

# **SOUTH HEIGHTON PARISH COUNCIL**

## **Expenses Policy**

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## Notes and Background

The Parish Council is committed to achieving good local governance. This means that the Parish Council wants to ensure that they are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.

To help the Parish Council achieve this we aim to follow the six principles of good local governance:

- 1 Focusing on the purpose of the Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
- 2 Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
- 3 Promoting values for the Council and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
- 4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;
- 5 Developing the capacity and capability of Members and Officers to be effective;
- 6 Engaging with local people and other interested persons to ensure robust public accountability.

As a first tier of local government the Parish Council is directed and controlled by central government legislation. This document is one of a number, which together, sets out the systems and processes of how the Parish Council works within this framework and, as importantly, our culture and values on the way we work, so that we may fulfil these six principles.

This Expense Policy has been prepared from the model provided by the Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC) on their website as at 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017. It has however been adapted to meet the specific circumstances of South Heighton Parish Council.

It should be read in conjunction with the other adopted policies, procedures and protocols of the Parish Council.

The Council is committed to being a responsible employer and the adoption and application of this Policy/Procedure is part of this commitment.

For their part the Parish Clerk and Members are expected to comply with the principles of this Policy

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**In the context of this document reference to the “Council” and/or “Parish Council” means South Heighton Parish Council**

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 This policy applies to the Parish Clerk and all Members of the Council.

1.2 The policy provides a framework to show how the Parish Clerk and Councillors can claim and be reimbursed for reasonable and authorised expenses that are incurred during their normal course of work, or in executing their duties as a Member of the Council.

## **2. Expectations**

2.1 The Parish Clerk and Members are expected to:

- i. Behave honestly, responsibly and within the guidelines of this policy;
- ii. Submit expenses claims within reasonable timescales, on the currently approved forms and provide enough information to explain the need for the expense and
- iii. Keep all receipts and provide VAT receipts (where appropriate) to allow the Council to reclaim the VAT.

2.2 The Council will:

- i. Check claimed expenses are authorised in line with this policy and
- ii. Approve and pay legitimate claims promptly.

2.3 If the Parish Clerk or Member fails to comply with this policy, this may delay reimbursement or cause claims to be rejected. In the case of the Parish Clerk persistent or deliberate non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, in the case of a Member this may result in a referral to the appropriate Monitoring Officer.

## **3. Travel related claims**

3.1 The Council has followed the guidance of HM Revenue & Customs in setting the following travel related expense rates:

- i. Private car mileage – 45p per mile (up to a maximum of 10,000 miles per annum, thereafter 25p per mile)
- ii. Additional passenger mileage in a private car – 5p per mile per passenger
- iii. Motorcycle mileage – 24p per mile
- iv. Bicycle mileage – 20p per mile
- v. Rail or bus fare – reimbursement of cost (standard class) as shown on ticket
- vi. Parking – reimbursement of cost as shown on ticket (only where no free parking is available within reasonable walking distance)

3.2 In the case of the Parish Clerk Mileage Claims should only be made for travel previously authorised by the Council and in the case of attending authorised meetings claimed for distances in excess of normal “travel to work”, that is from the Parish Clerk’s home (normal place of work) to the South Heighton Village Hall (normal place of Council meetings). The Parish Clerk and Members cannot claim mileage for normal travel between work (Council meetings) and their home, except with the prior authorisation of the Council.

3.3 The Council will not, under any circumstances, reimburse the Parish Clerk or Members for penalty fines incurred due to speeding, unsafe driving or any other motoring offence, or for parking fines.

#### **4. Other expenses claims**

- 4.1 The following expenses are acceptable and the Parish Clerk and Members will be reimbursed for them provided they have been authorised in advance by the Council:
- i. Overnight accommodation and sustenance where required for attendance at a Council related event;
  - ii. Professional membership fees and
  - iii. Office consumables, such as ink and paper, and other expenses, such as postage, incurred in the performance of Council business.

#### **5. Claims process**

- 5.1 The Parish Clerk and Members must fill out the currently approved Expenses Claim Form (see Appendix A) promptly after incurring expenses (and no later than 3 months after the claim date), and submit this to the Council for approval.
- 5.2 The Council is responsible for checking the claim complies with this policy, and includes receipts (where applicable). Once the Council is satisfied, the Chairman of the Council will sign the form, thereby authorising the payment to be made.
- 5.3 Payment will be made direct to the Parish Clerk (not through payroll) either by cheque or direct credit to their nominated bank account. In the case of a Member, payment will be by a cheque duly signed by two other nominated signatories.
- 5.4 If the Parish Clerk or Member is unsure whether a claim is likely to be acceptable they are advised to seek clarification by putting a request to the full Council prior to incurring the expenses.
- 5.5 In the case of unexpected or emergency expenses these must be reported to the Council at the next meeting of the Council and will normally be paid if covered under 4.1 iii) above.