



Payments to Councillors Policy

TOTNES TOWN COUNCIL

AGREED JANUARY 2025

NEXT REVIEW DECEMBER 2025

This Policy outlines the occasions on which payments may be made to Town Councillors.

Councillor Allowances

Whilst there is no provision in law enabling town and parish councils to pay individual councillors a wage commensurate with work done by that individual nevertheless the council notes and recognises the time commitment of councillors as well as the many incidental costs they incur in carrying out council business.

Such incidental expenses include: -

- a) the use of their homes.
- b) telephone calls from home landlines and mobile phones.
- c) stationary, printing and IT costs.
- d) use of car, motorcycle or bicycle.

Please note that this list is indicative and not meant to cover every circumstance in which incidental expenses may be incurred.

Totnes Town Council will pay a basic members allowance to elected members intended to compensate for time taken on council business and these incidental costs, except that

travelling expenses incurred on council business as specified below can be the subject of a specific claim.

In order to qualify for this allowance, Councillors must attend 75% of Full Council meetings plus meetings of one committee during the 12 months prior to the payment being made. Councillors who start part way through the year will receive a pro rata allowance assuming they have attended 75% of the meetings as detailed above during their time. Councillors who are not on at least one committee are not eligible to claim this allowance. Also Co-opted Councillors are not eligible to receive this allowance – this is not a local decision and is set down in Regulation 25 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

The levels of allowance paid are agreed by South Hams District Council in accordance with national legislation. The annual permitted allowance for members of Totnes Town Council is £487.50 and this is subject to taxation.

Town Councillors who are members of another local authority and who are entitled to an allowance from that authority should be guided by the Declaration of Interest Guidance in the Council's Code of Conduct.

NOTE: Town Councillors will be required to declare their allowance to HMRC through the Town Council PAYE system.

Rates set by South Hams District Council

Parish Basic Allowance

The formula recommended by the Parish Remuneration Panel at its last meeting calculates an allowance based on a percentage of the district basic allowance (now fixed at £6500 per annum) and the size of the electorate.

Electorate	% of District Basic Allowance	Amount per Councillor
5,001 – 10,000	7.5%	£487.50

Chairman / Mayor's Allowance

An additional sum will be allocated to a Chairman / Mayor of £100, claimable by receipts. Please see the Civic and Mayoral Budget Policy for details.

Travel Allowance

An elected and co-opted Councillor shall, in addition to their entitlement to a Basic Parish Allowance or Chairman's Allowance, will only in exceptional circumstance be paid a travelling expense in respect of travelling undertaken in connection with the duties and only for journeys outside the parish boundary.

Councillors may be reimbursed for expenses for travel when carrying out duties approved by the council or in connection with the discharge of the functions of the council or any of its committees or working parties. This includes attendance at training courses.

Approval for the attendance at events referred to above must be approved in advance.

Councillors will not receive expenses for attendance at any meeting of Totnes Town Council or work within the parish.

The main rates are:

- a. The council will pay a travel allowance in accordance with the following:
 - Cars: 45p per mile
 - Motorcycles: 24p per mile
 - Public transport: lowest available second-class fare only, ticket receipts required
 - Parking cost: actual cost with receipt

Taxis

In rare cases of urgency where no public transport is reasonably available the amount of the actual fare will be paid. In any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport will be paid.

Rail Travel

Tickets should be purchased through the office as far in advance as possible to minimise costs. All tickets will be standard class, and Councillors should use any discounts available to them.

- b. Subsistence Allowances

Subsistence is reimbursement from the Council to a Councillor in respect of actual food and drink costs they have incurred during their approved duty. Expenses will not be paid where a suitable meal is provided as part of the event (e.g. at a course or conference).

If a town councillor is away from their usual place of residence for more than four hours, they can claim £10.00 towards their breakfast, lunch and/or evening meal.

In exceptional circumstances, if a Councillor must stay away from home overnight on an approved duty, then dinner, bed and breakfast (at a reasonably priced rate with full supporting receipts) may be claimed.

Where hotel accommodation is essential it will be in a reasonably priced hotel (e.g. Travel Inn or 3 star hotel), and must be booked in advance by the office.

Reimbursement of expenditure

Items required by Councillors to carry out their approved duties must be ordered and paid for through the office in advance of the event.

Councillor Training

All Councillor training will be booked and paid for through the office.

Administration

Claim forms are available from the Finance, HR and Lettings Manager.

In general, appropriate VAT receipts must be obtained for all expenses incurred.

Reimbursement of the VAT element, or the entire sum will be withheld in cases where there is no receipt.

Any dispute over claims or reimbursement of expenses will be considered by Full Council.