

Report of the Wealden Parish Independent Remuneration Panel on Town and Parish Councillor Allowances for 2026/27

Introduction

1. This is the report of the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations regarding the amount of allowances that may be made to Town and Parish Councillors. 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).

Recommendations

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 an increase in allowances in line with that recommended for District Councillors, with Basic and Chairman's Allowances rounded up to the nearest pound. These allowances for 2026/27 to be as set out below.

2026/27	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
Basic Allowance	£201	£500	£1,595
Chairman's Allowance	£349	£785	£2,203

- c) That Travelling Allowances continue to be in line with HM Revenue & Customs 'Approved Mileage Allowance Payment' (AMAP). These allowances for 2026/27 are set out in the table below.

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)
Passenger supplement	5p per mile for up to four passengers
Public transport	Actual cost subject to the Council's approval

- d) Subsistence Allowance to be the same as those indicated for District Councillors. These allowances for 2026/27 are set out in the table below.

Breakfast	£8.00	When away from home on approved Council business before 8 a.m.
Lunch	£11.00	When away from home on approved Council business between 12 noon and 2 p.m.
Evening Meal	£20.00	When away from home on approved Council business after 7 p.m.
Overnight absence	£98.30	When outside London

London and specified Conferences	£110	
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- e) That all Travelling and Subsistence Allowance claims must be accompanied by a valid receipt and payment is subject to Councillors signing to say they have actually and necessarily incurred the amount being claimed.
- f) That the recommendations set out above are all proposed for implementation at the commencement of the financial year 2026/27. However, Town and Parish Councils can choose the extent to which they wish to implement these allowances; and
- g) That all Parish and Town Councils consider adopting a basic allowance to enable Parish/Town Councillors to use this to cover costs if needed 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 initially met on 10 October 2025, again on 31 October 2025 and communicated by telephone and email at other times.

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; 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 previous year's reports to Town and Parish Councils recommending allowances.
8. The Clerk to the Panel had invited all Town and Parish Councils, via the clerks, to provide any comments on the allowance scheme. Ten responses had been received and welcomed.
9. 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.
10. Following discussion, the Panel recommends that the increase in the Parish / Town Council Basic allowance is in line with that recommended for Wealden District Councillors, at 3.8% (in line with the Consumer Prices Index inflation rate as defined by the Office of National Statistics in September 2025), rounded up to the nearest pound (£).
11. 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 £5,496 per annum for the financial year 2026/27. Based on that figure, the percentages have been incorporated into the attached Appendix A.

Chairman's Allowance

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. The Panel recommends an increase to the Chairman's Allowance of 3.8%, on the same basis as increases to Parish/Town Council Basic Allowances, as detailed in Appendix A attached.

Travelling Allowance

15. 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 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. This also includes provision for encouraging car sharing.
16. 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 Town and Parish Councils are recommended to adopt the HM Revenues and Customs rates.
17. 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.

Subsistence Allowance

18. The Panel recommends that the current level of subsistence rates be the same as those indicated for District Councillors.
19. 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.
20. The Panel noted that subsistence allowance was a 'top up' on the amount it would cost a councillor to eat at home.

Co-opted Members

21. The Panel received independent legal advice on the payment of allowances to co-opted members of the Council.
22. Regulation 24 of the 2003 Regulations provides that "a reference to a member is, unless otherwise specified or the context otherwise requires, a reference to a member of a parish council, whether or not elected to such office."
23. Regulation 25 of the 2003 Regulations, concerning the payment of Basic Allowance, subsection 10 expressly provides that "for the purposes of this Regulation any reference to a member is a reference to an elected member of a parish council."
24. Therefore, the Basic Allowance is not payable to co-opted members of the Council.
25. Regulation 26 of the 2003 Regulations, concerning the payment of Travelling and Subsistence Allowances, does not contain such a distinction so the definition of a member contained in Regulation 24 prevails.
26. Therefore, Travelling and Subsistence Allowances may be paid to co-opted members of the Council.

Carers' Allowance

27. In response to questions raised, the Panel cannot recommend the payment of Carers' Allowance as this is not provided for within the scope of the 2003 Regulations.

Communication of Allowances

28. On receipt of this Report, Town and Parish Councils must advertise receipt of the report in line with Regulation 30 (2003 Regulations).
29. 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.

Edward Stone
Chairman

Dated: 25 November 2025

Appendix A

	LEVEL1	LEVEL2	LEVEL 3
<i>Parish Basic Allowance:</i>	£201	£500	£1,595
<i>Parish Basic Allowance as a percentage of the recommended District Basic Allowance:</i>	3.66%	9.09%	29.02%
<i>Chairman's Allowance:</i>	£349	£785	£2,203
<i>Applicable Towns/Parishes:</i>	<i>Cuckmere Valley Berwick Wartling Long Man Hooe Arlington Laughton Isfield Chiddingly Hellingly Hadlow Down Fletching Warbleton Frant Alfriston East Hoathly/Halland Chalvington/Ripe Horam East Dean/Friston Framfield Hartfield Ninfield Danehill Buxted Withyham Herstmonceux Mayfield/ Five Ashes Maresfield Rotherfield Westham Pevensey Wadhurst</i>	<i>Forest Row Willingdon/Jevington Polegate Heathfield/Waldron</i>	<i>Hailsham Uckfield Crowborough</i>