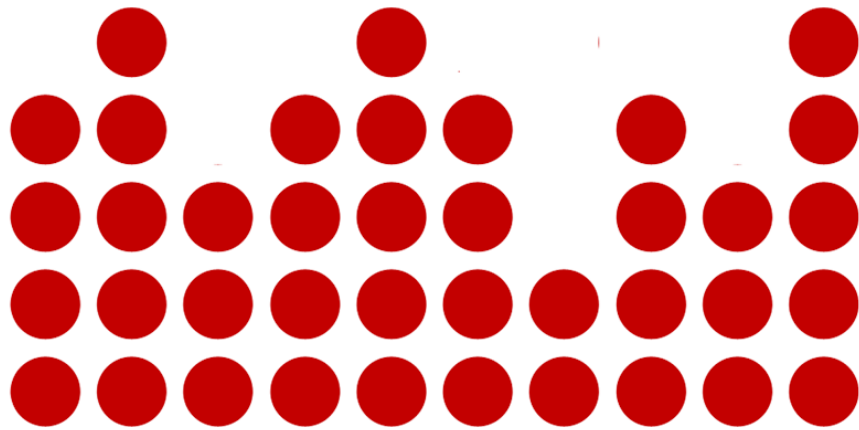


Business Plan

Guy Britton
Tom Mallard



**riverbank
studios**

Young People's Arts & Media Suite
Wiltshire Council

facebook.com/RiverbankChippenham

Contents

Introduction.....	1
Feedback Statements.....	2
SWOT Analysis.....	3
Business Objectives.....	4
Business Operations.....	5
Personnel.....	7
Finances.....	8
Appendices.....	10

Introduction

Riverbank Studios, based in Chippenham, has evolved into a community-based recording and rehearsal facility set up as part of Wiltshire Council's Youth Offer in order to provide young people aged 13 to 19 with a place to rehearse, record, and develop their musical abilities under the guidance of experienced professionals who have backgrounds in both work with young people and music production, performance & tuition. The facility was built on research carried out with young people in the area which demonstrated an expressed need from them for this kind of service.

It currently opens two nights a week (Tuesday & Thursday evenings) from 7pm to 9:30pm offering access to a state of the art recording studio as well as three rehearsal rooms. The studio currently allows young people free access to all of the facilities subject to prior booking. Other services offered include popular live events which showcase a number of young musicians from Chippenham and the surrounding area. At these events staff film and record the performances allowing the musicians access to a professionally shot live music video that they are then able to share online and use for their own promotional purposes.

Riverbank has recently seen a surge in popularity with a high demand for its services. It is clear that there is a huge amount of musical talent amongst local young people who are often looking for a place where they are able to pursue their creative interests. This year alone, Riverbank has worked with 20 unique acts which has engaged 56 individual young people. 26 of whom have performed across 5 Riverbank Live events throughout the year which have seen over 100 young people in attendance. 6 young people took part in a feature by BBC Introducing which aired nationally in April. As well as this, 3 young people also appeared on local radio station Chippenham FM.

This development at Riverbank has been aided in the last 12 months with the introduction of two volunteers working five hours a week which has allowed for more focus on engaging with young people through social media and planning of live events.

Recent budget cuts to Wiltshire Council's Youth Offer means that Riverbank will no longer receive the funding in order to continue operating in its current format. However, due to the high level of time and work that the team has put into this project along with the great feedback from young people and their parents, it would be a highly beneficial to young people to see such a unique facility remain open just as it begins to realise its full potential.

It is now the aim of the Riverbank team to continue the development and expand on the work which has already been done; this requires finding alternative funding sources in order to make this possible. The intention is to establish Riverbank as a thriving social enterprise focused on delivering high quality services and activities to local young people with a strong interest in music and creative arts.

Feedback Statements

“Riverbank studio is an essential outlet to preview the new young acts as they are starting out & for their friends/fans to see these bands perform live”

“Having heard the Social Glitch demo, these recordings are of a high standard & at a price that any young band can afford.”

