HOPE WITH ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Expenses Policy

Reviewed and Adopted:

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Background

The Parish Council will reimburse councillors, volunteers and employees for reasonable expenses wholly, necessarily and exclusively incurred in connection with its business. Councillors / employees / volunteers should not be either financially disadvantaged or advantaged because of genuine Parish Council expenses.

Purpose

This policy sets out the Council's rules on how councillors / employees / volunteers can claim for expenses incurred in the performance of their duties for the Parish Council to ensure that everyone is properly reimbursed for legitimate expenses and to ensure that these expenses are treated appropriately for tax purposes.

This policy does not include expenses incurred for the purchase of goods or services. For these expenses a valid receipt should be submitted to the Clerk for approval at the next Parish Council meeting and will be paid by BACs.

General procedure

The Parish 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 duties. If you are unsure whether an expense can be claimed, you must seek prior written authorisation from the Clerk, or the Chair in the case of the Clerk.

Expenses will not be paid unless a claim form is submitted (Appendix A), with receipts if appropriate. Credit and debit card statements will not be accepted.

Expenses claims must be submitted within 30 days of the expense being incurred. If this is not practical, the Clerk should be notified.

The Council will pay claims for authorised expenses by BACS transfer.

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, an estimate of costs should, where possible, be agreed at a Parish Council meeting prior to expenditure.

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

Training

When attending training courses all councillors / employees / volunteers are able to claim travel expenses.

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 £100 should an employee not complete the training or leave the council within a year of completion. Repayment of costs reduces to 50% reimbursement in the second year.

Travel

Councillors / employees / volunteers 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 councillors / employees / volunteers, 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.

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 mileage, you should set out the distance of the journey undertaken on your expenses claim form (Appendix A).

The Council will pay you a mileage allowance of 55p 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. These rates are the same for all types of vehicles, e.g. electric, diesel etc.

The Council will pay for tolls, congestion charges and parking costs incurred, where applicable.

An additional 5p per mile may be claimed for up to 4 additional passengers.

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 full council approval in advance and only in limited circumstances. Examples of circumstances are:

- where taking a taxi would result in a significantly shorter travel time than using public transport;
- where personal security and safety 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 £150 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.

Any use of hotels will require full council approval in advance.

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 other than for the daily allowance, where no receipt is required and an expenses claim form completed.

Expenses that will not be reimbursed

The Council will not reimburse you for:

- the cost of any travel between your home and any location within the Parish of Hope with Aston (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 / future 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;
- 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.

Appendix A

HOPE WITH ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

Expenses Claim Form

This form can be submitted electronically with scanned evidence

Name:	Email:

Date	Expense description e.g. training at Buxton 20 miles@45p	Receipt (√)	Amount
		Total	**£**

Bank Details:

Account Name:	
Bank Name:	
Account Number:	
Sort Code:	

I confirm that all expenses submitted are for Hope with Aston Parish Council purposes only.

Signature:	Date of Claim: