East Dean & Friston
Parish Council

Date: **07 January 2020**

Title: **Report Item 11 – Parish Councillor Allowances 2020/21**

By: **K Larkin (Parish Clerk)**

Purpose: **To invite the council to adopt a Councillor Allowance Scheme**

Recommendations: **To consider adopting a scheme even if allowances are not claimed by individual councillors**

The annual report of the Independent Parish Remuneration Panel must be advertised as required by Regulation 30 of the 2003 Regulations. A copy is appended to this report.

The council is requested to note the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel (paragraph 24) that each parish council adopts and publishes an Allowance Scheme 2020/21 for councillors having regard to the Panels' recommendations even if allowances are not claimed by individual councillors.

The council is invited to adopt and publish such an Allowance Scheme

Report of the Wealden Parish Independent Remuneration Panel on Town and Parish Councillor Allowances for 2020/2021

Introduction

1. This is the report of the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel for 2020/21. The Panel is established by Wealden District Council under Regulation 27 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, for the Town and Parish Councils in its area (full list of Town and Parish Councils to which the report applies is attached at Appendix A).

Summary

2. The Panel recommends:
   a) That allowances should be paid in accordance with three bands, Levels 1 to 3 as defined in Appendix A;
   b) That there be a 2.5% increase to all Basic and Chairman's Allowances rounded to the nearest pound.

2020/21	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Basic Allowance	£167	£413	£1,318
Chairman's Allowance	£288	£649	£1,820

   c) That the policy to fix Travelling Allowances in line with HM Revenue & Customs 'Approved Mileage Allowance Payment' rates be re-affirmed;
   d) That the Subsistence Allowances remain unchanged from last year;
   e) That the recommendations set out above are all proposed for implementation at the commencement of the financial year 2020/21. However, Town and Parish Councils can choose the extent to which they wish to implement these allowances; and
   f) The Panel notes with regret that it is still not possible under the current legislation to recommend a Carers' Allowance for Parish/ Town Councillors, but would wish for all Parish and Town Councils to consider adopting a basic allowance to enable Parish/Town Councillors to use this to cover care costs where need be to attend meetings.

Membership of Panel and Meetings

3. The Panel consists of three members – Mr Edward Stone (Chairman), Mr Stephen Hallam and Mr Clive Mills.
4. The Panel met on Monday 4 November 2019. The Panel subsequently dealt with the preparation of this report through discussion and advice from officers by email.

Panel Remit

5. The Panel produces a report in relation to the members of the town and parish councils for which the Wealden District Council is the responsible authority and in respect of which it is established, making recommendations, in accordance with the provisions of regulation 29 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 as to:
   a) the amount of parish basic allowance payable to members of such town and parish councils;

b) the amount of travelling and subsistence allowance payable to members of such town and parish councils;

c) whether parish basic allowance should be payable only to the Mayor or Chairman of any such town and parish council or to all of its members;

d) whether, if parish basic allowance should be payable to both the Mayor or Chairman and the other members of any such town and parish council, the allowance payable to the Mayor or Chairman should be set at a level higher than that payable to the other members, and, if so, the higher amount so payable (Chairman's Allowance); and

e) the responsibilities or duties in respect of which members should receive parish travelling and subsistence allowance.

Parish Basic and Chairman's Allowances

6. As in previous years, the Panel has examined available data in order to assist in determination of a recommendation on parish/town council basic allowance and whether it should be payable to both the Mayor or Chairman and the other elected members of a town or parish council.
7. The Panel has considered last year's report to Town and Parish Councils recommending allowances for 2019/20. The Panel had carried out a review of the level of allowances last year and had recommended a 2% increase.
8. The Clerk to the Panel had invited all Town and Parish Clerks to provide any comments on the allowance scheme. Six Parish/Town Councillors had responded and a summary is set out below:

