

Energy for community buildings and village halls

This information sheet covers some of the frequently asked questions Community First Yorkshire receives in relation to energy and green technologies, from community buildings and village halls.

Frequently asked questions

How can I find out more information on the different types of energy options available?

The Centre for Sustainable Energy has an [excellent guide](#) on the different types of renewable energy such as solar, wind or biomass. The [Renewable Energy Hub](#) also has information on the different energy types and a function to search for local providers and installers. To find out more information on traditional or non-renewable energies, such as coal, gas and oil and to check who your current gas or electricity supplier is, visit ofgem.gov.uk.

We would like to reduce our hall's carbon footprint and improve its energy efficiency. Can you suggest someone to undertake an energy audit? *

Before engaging someone to carry out an energy audit, we recommend using the Centre for Sustainable Energies [eco audit](#) yourself. This will empower and inform you, helping you to understand your building and your energy use. This is something that you should review regularly to make sure that any changes you make are having an impact. The [Yorkshire Energy doctor](#) can also provide advice on mini and full energy audits. Church halls in West Yorkshire may also be able to access the [Green Journey scheme](#) through the Leeds Diocese, which includes complementary energy audits.



How can we reduce our energy costs?

There are a number of measures you can take to reduce your energy costs. Firstly, consider switching energy suppliers to reduce the amount you pay (see below for further information). More importantly, you should also try and reduce the amount of energy you use, which will also lead to reduced costs. The key to lowering energy usage is to change behaviour, for example installing timers or turning off lighting. You can buy reminder signs for display around your hall to prompt users.

There are different levels of improvements you can make in terms of cost and impact:

Easy/cheaper improvements

- lagging boilers and pipes
- installing LED light bulbs
- timers for appliances / remote heating controls
- draught exclusion

Mid-range improvements

- roof insulation

- floor insulation
- double glazing
- smart auto lights

Expensive

- solid wall insulation
- renewable energy sources e.g. solar panels



This list is not exhaustive and there are a number of improvements you can consider making to your hall. An energy audit will help you to understand which changes to make. Visit the [Energy Saving Trust website](#) for more tips.

Can you recommend the cheapest energy rate?

Unfortunately Community First Yorkshire are not in a position to recommend one supplier over another. The best thing to do is to search a price comparison site to find the best tariff for you. Citizens' Advice has further information on switching suppliers and UK energy has [an energy comparison tool](#).

We are interested in installing infrared heaters in our hall. Are these a good option? *

The [Renewable Energy Hub](#) website has information on the different types of infrared heating and you can also search for local suppliers. While infrared heating systems can be more cost effective, they are not considered sustainable unless the energy supply is from a sustainable source.

We are interested in installing a heat pump but heard that they are very expensive to install. *

When installing any new system, it is important to consider installation and running costs against longer term savings. The Centre for Sustainable Energy has more information on installing and making the most of both [ground source](#) and [air source](#) heat pumps. YES energy solutions are a community interest company with experience of working with public sector and local business and they have a handy [overview guide](#) to both [ground](#) and [air](#) source heat pumps. The [Renewable Energy Hub](#) has information on heat pumps and you can also search for local suppliers.



We are interested in installing solar panels on our hall; where can I find more information? *

YES energy solutions are a community interest company with experience of working with public sector and local businesses and they have [a handy overview guide](#) to solar heating. The [Renewable Energy Hub](#) website has information on solar panels and you can also search for local suppliers.

We need to install a new boiler - should we install a biomass boiler?

This will depend on your building. YES energy solutions are a community interest company and have experience of working with public sector and local business. They have [a handy overview guide](#) to Biomass boilers. The [Renewable Energy Hub](#) has information on biomass boilers and you can also search for local suppliers.

Can we install electric vehicle (EV) charging points outside our hall? *

[Charge My Street](#) has lots of information about electric vehicle charge points. They are a community benefit society that are focussing on installing charge points for community use across the north of England. The [Orkney renewable energy fund](#) has produced a short handy guide to the practicalities of installing charge points at community halls. [Car Wow](#) and [Zap Map](#) both allow you to search for local charge points.



Do you have any information on setting up an oil cooperative?

