



# Business Plan

V4\_final - 3 February 2026

## Executive summary

Creative Coathanger (CC) was established in 2026 as community group and became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2025, supporting creative practitioners, sole traders, micro businesses and businesses and providing access to creative services to communities in the Scottish Borders. It is unapologetically run by creatives for creatives. Creative Coathanger exists to strengthen creative livelihoods, build community capacity, and contribute to sustainable regional regeneration.

The Scottish Borders has a substantial creative economy, dominated by freelancers and sole traders, yet lacks coordinated infrastructure, affordable workspace, and consistent development support aligned to fast-moving changes in the creative industries. Long-standing evidence, including the CABN 2019 survey and Creative Coathanger-led research (2023-2024), demonstrates clear demand for shared creative spaces, skills development towards sustainable livelihoods, and stronger collective visibility of local creative industries.

CC delivers a practical, place-based model through four interlocking strands: events and training; commissioning and partnerships; advocacy and visibility; and the development of a Creative Impact Hub in Selkirk. Together, these form a collaborative ecosystem designed to support resilience, sustainability and thriving, aligned to a Quintuple Bottom Line approach.

In the short term (2026-27), CC is focused on consolidating governance following establishment as a SCIO incorporation, delivering its flagship Creative Business Works Festival, expanding creative tech and skills programmes in the creative sector and secondary schools, and is currently completing a feasibility study for a Creative Impact Hub based in Selkirk's former Municipal Building.

In the medium term (2027-2030), CC aims to secure capital and operational funding to establish the Hub as a permanent anchor for creative enterprise, learning, innovation and community use.

This business plan sets out CC's value proposition, market context, activities, resources, costs and revenue model, partnerships, and intended social impact. It is designed as a live document, to be strengthened by the forthcoming feasibility study and subsequent detailed financial modelling.

## 1. Products and Services – Our Sustainable Value Proposition

*[Creative Coathanger](#) (CC) has, since its inception in 2016 to celebrate the return of the Borders Railway, been imagined as a 'coathanger' or umbrella for creative programming and delivery. Creative Coathanger became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) (OSCR: charity number SC054603) in 2025, supporting creative practitioners in the Scottish Borders.*

*CC's mission is to work towards a more sustainable, resilient future for the creative industries in the Scottish Border and its people. It is run by creatives, for creatives.*

*Our value proposition: a collaborative ecosystem where creativity drives sustainable livelihoods, community wellbeing, and regional innovation.*

### **Our core offer consists of:**

- 1) Events and training
- 2) Commissioning and partnerships
- 3) Creative Impact Hub for R&D and innovation
- 4) Advocacy and visibility of the local creative industries

### **1.1. Events and training**

*CC has developed an offer of skills workshop, targeting different audiences, with a focus on creative digital skills and business development skills. It also programmes a tri-annual festival to bring the creative business community together and share good practices by collating resources.*

- *ongoing skills workshops* with a focus on creative tech skills and innovation, delivered in partnership with others, e.g. Creative Tech introductory training in high schools funded by South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) (2024), Creative Tech Tasters programme, funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) (2025) or Creative AI, in collaboration with Creative Arts Business Network (CABN) (2026). These are aimed at both creatives and non-creatives.
- *tri-annual flagship [Creative Business Works Festival](#)*, support and advice with inspirational case studies to support practical creative livelihoods (digital skills, sustainability, marketing, circular economy, creative tech, funding and business planning)

## 1.2. Commissioning and partnerships

*CC commissions and co-production, embedding fair pay and inclusive access. This puts creative practice at the heart of programming to create opportunities for local communities to take part in cultural and creative activities, and support local creative businesses through paid opportunities that embed fair pay.*

CC will continue to work with creatives, creating paid work opportunities for local creative businesses and developing partnerships with other regional and national organisations and stakeholders. CC is currently fundraising for an extensive *Making Selkirk* programme of artist commissions and training programme, with bids under development, including to Creative Scotland and Heritage Lottery.

