

# Dimplex heat pumps breathe new life into art centre

**The oldest working men's institute in Wales has been given a new lease of life with the latest Dimplex heat pump technology, helping to create a lively arts centre and focal point for the whole south Wales community and beyond.**

Ebbw Vale Institute (EVI) has been an important part of the Welsh industrial heritage, providing educational and recreational facilities. It has served as a town hall since 1849 and is now a listed building that has been regenerated with the help of a £290,000 cash boost from the Welsh Assembly.

It was an important aspect of the grant funding that the regeneration of the building was achieved using sustainable materials. Penarth-based architects Lapidar specialise in the sustainable development and refurbishment of public buildings in Wales and were called in to assist with the design and specification of the materials and equipment.

Geoff Cheason, Lapidar architect and member of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) reviewed all aspects of the building and wanted to ensure that a replacement heating system was as efficient as possible to ensure low running costs. Running costs are closely monitored and in the first year of operation, reductions of 55% were achieved, signalling a system payback of 10 years.





## Client

Ebbw Vale Institute

## Products

LA 40 TU air source heat pump

## Partners

WDS Environmental



"This is a large building, with large rooms and it's used at all times of the day and evening, so getting the heating right was very important. When we took over the building, there was no roof insulation so that was a priority and we'd specified Dimplex heat pumps for other projects so we knew what they could do on their own and with extra insulation and so far the savings are paying off," he said.

Julian Gardner, EVI's manager added: "The building is old and listed, so we have to plan our energy saving measures very carefully and there's more work to be done such as replacing and upgrading the seven, seven metre high glazed windows in the main hall, five of which are originals. But already, despite the cold weather last winter, we managed to save around £250 a month on running costs and the challenge is to keep the improvements going to cut our bills and carbon footprint," he said.

Two Dimplex LA40 air source heat pumps were installed by Dimplex installer partner, WDS Environmental, during the cold winter of 2009, with additional back up heat provided by two gas boilers.

Funding of £60k for the heating system was secured from the Heads of the Valleys Fund as the use of air source heat pumps was not provided for within the LCBP2 programme.

The building is managed by ProMo Cymru which aims to blend economic development in Wales with community involvement and development. The traditionally built EVI has 28 high ceilinged rooms which have been transformed into a wide range of facilities including a theatre, dance studio, gallery, recording room and a rehearsal space for musicians to practice. In addition, there are facilities to encourage start up businesses and facilities for conferences and events, including weddings.

Julian Gardner is now working on the next phase, thanks to EVI's inclusion in the development phase of the Big Lottery Community Asset Transfer programme. A further £200k funding is now being sought to purchase the building for the community, add car and access parking facilities and other improvements including upgrading the internal heating distribution system.

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A division of the GDC Group, Millbrook House, Grange Drive, Hedge End, Southampton, SO30 2DF

● Tel: 0845 601 5111 ● Email: [marketing@dimplex.co.uk](mailto:marketing@dimplex.co.uk) ● [www.dimplexrenewables.co.uk](http://www.dimplexrenewables.co.uk)

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