entertainment offered to you should be reported immediately to the Clerk or the Personnel Committee in the case of the Clerk. As a general rule, small tokens of appreciation, for example flowers or a bottle of wine, may be retained by employees.

**Annual events:**

The Council may decide to hold a staff event, such as a Christmas meal or other celebration. Except where agreed to the contrary, attendance is not compulsory, and you will remain responsible for any expenses you incur.

**Expenses that will not be reimbursed:**

The Council will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel between your home and usual place of work (except in exceptional circumstances for early morning/late night transport as set out above);

- 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;
- alcohol; and
- cash advances or withdrawals from an ATM machine.

You are required to pay for any travel costs incurred by your partner or spouse in the event that he or she accompanies you on business. Your spouse or partner must have adequate travel insurance for that journey.

False claims:

If the Council considers that any expenditure claimed was not legitimately incurred on behalf of the Council, it may request further details from you. The Council will thoroughly investigate and check any expenses claim as it sees fit. It may withhold payment where insufficient supporting documents have been provided. Where payment has been made to you prior to the discovery that the claim was not legitimate or correct, it may deduct the value of that claim from your salary.

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;
- claims for hospitality and/or gifts without them having been declared; and
- receipt by you of hospitality and/or gifts from contacts that may be perceived to influence your judgment.

The Council will take disciplinary action where appropriate and, in certain circumstances, may treat a breach of this policy as gross misconduct, which may result in your summary dismissal. In addition, the Council may report the matter to the police for investigation and criminal prosecution.

Review of Policy:

- This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if significant changes occur, such as legislative amendments or changes in the Council's operational activities.

- Any updates to the policy will be communicated to all staff, volunteers, and Councillors.