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DIOCESE OF ST ASAPH

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EXPENSES GUIDANCE

ISSUE DATE: 3RD JULY 2026

Contents

Expenses Guidance

Introduction

1.1 This guidance is designed to sit alongside the Church in Wales guide 'Parochial Expenses of Clergy' available on the Church in Wales website. It does not replace this document, but it is intended to clarify the process and policy of expenses claims within St Asaph Diocese. This includes defining what costs can be claimed as expenses and who these should be claimed from.

1.2 Under the constitution of the Church in Wales the Mission Area must review the reimbursement of expenses of clergy on an annual basis, to ensure that the procedures are working effectively.

1.3 Important note: fixed allowances for clergy expenses are not permitted under UK Charity law.

Mission Area clergy expenses claim

2.1 Reasoning

The move to a Mission Area structure in St Asaph Diocese led to a change in approach for reimbursing clergy expenses. Previously, ministry expenses were claimed from each parish or church. However, the Mission Area model suggests that the clergy now operate as a ministry team and therefore the cost of this ministry is shared amongst all churches within that Mission Area.

The Diocesan finance team reimburse an individual cleric on receipt of an approved expenses claim form. At year-end, the total cost of clergy expenses for that year is recharged to each Mission Area. Quarterly statements are sent to the MA treasurers by the Diocesan finance team to assist with budgeting.

The expectation is that a cleric will submit a claim for expenses to which they are entitled. This is so that the true ministry cost is known and budgeted for. An individual cleric may feel they wish to support their church or Mission Area by not claiming expenses, but this may not be helpful to the church or the next incumbent as they may have different financial circumstances. Should a cleric wish to support their church or Mission Area, please continue to claim expenses and then donate the sum received back to the church. In this way the church benefits more because gift aid can then be claimed from HMRC in the same way as any donation received from a UK taxpayer.

2.2 MA clergy expenses claim process

Expenses claims should be submitted regularly, ideally monthly or quarterly. Claims should be kept as up to date as possible. As Diocesan and Mission Area accounts for the previous year will be finalised during February, claims up to the 31st December of the previous year must be submitted by the end of January. Claims after this date may not be reimbursed. For Mission Area expenses, claim forms should be sent to a designated MA officer, usually the treasurer. In a period of vacancy, the MA leader or other person authorised by the Mission Area Conference (MAC) may be designated to approve claim forms. The approved forms will be sent to the Diocesan finance team who will reimburse each individual via online bank transfer.

There is a Diocesan expenses claim form available as an Excel sheet (and a pdf version if this needs to be printed). However, a number of clerics, especially from other Dioceses use the Church in Wales form that is available on their website. This is also available as an Excel sheet or pdf document. Receipts should accompany claim forms and be filed for 7 years in line with HMRC guidelines.

2.3 Diocesan expenses claim process

For Diocesan expenses, a separate claim form should be submitted to the Diocesan finance team. This should be approved by the budget holder. Contact the Diocesan finance team if you need any guidance on who should approve expenses claims. These claims will relate to specific funds within the Diocesan budget or one-off events (e.g. newly licensed minister training, Eco-church day). Receipts should accompany claim forms and be filed for 7 years in line with HMRC guidelines.

2.4 Travel expenses

The Church in Wales guide to Parochial Expenses of Clergy provides details on reclaiming travel expenses in the course of ministry or other scenarios involving the Church in Wales. This guidance provides clarification on situations not currently included in the CinW guide and specific to St Asaph Diocese.

The HMRC mileage rate remains at 55p for the first 10,000 miles for business purposes, 25p for each business mile after the threshold of 10,000 miles. In addition, 5p per passenger per business mile may be claimed for carrying fellow employees on journeys which are also work journeys for them. This rate applies to diesel, petrol or electric cars. Bicycle mileage is reimbursed at 20p per mile.

Where a cleric must travel exceptional mileage, for example to visit sick parishioners in a hospital which is outside their mission area, this travel cost will be covered centrally. As with any expenses claim, these will need to be approved by a senior clergy or diocesan staff member.

2.5 Travel expenses when living outside a Mission Area

The Diocese recognises a need to provide clergy with housing which is both appropriate to their needs and to the needs of the community which they serve. In some instances this may mean that the cleric is housed outside the boundaries of the Mission Area in which they serve. The extent to which the Diocese covers the cost of travel from the cleric's home to/from their Mission Area depends on the individual circumstances and is agreed on a case by case basis.

