

North Hertfordshire Museum & Hitchin Town Hall Hire Policy



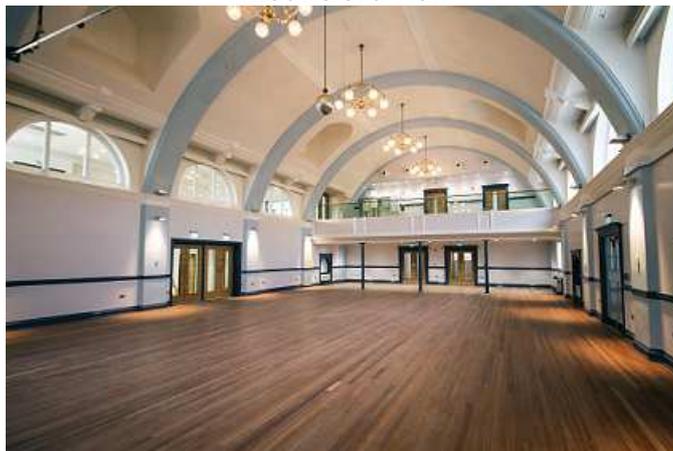
Purpose and Scope

Hitchin Town Hall is a newly refurbished Grade II Listed Building which offers a first class community facility which is available to hire to the residents of North Hertfordshire. This Hire Policy seeks to set out clear guidelines for the hire and use of the Town Hall.

1.0 Building Information

Hitchin Town Hall has recently undergone a multi-million pound refurbishment and now provides a first class community facility and venue and adjoins the newly built North Hertfordshire Museum. The original Town Hall was built in 1900-1901 in the neo-Georgian style, to the designs of architects Edward Mountford and T. Geoffry Lucas. It cost £7300, and replaced an earlier Town Hall of 1840, which may still be seen on the opposite side of Brand Street.

Mountford Hall



Hire rates*

Community	£52 per hour
Private	£82 per hour
Commercial	£113 per hour

The newly refurbished Mountford Hall is a multi-purpose events space that is available to rent with audio/visual equipment, catering facilities, temporary bar, tables, chairs and staff on hand to facilitate your event, subject to further charges. When requesting to hire the venue, please indicate that you wish to have use of these facilities. The hall has retained its original barrel-vaulted ceiling, with an attractive cornice decorated with roses and lavender, both of which were grown locally. The sprung floor is also original. The balcony contains attractive panels with information on the history of the Town Hall, with copies of flyers and posters showing events throughout its long history.

Size	225 metres sq.
Capacity: Banquet	150
Capacity: Theatre or Auditorium	300
Capacity: Standing	350

*Audio Visual equipment is provided in each of the rooms free of charge

Lucas Room



Hire rates*

Community	£26 per hour
Private	£36 per hour
Commercial	£52 per hour

The Lucas Room offers an intimate events space that is available to rent with Audio Visual Projection and a PA system. The Lucas Room is eloquently suited to holding many types of events, from yoga classes to business conferences. Conferencing materials and catering are available upon request subject to availability and further charges.

The main feature of the Lucas Room is the splendid tiled fireplace, with its carved wooden surround, and decorative plaster cartouche above, said to represent the Lucas family arms. The attractive wrought iron window catches and door plates are original fittings.

When completing the booking form, please indicate the nature of your hire and we will try and meet your requirements as best we can.

Size	53 metres sq.
Capacity: Standing	80
Capacity: Conference Style	30
Capacity: Theatre Style	50

*Audio Visual equipment is provided in each of the rooms free of charge

2.0 Types of Hire

Hire rates are determined by the nature of hire and are designed to balance use of the facility by subsidising community use with commercial hire, as well as providing a range of commercial, private and community uses. As a guideline, definitions of the three categories of hire are provided below.

Commercial Hire

Hirers whose activity within the Town Hall is for the purposes of their own financial gain and/or the development of commercial activities. Rates are agreed on the basis of nature of activity at the discretion of the Town Hall Manager and are subject to the conditions listed below.

Private Hire

Hirers whose purpose of hire is for solely private use, who shall receive no financial benefit from activity within the Town Hall at the time of hire.

Community Use

Hirers whose purpose is demonstrably community-oriented, shows clear benefit to the community and yields no financial benefit to the organiser, or any party affiliated with the hirer excluding registered or recognised charitable organisations.

2.1 Block Bookings / Long Term Hire

Block Bookings and Long Term Hire arrangements are at the Council's discretion.

2.2 Bank Holiday Bookings

Bookings on Bank Holidays are at the Council's discretion.

2.3 Hire Agreements

A request for hire form must be completed and sent to the Town Hall Manager for review. This form must be completed in its entirety, either electronically via our booking system or via telephone, with all information relating to the nature of the hire included. The application will subsequently be reviewed and a member of the Town Hall team will contact you to make arrangements for your hire.

2.4 Combined Hire

Combined hire rates for multiple areas are available on request at the discretion of the Town Hall Manager, subject to availability and terms of hire.

2.5 Catering and Alcohol

We ask all customers who are requesting on-site preparation and cooking of food to ask their suppliers to complete forms so that they comply with Food Standards Agency information. We then charge 10% commission for use of our kitchen facilities based on the invoiced amount.

If food is brought on site, we charge the fee appropriate to the hire as follows:

Community	60p per head
Private	70p per head
Commercial	80p per head

We can provide a paid bar, or alternatively corkage fees are charged as follows:

Bottle of beer/cider/bitter	£1.00 per bottle
Bottle of wine/champagne	£4.00 per bottle
Bottle of spirit	£5.00 per bottle

If you have a specific supplier in mind or cannot find what you are looking for, please contact the Town Hall Manager for further details.

