

## Tom's Expenses: Your Questions Answered

### ***Why do we pay MPs London expenses as well as a salary?***

I spend 150 nights each year in London and 150 in High Peak so I need two homes and two offices. I am allowed to claim mortgage interest on my (ex-council) flat in Lambeth, currently around £400 each month. If I were renting the flat it would cost £1,500 a month.

### ***How much does Tom earn?***

I earn £64,766 a year, about the same as a deputy head in a medium sized comprehensive school. I have no income from any employment outside Parliament; I am a full time MP working for the people and communities of High Peak.

### ***How much expenses do you claim?***

Last year my expenses ran to £164,420 over half of which was the employment of 3.5 (full time equivalent) staff. The total covers my London allowance, office costs, travel and some of the stuff I publish (but not this one, which is funded by the Labour Party).

### ***Why did you claim back the money for a poppy wreath?***

I did not. Once, a member of my staff accidentally sent in an invoice for a Remembrance Day wreath. I knew the invoice would not be paid and it was not paid. *All of the wreaths I have laid in the last 12 years have been bought from my own money.* This is not the case for High Peak mayors - the wreaths they lay as Mayor are paid for from Council Tax.

### ***Doesn't your wife work for you?***

Yes. Teresa has worked part time for me since 1997, currently 3 days a week. She is my only employee in London where she acts as PA/secretary, runs my web site and carries out general administration. She is paid pro rata on the Parliamentary Assistant scale set down by the Fees Office. She works hard, often antisocial hours and genuinely earns her pay – as all my staff do.

### ***You are the 7th most expensive MP over the last 4 years***

I don't know how the Sunday Times newspaper calculated that. Two years ago there was a lot of publicity about my very high postage bill. That bill alone has pushed me into the top 20 over 4 years. I believe it is right for MPs to communicate with constituents and support the Post Office at the same time.

### ***You voted against publication of expenses***

No, I did not. I voted in favour of routinely publishing all of our expenses to Freedom of Information standards. This would have made individual Freedom of Information queries unnecessary. That publication will happen this summer.

### ***You live an extravagant lifestyle***

No. Much of my furniture in London is second hand. I replaced a 40-year old bathroom suite but received no more than the limit for such work. I paid the rest myself. I have no moat, garden or duck house. I claim nothing for my Buxton home and have never 'flipped' my first and second homes. As a former member of the Standards Committee, which oversees MPs' conduct, I have always been responsible in the way I spend public money.