

Old Bolingbroke with Hareby Parish Council Expenses Policy

Adopted: 21.09.23

Last review: 09.24

Next review: 09.26

1. Purpose

This policy sets a framework for claiming expenses incurred on behalf of Old Bolingbroke Parish Council. The policy ensures members of staff and Councillors act reasonably when incurring expenses and achieve value for money. In the interests of value for money and to support the appropriate use of public funds, claimants are expected to be prudent in their spending. The Parish Council is required to be diligent in their review and approval of expenses to avoid the Parish Council incurring any unnecessary expense.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff who work under a contract of employment with Old Bolingbroke Parish Council and to Councillors who claim expenses as a result of undertaking voluntary work on behalf of Old Bolingbroke Parish Council.

3. Expenses

When incurring business travel expenses it is not necessary to obtain approval in advance of incurring the expense. Provided that all expenses are reasonably incurred while on Old Bolingbroke Parish Council's business they will be reimbursed. However both staff and Councillors need to be mindful of not incurring mileage unnecessarily and where possible use online processes, car sharing etc.

a. Travel by car

- If an employee uses their own vehicle, the mileage claimed need not be receipted. However, evidence should be provided of the distance travelled using the agreed monthly mileage claim form.
- Car mileage for business use is paid at 45 pence per mile, thus avoiding tax implications.
- All employees who use their vehicle on Old Bolingbroke Parish Council's business must be appropriately insured for business purposes. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure this.
- Parking fines or penalties will not be reimbursed unless there are exceptional circumstances and this is at the discretion of the Staffing Committee.
- Under no circumstances will speeding or any other form of traffic violation, penalty or fine be reimbursed.

b. Other expenditure

For employees' expenditure incurred on behalf of Old Bolingbroke Parish Council, the Council's general approval should be obtained in advance of incurring the expenditure if the purchase is outside the usual remit of expenditure. Full Council approval is required to authorise Councillor expenditure.

Expenditure on non capital items, purchased on a non regular basis, may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget.

This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £50;

- the Clerk in conjunction with Chairman of Council, for any items below £50. Such authority is to be evidenced by an authorisation slip/email duly sanctioned by the Chairman.

All staff must seek value for money and obtain alternative quotes where necessary. Purchases must be supported by detailed receipts. Any items purchased with Parish Council administered funds are Parish Council property.

4. Claims

It is the responsibility of the Finance Lead to ensure that all items claimed by staff are legitimate and supported by a receipt. Original receipts must be retained. In the event that a receipt cannot be provided for an otherwise legitimate expense, this should be highlighted and it is then at the discretion of the Council whether or not that item is approved for payment.

All Old Bolingbroke Parish Council expenditure is subject to scrutiny and audit by government agencies, internal and external auditors, funders and their auditors and other sponsors.

Old Bolingbroke Parish Council expenditure is also subject to scrutiny under Freedom of Information requests that can include the reporting of anonymised details of staff / Councillor expense claims. All claimants and authorisers must ensure that any claim made is justifiable, legitimate and will not risk the Parish Council's reputation.

5. Home Working

For employees required to regularly work from home under formal 'homeworking' arrangements expenses may include any of the following:

Purchase or use of office equipment

Purchase of office consumables

Connection, rental or use of telephone line, internet and broadband.

The council should also pay the employee for the costs associated with heating, lighting, etc. HMRC rules allow for some of these expenses to be paid tax-free (see HMRC guidance: www.gov.uk/expenses-and-benefits-homeworking/whats-exempt).

It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that any of the above items if claimed are legitimate and supported by a receipt and authorisation is sought in advance.