“Just wanted to say what a great night we all had the other evening at the Riverbank studio gig... Chippenham’s music scene would be in a worse place without you!”

- David Coley, father of young musician

“There’s nowhere else around here that does this... Being able to get music out when we’ve got no money to spend on that stuff and we’ve got no connections other than this and it’s just so helpful”

- Jaz Oehley, 19 year-old musician from Calne

“You meet people in your area that you wouldn’t necessarily meet before. A lot of it is also down to the work that the people here do - the engineering and the producing that they put into it - and I think that’s really good that you’ve got people who understand music and have been in that situation”

- Paddy Morrison, 19 year-old musician from Chippenham

“I came here a few months ago with my friends who are here to see me today and I thought it was a really good venue”

- Luke Gittins, 13 year-old musician from Chippenham

“It’s a really good opportunity for people my age. The best thing is really high quality recordings, it helps in the process of getting gigs as well”

- Jack Moore, 17 year-old musician from Calne

“We really appreciate what they do here. It’s been very difficult to get a gig in Chippenham, we’re just very lucky to have these guys keeping it going”

- Joe Robinson, 18 year-old musician from Chippenham

“It’s been a real pleasure coming down tonight and checking it out, it’s been a really good show”

- Brian Reid, Chippenham FM

SWOT Analysis

After a review of what Riverbank is able to offer as a service, below is a list of what is believed to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Strengths:

- Established facility, professional equipment and developing 'brand'
- Loyal base of users
- Experience in youth work and providing services to young people
- Well trained staff familiar with equipment and musical environments
- Established relationships with many local young musicians across many backgrounds and musical genres

Weaknesses:

- Availability of space and facility - not exclusive ownership of building, shared space conflicts
- Due to lack of current funding, currently unable to offer better equipment for rehearsal spaces
- Currently unable to expand local networks through social media due to Wiltshire Council policy

Opportunities:

- Chance to extend opening hours across more weeknights and increase participation levels
- Established links with local music-based media (BBC Introducing, Chippenham FM) - want to expand network here
- Build a bigger social media profile with use of other social networks (twitter, youtube etc.)
- Providing more services from studios such as teaching (instrument lessons, audio engineering lessons etc.), better video production opportunities
- Potential to become self-sustainable through various income sources such as small, competitive studio-time fees and charging for lessons etc.

Threats:

- Potential loss of space and equipment due to non-exclusive ownership
- Other local youth-work based arts projects
- Budget cut has left Riverbank with a lack of secure, regular funding and support
- Local professional recording studios, although more expensive, offer more established and specialised facilities and equipment.

Business Objectives

Immediate Objectives (2014):

- Inform young people of the changes to the structure of the youth service and future aims for Riverbank
- Establish basic funding in order to cover initial wages & startup costs, meet with local organisations and discuss funding options
- Redesign booking systems and general management to ensure smooth changeover
- Setup structure of social enterprise including financial management etc.
- Continue to build relationships with both young people and other valuable contacts
- Ensure the space and equipment will remain available after transition
- Contact relevant people in order to establish extra opening hours
- Continue to work on projects left from previous model

Short term (next 12 months):

- Establish new opening hours Monday - Thursday, 6pm - 9:30pm
- Aim to take average bookings of 2 recording sessions, 4 rehearsal sessions per week
- Expand profile through use of more social media platforms and paid advertising
 - Twitter, Youtube, other social media by October 2014
 - Own website setup by December 2014
 - Local magazines, Gazette & Herald, Flyers & Posters etc.
- Begin tuition sessions (guitar, bass, drums, studio engineering) - run at least one tuition course by March 2015
- More regularly scheduled live events with the intention of running a show every 6-8 weeks on average
- Purchase new equipment and upgrade studio where necessary by early 2015

Medium term (next 1-3 years):

