# REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

# FOR

# MAIDSTONE BOROUGH PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

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**MARCH 2026**

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**Report from the Parish and Town Councils Independent Remuneration Panel**
**March 2026**

## 1. Introduction

The Parish Remuneration Panel was convened by Maidstone Borough 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 Councils regarding:

- Basic Allowance
- Chair's Allowance
- Travel and Subsistence Allowance
- Indexation

**The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel**

The Parish Independent Remuneration Panel comprised of the same membership as the Independent Remuneration Panel which met on 1**8th and 19th March 2026** to review the allowances for Maidstone Borough Council and the members of the panel are set out below:

The Panel comprises the following members:

- Chris Hare, Chair of Mid Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce and Local Resident
- Jonny Wall, Local Entrepreneur, Business Owner and Resident
- Mark Palmer, Director: Development & Governance, South East Employers, Chair of the Panel

The Panel met virtually via MS Teams. The Panel meeting was held in private session.

## 3. Approach

All Parish and Town Councils were invited to provide views through a questionnaire and the opportunity to speak to the Panel in respect of the Parish Basic Allowance, the Chair's Allowance, Travel and Subsistence and Indexation. Eighteen responses to the questionnaire were received and no Parish Clerks or Members met the Panel. The Panel thanks the eighteen Councils that responded to the questionnaire. The questionnaire responses are attached as Appendix 1.

The Panel also paid close attention to the Government Guidance.

## 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.

## 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 Maidstone Borough Council.

**The Panel therefore recommends that those parishes who feel that a basic allowance would be appropriate should be able to pay an amount up to 10% of the Basic Allowance for Maidstone Borough Council.**

The recommended Basic Allowance for Maidstone Borough Council for 2026/27 is £6,631; 10% of this is **£663**. This should only be paid to Members who are elected not those co-opted.

**Chair's Allowance**.

The Chair's allowance that can be recommended by the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel and can be for any amount up to 100 percent of the Basic Allowance paid by Maidstone Borough Council. The Panel is of the view that any decision regarding the payment of a Chair's Allowance and the level of that allowance should be left entirely to the discretion of individual parish councils, considering individual local circumstances, whilst adhering to the recommended maximum allowance.

**The Panel therefore recommends the Chair's Allowance should be up to 15% of Maidstone Borough Council's recommended Basic Allowance. The recommended Basic Allowance is £6,631; 15% of this is £995. The Chair's allowance can be in addition to the Basic Allowance, or not, if no Basic Allowance is paid.**

**Travel and Subsistence.**

The Panel recommended that travel and subsistence for Parish and Town Councils should be at the same rates paid to Maidstone Borough Council Members. **The Panel recommends that the Parish Councils should pay a mileage allowance of 45p per mile (for a car) which is in line with the HMRC recommendations. Subsistence rates should be paid in line with Maidstone Borough Councillors.**

**Indexation of Allowances**

The indexation of the allowances paid to Members of the parish and town councils should be in line with the indexation applied to Members Allowances at Maidstone Borough Council, namely linked to staff salary increases of Maidstone Borough Council employees.

**Withdrawal of Allowances**

The Panel recommends that where a member is suspended or partially suspended, all or part of their allowance should be withheld. This would also apply to Travel and Subsistence allowances.

**Forgoing Allowances**

A parish/town 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**

Regarding the allowances, the Panel recommends that the 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."*

**Publication**

**The Panel recommends that the Parish Clerk should publicise the allowances scheme to all Parish Councillors and the public.**

**Implementation**

**The Panel recommends the changes to the Basic Allowance and Chair's Allowance should be implemented from May 2026.**

**Mark Palmer**
**Chair of the Independent Remuneration Panel**
**March 2026**

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