

Hitchin Town Hall Hire Policy and Conditions of Contract

Purpose and Scope

Hitchin Town Hall is a Grade II listed building which offers a first-class community facility which is available to hire. This hire policy seeks to set out clear guidelines for the hire and use of the Town Hall which includes the Mountford Hall, Lucas Room, Terrace Gallery and Learning Centre.

1.0 Building Information

Hitchin Town Hall provides a first-class community facility and venue which adjoins the newly built North Hertfordshire Museum. The original Town Hall was built in 1900-1901 in the neo-Georgina style, to the designs of architects Edward Mountford and Geoffry Lucas. It replaced an earlier Town Hall of 1840, which may still be seen on the opposite side of Brand Street.

Mountford Hall

Hire Rates

Mountford Hall	
Community Rates	Standard Rates
Mon – Thu 'Off-Peak' 9am to 5pm	Mon – Thu 'Off-Peak' 9am to 5pm
<i>£55 per hour</i>	<i>£70 per hour</i>
Mon – Thu 'Peak' (up to midnight) *	Mon - Thu 'Peak' (up to midnight)*
<i>£60 per hour</i>	<i>£75 per hour</i>
Friday to Sunday 'Off-Peak' 9am to 5pm	Friday to Sunday 'Off-Peak' 9am to 5pm
<i>£65 per hour</i>	<i>£80 per hour</i>
Friday to Sunday 'Peak' (up to midnight)*	Friday to Sunday 'Peak' (up to midnight)*
<i>£75 per hour</i>	<i>£95 per hour</i>

*Please note peak rates will also apply for early morning use

The Mountford Hall is a multi-purpose events space that is available to rent with audio/visual equipment, in house catering and bar facilities, tables, chairs and staff on hand to facilitate your event. When requesting to hire the venue, please indicate if you wish to have use of these facilities). The hall has retained its original barrell-vaulted ceiling, with an attractive cornice decorated with roses and lavender, both of which have historically been grown locally. The sprung floor also uses the original mechanism.

Hall Size	225 sq. metres
Maximum Capacity: Banquet (15 round tables seating 10 per table)	150 guests
Maximum Capacity: Theatre or Auditorium (rows of seats)	275
Maximum Capacity: Standing (no furniture)	275

Lucas Room

Hire Rates

Lucas Room	
Community Rates	Standard Rates
Mon - Thu Off-Peak 9am to 5pm	Mon - Thu Off-Peak 9am to 5pm
£25 per hour	£28 per hour
Mon - Thu Peak (up to midnight)*	Mon - Thu Peak (up to midnight)*
£30 per hour	£34 per hour
Friday to Sunday Off-Peak 9am to 5pm	Friday to Sunday Off-Peak 9am to 5pm
£30 per hour	£34 per hour
Friday to Sunday Peak (up to midnight)*	Friday to Sunday Peak (up to midnight)*
£35 per hour	£40 per hour

*Please note peak rates will also apply for early morning use

The Lucas Room offers an intimate events space that is available for hire with audio visual equipment available as standard. It is suitable for holding many types of events, from yoga classes to business conferences, afternoon teas and baby showers. 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 requesting to hire the venue, please indicate the nature of your hire and we will try to meet your requirements as best we can.

Size	53 metres sq.
Capacity: Conference Style (one large central table)	30
Capacity: Theatre Style (Rows of seats)	65
Capacity: Standing (no furniture)	75

Terrace Gallery

Hire Rates

Terrace Gallery	
Community Rates	Standard Rates
Mon - Thu Off-Peak 9am to 5pm	Mon - Thu Off-Peak 9am to 5pm
<i>Not Available</i>	<i>Not Available</i>
Mon - Thu Peak (up to midnight)*	Mon - Thu Peak (up to midnight)*
<i>£60 per hour</i>	<i>£75 per hour</i>
Friday to Sunday Off-Peak 9am to 5pm	Friday to Sunday Off-Peak 9am to 5pm
<i>Not Available</i>	<i>Not Available</i>
Friday to Sunday Peak (up to midnight)*	Friday to Sunday Peak (up to midnight)*
<i>£75 per hour</i>	<i>£90 per hour</i>

*Please note peak rates will also apply for early morning use

The Terrace Gallery forms part of the newly built North Hertfordshire Museum, which forms part of the overall facility. The Gallery is suitable for many types of events from canapé receptions to art exhibitions and afternoon teas. All of the exhibits are enclosed behind glass casings which allow food and drink to be consumed in the room without damage to items on display being sustained. The room itself is a large, versatile open space which includes an outside patio area equipped with modern Rattan furniture and parasols.

