

READIPOP ANNUAL REPORT 2020 - 2021

A summary of Readipop's work from April 2020 to April 2021.



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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About Us



Established in 1998, Readipop is an innovative music and arts charity with a strong reputation for inspirational, engaging arts projects that make a positive difference in people's lives. We are passionate about the power of music to communicate and bring people together. Our work celebrates our community and the joy of creativity as vital to a fulfilled life.

“A first class example of ambition triumphing in the face of adversity.”

– Terry Adams of Arts Council England commenting on Readipop's new purchase.

WHO ARE WE

Our Approach

Our programmes are participant or artist led, focused on original work and help to improve confidence and opportunities for the people we work with. Sessions are musically inclusive, involving musicians of varying skill levels, and both social and musical diversity is celebrated. Across every programme and project we run, we always strive to develop musicianship and create positive change within individuals and groups. Readipop also aims to promote creativity, all whilst listening to and aiding individuals to find their own life paths or improve as musicians.

Though Readipop reaches people of many different backgrounds in Reading and the Thames Valley, our focus is always on targeting places where need is greatest. For this reason, we prioritise the needs of marginalised peoples and communities, and others facing hardship in our local community when devising and running new programmes and projects.

From providing weekly interaction through our community bands, to being a young person's sole place of interaction with education or engagement, Readipop always aims to facilitate 'Music Changing Lives'.



OUR

APPROACH

WHAT WE DO

A Year at Readipop

April 2020 started very strangely, and got stranger still. Readipop studios had been closed since the 15th March, and the charity started April having just announced the postponement of its 5th Readipop Festival due to the Coronavirus pandemic. With all in-person sessions cancelled, two members of our core team put on full time furlough, and the country in a national lockdown, April brought a cruel start to this report year.

However, Readipop refused to stay idle over the following 12 months.

A month into lockdown, the team had already reinvented some of it's most crucial work. Older participants were given support to access brand new virtual community band sessions and the organisation had re-established 1:1 sessions digitally with its most hard-to-reach young people.

By May, Readipop had reached even more of the community with video catch-ups and music-based discussion for AAA participants. New audiences of all ages and abilities found the charity through its Creative Lockdown campaign, getting musical from home via brand new video tutorials and creative resources. And as July approached, there were rumours that even the Festival could be re-invented for the new normal.

Virtual Readipop Festival 2020 celebrated the 'lockdown spirit' of all our participants and a music community deprived of venues and livelihoods. It brought together video performances from young rappers,

ukulele groups and other local talent, alongside the live-streamed delights of Musical Youth, Badly Drawn Boy and a Beadyman set which sampled the infamous tones of Broad Street's long gone doughnut man.

Streamed from an empty looking Milford Rd, the event marked the final usage of Readipop's home of many years and the beginning of a new chapter at 15 Trafford Rd.

With lots of heavy lifting, the new building grew into a usable space ready to restart in-person 1:1 work for November. COVID-19 had different plans, and after only one session, new regulations halted delivery once more. Restrictions stepped up further as we approached Christmastime, meaning our annual Hootenanny was also forced online.

However, Readipop still celebrated with its community. Bringing together audio tracks and home video recordings from almost 100 different participants and team members, a group cover of Shakin' Stevens' 'Merry Christmas Everyone' (ft. a Bob Marley interlude) was created, complete with music video.

Reminded from home of the huge array of people the charity supports, Readipop went into the new year even more determined to restart in-person work. By March it was decided the full team would finally come back from furlough and by the end of the month even better news arrived; Readipop had purchased its new building. This was a huge coup for the organisation and will give the charity stability and the chance to expand and develop new and existing projects for years to come.

2020-21 had shown Readipop the crucial civic role it has in Reading's community more clearly than ever. As April 2021 began, in-person work commenced and the team regrouped to restart existing projects and meet new needs, with the aim to change even more lives through music.

WHAT WE DO

Readipop Programmes 2020 - 2021

The Coronavirus pandemic presented new challenges for Readipop, and enforced changes to our programme. This is included adapting existing provision, and creating new projects to help change lives through music:

“I am now realising for the first time the healing powers of music.”

– Community band member during the pandemic.



ACCESS ALL AREAS

'AAA' -

ACCESS ALL AREAS

Readipop's AAA (Access All Areas) programme brings together a number of projects to engage and support young people and their music:



MUSIC BASED MENTORING

These 1:1 sessions are for Reading's most vulnerable young people. They are referred to us from pupil referral units, the young offenders service, schools specialising in special educational needs students and other children's services. The sessions continued where possible throughout the pandemic via online sessions, as Readipop helped provide production software and equipment where needed. By the close of March 2021, the team were prepared and booking in face-to-face sessions to recommence in April 2021.