Where the Diocese has organised temporary accommodation outside the Mission Area, due to availability of housing, training placement etc, for a cleric in this situation the Diocese will pay for six return journeys per week (pro-rata for part-time clerics) between the cleric's home and the Mission Area boundary. Journeys within the Mission Area are paid for by the MA as part of the cleric's usual ministry. The Diocesan finance team will apportion the costs between the Diocese and the Mission Area.

Where the Diocese has organised temporary accommodation outside the Mission Area, due to availability of housing, training placement etc, for a curate in this situation the Diocese will pay for two return journeys per week between the curate's home and the Mission Area boundary. Journeys within the Mission Area are paid for by the MA as part of the curate's usual ministry. Any additional journeys to / from the curate's home to the Mission Area will be paid for at the discretion of the MA.

If a cleric or curate chooses to live outside the boundary of their Mission Area (for example in a home that they own), they must cover the cost of travel to / from their home to the Mission Area boundary. Journeys within the Mission Area are paid for by the MA as part of the cleric or curate's usual ministry.

Non-stipendiary ministers who are asked by the Bishop's Office to cover services in a different mission area outside of the mission area in which they live, will have their travel expenses paid by the Diocese.

Clergy Utility Expenses

3.1 Water bills

Parsonage water bills should already be sent directly to the Diocese by the water companies. In the same way as the shared cost of ministry, after year-end, the total cost of water bills for parsonages occupied by a cleric is recharged to the Mission Area in which they minister. This reflects the shared cost of ministry throughout a Mission Area rather than some churches being penalised because a parsonage happens to be located nearby. (Church water bills should continue to be paid directly by the church treasurers as they relate to each specific church building.)

3.2 Heating and lighting (gas, electricity and oil usage)

Clerics can claim 25% of the cost of heating and lighting at a parsonage where they reside. This is based on HMRC guidelines for a cleric's home being a place of work and is in line with clergy self-assessment guidance. The Church in Wales guide to Parochial Expenses of Clergy guidance also refers to claiming 25% of heating, lighting and cleaning costs for parsonages, mindful not to create a chargeable benefit for tax.

To prevent confusion around direct debits that generate large credit balances, expenses claims should be for the actual energy usage shown on the bill. This means that in order to be reimbursed it is essential to supply a copy of the gas or electric bill along with the expenses claim form.

Where a parsonage is heated by oil, 25% of the purchase price for a delivery of oil may be claimed as expenses. The invoice or payment receipt should be supplied along with the expenses claim form.

3.4 Mobile, Landline and Broadband

Due to the complexity of bundles now offered by telephone and broadband providers it is no longer appropriate to provide itemised bills, or a detailed breakdown of home and work usage. Mission Areas should agree with their clergy an acceptable percentage of the bills that can be reimbursed to reflects the balance of home and work usage in their individual settings. A copy of the bill should accompany the claim.

IT Equipment and Software

4.1 Laptops and Tablets

The Church in Wales guide to Parochial Expenses of Clergy provides clear guidance that the Mission Area is responsible for providing and maintaining all office equipment. The term computer should be assumed to mean desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone. Where any such device is provided this remains the property of the Mission Area. Personal use of these items should be kept to a minimum unless an element of reimbursement for personal use has been agreed by the MA. The Diocese will only provide such items under exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Software subscriptions

The increase in use of digital ministry and online meetings has given rise to the need for subscriptions to software platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Where these are used for ministry purposes, the MA is responsible for covering the cost. If a MA leader subscribes to software that is wholly or partially used in their MAL role, this expense can be claimed wholly or partially from the Diocese and will be apportioned accordingly by the finance team.

Wedding and Funeral Fees

5.1 Wedding and funeral fees cover the time spent conducting the services, rehearsals and associated meetings. These fees do not cover travel expenses and so these costs should be included on a Mission Area clergy expenses claim, unless they are reimbursed directly by the funeral director, family, wedding couple etc.

Interregnums

6.1 Covering services during an interregnum is a part of ministry, therefore mileage should be claimed from the Mission Area as normal. If a cleric travels to cover services in another Mission Area, this cost should be agreed and claimed from the MA requesting the ministry cover.

Retired Clergy

7.1 Fees and expenses for retired clergy with permission to officiate should be claimed from Esgobty as per the existing process.