The Terrace Gallery is available to hire after 4:30pm Tuesday-Saturday from 3:30pm on Sunday and from 9am-11pm Monday.

Size	
Capacity: Conference Style (one large central table)	N/A
Capacity: Theatre Style (Rows of seats)	N/A
Capacity: Standing (no furniture)	120

Learning Centre

Hire Rates

Community Rates	Standard Rates
Mon - Thu Off-Peak 9am to 5pm	Mon - Thu Off-Peak 9am to 5pm
<i>£30 per hour</i>	<i>£36 per hour</i>
Mon - Thu Peak (up to midnight)*	Mon - Thu Peak (up to midnight)*
<i>£32 per hour</i>	<i>£38 per hour</i>

Friday to Sunday Off-Peak 9am to 5pm	Friday to Sunday Off-Peak 9am to 5pm
£36 per hour	£42 per hour
Friday to Sunday Peak (up to midnight)*	Friday to Sunday Peak (up to midnight)*
£40 per hour	£45 per hour

*Please note peak rates will also apply for early morning use

The Learning Centre is an educational space located at North Hertfordshire Museum and is available for hire when not in use. The Learning Centre has modern AV and is suitable for meetings, lectures and teaching.

Size	
Capacity: Conference Style (one large central table)	25
Capacity: Theatre Style (Rows of seats)	45
Capacity: Standing (no furniture)	60

2.0 Common Places

This contract relates to any common parts of the building which are used by the hirer for the purpose of the event. This includes, but are not limited to the kitchen, café, toilets and all corridors.

3.0 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 other uses.. As a guideline, definitions of the two categories of hire are provided below.

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 group or party affiliated with the hirer excluding registered or recognised charitable organisations

Standard Hire

All other types of hire which do not meet the above definition.

2.1 Block Bookings/Long Term Hire

Block bookings and long terms hire arrangements are at the Council's discretion.

2.2 Bank Holiday Bookings

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

2.3 Hire Agreements

An Online Hire Request Form must be completed and sent to Hitchin Town Hall for review. This form must be completed in its entirety, via our online booking system with **all** information

relating to the proposed hire included. The application will subsequently be reviewed, and a member of the Hitchin Town Hall team will contact you to provide a quote and make arrangements for you to hire the venue thereafter, if approved.

2.4 Combined Hire

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

2.5 Catering, Bar and additional services

If you require catering during your event, Hitchin Town Hall are able to offer a bespoke in-house catering service. We cater for all types of functions, from three course sit down meals through to finger buffets. Town Hall staff will be happy to arrange for you to discuss your requirements further with the Catering Team.

Alternatively, hirers may bring in their own pre prepared/cooked food (i.e. cold buffet). If pre prepared/cooked food is brought on site, we charge a fee appropriate to the hirer as follows:

Community	70p per head
Standard	80p per head

Please note there are no on-site kitchen facilities available for hirers use. We are also unable to offer any space inside the venue for external caterers to use. The use of external caterers during events is at the discretion of Town Hall Management team. Requests to use external caterers at Hitchin Town Hall must be made formally in writing at least 28 days prior to the date of the event.

Any payments due in relation to such services are to be agreed in writing and paid for 28 days before the event.

Please note that notice of any allergies or dietary requirements must be made formally in writing at least 28 days prior to the event.

Bar

Hitchin Town Hall operate an in-house bar service. If you would like to arrange pre-ordered wine to be placed on any tables in advance of your event, this can be arranged with Hitchin Town Hall staff. Or alternatively, wine corkage fees are charged at £5.00 + VAT per 70cl bottle. Please note there is a maximum cap of half a bottle of wine per guest.

Security

Being in a central town location Hitchin Town Hall requires hirers to pay for security during an event. The basic matrix is outlined below.

0-80 guests with alcohol	1 guard
80-150 guests with alcohol	2 guards
150-300 guests with alcohol	3 guards

Security is charged to the hirer at £20+VAT per hour. This matrix is a guideline for hirers and remains at managements discretion to vary from time to time.

Decoration

Hitchin Town Hall are able to hire out chair covers and sashes during your event. Please make us aware at your earliest opportunity if you are interested in hiring any of the below items.

