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Lighting is one of the biggest overheads in a pub, accounting for a

But by switching to energy-efficient light-fittings, retailers Dave and Clare Hennah are saving the equivalent of five pints a day.

The low-wattage bulbs were fitted throughout the Wheatsheaf Inn in Magor, near Newport last October, including in its 66-cover restaurant, six letting rooms, the living quarters, and the exterior.

A combination of compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and LEDs were used.

Long-lasting

Since then the Hennahs have been better off by up to £200 a month. What's more, the bulbs last longer than the regular type, which represents a further cost saving.

"The quality of light is good – the only thing to be aware of is that it takes a about a minute and a half to properly diffuse.

"But once they kick in, they're great," said Dave, who has recognised that being green is a marketable opportunity.

"A lot of customers have noticed that we're using low-energy bulbs – at first they didn't like the light but they're more than happy now. They ask about it and they've seen that it works well for us and also reduces our carbon footprint," he said.

And they haven't stopped at electricity; the introduction of more efficient boilers has cut the pub's gas bill by £200 a month, and timers on bottle fridges and turning off unused equipment such as

extractor fans in the kitchen overnight has made a difference.

"It's a lot of money, and in these tight times saving energy has got to be looked at," said Dave.

Other measures the retailers are looking at include heating timers, converting the 100 litres of used cooking oil the kitchen produces every fortnight, and harnessing the excess energy generated by central heating system.



5 pints a day
The saving the Wheatsheaf is making by using low-energy bulbs

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quarter of energy used.

They also plan to put up polite notices asking guests not to over-use hot water in the letting rooms, and encourage them to consider the environmental cost of their stay.



Low-energy high savings

The Wheatsheaf's low-energy lighting trial:

- Number of low-energy lights fitted: **176**
- Cost to supply and fit: **£3,700**
- Projected annual saving: **£1,800-£2,000**
- Five-year saving: **£9,000-£12,000**
- Payback: **18 months-2 years**

cost crunching tips

With rising running costs and soaring energy bills leaving margins tighter than ever, every penny counts in the current climate. Try these simple measures:

- Get staff into the habit of turning off all electrical equipment at the plug; leaving it on standby can consume as much as 70% of daily energy used
- Turning down the thermostat by just 1°C can cut your heating costs by 8%
- Swap your regular light-bulbs for low-energy ones and save hundreds of pounds on your electricity bill.
- If you use halogen lights, opt for infra-red coated (IRC), which give the same light for 30% less wattage. Compact fluorescent or LED options produce a different colour of light, but will cut consumption by 80%
- Fit water-saving devices in all your toilet cisterns. Try Hippo Water Savers (from www.hippo-the-watersaver.co.uk) which claim to reduce each flush by up to three litres
- File PAYE tax returns online and get up to £825 tax-free from HMRC over five years. And paying VAT online means you can keep the cash in your account for longer, allowing it to collect interest
- Check your business rates – if there has been any “material changes of circumstances” in your area, such as a supermarket opening, you could be eligible for a rates reduction. Ask your regional manager about Enterprise’s free business rates appeal service
- Look for cheap ways to promote your pub. Enterprise’s Pub Retailer Online Promotions Store (PROPS) offers a variety of low-cost, high-quality marketing materials. Log on at www.enterpriseinns.com and follow the PROPS link in the retailer channel
- Also, use social networking websites such as Facebook (www.facebook.com) to advertise for free