The programming strand of CC continues earlier programming such as the *Creative Coathanger Everything Festival* (2016), [Mapping the Borders](#) (2017), *Creative Coathanger Making Festival* (2018) and *Life Drawing* (2018), *Creative Business Works Festival* (2023) and recent *Scale* R&D collaboration with *Connecting Threads* (2025). These partnerships have included the National Library of Scotland, MacArts, The Haining, CABN, SOSE, local and national universities and others.

In addition, CC board members have contributed towards and delivered various cultural festivals in the region, including the [Borders Heritage Festival](#), YES Arts Festival, and Alchemy ([The Big Border Bogle Hunt](#), an immersive live theatre/augmented reality (AR)) event. We have also attended national training and industry events, including Creative Tech Gathering Scotland (CTGS), and Split Screen Creative Tech in Performance programme (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).

## 1.3. Creative Impact Hub (in development)

*CC is proposing to develop a **regional Impact Hub** in Selkirk. Whilst CC has a regional remit, CC also has established ties to Selkirk and its communities. Selkirk was the focus of Need for Space report, as Selkirk offered the highest density of creative business co-locations through the WASPS studios and the Haining as well as many local independently operating creative business who registered interest in developing co-location premises.*

*CC has had an active input into the Selkirk Place Plan.*

*CC has its registered address in Lilliesleaf, which falls under the Selkirk catchment area.*

*The **Creative Impact Hub** is modelled on the international [Impact Hub model](#) as a place for entrepreneurs and innovators to build a regenerative economy, where business and profit serve (local) people and planet. Its ethos is based on collective action and collaboration. R&D and innovation in the creative economy is well established and a national economic driver, hence our focus on Creative Impact Hub.*

Creative businesses and access to creative technology, including makerspace equipment (see also [FabLab](#)) and other non-digital production facilities will be critical. CC has an inventory of creative tech equipment (funded by a SOSE Createch grant) and the business plan includes consolidating existing, disparate workshop facilities into one facility that will be accessible by many.

The Creative Impact Hub is envisaged as a permanent community space, underpinned by green design and fair work principles, for:

- making, learning
- R&D, innovation, prototyping
- secure, long-term studio spaces for co-working
- shared access to fabrication equipment
- exhibition/social space
- shared marketing
- peer support

The Creative Impact Hub will fulfil two mutually supportive functions:

- 1) act as a local and regional hub for entrepreneurial R&D
- 2) support a creative ecosystem of small creative businesses

The vision is for Creative Coathanger to work regionally across the Scottish Borders, with a place-based focus in Selkirk. By anchoring a Creative Impact Hub in Selkirk, we address local need while creating shared infrastructure that supports creative livelihoods and connectivity across the wider region.

CC collated the **Need for Space report** (2024) (attached), in collaboration with partners, and based on long-standing dialogue and community engagement to develop long-term sustainable creative spaces in the Scottish Borders.

CC are currently developing plans for a Creative Impact Hub in Selkirk, centred around the Municipal Building on the High Street, and working closely with local partners, including the Selkirk Development Trust, The General Store, Transform Arts CIC, and with support from Scottish Borders Council (SBC) and Borders Community Action.

The Municipal Building in Selkirk became surplus to requirements from Scottish Borders Council (SBC) in May 2025. CC submitted an Expression of Interest (EoI) for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) in July 2025. Since then, CC has been fundraising for a feasibility study for the building. A successful grant application to the Architectural Heritage Fund raised 50% of the needed funds. Four match funding bids (Fallago WindFarm, Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Action Group and Borders Community Action) have been unsuccessful partly due to the tricky issue of feasibility falling between capital/revenue. A further bid is pending with Langhope Rig Windfarm (Feb 2026). This work in progress is supported by the Impact Hub methodology.

A feasibility study will deliver an in-depth report on:

- 1) the state of the building and any remedial work required with concomitant costing
- 2) outline of options to inform a detailed business plan related to the viability of the building, its structure and available space, including any changes of use and other legal, structural or organisational changes that may be required.

A feasibility study will also inform and add concrete numbers and detail to support the CAT and associated Business Plan.

