

Upgrading Heating/Lighting in Tolpuddle Village Hall

Introduction

This is an application from the Trustees of Tolpuddle Village Hall Charitable Incorporated Organisation for a grant of up to £4,000 towards the cost of upgrading the heating and lighting in the Hall.

Background

The Parish Council is familiar with Tolpuddle Village Hall – an elegant Victorian school house with a tall, steeply sloping roof and mullioned windows, located in a conservation area. It was upgraded and modernised in 2016-18 at a cost of £190,000 (a new extension and full disabled access) towards which the Council gave a grant of £5,000. Inside, the “old” hall is open to the tall roof which is supported by hammer beams, a defining feature of the building.

Electricity is the only source of power for the Hall. It is currently heated by a mix of night storage radiators (part of the 2016-18 refurbishment) and ceramic radiators (installed in 2021), topped up where necessary by halogen wall heaters which are at least 20 years old. Overhead lighting in the main hall is via very old fluorescent tubes.

The Hall is a focal point for the communities of Tolpuddle and Southover and is well used by local groups (pilates, yoga, toddlers) and for community and private functions as well as, bimonthly, by the Puddletown Area Parish Council.

Why we want to improve Heating/Lighting

Experience in recent winters has shown that the current **space heating arrangements** are incapable of delivering comfortable temperatures in cold weather unless users are allowed uncontrolled access to the halogen heaters and, given recent hikes in electricity prices, that is expensive. The **lighting** in the main hall is old-fashioned. None of the lighting is dimmable or configurable – features which are increasingly looked for in modern public venues where events as diverse as meetings, film nights, table tennis, parties and wakes and band nights take place.

As important, some of the heating and lighting equipment (ie the halogen heaters and fluorescent lights) are now very old and spares are difficult to source. So, these items need upgrading regardless of any other reasons for doing so.

For all these reasons, the Hall Trustees have concluded that investment to modernise heating and lighting is now overdue and that, without it, the Hall may struggle to compete with other venues, especially in the winter months.

Proposed Changes

The Trustees have sought advice from a variety of sources on how to improve heating and lighting at reasonable cost, including from firms that have helped provide solutions for other village halls with similar problems. Sadly, there is no “silver bullet” here.

On heating, a major issue is the building design. The large open roof void sucks up heat from lower levels. Insulation is poor and there is no simple way of changing that. Dry-lining the walls and roof would be very expensive and aesthetically damaging as would be secondary glazing for the windows, especially the mullioned ones. Installing a lower-level, insulated ceiling would compromise the whole design of the building interior.

We have optimised our electricity tariff as far as we can. Beyond that, solutions are limited. Installing an oil boiler and wet radiators would be hugely expensive, disruptive and environmentally unappealing. A heat pump would also be very expensive and, given the roof void problem, unlikely to provide sufficient heat. While the south facing roof would be suitable for solar panels, they would be expensive and probably struggle to get planning approval in a conservation area and with local opposition; and, crucially, they would not deal with the fundamental problem – the need adequately to heat the hall in cold weather.

On heating, the consensus advice is that, because of the large roof void, the only solution is to use modern halogen heaters to top up background heat from the radiators. Halogen heaters provide almost instantaneous warmth and heat people rather than space and air, so occupants get the benefit quickly. The costs of using these heaters would be managed by installing thermostats and a people detection system which would remove control from users and ensure supplementary heating is only on when the Hall is in use and the background heat is insufficient.

Lighting is simpler. Modern LED light systems are relatively cheap to purchase and run. Our plan is to replace the uplighters with LED lights like the ones at Moreton Village Hall. These are highly configurable for different events. The fluorescent tubes in the main hall would be replaced with LED lighting. In the rear hall, we would change the lights to dimmable LEDs.

The Trustees are confident that these changes will much improve the appeal of the Hall, especially in the winter months and, by using the latest technology and controls, help manage our electricity costs.

Costs

Quotes have been obtained from a number of suppliers. For the heating changes, we plan to use our usual electricity contractor, Hustings, because they know the set-up of the electrics in the Hall. However, we can save money by sourcing the new halogen heaters direct and will do so. On lighting, we plan to use the same firm as used by Moreton Village Hall for the configurable lighting in the main hall and Hustings for the more straightforward ceiling replacement lights.

The costs of the work come to a total of £8,243 as shown in the attached table. The Village Hall aims to maintain a reserve of around £10,000 to enable it to cope with unforeseen problems, maintenance etc and to help us manage if we were, for example, to lose a major

user. We are ready to dip into some of this to enable these works to go ahead. In addition, we have set aside the surplus of just over £2,000 we made this year from the Martyrs Festival for this improvement. So, overall, we feel we can safely commit a little over £4,000 to these works. **Our request is that the Parish Council provides a grant of up to £4,000 (just under 50% of estimated costs) to enable us to go ahead**, with grant payable in arrears based on invoices from our contractors showing the amount we have spent.

Peter Walton, Chairman, Tolpuddle Village Hall CIO Trustees
3 January 2026

Item	Supplier	Cost (inc VAT)
Electrical Work, including thermostats, controls etc	Hustings	4,353
8 x Halogen Heaters	TLC (Southern)	1,435
6 x Replacement, dimmable LED wall lights (installed)	Asset AV Events	755
Set up	Asset AV Events	400
3 or 6 x replacement LED ceiling lights (main hall) – including installation	Hustings	600*
8 x replacement LED ceiling lights (rear hall) – including installation	Hustings	700*
TOTAL		8,243

*there are numerous on-line suppliers of LED bulkhead and ceiling lights which are dimmable and, in some cases, multi colour with prices in the range £15-50 (for some bulkhead lights suitable for the rear hall) to £50-100 (for LED strip lights suitable for the main Hall, replacing the fluorescent tubes). The contractor will advise on the most appropriate, best value lights in each case and, if best value, we will source direct from suppliers.