Community First Yorkshire has a downloadable [toolkit](#) to support you with setting up an oil buying cooperative in your community. If you would like more information, please contact communitysupport@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk

Can you recommend someone to carry out work in our hall?

As an independent charity, we are unable to recommend one provider, supplier, company or service over another. We always suggest that you undertake your own research to find the most suitable provider for your hall. The [Renewable Energy Hub](#) allows you to search by area and technology to find local installers. You should always try and obtain three quotes for any significant work, this is also usually a requirement from funders.

Where can I find funding or grants for my energy project?

Before you apply for any funding make sure your governance documents are up to date and in order, and that your accounts are up to date with the [Charity Commission](#) as these are usually checked by grant funders. Make sure you are signed up to our [Funding Bulletin](#) for all the latest information on grants and funds that can help. We have lots of training and resources about funding on our [Community Support North Yorkshire](#) website.



General funding opportunities

- Your local [community foundation](#) administers funds on behalf of others. They often have funding relating to green energy projects and carbon reduction.
- For a grant of up to £10k toward a project of up to a total value of £25k you should consider [Awards for All](#). You can apply again after one year for a new project.
- It may also be worth applying to the [Postcode Local Trust](#).
- For a small grant contact your local county councillor as they may have a delegated fund for community projects. You might also want to contact your town or parish council.
- Local civic groups e.g. Round Table Rotary or Lions may have funding for community projects.
- Local supermarkets often have funding available for charities and groups that are located near to one of their stores. Further information can be found on their websites.
- Funding may be available for halls located within or near a National Park, AONBs or large developments such as wind turbines, mines or waste disposal sites. Search online to find out more.

- It is also worth checking with your current and local energy providers for any initiatives or grant schemes they are running for customers.
- [Rural Community Energy Fund](#) is a funding scheme to support rural communities across England wanting to set up renewable energy projects in their area.

The following websites all have a list of potential funders for green energy and carbon reduction projects:

[Centre for Sustainable Energy](#)

[Community Energy England](#)

[Energy Saving Trust](#)

Interest free loan

One other route that you may want to consider if you are unable to source funding is that there is potential for securing an interest free loan to cover the cost of the project. The idea being that you would then repay the loan at 0% interest from the savings you make. A number of companies offer this and further information can be found by visiting the [Centre for Sustainable Energies funding your project webpage](#).

Useful websites and resources

[Community First Yorkshire's](#) website has a wide range of resources for Community Buildings and Village Halls that cover all aspects of Hall management.

[Action for Communities in Rural England](#) (ACRE) is a national charity that provides advice and support for Village Halls.

[Centre for Sustainable Energy \(CSE\)](#) is a national charity that supports people to make changes to the way they think about and use energy.

[Community Energy England](#) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping community energy organisations create and implement new projects. It lists available funding.

[Energy Saving Trust](#) is an independent organisation working to address the climate emergency with information and support for homes, communities and business.

[Renewable Energy Hub](#) allows you to search for installers by geographic location and technology.

[Rural Community Energy Fund](#) has funding available to help community groups in rural areas across Yorkshire to develop renewable energy projects.

[YES energy solutions](#) is a community interest company with experience of working with public sector and local business and offer a free survey and quote service.

[Yorkshire Energy Doctor](#) is a local not-for-profit organisation who can offer advice and information on reducing energy costs and energy efficient measures.

If your hall is a listed building you should also contact your local planning department for further guidance.

Further support and information

Members of Community First Yorkshire can access over 40 ACRE information sheets which cover many aspects of hall management. Access is through the Members area of our website. If you would like more information about membership, please visit our [members webpage](#) or call 01904 704177.

For upcoming events and training related to energy, please visit our [website](#) for further information and to book a place.

We host a closed Facebook group for halls in Yorkshire. The group is for hall trustees to share their thoughts, actions and questions on all aspects of hall management. You will need a Facebook account to join, please contact us if you need guidance on this. If you already have a Facebook account please click [here](#) to join.

If you need any further support, please complete our [enquiry form](#) and one of our development officers will be in touch to support you with your project.

If you have any other questions regarding your village hall or community building please do get in touch communitysupport@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk or call 01904 704177.

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