



Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council

Expenses Policy

1 General principles

It is the policy of the Council to reimburse expenses incurred by its employees and Councillors in performing the duties required by the Council. The aims of this Policy are to ensure that necessary expenses incurred by employees and Councillors are reimbursed in a fair and timely manner and to ensure that costs and expenses are controlled by the Parish Council.

This Policy also allows for the Clerk, or the Council Chairman and Clerk together, in accordance with their authority to spend as set out in the Financial Regulations, to authorise an employee or Councillor to purchase goods or services and claim repayment.

2 Authorisation

Before expenses are incurred, whether by employees or Councillors, the authorisation of the Clerk, or in the case of the Clerk's own expenses, the Chairman or Vice Chairman, must be obtained. However, this is not necessary for amounts up to £20, provided the expenditure complies with the requirements of this Policy.

Expenses incurred without the required authorisation will not be reimbursed.

3 Method of travel

Travel should be undertaken by the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly mode of transport taking into account journey time and the nature of the journey, as well as monetary cost (for example, car-sharing where possible).

Public transport is preferred where practical and cost-effective. All rail travel should be by the cheapest standard-class fare available. Taxis may only be used when essential.

Travel by car will be reimbursed at HMRC "Employee vehicles: Mileage Allowance Payments" rates and reasonable parking costs will be paid.

Where an employee uses their own vehicle, they should ensure that the vehicle is in good working order, insured for business use, taxed and with a valid MOT. Councillors using their own vehicle must ensure that the vehicle is in good working order, insured, taxed and with a valid MOT. If these standards are not met, expenses will not be reimbursed.

4 Subsistence

Claims may be made for the costs of meals and non-alcoholic beverages reasonably purchased when travelling on Council business where the employee or Councillor is away from home for longer than 5 hours and where food and drink is not otherwise provided.

5 Claiming Expenses

All expenses claims must be submitted on the Council's Expense Claim form with receipts attached as appropriate. Expense Claim forms are available from the Clerk.

All claims must provide full details of amounts claimed and the reasons the expenses were incurred.

In respect of car travel, expense claims must show where journeys commenced and ceased, and the number of miles travelled.

Sundry expenses such as stationery and supplies must be itemised and include the reasons the expenses were incurred.

The completed and signed form, with all original receipts attached, should be given or sent electronically to the Clerk for review and processing. The Clerk (or other designated officer) will scrutinise all claims submitted for approval.

Claims must be submitted within three months of expenses being incurred.

6 Claiming Repayment

Where the Clerk, or the Council Chairman and Clerk together, in accordance with their authority to spend as set out in the Financial Regulations, has authorised an employee or Councillor to purchase goods or services and claim repayment, that individual should complete a Repayment Claim form with receipts attached as appropriate. Repayment Claim forms are available from the Clerk.

7 Payment

Approved Reimbursement Claims may be paid in accordance with the Financial Regulations and reported to F&GP and the Council in the same manner as other payments authorised by the Clerk or by the Council Chairman and Clerk.

Approved Expense Claims will be presented at the next Council meeting where approval for payment will be sought - where expenses are not considered to be reasonable and necessary, the Council may approve partial reimbursement or refuse reimbursement.

8 Abuse of this policy

Any abuse in the application of this policy by employees will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

Any abuse in the application of this policy by Councillors will be dealt with under the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Deliberate falsification of a claim or the evidence needed to make a claim will constitute gross misconduct. Falsification includes the failure to pass on any discount obtained while incurring an expense. Where this is considered serious, this may be referred to the police.