- The Parish Council does not operate a remuneration scheme
- The allowance is sufficient.
- The Basic Allowance is not sufficient to attract a wide range of people to become Councillors, particularly if they need child care or care for a relative to attend meetings. The allowance could be set higher - with a reminder that members can take just PART of the allowance if wanted. The current Chairman's Allowance seems to work ok; however, the Travelling and Subsistence Allowances do not seem to have gone up for ages. Perhaps it could be made clearer at election time and when co-options are made that there IS an allowance. Our council seems to accept the recommendation each time and some members scorn the allowance as they think of it as a payment rather than defraying expenses.
- At the events held prior to the elections to encourage more people to stand as councillors, nobody asked about the money. Indeed, when I became a councillor, I was not even aware that an allowance was available. I am against any increase in allowances as my view is that no allowance should be paid, I think it immoral, but councillors should be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses, excluding travel between home and council meetings, home printing, etc.
- I believe that it is quite common for allowances to be waived en masse – generally as a result of an open meeting request from the chair for confirmation that no one wants to receive one; those less fortunate could be embarrassed by having to publicly declare that they would like to take the allowance and for that reason discouraged from continuing in a councillor role because of the cost. Perhaps the acceptance of allowances should be for the clerk to communicate directly with individual councillors so that the decision is an individual rather than a group one?
- As the cost of fuel and travel costs have increased dramatically and the allowance has not increased, I understand perhaps a small increase again would not go amiss.

9. The Panel notes that the last full election for all Town and Parish Councils was May 2019. The Panel is aware that it is common practice to co-opt Parish Councillors to vacancies. It noted the request that allowances should be given to co-opted members, but confirmed that this was not allowed under the Regulations.

10. However, the Panel emphasised that it is keen to see all Parish and Town Councils adopt a scheme of some sort, even if it is normal practice not to claim. This is to ensure that no potential candidate should be put off standing due to the costs of working as a local councillor, and to ensure that Parish and Town Councillors could choose to claim an allowance should they need to do so. The Panel expressed some concern regarding comments received from Councillors over what appeared to be a "bullying culture" when it came to decision making on the issue of claiming allowances.

11. Given the rise in the cost of living, it was agreed that a recommended 2.5% increase in all the basic allowances for levels 1-3 is appropriate, rounded to the nearest £1. This is in line with the Panel's recommendations for Wealden District Council.

12. Regulation 29(2) requires that recommendations be expressed not only in cash terms but also as a percentage of the amount recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel as the Basic Allowance for Wealden District Councillors. The Panel is recommending that the allowance is increased for District Councillors to £4,728 per annum for the financial year 2020/21. Based on that figure, the percentages have been incorporated into the attached Appendix A.

Chairman's Allowance

13. As indicated in previous reports, individual Town and Parish Councils are free to decide whether an allowance should be payable only to the Mayor or Chairman and/or to all of its members. The Chairman's Allowance as recommended by this report is intended to be paid as a substitute for the Basic Allowance rather than in addition to it, but this is at the discretion of each Town and Parish Council.

14. Town and Parish Councils are reminded that the Chairman's Allowance (again detailed in the attached Appendix A) is an allowance personal to the Parish/Town Councillor elected Mayor or Chairman. It is entirely separate to the allowance under the Local Government Act 1972, Sections 15(5) and 35(5), which is payable as the Parish/Town Council thinks fit to reasonably meet the expenses of the office of Mayor or Chairman.

15. The Panel **recommends** an increase to all Chairman's Allowances in Levels 1 to 3 on the same basis as increases to Parish/Town Council Basic Allowances, as detailed in Appendix A attached.

Travelling Allowance

16. The Panel wanted to clarify that under Regulation 26, Town and Parish Councils may pay travelling and subsistence allowances, including an allowance in respect of travel by bicycle or by any other non-motorised form of transport, undertaken or incurred in connection with the performance of any duty within one or more of the categories set out in that Regulation.

17. Councillors can receive up to a tax-free approved amount when using their own vehicles in carrying out their duties. These payments are known as Approved Mileage Allowance Payments **(AMAP),** and as from 6 April 2011 the following rules apply:

    Car or Van – 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p per mile thereafter;

    Motor Cycle – 24p per mile (all miles);

    Cycle – 20p per mile (all miles); and

    A 5 pence per mile per passenger supplement for up to four passengers.

Travelling Allowance

18. The Panel recommends that travelling allowances continue to be paid in line with the HM Revenue & Customs 'Approved Mileage Allowances Payments' (AMAP). The Panel observed that there was no mention of claims for other travel costs within the Allowance Scheme, such as public transport and taxis. It was suggested that this category be included and reimbursed in full, subject to the Leader's approval.