3.0 Conditions of Hire

3.1. All letting arrangements shall be at the discretion of the Council, which reserves the right to cancel, curtail or modify an event in the event of misuse of the facility.

3.2. All hirers are required to pay the Council's fixed scale of charges in full upon demand (without prejudice to any right to apply for a refund of such charges or any part thereof). The Town Hall Manager reserves the right to ask for a hire bond deposit in order to secure bookings of any nature. A deposit of 20% of the hire fee will be charged to confirm a booking. The total hire fee will be requested 28 days prior to the booking.

A refundable hire bond will be charged on a fixed scale in accordance with the time of hire, nature of hire, number of attendees and whether or not any alcohol or catering is consumed on the premises.

3.3. Where a booking is cancelled by the hirer, and the period of notice given of the cancellation is 28 days or less, then the whole of the hire fee will be forfeited.

3.4. Any alcohol consumed on the premises must be purchased from the venue or corkage fees agreed in advance.

3.5. The Council cannot accept any responsibility for loss, damage or theft of any property belonging to the hirer or to a third party whilst it is in the Town Hall. Hirers

leaving property unattended and/or overnight (the latter to be pre-arranged) do so entirely at their own risk.

3.6. The hirers are responsible for providing appointed responsible persons. For a private party the minimum is two. Duties include control of admission; checking that exits are not obstructed in the event of an emergency; and general supervision of patrons' conduct in the building.

3.7. Hirers shall not use or permit the rooms to be used for the performance in public of any dramatic musical or other work in which copyright exists or for the delivery in public of any lecture in which copyright subsists without the consent of the owner of the said copyright, nor shall they in any other manner infringe any subsisting copyright. Hirers shall indemnify the Council against all sums of money which the Council may have to pay for reason of any infringement of copyright occurring during periods of hire.

3.8. It is a condition of letting that no advertisements may be displayed on the **exterior** of the building without the express consent of the Town Hall Manager. The Town Hall Staff are empowered to remove any unsuitable notices posted **within** the building. Hirers are also reminded that formal consent from the Local Planning Authority may be necessary for any advertisements/notices relating to events/functions taking place in the Town Hall, which the hirer or others may wish to display, except within a building, the Town Hall steps, or on a public notice board. Should any **external** advertising be intended, hirers are, therefore, requested to contact the Town Hall Manager in order that details can be discussed and agreed before such advertising takes place.

3.9. No driving or fixing of nails, screws or bolts into the floors or panelling or other parts of any of the rooms: no hanging of any items from any part of the internal finishes i.e. banners, pictures, balloons etc.; nor any alterations in the electric, gas or other fittings, seats, tables, platforms or otherwise is allowed without express permission of the Town Hall Manager.

3.10. In case any damage other than by accidental fire, shall be done to the rooms, to the gas, electric or other fittings, seats, tables, platforms, during the occupancy by any hirer by himself/herself or by their guests or any other person, the amount of damage (to be assessed by the Town Hall Manager in consultation with the Strategic Director Customer Services) and charges for estimates that need to be obtained from specialist restorers/contractors shall be forthwith paid by the hirer. In addition, the Town Hall Manager, in consultation with the Strategic Director Customer Services, shall be entitled, at their discretion, to cancel any subsequent letting or lettings to that hirer or such person or persons believed by the Council to be responsible for any damage.

3.11 With regards to cleanliness of the facility, it is the responsibility of the hirer, unless otherwise expressly stated, to return the facility in a clean and acceptable state, which shall be assessed by Town Hall staff. Should the Town Hall Manager deem the cleanliness of the facility to be inadequate, the hirer will be charged for the cost to clean and any subsequent loss of income as a result of the inability to hire.

3.12 To comply with the Electricity at Work Act 1989 all items of electrical equipment brought onto the Council's premises by outside agencies and hirers must have a current test certificate. Copies of test certificates for each item of electrical equipment must be forwarded to the Site Manager at the Town Hall prior to the hire period. The Council will not allow the use of uncertified electrical apparatus on the premises. The hirers must on no account undertake any works or alterations to the fixed electrical installation of the building.

3.13 No firearms, explosives, chemicals or other materials likely to cause concussion, fumes or damage in or to the rooms, or to the pictures, paintings or windows therein, will be allowed to be used therein.

3.14 Any access to areas of the premises not covered under the hire agreement or without the express permission of the Town Hall Manager is strictly forbidden. Failure to comply may result in the withholding of any hire bond agreed with the Town Hall Manager and, in addition, it is at the Council's discretion to cancel any subsequent letting or lettings to that hirer or such person or persons believed by the Council to be responsible for any damage.

3.15 The Council reserves the right to use any event for its own marketing and promotional purposes. In the event that the Council chooses to do this, organisers will be notified of any photographs, marketing and/or promotional material produced relating to the event.

3.16 The Town Hall is licensed for the consumption of alcohol and performance of live music. If, however, further licenses are required then the appropriate License Fee must be paid by the hirer.

3.17 The Town Hall reserves the right to operate or not to operate its own paid bar.

4.0 Contact Officers

Hitchin Town Hall Manager: hitchintownhall@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474 850

Cultural Services Manager ros.allwood@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 435 197

5.0 Background Papers

5.1 Report to Council 16 July 2015: North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility at Hitchin Town Hall

5.2 Report to Cabinet 28 July 2015: North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility at Hitchin Town Hall

