

Report by the Parish Remuneration Panel for Dacorum Borough

This Report was adopted at the Council's Finance & Policy Committee on 14th June 2004 (Minute 12255) and forms the basis of Tring Town councillors' travel and subsistence allowances for 2003 – 2005.

Tring Town Council has decided not to pay Basic Parish Allowances (i.e. for attendance).

Travel and Subsistence Allowances for Parishes who do not also pay Basic Parish Allowances

1. The Panel has been asked to make a recommendation on the payment of travel and subsistence allowances for Town and Parish Councils located within the Borough of Dacorum who do not intend to pay Basic Parish Allowances to their members.
2. Under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, Town and Parish Councils are required to have regard to the Panel's recommendations before paying any travel and subsistence or other Parish allowances after 31st January 2003.

Basic Parish Allowance

3. The Panel notes that a number of Councils have indicated that they do not wish to pay Parish Basic Allowance to its members. It would generally support this approach, as being in line with the "voluntary principle" of service to the community.

Subsistence Allowances

4. The Panel notes that the same Town and Parish Councils have indicated that they wish to be able to pay subsistence allowances, and accepts that members may, occasionally, be required to undertake longish journeys away from the Parish. Where they do so, it seems right that they should be able, subject to the agreement of the Council, to claim the same subsistence allowances as would be available to District Councillors undertaking the same type of activity. The recommendation below reflects this view.

Travel Allowances

5. The same Town and Parish Councils also wish to pay travel allowances. With regard to travel allowances, there are two issues to consider:
 - the duties for which travel allowances may be claimed; and
 - the rates of allowance which can be claimed.

Duties for which allowances can be claimed

6. The Panel judges that, given the small size of a Parish, there is no justification for paying travel allowances for journeys within the Parish – this will also preclude paying travel allowances in respect of attendance at meeting of the

Council and any Committees, Sub Committees or working groups, which, it is assumed, always take place in the Parish.

7. For journeys beyond the Parish, some categories of journey ought to qualify automatically for the payment of allowances, but there should also be a facility for the Council to decide that other journeys which are made in the interests of the Council or its parishioners should qualify.
8. The journeys which should automatically qualify are:
 - attendance at a meeting of a body to which the Parish Council makes appointments or nominations;
 - attendance at a meeting of a Committee or Sub Committee of a body to which the Parish Council makes appointments or nominations;
 - attendance at a meeting of a local authority association (i.e. the County ALC or NALC) of which the Council is a member.

The rate of travel allowance

9. For journeys outside the Parish, the rates payable should be in line with the rates paid to Dacorum Borough Council members for the relevant form of transport. The recommendations, below, reflect this view.

Withdrawal of allowances

10. Under the Regulations, a Council is able to cease payment of travel and subsistence allowances to any member who has been suspended from their duties during the period of suspension. The Panel recommends that all Parish Councils make full use of this facility, should a suspension occur.

Recommendations

11. The Panel recommends

(1) that, for :

- attendance at a meeting of a body to which the Parish Council makes appointments or nominations;
- attendance at a meeting of a Committee or Sub Committee of a body to which the Parish Council makes appointments or nominations;
- attendance at a meeting of a local authority association (i.e. the County ALC or NALC) of which the Council is a member;
- the carrying out of any other duty which the Council approves as being for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of its functions,

travel allowance be payable to members of the Parish Council at the following rates:

Use of members own car:	40p per mile (all engine sizes)
Use of members own motorcycle:	24p per mile (all engine sizes)
Use of members own bicycle:	20p per mile

and that the above rates are revised as appropriate to keep them in line with the per mile operating cost of the vehicle concerned determined by the Inland Revenue.

(2) that, alternatively, where they have used public transport, members should be entitled to reclaim the ordinary (standard class) fare by public transport in respect of attendance at these meetings/events.

(3) that, if attendance at these meetings/events entails members purchasing a meal outside the Parish, they should be able, on production of a receipt, to claim the cost of the relevant meal, up to the following amounts:

Breakfast	£4.92
Lunch	£6.77
Tea	£2.67
Dinner	£8.38

and that the above amounts should be increased on the 1st April every year, in line with the increase in the Retail Prices Index (RPI) for the preceding September, commencing on 1st April 2005.

(4) that, in the event that any member is suspended from their duties, payment of travel and subsistence allowances should cease for the duration of their suspension.