

Support from the government for village halls and other community Buildings during the Covid 19 epidemic

Most village and community halls should be eligible for two forms of support:

- **100% business rate relief** (the Expanded Retail Discount or ERD), which is available to places of public assembly and;
- **The Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant (RHLG)**. The RHLG is £10,000 for premises with a rateable value up to £15,000 and £25,000 for premises with a rateable value over £15,000 and less than £51,000. You can find your rateable value at the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) website under the business section, by entering the hall's postcode or rating reference.

How to apply

If you do not receive a letter with an application form from your local authority inviting you to apply, you will need to look on your Local Authority's website for '**Help for Small businesses**'. You can then apply online for the **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund**.

Note: In the early days of issuing this grant, those charities already in receipt of full discretionary rate relief were inadvertently excluded from support. However, since 1 April, version 3 of the guidelines has clarified that charities already in receipt of full discretionary relief are eligible for RHLG.

Parish and Town Councils running village halls and community centres are ineligible. Please contact Christine Lalley, County Officer at OALC on 07746 943076 or email info@oalc.org.uk for help and advice.

If a Parish or Town Council is a sole trustee of a charitable hall, it should be eligible because it is the charity that is the ratepayer and the rates come out of charity income and not the council. Please explain this position to rating authorities if queried.

Church Halls may not be eligible because they are religious charities.

If you need any help please contact Tessa Hall, Community Buildings Adviser at CFO email: tessa.hall@communityfirstoxon.org or phone 07595787104. I work from 9am until 5pm Monday to Thursday.

I may be able to offer advice and support if this grant is not enough to cover your losses. Here is some very useful advice to small charities from the Charity Commission on managing your financial difficulties at this time: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-financial-difficulties-in-your-charity-caused-by-coronavirus>

If you need advice on keeping your employed and self-employed staff on. Please look at the Gov.Uk website for guidance for Employees, Employers and Businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19>