- Aim to be more self-sustainable with the intention of cutting need for funding by at least 15% by 2016
- Establish relationships with local schools with the offer of providing workshops to students (likely Primary Schools)
- Develop mobile studio possibilities in order to go into the community and provide services away from Monkton facility
- Aim to fill studio bookings to 80% per week
- Establish regular workshop sessions by 2016
- Take on at least one young volunteer by 2016
- Look to establish links with new Chippenham campus and integrate the studio services into the facility

Long term (next 5 years):

- Be a reputable facility for young musicians all across Wiltshire with a proven track record of successful development of young people
- Be almost completely self-sustainable and rely on very little funding from community sources
- Offer potential employment opportunities to young people involved in order to maintain core values and succession

Business Operations

Under the current operation at Riverbank Studios, recording & rehearsal facilities are offered to people aged 13-19 on two weeknights (Tuesday & Thursday evenings) totalling to just five business hours each week. The vision is to be able to secure the space in order to open four nights a week with an extra hour allocated to opening times each evening. This would mean that the studios would open Monday - Thursday from 6pm to 9:30pm with a view to possibly opening on Saturday mornings should an extra session be required.

The recording and rehearsal programme (Tuesday & Thursday evenings) would remain mostly unchanged as it currently does not interfere with other activities in the vicinity. Depending on the availability of the shared space on the remaining evenings (Monday & Wednesday) further consideration would be given to what activities will be possible. Providing there is no other usage of the rehearsal rooms the intention would be to open Monday to Thursday with full access to all recording and rehearsal facilities. If this is not possible 'quieter' sessions would run on Mondays & Wednesdays, during which only the recording studio rooms would be occupied. A wide range of activities would be run from here including standard recording sessions, audio & video post-production as well as workshops and various tuition courses (instrument teaching, audio production lessons etc.).

So far, as part of the Wiltshire Council youth offer, the funding had been in place for all attendees to pay only 50p (per person) admission to the building which allows them full access to any of the services (subject to prior booking). However, due to no longer receiving council funding, alternate funding options must be sought with the view to becoming as self-sustainable as possible. This means charges must be increased with a view towards establishing fixed-rate prices whilst still enabling the provision of a service which remains accessible to young people and offers an alternative to ever-increasing rates of local commercial studios.

Research has shown that within an area covering Wiltshire, Bath & Bristol, the cheapest going rate for rehearsal facilities is £7/hour with most bookings being for 3 to 4 hour sessions (*Appendix C*). This means that musicians will be spending roughly £25 per rehearsal session. It is recognised that in order for Riverbank to succeed whilst charging a fee for the use of the facilities, the first year of new operation must remain as cheap to musicians as possible in order to retain current users and allow time to build enough of a reputation to follow this mode fully. This time will allow for a smooth introduction of charges and also allow time to improve the facilities on offer by purchasing PA systems and drum kits that would be available in each rehearsal room.

The long term intention of Riverbank is to offer an equivalent service to professional rehearsal studios elsewhere in Wiltshire for £10 per night, based on a three and a half hour session. This would include a rehearsal room with full PA and basic drum kit hire and would allow the service to remain affordable to young people whilst still generating enough income to eventually become self-sustainable. As of November 2014 a rehearsal room at Riverbank will be available for just £5 per night and once the rooms have been upgraded to include a PA system and drum kit hire, the cost will then raise to £10 per room, per night.

The recording studio follows a similar approach, with the cheapest local recording studios offering their services at £25/hour. Riverbank will offer young musicians full access to the recording facilities at £30/night, again based on a three and a half hour session with discounts available on block-booked sessions (i.e. £30 for one night, £50 for two etc.). Similarly to the rehearsal rooms, from November the studio will be available at a lower rate of £15 per until more equipment has been purchased and the studio facilities have been upgraded.

Currently, Riverbank is running semi-regular live events and this is something that is a priority to continue and improve on as it offers good opportunities for young people to come together and showcase their talents. The vision is to host more regular events with the intention of putting on a show (on average) every 6-8 weeks. This ties in with the video production service offer as staff are able to film the live shows and multitrack the audio from the performance to produce professional videos which can be shared on social networks. To improve this service a new camera must be purchased which will also be used in a wider range of photographic and video production projects.