OPEN ACCESS SESSIONS

Regular visitors to Readipop's AAA Friday group sessions were invited instead to group video calls, where young people could discuss what they'd been up to, listening to and writing whilst stuck at home.

"It's made me feel like I have a family... with ties that even a pandemic cannot sever."

- AAA participant on Readipop's online sessions during lockdown.

OTHER COMMUNITY WORK



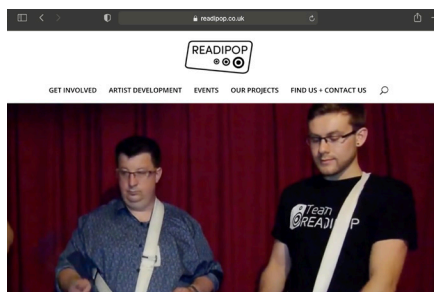
VIRTUAL READIPOP FESTIVAL

With COVID-19 restrictions in full force and the in-person festival cancelled, Readipop instead hosted 4hrs of live-streamed music and entertainment; bringing together big names, local musicians and charity participants. The event attracted over 7386 views on a hot summer's day.



COMMUNITY BANDS

Readipop ran virtual sessions for its samba group Beatroots Bateria, Tankata Percussion, 60+ choir Moving On and Ukulele groups Tea and Jam (60+) and Small Strings (all ages), to help keep band members' engaged, playing music and socialising whilst they were forced to isolate at home.



CREATIVE LOCKDOWN

Set up to help people of all ages and abilities get creative virtually, readipop.co.uk/creativelockdown is a collection of free music tutorials, activities and other resources compiled to entertain, engage and educate people through the pandemic and beyond.

D&D ARTIST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME + RISER

Readipop continued its Discovery & Development programme by mentoring artists via video calls, recording sessions, and promoting local acts with a brand new podcast series. Beyond this work, the wider local music community were surveyed and consulted on how the charity could help support them when Coronavirus restrictions lifted. Planning also began for a new record label, RISER, after a successful bid for project funding from Arts Council England. The project will benefit talented local artists from under-privileged and under-represented backgrounds to record and release new music.



THE NEW BUILDING

Readipop started moving from its old premises at Milford Rd to Trafford Rd in summer 2020, with the old building becoming increasingly difficult to maintain and upkeep as a headquarters.

By spring 2021, the new digs had become a home. Supported by Big Issue Invest, Chris Bevington Foundation, The Earley Charity and Garfield Weston Foundation, Readipop had successfully purchased its new premises.

Owning the new space (which includes new office and meeting areas, rehearsal spaces and recording studios) will give Readipop greater capacity going into the future; helping the organisation to change even more lives through music.



OUR REACH + IMPACT

1 ZOOM PRO SUBSCRIPTION.

124 VIRTUAL COMMUNITY BAND SESSIONS.

19 YOUTH GROUP CATCH-UP SESSIONS.

22 1:1 MUSIC MENTORING SESSIONS.

2413 TOTAL SESSION ATTENDANCES.


41 OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKED WITH.

143 CREATIVE LOCKDOWN VIDEOS.

23774 YOUTUBE VIEWS ON NEW VIDEO CONTENT.

Social Media reach

 **YouTube** 484 (+305) Subscribers

 **Readipop: 6861 Followers**

 **@Readipopcharity / @Readipopfestival:
3192 Followers**

 **@Readipop: 3380 Followers**



OUR

REACH + IMPACT

**“Continued connection,
a feeling of
togetherness, laughter
and fun during a
challenging time.”**

- Community Band member on the impact of Readipop's work during
lockdown.

FINANCES

INCOME:

Donations and Legacies: £477,330

Charitable Activities: £11,685

Investment Income: £24

Other Income: £53

TOTAL INCOME: £489,092

EXPENDITURE:

Expenditure on charitable activities: £305,858

CHARITY FUNDS:

Restricted Funds: £140,588

Unrestricted Funds: £54,578

Total Charity Funds: £195,166

For Readipop's full accounts, please head to the Charity Commission website and search for Readipop.

THANK YOU!

As we close off 2021, we would like to say a massive **thank you** to all those who have attended, performed, participated, collaborated with, supported, led or otherwise been involved with a Readipop event or project, or donated to our charity. Our work is only realised through grants and donations, and your generosity does not go unnoticed.

If you would like to further help Readipop and what we do, **please donate or become a Readipop friend here:**

readipop.co.uk/donate

Our Funders

We would like to thank the following organisations who helped us in the 2020 - 2021 financial year:

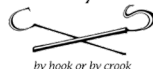


Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

The Red Hill Trust



The Earley Charity



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