

Eastwood MSP insists £2,000 bill for taxis is 'fare' enough

Posted by RM64 - 10 Oct 2019 08:56

Published Barrhead News On Line -

10/10/2019

Eastwood MSP insists £2,000 bill for taxis is 'fare' enough

AN East Renfrewshire politician has defended his use of taxis for parliamentary business after racking up fares of almost £2,000 last year.

Jackson Carlaw, who is the MSP for Eastwood, was reimbursed with £1,899 from the public purse to cover a total of 188 taxi trips.

This was the highest figure claimed by any of the 129 MSPs at Holyrood.

The bill included multiple journeys to and from his home in East Renfrewshire and Queen Street train station, in Glasgow.

Mr Carlaw, who took over the role of interim Scottish Conservative leader after Ruth Davidson quit the post in August, said he did occasionally walk but this was not always a practical option.

He added: "Taxi journeys are generally to and from mainline stations and my home address in East Renfrewshire and to and from my Scottish parliamentary accommodation, near Craigmillar – a cheaper rental than a property more central in Edinburgh.

"I do occasionally walk, which takes just under an hour, but this is not always practical."

Mr Carlaw's total expenses bill for the year was £37,639 – up from £31,879 in 2017/18.

Meanwhile, expenses claimed by Barrhead's MSP Tom Arthur also rose last year.

The SNP man, who represents Renfrewshire South, claimed £32,804 – around £5,000 more than his £27,670 total for 2017/18.

The parliamentary figures show no claims for taxi fares were made by Mr Arthur.

Total costs of running a local office, employing staff and paying for stationary and postage are also given in the parliament's figures.

Mr Carlaw's office costs were £88,761, while Mr Arthur's were £87,525.

The Eastwood MSP's stationary and postage costs were £3,194, while Mr

Arthur's hit the capped permissible total of £5,500.

Across the country, MSPs claimed almost £17million in expenses last year – an increase of almost four per cent compared to 2017/18.

The cost for carrying out parliamentary duties, employing staff and running a local office rose by £633,125, to around £16m.

When party leaders' allowances and the stationery and postage provision is taken into account, the total amount claimed in the 2018/19 financial year was £16,803,605.

This is up by £643,898 on the previous year, a rise of 3.98%, which is higher than the rate of inflation.

=====