Other sources of income would include tuition which would be charged at £10 based on a half-hourly rate as this is below current Musician's Union recommended rate for instrument tuition.

Providing access is granted to the recording studio on Saturday mornings (sessions running from 10:30am to 2pm) another service available will be bookings for parties of children who are looking for 'popstar recording experience' packages. This would consist of a two-hour recording session for a party of children including a CD of three tracks recorded at Riverbank, plus photos/videos from the day and the opportunity to provide another room for snacks, drinks and birthday cake etc. This package will cost £175.

Personnel

Studio & Events Manager:

Tom Mallard - 25 year-old Bsc(Hons) Music Technology graduate, five years studio experience, runs own drum tuition business, highly commended volunteer youth-assistant at Riverbank, eight years experience in event management & promotion, wide knowledge of local music scene, DBS checked and first-aid trained.

Management of facility during opening hours, including assigning rehearsal rooms, meeting needs of those using the space. Will be responsible for developing and maintaining a studio booking system, managing events and ensuring they are promoted appropriately, general studio promotion and marketing, building relationships with local musicians and other key figures in the local music scene.

Sound Engineer:

Guy Britton - 22 year-old music producer & recording studio engineer, BTech National Diploma in Music Technology. Eight years studio experience, work as freelance engineer in both professional studio and live situations. Three years experience as Youth Worker for Wiltshire Council, DBS checked and first-aid trained.

Guy will be responsible for managing and running of recording sessions, ensuring targets are met for each session. Responsible for maintenance of equipment; ensuring gear is operated and stored safely and securely. With experience in youth work, Guy will be responsible for meeting and liaising with young people, ensuring their aims and needs are met during every session.

Volunteer:

Aaron Viveash - 25 year-old, highly commended volunteer with experience in hosting and promoting live events. DJ and electronic music producer with live and recording studio experience. DBS checked.

Shared duties will include managing social media accounts, financial management, health and safety checks and protocols such as recording/logging any incidents etc.

The aim is also to look towards taking on young volunteers in order to help with the workload and further career opportunities for young people. Some tuition sessions may also require bringing in teachers for evenings in order to run sessions properly.

Finances

In order to successfully establish Riverbank as a social enterprise, it is estimated that an initial £21,500 will be required in funding for the first year of operation. This funding will be used to cover initial startup costs, advertising and wages in the first year. *See appendices for a full breakdown of the costing.*

EXPENDITURE:

Wages

The wage cost in the first year will be up to £17,500 based on employing two members of staff with a basic wage of £12.50 an hour. Both members of staff will initially work Tuesday and Thursday, 18:00 - 21:30 for 50 weeks per year with the intention of eventually including Monday and Wednesday as working days providing access to the space is granted for these hours.

Startup Costs

The startup costs total to £2,500 which will be used to purchase extra necessary equipment in order to run new activities and improve the standards of the current facilities. This will include purchasing three PA systems for use in the rehearsal rooms in order to compete with the facilities offered by other local rehearsal studios as well as purchasing extra equipment for the recording studio in order to be able to adequately tutor local young people who wish to participate in courses throughout the year and improve the recording capabilities (*Appendix A*).

Administration

Administration costs for the first year will be £1,500. These costs will include advertising (physical advertising: flyers, magazines and newspaper adverts; digital advertising: website hosting and startup, online advertising, social media etc) plus accounting costs for the year.

INCOME:

The aim at Riverbank is to provide a service for the community that is accessible to young people from all backgrounds. Research has identified that in order for the studio to remain accessible and encourage as much participation as possible, rates for the first six months must be kept lower (£5/night and £15/night for the rehearsal and recording studios respectively) and following on from then, the rates will increase although must still be as affordable as possible whilst still recognising that it must generate some income to continue running as a self-sustainable enterprise without a direct intention of generating profit. This means that initially the studio will require external funding in order to establish a new model for the recording and rehearsal facilities which will eventually generate their own income and the need for alternative funding will decrease over time.

