

Funding Application Working Men's Hall

In the early 1900s in Caerphilly, a welfare fund was set up to provide for the needs of the workmen. In 1924, work started on building Caerphilly Workmen's Hall and in 1925, it was opened. For decades, it was at the heart of the community, providing social, welfare and entertainment activities.

Ninety years later, the building is Grade 2 listed and still boasts the original 1920s decor. Unfortunately, as is the case with many similar buildings in South Wales, Caerphilly Workmen's Hall began to fall into disuse.

The current committee has been in place for almost four years and is making efforts to bring the Hall back to the heart of the community. In the last three years, an ambitious events programme has been put into place and support for the Hall is growing. There are further plans to promote the Hall as a community venue, including refocussing on encouraging private hires from community groups. The committee has been successful in securing regular bookings from Caerphilly Players and local bands that use the Hall for rehearsals. More recently, some younger people have started hiring the Hall to organise and promote their own events in an effort to give younger people somewhere to go and to combat anti-social behaviour in Caerphilly.

There are also plans in place to develop an arts and crafts workshop programme to promote adult learning and community engagement.

As well as making use of the Hall as an entertainment and education venue, the committee hopes that meeting rooms and office space can be developed in other areas of the building for use by smaller social enterprises and community organisations.

It is vital that this piece of Caerphilly heritage is preserved for future generations to use and to promote a socially inclusive community. The current committee has made excellent progress so far. However, the building itself requires development in order to attract more usage and to once again be fit for purpose. In order to make this possible, the Hall will have to undergo refurbishment to allow appropriate disabled access.

Projects are already underway to improve access to the actual building, but there are a number of issues with the interior that prevent full accessibility.

There are currently three toilets in the building, none of which are accessible and this prevents the Hall from being a fully inclusive community venue. Our aim is to upgrade the toilet in the reception area to be accessible, allowing wheelchair users and people with mobility issues access to a toilet.

The following shows the work that is needed:

- Remove existing hand basin and toilet
- Widen existing outer doorway for wheelchair access
- Take down interior wall and door
- Install new toilet in new position
- Install grab rails
- Fit new hand basin and water heater

An initial quote has been obtained for a total cost of £4,660. It is hoped that the cost can be reduced through negotiation and volunteer involvement in the project. Further quotes will be obtained in an effort to reduce the cost and can be submitted for consideration.

With appropriate refurbishment and improvement of the current facilities, Caerphilly Workmen's Hall can return to the centre of the whole community where it began and where it belongs.