Chair cover with sash colour of your choice	£1.75 +VAT per chair
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Furniture and Glassware

Hitchin Town Hall is a dry hire venue which means that unless booking our catering services the hire fee only covers the hall itself and basic tables and chairs. If using an external caterer the Town Hall team can provide a quotation for glassware and additional tables, cloths and equipment that they may wish to use. Glassware (or reusable plastics) from the bar is included as standard for all events using the Town Hall bar service.

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, or due to 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). Hitchin Town Hall reserves the right to ask for a deposit and a hire bond deposit in order to secure bookings of any nature and a deposit of 20% of the total hire fee to confirm the booking. Deposits must be received 14 days after receiving a full quotation in order to secure the event booking. The Council reserves the right to offer the vacant event slot to an alternative hirer should the deposit not be received within 14 days of the date of the quotation. The remaining hire fee shall be paid in full 28 days prior to the event in order for the event to proceed. The Council reserves the right to cancel the event should the hirer fail to pay the full hire fee 28 days prior to the event and the deposit will be forfeited.

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. This will be charged for in advance of the booking and refunded after the event on the condition that the hirer has complied with the conditions provided within these terms and conditions. The Council reserves the right to retain the hire bond in the following circumstances:

- The hirer has failed to leave the venue in a clear and damage free state;
- The hirer and/or the attendees present at the event consumed alcohol and/or food/soft drinks on the premises which was not purchased on the premises or agreed in advance with the Council in writing;
- The hirer and/or the attendees present at the event consumed any banned drugs or other illegal substances or so called "Legal Highs"

- The hirer and/or the attendees present at the event were abusive towards the staff at the premises;
- The hirer and/or the attendees present at the event causes noise nuisance and/or antisocial behaviour in the premises or within the vicinity of the premises;
- The hirer and/or the attendees present at the event causes damage to the premises, intentional or otherwise;
- The hirer and/or the attendees present at the event is suspected of conducting criminal activity on the premises including theft, buying alcohol for those under 18 years old or any other such illegal activity;

If in the reasonable mind of the Council, the hirer and / or the attendees at the event, acted in a way, at the event, which may bring the reputation of the Council into disrepute. The Council reserves the right to withhold the hire bond in full in the occurrence of any damage, overrun events, breakages, where additional cleaning is considered necessary, resulting from the hire, or if the hirer breaches other conditions of this agreement, without prejudice to any remedy for loss not fully covered by said hire bond.

3.3 All cancellations by the hirer must be made in writing. In the event of cancellation, the hirer shall be liable to pay cancellation fees as follows:

- Where a booking is cancelled by the hirer, and the period of notice given is less than 45 days prior to the event, 50% of the hire fee will be forfeited.
- Where a booking is cancelled by the hirer, and the period of notice given is less than 28 days prior to the event, 100% of the hire fee will be forfeited.

3.4 The Council shall not be in breach of this agreement nor liable for delay in performing, or failure to perform, any of its obligations under this agreement if such delay of failure results from events, circumstances or causes beyond its reasonable control. For the purposes of this clause, events, circumstances or causes beyond the Council's reasonable control include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. Damage to Hitchin Town Hall (including its fixtures and fittings)
2. Any issues arising in relation to access to Hitchin Town Hall including access issues with the Fire Exits;
3. Disruption to power to utility supplies;
4. Informal or formal strike action and/or general staff shortages beyond the reasonable control of Hitchin Town Hall; or
5. Disruption to food, drink and and/or general catering supplies.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council does not accept liability or responsibility for any alteration, delay or cancellation caused by industrial dispute, fire, sickness, bad weather, civic strike, terrorist activity, acts of any governmental or public authority, threat of war, natural disaster, act of God or other circumstance amounting to a force majeure event.

The council endeavours to raise any issues which may affect the booking at the earliest opportunity.

3.5 Any alcohol consumed on the premises must be purchased from the venue or wine corkage fees agreed and paid for in advance. No alcohol is permitted on the Premises without the prior written consent of the Hitchin Town Hall management team handling the booking.

Where such consent is given the hirer is solely responsible for ensuring the conditions of the premises licence regarding provision of alcohol are strictly adhered to. It is strictly forbidden for persons under the age of 18 to consume alcohol on the premises and the Hirer must take all reasonable steps to prevent such consumption.

It is strictly forbidden to bring onto the premises any banned drugs or other illegal substances or so called "Legal Highs" and the hirer must take all reasonable steps to prevent such consumption. Failure to adhere or comply with the law will result in the event being shut down and the Police being called.