The delivery of the Impact Hub will be done in collaboration with local partners and organisations outlined above, and aligns with key priorities in the **Selkirk Place Plan** (attached), to which CC contributed (2024/2025). This includes:

- 1) “supporting creative platforms for arts, culture and heritage that are accessible to all people” including better co-ordination between groups involved in tourism, heritage arts and culture (p. 35),
- 2) an identified need for a community and creative hub (p.38, p. 40, p58), and
- 3) the urgent need to address vacant and derelict buildings (p.44, p 49-50).
- 4) creative placemaking as a key mechanism for delivery of the local Place Plan.

As such the Creative Impact Hub aligns very well with community-identified priorities.

CC board members have played active roles in the delivery of cultural programmes and activities in and around Selkirk over the years; including [The Haining at Home](#) (2014, with CABN), the Yarrow Ettrick Selkirk (YES) Arts Festival (2013, [2015](#), 2017), Borders Heritage Festival (2017), and [Reflections at the Haining](#) as part of the Year of Architecture and Design (2016). Partnerships have included Selkirk CARS, the Haining, MacArts and CABN.

## **1.4. Advocacy and visibility**

*CC connects creatives with policymakers, education, and enterprise agencies, highlighting the sector’s contribution to the regional economy and wellbeing. It has done this in the past by stepping in during the pandemic and post pandemic (e.g. by facilitating and hosting the [Cultural Forum](#) during Covid19) and developing the Creative Business Works festival. CC continues to contribute to regional advocacy and visibility through participation in the **Cultural Strategy** development and collaboration with regional organisations such as Southern Uplands Partnership (SUP), CABN and others.*

We strongly believe that the region needs a diverse range of creative organisations to support a healthy ecosystem.

CC operates through a **Quintuple Bottom Line** lens – *People, Planet, Profit, Purpose and Place* – and measures success through community resilience and wellbeing, creative livelihoods and sustainable and regenerative environments, as well as financial sustainability.

## 2. Customer and Market

### 2.1. Who we serve

*CC aims to work with people and groups across the region at different levels: the regional economy (macro level), with a specific focus on the creative economy (middle) and local Selkirk community (micro).*

- **Primary:** freelance creatives, micro-enterprises and cultural producers in the Scottish Borders (approx. 1,800 businesses, employing 6,300 people - data from SOSE), with a subsidiary focus on young people entering creative careers.
- **Secondary:** local communities, business and public sector partners (e.g tourism, heritage) seeking creative activities and services.

### 2.2. Market gap

*Aligned with our core offer, we have identified these gaps in provision:*

- Training support to address the fast-changing landscape, particularly around digital skills and training (e.g. AI, AR, podcasting, coding etc.), in order to support innovation (beyond immersive technologies and AI),
- Lack of affordable, permanent workspace and shared resources ([A need for Space](#) report (2023)(attached),
- Need for collaborative and cross-sector working to address regional economic challenges,
- Support R&D and multi-disciplinary collaboration.

We believe that the creative economy is exceptionally well placed to help deliver this with an agility, resilience and flexibility that is well documented ([We are Creative \(2025\)](#) report).

Investment in an Impact Hub will signal the importance and value of the creative industries to the region and as an important contributor towards innovation and supporting a thriving local economy.

## 2.3. Market opportunity

*CC vision for the future aligns very well with the Selkirk Place Plan and continues an established working relationship with the Selkirk community through association.*

*Secondly it aligns with national moves towards more local devolvement and involvement with local economic and social wealth building (supporting and developing local) informed by the Five Pillars of Community Wealth Building, in turn informed by the Preston model. This would help supporting and retaining local talent in the region, upskilling local people and developing entrepreneurship.*

- Aligns with **Selkirk Place Plan**
- Aligns with **South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)** strategy for creative economy growth, innovation, and fair work. See [South of Scotland Creative Economy Guide \(2023\)](#)
- Leverages national trends toward **creative tech, net-zero innovation**, and **community wealth building** ([Preston Model](#)).
- Aligns with the **Five Pillars of Community Wealth building**: 1) plural ownership of the economy, 2) making financial power work for local places (e.g. through investment), 3) fair employment and just labour markets (e.g. paying Scottish Artist Union [Recommended Rates of Pay](#) as a principle), 4) progressive procurement of goods and services (e.g. actively procuring and developing local talent and 5) socially productive use of land and property (e.g. by occupying and developing a landmark empty building).
- High potential to **attract inward investment** and
- High potential for **youth retention** in a region with affordable living and strong creative heritage.

