

Waffle Live



Business name and size: The Community Waffle House CIC (Waffle) 35 staff, two sites, 40 volunteers.

Funding awarded: £2,683 to create a community-centred, alcohol free music hub in the centre of Axminster.

Project outline:

The Waffle Live project has an aim to make quality music available to the whole community. This sits within our wider mission as an organisation to gather the hardest to reach in our community with opportunities and skills to socialise. Waffle Live is a weekly program of free music events that take place within a safe, alcohol-free, community setting.

The challenge: To many, alcohol consumption is widely synonymous with live music consumption. Our challenge was to create a high-quality, grown-up venue for music which was also a 'dry' venue.

The solution: To achieve this we firstly focused on the music; making sure that our equipment and sound tech was of the highest quality and then bringing in some brilliant and eclectic bands and performers. We also brought in some really good Alcohol Free drinks and concentrated our efforts on creating a community within the space by maximising the opportunities for people to engage with others.

The impact (key achievements): the ongoing legacy of this project is that it has enabled us to diversify our business model. By extending our 'family feel' atmosphere into the evenings, we have developed a model for evening entertainment which has brought in a whole new revenue stream. We have then been able to take this learning and infrastructure and apply it to other evenings in the week to enhance our games and book events.

How is the new approach being sustained: This grant gave us the springboard to apply for an Arts Council England grant for which we have re-applied this year. Many of the core and capital elements of the funding have now been integrated into the business plan for Waffle which means that they can be sustained as part of the business. We are exploring how to continue to offer free music whilst also paying quality artists fairly.

Matt Smith, Director of Waffle House, said: "As a project Waffle Live has paved the way for us to operate in the evenings, meaning that we can reach a whole new section of our community. It has

shown us just what music can achieve in tackling loneliness when it is driven by community and resourced properly."

Video: [Waffle Live | Waffle](#)

www.waffle.org.uk