3.6 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 any property unattended and/or overnight (the latter to be pre-arranged and agreed by Hitchin Town Hall in writing in advance) do so entirely at their own risk. The Council will use its best endeavours to make attempts to contact the main hirer of the event with any lost property that is found after the event. Lost property will be held for 28 days, if it is not collected by then, the Council reserves the right to dispose of the unclaimed lost property.

3.7 The hirers are responsible for providing appointed responsible persons ahead of the event to manage and facilitate their event for which they have booked with Hitchin Town Hall, the contact details of which shall be supplied to Hitchin Town Hall at the time of booking. Should these details change, the hirers will inform Hitchin Town Hall promptly of who the responsible persons are, along with all reasonable and necessary contact details. For a private party the minimum is two appointed responsible persons. Duties include control of admission; checking that exits are not obstructed; and general supervision of patrons conduct in the building. These individuals will liaise directly with Hitchin Town Hall's appointed Duty Manager during the event.

The hirer shall take all practicable steps to prevent any guests or attendees present at the event arriving and leaving the event from causing any nuisance or annoyance to local residents and in particular shall reduce any noise generated inside the building if instructed to do so by the staff on duty at the premises.

The hirer is responsible at all times for the behaviour of attendees to their event.

3.8 Hirers shall not use or permit the rooms to be used for a performance in public that may bring the council into disrepute, of any dramatic musical or other work 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.

3.9 It is a condition of letting that no advertisements may be displayed on the exterior of the building without the express consent of Hitchin Town Hall. Hitchin Town Hall staff reserve the right 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 Hitchin Town Hall, which the hirer or others may wish to display, except within the building, the Town Hall steps, or on any public notice board. Should any external advertising be intended, hirers are, therefore, requested to contact Hitchin Town Hall in order that details can be discussed and agreed

before such advertising takes place. The use of Hitchin Town Hall logo is not permitted to be used in marketing materials without prior written consent from Town Hall Management.

3.10 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. no 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 Hitchin Town Hall staff. No tack or tape shall be used to fix decorations etc to the walls/fixtures and fittings.

3.11 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 Hitchin Town Hall staff in consultation with the Director for Enterprise) and charges for estimates that need to be obtained from specialists restorers/contractors shall be forthwith paid by the hirer. We reserve the right to withhold a hirers bond, should any damage be caused to the facility or its reputation as a result of the activities (such as use of narcotics in or around the premises) or due to the misuse by hirers, guests or appointed third parties. In addition, Hitchin Town Hall staff, in consultation with the Director for Enterprise, 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.

3.12 With regards to cleanliness of the facility, it is the responsibility of the hirer and nominated responsible persons, unless otherwise expressly stated, to return the facility in a clean and acceptable state, which shall be assessed by Hitchin Town Hall staff. Should Town Hall staff 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. These costs will be taken out of the Bond charge and/or invoiced as appropriate as outlined with clause 3.10.

3.13 All items of electrical equipment brought onto the Council's premises by outside agencies and hirers such as production equipment must have a current PAT pass certificate. 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.

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

3.15 Any access to areas of the premises not covered under the hire agreement or without the express permission of Hitchin Town Hall staff is strictly forbidden. Failure to comply may result in the withholding of any hire bond agreed with Hitchin Town Hall staff 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. Early entry and late exit from the facility will be charged at the hourly rate along with associated staffing and security costs. Hitchin Town Hall reserves the right to withhold a bond payment to recoup these monies.

3.16 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.

3.17 Hitchin 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.

It is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that any performers, operators or third parties at their event (i.e. DJ, band etc) forward a copy of their current Public Liability Insurance documents to Hitchin Town Hall staff in advance of the event. This must cover the date and scope of the event.

3.18 Hitchin Town Hall reserves the right to operate or not operate its own paid bar.

3.19 Abuse, physical or verbal of our staff and team will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Hitchin Town Hall reserves the right to withhold the Hire Bond due to any abuse of staff.

3.20 All quotations are subject to the correct application of VAT. VAT will be charged as laid out within the quotation, however this is subject to change as additional services are requested by the hirer.

4.0 Contact Officers

Events Team Leader: lucy.murza@north-herts.gov.uk

Operations and Events Manager: katie.hasler@north-herts.gov.uk

Culture and Facilities Service Manager: robert.orchard@north-herts.gov.uk

I confirm that I have read, understood and agree to be bound by these Terms & Conditions of Hire.

Signed by the Hirer.....

Date.....