## 3. Key Activities (short to medium term)

*CC aims to continue development of its training and skills development offer for creatives, and by creatives for the local community. In addition, it is working towards consolidating its commissioning programme through continued partnership working.*

### 1) Events and training

- **Develop training and outreach programmes** (creative tech, AI, coding for creatives, sustainable design) including current partnership with CABN (2026-27)
- **Deliver Creative Business Works Festival** annually as a practical learning, networking, and showcase event.

### 2) Commissioning and partnerships

- **Develop Making Selkirk programme:** funding, programming and delivery
- **Deliver Creative Business Works Festival** annually as a practical learning, networking, and showcase event.

### 3) Creative Impact Hub for R&D and innovation

- **Commission feasibility and business case** for the *Creative Impact Hub* in Selkirk.

### 4) Advocacy and visibility of the local creative industries

- **Partnership development** with CABN, SOSE, DYW, SBC, Heriot-Watt University, Transform Arts CIC, and others.
- **Marketing, advocacy, and impact reporting** to strengthen visibility and stakeholder confidence.

**Governance transition:** board training, and policy development and expansion of CC Board of Trustees to acquire more diverse expertise

## 4. Resources Required

*CC has acquired diverse experience of running creative and cultural events and working in partnership with local, regional and national organisations. In addition, the CC Board are also creative freelancers who collectively have run their own creative businesses, working in and with local communities in the Scottish Borders for many decades. The CC Board thus has a clear, embodied understanding of the creative industries sector. All Board members are also living and working in the Scottish Borders.*

*CC is currently run by a volunteer board and pays freelancers to deliver services (paying SAU Rates of Pay) aligned with restricted funding. CC is working towards a longer term robust financial basis, including working towards paid staff. The CC board has a varied range of experience of writing funding bids and will continue to do so but may acquire specialist help with large funding bids (e.g. Architectural Heritage Fund).*

*CC will acquire the specialist services to deliver some of its plans and ambitions, e.g. expert heritage building development and architectural design expertise, and social enterprise development skills through continued partnership working.*

### 4.1. Technical & Physical

- Partner venues for pop-up events in Galashiels, Kelso, Hawick, Innerleithen as well as Selkirk.
- Permanent hub premises in Selkirk (target: Municipal Building).
- Maker-space equipment (digital fabrication, printmaking, audio-visual tech).
- Event and workshop logistics (venue hire, digital platforms, insurance, AV kit).

## 4.2. Human

- Volunteer board
- Part-time paid project coordination,
- Part-time paid marketing, social media event support
- Commissioned facilitators, trainers, and local creatives.
- Specialist consultants (architect, feasibility study, fund-raiser).

## 4.3. Financial

- Project-specific income (tickets, training fees, commissions, consultancy) - short to medium term
  - Core funding (e.g., Community Led Local Development Fund, SOSE, Creative Scotland, Heritage Trust) - medium to long term
  - Long-term plan for mixed revenue from hub tenancy, consultancy, hires, hospitality, training, events - long term
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## 5. Costs and Revenue Model

*To date, Creative Coathanger's income has been fully project-based with restricted funding. Developing a more balanced funding model, including elements of flexible or core support, is a medium-term objective as organisational capacity grows.*

Over the next three years, Creative Coathanger will move from a primarily project-funded organisation to one with growing operational stability, underpinned by a permanent Creative Impact Hub. Costs will increase gradually in line with delivery capacity, staffing, and premises responsibilities, with significant capital and fixed costs deferred until feasibility and funding milestones are achieved.

Creative Coathanger will operate through a **mixed funding model**, with the balance between grant income and earned revenue shifting over time. In the short term, activity will be primarily supported through project and development funding. As delivery capacity and infrastructure develop, earned income from training, events and, in the longer term, hub-related activity will increase, while continued public and charitable subsidy will remain essential to ensure affordability, access and fair work.