19. The Panel **recommends** that the policy to fix Travelling Allowances in line with AMAP be re-affirmed.

Subsistence Allowance

20. The Panel **recommends** that the current level of subsistence rates remain for 2020/21, as follows:

Breakfast	£6.50	When away from home on approved Parish/ Town Council business before 8 am.
Lunch	£8.50	When away from home on approved Parish/ Town Council business between 12 noon and 2 pm.
Tea	£4.50	When away from home on approved Parish/ Town Council business between 5 pm and 7 pm.
Evening Meal	£10.50	When away from home on approved Parish/ Town Council after 7 pm.

In addition, subsistence for overnight absence other than London or specified conferences should remain at £85, and for London or specified conferences should be £95.00.

21. It was confirmed that payment should still be subject to Parish/ Town Councillors certifying that they had actually and necessarily incurred the amount being claimed.

Co-opted Members

22. As set out above under the relevant legislation, co-opted members of Town and Parish Councils are not eligible to be paid Parish/Town Council Basic Allowances nor Chairman's Allowances, but may claim Travelling and Subsistence Allowances. It is not in the Panel's remit to make any recommendations that this change.

Communication of Allowances

23. On receipt of this report, Town and Parish Councils must advertise receipt of the report in line with Regulation 30 (2003 Regulations).

24. In setting the levels of allowances, Town and Parish Councils must show they have regard to the IRP's recommendations, but it is entirely up to each Town and Parish Council what scheme of allowances is adopted. The Panel has expressed its preference that an allowance scheme is adopted by all Councils, even if not claimed by individual Councillors. When adopting a scheme, Parish and Town Councils must under the Regulations publish its scheme by public notice.

25. The Panel expressed concern that several councillors had responded to advise that they were unaware of the existence of an Allowance Scheme when they stood for election. The Panel, therefore, felt it important that the Parish and Town Clerks should ensure that all Parish/Town

Councillors are made aware of what level of allowance is available and what other expenses can be claimed.

Other Business

26. The Panel did not consider that it was appropriate to make a recommendation for more than one year.

27. The Panel would like to express its thanks to the Parish and Town Councils and Officers who had assisted it in its work and the preparation of this report.

Mr Edward Stone
Chairman

Appendix A

	LEVEL1	LEVEL2	LEVEL3	
Basic Allowance	£167	£413	£1,318	
Chairman's Allowance	£ 288	£649	£ 1,820	
PARISH	**No. of Councillors**	**Maximum Basic Allowance**	**Maximum Chairman's Allowance**	**% of Recommended District Basic Allowance**
Level 1				
Alciston	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Little Horsted	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Selmeston	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cuckmere Valley	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Berwick	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Wartling	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Long Man	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Hooe	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Arlington	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Laughton	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Isfield	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Chiddingly	9	£167	£288	3.53%
Hellingly	15	£167	£288	3.53%
Hadlow Down	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Fletching	9	£167	£288	3.53%
Warbleton	11	£167	£288	3.53%
Frant	11	£167	£288	3.53%
Alfriston	7	£167	£288	3.53%
East Hoathly/Halland	9	£167	£288	3.53%
Chalvington/Ripe	7	£167	£288	3.53%
Horam	11	£167	£288	3.53%
East Dean/Friston	9	£167	£288	3.53%
Framfield	11	£167	£288	3.53%

Hartfield	13	£167	£288	3.53%
Ninfield	9	£167	£288	3.53%
Danehill	9	£167	£288	3.53%
Buxted	15	£167	£288	3.53%
Withyham	13	£167	£288	3.53%
Herstmonceux	11	£167	£288	3.53%
Mayfield/ Five Ashes	15	£167	£288	3.53%
Maresfield	14	£167	£288	3.53%
Rotherfield	13	£167	£288	3.53%
Westham	13	£167	£288	3.53%
Pevensey	13	£167	£288	3.53%
Wadhurst	15	£167	£288	3.53%
Level 2				
Forest Row	15	£413	£649	8.76%
Willingdon/Jevington	19	£413	£649	8.76%
Polegate	15	£413	£649	8.76%
Heathfield/Waldron	21	£413	£649	8.76%
Level 3				
Hailsham	24	£1,318	£1,820	27.88%
Uckfield	15	£1,318	£1,820	27.88%
Crowborough	16	£1,318	£1,820	27.88%