



REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

FOR LEWES PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

FEBRUARY 2020

(updated November 2020)

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**Report from the Parish and Town Councils
Independent Remuneration Panel
February 2020**

1. Introduction

The Parish Remuneration Panel was convened by Lewes District Council as the 'Responsible Authority' so required by the 2003 Regulations:

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1021 and the amendment – Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1692

The Guidance issued on these regulations for Parish Allowances/ or Members of Parish Council is:

“91. Parish councils may choose to pay their members an allowance, known as ‘parish basic allowance’, to recognise the time and effort they put into their parish duties. There is no obligation on parish councils to pay such allowances. Each parish council may make an allowance available to its chair only, or to each of its members. Where all members receive an allowance, the amount payable to the chair may be different to that paid to other members, but otherwise the amount paid to each member must be the same. Parish basic allowance is a discretionary allowance. It may be paid in a lump sum, or at intervals throughout the year.

92. If a parish council wishes to pay a basic allowance, it should have regard to a recommendation from its parish remuneration panel. This is a panel set up to make recommendations to parishes in its area. The membership of a parish remuneration panel will be the same as the independent remuneration panel of the district or county council within whose area the parish is situated. The panel will make a recommendation as to whom basic allowance should be paid, and the level of the allowance.”

(New Council Constitutions: Guidance on Regulation for Local Authority Allowances, DCLG, 2003)

2. Terms of Reference

The Panel was asked to consider and make recommendations to Parish and Town Councils regarding:

- Basic Allowance
- Chairs Allowance
- Travel and Subsistence Allowance
- Indexing

The Parish and Town Independent Remuneration Panel

The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel comprised of the same membership as the Independent Remuneration Panel which met on the **28th, 29th and 30th January 2020** to review the allowances for Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council. The members of the panel are set out below:

The Panel comprised the following members:

- Mark Palmer, Development Director, South East Employers (Chair)
- Daphne Bagshawe, .MA JP, Consultant on Local Government
- Ian Buckingham, Management Consultant and Local Resident.

The Panel meeting was held in private session.

The report recommendations apply to the twenty-two Parish and Town Councils within the boundaries of Lewes District Council. The last review was undertaken in December 2003.

3. Approach

All Parish and Town Councils were invited to provide views through a questionnaire that was sent to all twenty-two Councils and responses were received from fourteen of the Councils. A summary of the responses is included as Appendix 1. The Councils also had an opportunity to take part in an interview/ workshop session on the **29th January 2020**, the following Parish and Town Council representatives were interviewed as part of the review:

- Councillor Robinson, Telscombe Town Council
- Councillor Baah, Lewes Town Council
- Councillor Lamb, Lewes Town Council
- Councillor Catlin, Lewes Town Council
- Councillor Jordan, Chair, Chailey Parish Council

The Panel paid close attention to the Government Guidance in arriving at the recommendations.

4. Arriving at the Recommendations

The Panel was of the view that whilst parish councillors did not stand for office for any financial reward, an allowance could actively support someone in the councillor role and that it was essential to be able to attract parish councillors from a wide range of backgrounds. Councillors should also not be out of pocket for undertaking the role.

The recommendations are based on the information provided from the responses to the questionnaire, the interviews and consideration was given to:

- Frequency of meetings
- The number of Committees

- Levels of responsibility and
- Hours worked

5. Recommendations

Basic Allowance

The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 1021 state the basic allowance recommended by a Parish Independent Remuneration Panel can be for any amount up to 100 per cent of the Basic Allowance paid by Lewes District Council.

The Panel therefore recommends that those Towns and Parish Councils who feel that a basic allowance would be appropriate should be able to pay an amount up to 15% of the Basic Allowance of Lewes District Council.

The basic allowance for the Council for 2020/21 (and 2021/22) is £3,260 subject to any indexation; 15% of this is £489 per annum, subject to any indexation. This should in accordance with the statutory regulations only be paid to Councillors who are elected not those co-opted.

Chair's Allowance.

Should any Parish or Town wish to set an allowance for Chair, in addition to the civic and ceremonial allowance then the Panel is again given authority to award any amount up to 100 per cent of the basic allowance paid by Lewes District Council.

The Panel did both hear and receive responses in respect of the increasing levels of responsibility and hours worked by Chairs of the Councils.

The Panel therefore recommends that those Town and Parish Councils who feel that a chair's allowance is appropriate should be able to pay an amount up to 30% of the Basic Allowance for Lewes District Council

The recommended Chair's Allowance is therefore any amount up to £978, 30% of the proposed Basic Allowance for Lewes District Council.

6. Travel and Subsistence.

The Panel recommends that the Parish and Town Councils should pay Travel and Subsistence Allowances in line with those agreed as part of the Members Allowances Schedule for the District Council.

Indexation of Allowances

The indexation of the allowances paid to Members of the Parish and Town Councils should be in accordance with the indexation applied to Members Allowances at the District Council. The recommended approach to indexation is in line with the District Councils annual staff salary increase when applicable.

Forgoing Allowances.

A Councillor may choose not to receive all or part of any allowance to which they would otherwise be entitled. To do so they must give written notice to the proper officer of the Parish/Town Council.

Publicity

With regard to the allowances, the Panel recommends that the Town and Parish Councils act in accordance with the following guidance (Section 5, Paragraph 30 of the Regulations (SI2003 No. 1021):

“Parish councils are required to publicise their allowances in a notice or notices conspicuous in their area. These notices must remain in place for at least 14 days. In addition, they must make a record of the allowances they have paid available for inspection at reasonable notice. They must provide copies of this record on request and may charge a reasonable fee for this. Parishes must also publish details of the parish remuneration panel reports. Again, these are minimum requirements, and parish councils may wish to go further in making local people aware of their allowances scheme and payment levels. For- example they may wish to circulate details of their allowances in the parish newsletter, if they have one, place them on a website, or publish them in one or more local newspapers.”

The Panel recommends that the Town/Parish Clerk should also publicise the allowances scheme to all Parish and Town Councillors.

Implementation

The Panel recommends the new allowances should be implemented from April 2020. If a decision on allowances has not been made by Lewes District Council before the start of the new municipal year then allowances payable to Parish Councillors can be backdated to April 2020.

Mark Palmer- Chair, Independent Remuneration Panel

Daphne Bagshawe- Independent Remuneration Panel

Ian Buckingham- Independent Remuneration Panel

February 2020