Operational costing will be modelled on specific building requirements (informed by feasibility study). Rental rates will be informed by other comparable venues such as Mushroom Works in Newcastle, Coburg Studios in Edinburgh, WASPS Scotland wide for creative co-operative spaces. Most rentals are inclusive of utilities (shared costs) - with fair use policy - and often included additional benefits like shared facilities (e.g gallery space for marketing and events, teaching space, shared administrator and/or technical support, providing both shared assets and work opportunities.

Additionally a research visit to Inverness has been included in our feasibility study costing and we will seek collaboration with them as well as the wider international Impact network for support, advice and mentoring.

### **Year 1: Stabilisation and Proof (2026–27)**

#### **Cost profile**

- Predominantly **variable and project-based**
- Core costs remain low and flexible

#### **Main cost types**

- Programming: events, festival and commissions
- Training delivery costs
- Feasibility study and specialist consultancy
- Part-time coordination (freelance / fractional)
- Marketing and governance setup

#### **Funding mix**

- Restricted grants
- Earned activity income (tickets, workshops, consultancy)
- Future self-sustaining hub income (tenancies, social space, hires)

### **Year 2: Transition and Capacity Build (2027–28)**

#### **Cost profile**

- Introduction of **semi-fixed costs**
- Still no full premises burden

#### **Main cost changes**

- Increased **staff** time (coordination, partnerships)
- Development costs linked to hub planning
- Early engagement costs for building, design, and community consultation

#### **Funding mix**

- Project grants

- Development funding
- Some repeat earned income streams

### Year 3: Hub Activation (2028–29)

#### Cost profile

- Shift towards **fixed operational costs**
- Premises becomes material

#### Main cost types

- Rent / maintenance / utilities (subject to feasibility outcomes)
- Staffing for hub operations
- Ongoing programme, **project, marketing** and access support

#### Funding mix

- Mixed economy:
  - grants
  - tenancy income
  - hires, events, training
- Continued need for subsidy in early years

## 6. Route to Market – Marketing and Communications

*CC has no premises so relies on accessing audiences and through development of its own networks (e.g. through mailing list and social media), and by co-opting other local networks (e.g. CABN, local community networks etc.). It delivers its current programming through partnership venues (e.g. Macarts). A short to medium term priority will be to develop a consistent and regular communication presence, currently delivered by volunteer board member of acquired project services.*

#### Audiences

- Creative professionals in the Borders (via CABN Bulletin, social media, CC mailinglist)
- Young people (via DYW and education partners)
- Local communities and visitors (with Selkirk Regeneration Trust)
- Policy stakeholders (SBC, CABN)
- Funding stakeholders (SBC, Creative Scotland, AHT, SOSE, Lottery, Borders Community Action)

#### Channels

- CC website and social media
- Partner networks (CABN Bulletin, Alchemy, SBC, SOSE)

- Press, public events, podcasts, and short films highlighting impact

### Key messages

- “A hook for creativity.”
- “A sustainable, fair, connected creative economy for the Borders.”
- “Small is beautiful – creative livelihoods with purpose.”

## 7. Stakeholders and Partnerships

Stakeholder	Level	Role
CC Board of Trustees	local/regional	Stakeholder
General Store CEO	local	Joint development of hub concept
Transform Arts CIC	local	Joint development of hub concept, co-delivery of events
<b>Selkirk Development Trust</b>	local	Stakeholder, place plan lead,
<b>Selkirk Regeneration SCIO</b>	local	Stakeholder, place plan, Local partner for Municipal Building
The Haining	local	Stakeholder, venue for programming partners
WASPS	local/ national	stakeholder
Local councilors	local	stakeholder
Little Art Hub	regional	stakeholder
LDN Architects	Local / national	Feasibility and design expertise
Stuart Davison Architecture	Local	Feasibility and local connections
MacArts	regional	Cultural programming partners, venue
Alchemy	regional	Cultural programming partners
Connecting Threads	regional	Cultural programming partners