Mission Area Leader (MAL) expenses

8.1 Lay Mission Area Leaders should claim expenses incurred as part of their MAL role from the Diocese.

8.2 Ordained Mission Area Leaders

Ordained MA leaders need to differentiate between their expenses incurred while performing their ministry duties and those relating to their role as MAL. This would be best achieved by submitting separate claim forms. Some examples of MA leader expenses are attending MA leader forums, MA leader training, attending meetings as MA leader and supporting their MA clergy as part of their role. MA leaders should work with their MA treasurers and the Diocesan finance team regarding any queries.

Training costs and costs of travel to attend training courses

9.1 The Diocese is committed to continuing development and training of all its staff, lay and ordained. The tables below out-lines the available sources of funding.

9.2 In all cases, if you are not self-funding, please check that funding has been approved before booking any courses.

9.3 Training Bursary Forms and Guidance can be found at: **https://dioceseofstasaph.org.uk/training/**

9.4 Funding Sources for Training for Lay Persons.

Person Seeking Training	Stage of Training	Sources of Funding
Lay Person / Volunteer	Any training	1. Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel. 2. Ask the Mission Area (MA) or church to fund this locally.
DBF Employee	Not directly related to job role	1. Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel. 2. Ask the Mission Area (MA) or church to fund this locally.
	Work related training	1. Cost of training courses and travel are at the discretion of employee's line manager.

9.5 Funding Sources for Licensed Lay Minister or Reader Training.

Person Seeking Training	Stage of Training	Sources of Funding
Candidate for Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) or Reader	Leading up to discernment	1. Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel. 2. Ask the Mission Area (MA) or church to fund this locally.
	Discernment Day	1. Travel expenses to a Diocesan Discernment Day are covered by the Developing Steering Group. Overnight accommodation and other expenses are covered at the discretion of the Developing Steering Group. For further details please contact the Administration & HR Officer at the Diocesan Office, St Asaph. 2. Travel expenses to a Provincial Discernment Day are covered by the Provincial office in Cardiff.
LLM or Reader in Training	Training at St Padarn's	1. Travel expenses are covered by St Padarn's and should be claimed directly from St Padarn's.
	Other Training	1. This may be covered by the Developing Steering Group depending on the type of training. This should be verified by a member of the Developing Steering Group. 2. Ask the Mission Area (MA) to fund this locally. 3. Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel.
LLM or Reader post Licensing	Any training	1. This may be covered by the Developing Steering Group depending on the type of training. This should be verified by a member of the Developing Steering Group. 2. Ask the Mission Area (MA) to fund this locally. 3. Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel.

9.6 Funding Sources for Clergy Training.

Person Seeking Training	Stage of Training	Sources of Funding
Candidate for Ordination	Leading up to discernment	**1.** Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel. **2.** Ask the Mission Area (MA) or church to fund this locally.
	Discernment Day	**1.** Travel expenses to a Diocesan Discernment Day are covered by the Developing Steering Group. Overnight accommodation and other expenses are covered at the discretion of the Developing Steering Group. **2.** Travel expenses to a Provincial Discernment Day are covered by the Provincial office in Cardiff.
Ordinands	Training at St Padarn's	**1.** Travel expenses are covered by St Padarn's and should be claimed directly from St Padarn's.
	Other Training	**1.** This may be covered by the Developing Steering Group depending on the type of training. This should be verified by a member of the Developing Steering Group. **2.** Ask the Mission Area (MA) to fund this locally. **3.** Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel.
Curate	Newly Licensed Minister (NLM) Training provided by St Padarn's	**These training courses are free, but travel expenses are not:** **1.** This may be covered by the Developing Steering Group depending on the type of training. This should be verified by a member of the Developing Steering Group. **2.** Ask the Mission Area (MA) to fund travel expenses this locally. **3.** Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of travel.
	Other training	**1.** This may be covered by the Developing Steering Group depending on the type of training. This should be verified by a member of the Developing Steering Group. **2.** Ask the Mission Area (MA) to fund this locally. **3.** Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel.
Licensed Clergy	Any training	**1.** Apply for a Training Bursary from the Grants Committee to cover cost of training and travel. **2.** This may be covered by the Developing Steering Group depending on the type of training. This should be verified by a member of the Developing Steering Group. **3.** Ask their Mission Area (MA) or church to fund this locally.

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