Full list of income sources in appendix B

APPENDICES

Appendix A - List of equipment:

Pulse PMH PA System (£135 per unit) (x3) - http://simplysoundandlighting.co.uk/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=577&search=pulse

Shure SM58 (£95 per unit) (x4) - https://www.studiospares.com/Microphones/Mics-Vocalist/Shure-SM58-Microphone_423011.htm

Behringer Ultravoice XM1800s (£29.99 per unit) (x3) - <http://www.studiospares.com/mics-vocalist/behringer-ultravoice-xm1800s/inv/381130?VBMST=behringer%20ultravoice>

Rode NT1A Recording Pack (£149.99 per unit) (x2) - <http://www.studiospares.com/mics-condenser/rode-nt1a-recording-pack/inv/417005?VBMST=rode%20nt1>

Behringer Composer Pro XL (£89.00 per unit) (x2)
<http://www.studiospares.com/compressors/behringer-composer-pro-xl-mdx2600/inv/359200?VBMST=behringer%20composer>

Art Pro VLA II 2-Channel Compressor (£289 per unit)
<http://www.studiospares.com/compressors/art-pro-vla-ii-2-channel-compressor/inv/325730?VBMST=art%20pro%20vla>

LIVE PA Speaker Stand (£19.98 per unit) (x6)
<http://www.studiospares.com/stands-speaker/live-pa-speaker-stand-x1/inv/449350?VBMST=pa%20speaker%20stand>

NIKON D3200 DSLR Camera (£339 per unit)
http://www.argos.co.uk/static/Product/partNumber/5598263.htm?CMPID=GS001&_sja=cgid:12525697850|tsid:59158|cid:200291090|lid:94832036690|nw:g|crid:42772545170|rnd:10558361275102859106|dvc:c|adp:1o1|bku:1

SanDisk Extreme SDHC 16GB Memory Card (£29.99):
<http://www.argos.co.uk/static/Product/partNumber/1077362.htm>

AKG C1000s MKIV (£129.98):
<https://www.studiospares.com/ProductDetail.aspx?p=469231>

ART PDB Passive DI Box (£30.48):
https://www.studiospares.com/Microphones/DI-Boxes/ART-PDB-Passive-DI-Box_325650.htm

Appendix B - Rates

Riverbank Studio Rates

OPENING TIMES: MON-THURS, 6pm-9:30pm

RECORDING STUDIO OPEN MON- THURS NORMAL STUDIO OPENING

REHEARSAL SPACES OPEN TUES & THURS 6pm-9:30pm

POSSIBLE SAT OPEN 10am-1:30pm

Recording & Rehearsal Rates:

Studio time: £30/night based on 3 ½ hour session
 £50/week based on two 3 ½ hour sessions
 £100/week based on four 3 ½ hour sessions

Rehearsal space: £10/night based on 3 ½ hour session

Tuition Rates:

Drum Tuition: £10/half hour session

Guitar/Bass Tuition: £10/half hour session

Audio Engineering Tuition: £25/hour and a half session per person.

Video Production:

Half an hour live recording & video shoot: £120

“Documentary” style video recording during studio session: +£10/studio session

Live event filming @ Riverbank gig: £10/pre-specified song

Party/Studio Experience Days (Saturday Sessions Ideally)

2 Hour Recording Session: Includes 3 songs, photoshoot & one CD master copy. £2.50 per extra copy. Snacks & Drinks included - £175 total

Full package + video of day - £250

Appendix C - Local Rehearsal Rates

Crest Studios (Trowbridge) - £7 per hour

<http://www.creststudios.co.uk/page2.html>

The Warehouse Studios (Devizes) - £8 per hour

<http://www.thewarehousestudios.co.uk/rates/4548171361>

Stage 2 Studios (Bath) - £9 per hour
<http://stage2studios.co.uk/rehearsal.html>