/SUP		
<b>Scottish Borders Council (SBC)</b>	regional	Cultural strategy alignment; property assets, strategic alignment
CABN	regional	sector development and knowledge-sharing, partnership working
Borders Community Action	regional	Supporting organisation, fundraising, connecting
South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE)	regional	Strategic partner and funder, stakeholder, regional economic and creative economy remit
Creative Scotland	regional / national	Stakeholder, potential funder, creative economy remit
Development Trust Scotland (DTA)	national	Supporting organisation, potential funding, connecting
<b>Architectural Heritage Fund</b>	national	Funder, Feasibility and design expertise
National Lottery Heritage Fund	national	Funder
University of Edinburgh	national	Potential partner/funder, stakeholder
Heriot Watt University	regional/ national	stakeholder, skills pipeline and training
Borders College	regional	stakeholder, Skills pipeline and training
Developing the Young Workforce (DYW)	regional	Youth engagement and retention
Impact Hub network	international	knowledge-sharing, partnership working

## 8. Tangible Social Impact

*As outlined earlier, CC is drawing on, and using various models to develop its local impact by not only developing a local Creative Impact Hub (which has social and economic impact as integral), and is using the Five Pillars of Community Wealth Building as guiding principles to make develop and evidence local social and economic impact. CC argues that the creative industries are ideally placed to offer this mix.*

### **Beneficiaries**

- Local Community: through provision of local community hub
- Local Creatives: provision of secure spaces to work for 20+ businesses expected to collaborate through the hub model, generating joint working savings.
- Local and regional entrepreneurs: provision of technical spaces for R&D hub and focus for innovation, and R&D through collaborative multi-disciplinary collaboration
- Local and Regional Creative Entrepreneurs: 40+ creatives directly supported annually through paid commissions and training.
- already 2,000+ participants have been reached through forums, festivals, and workshops since 2016.

### **Expected outcomes**

- Stronger creative livelihoods (fair pay, skills, cashflow).
- Inclusive and accessible creative infrastructure for a rural region.
- Contribution to regional regeneration, wellbeing, and net-zero goals.
- Demonstrable increase in collaborative projects, enterprise creation, and youth retention.

### **Monitoring**

- Annual impact reporting using Social Value proxies (e.g., GVA uplift, wellbeing measures, collaborative working) - to be developed

Participant surveys, partner feedback, and data on event participation and hub tenancy.

## 9. Next Steps (2026)

1. Develop and deliver 'Making Selkirk' (2026-27) as live testbed for hub programming (pending Creative Scotland funding)
2. Deliver *Creative Business Works Festival* (2026), working with MacArts and seeking funding regionally or nationally (Creative Scotland and Lottery)
3. Commission feasibility study for the Creative Impact Hub (2026), pending funding - in progress.
4. Develop Impact Hub model and plan with support of Impact Hub organisation
5. Develop detailed business plan with 3-year operational and sustainability plan (informed by the above)
6. Continue development of partnership working locally with Selkirk Regeneration Trust, SBC and local partners and regionally with SOSE and CABN and internationally with Impact Hub.
7. Secure capital funding for building acquisition and retrofit with phased approach (2026-2030) with support and advice from Architectural Heritage Fund. Funding to be sought from Scottish Land Fund, SOSE, Creative Scotland, Lottery...
8. Continue development of SCIO governance framework and concomitant policies
9. Continue developing robust CC digital infrastructure (file sharing, data storage, website, digital resources, social media)

## Links

### Section 1.1:

- Creative Coathanger: <https://www.creativecoathanger.org/>

### Section 1.2:

- CC Creative Business Works Festival: <https://www.creativecoathanger.org/cbwf>
- Mapping the Borders, CC collaboration: <https://www.ingepanneels.com/mapping-the-borders-project>
- Borders Heritage Festival: <https://scottishbordersheritage.com/>
- Bogle: <https://alchemyfilmmandarts.org.uk/boglefaq/>

### Section 1.3:

- Impact Hub: <https://impacthub.net/ecosystem-building/>
- FabLab: <https://fabfoundation.org/getting-started/#fablabs-full>
- Haining at Home: <https://www.cabn.info/project/haining-home/>
- Reflections at the Haining: <https://www.ingepanneels.com/reflections-haining-project>

### Section 1.4:

- Scottish Borders Cultural Forum: <https://scottishbordersculturalforum.wordpress.com/>

### Section 2.2:

