



Britten Pears Arts prepares to submit a series of planning applications: the next steps towards realising a sustainable and accessible creative campus at Snape Maltings

Britten Pears Arts' £13.8 million Capital Programme will deliver increased activities for the organisation's communities, enhance lives and improve health through creativity. The planning applications are for a number of Britten Pears Arts properties, primarily at Snape Maltings, and this is the next step towards the realisation of the organisation's plan to create a truly sustainable and accessible creative campus. It will ensure that Britten Pears Arts' buildings and sites have improved accessibility and comfort for everyone, are financially sustainable and help the organisation on its path towards becoming net zero.

This work will also be transformative for Britten Pears Arts' Community and Creative Health Programmes and will allow the organisation to respond to an increased need by expanding existing programmes, adding new strands and reaching significantly more people through activity, knowledge exchange and partnership working.

The planning applications are for the following project elements:

- The modernisation of the **Britten Pears Building** to enable increased levels of community use and the expansion of the Britten Pears Arts community and creative health programmes. A new lift will be installed to ensure that everyone can use the revamped studios. Work is due to start in August 2025.
- A series of upgrades to **Snape Maltings Concert Hall** to improve access, audience comfort, programming flexibility and reduce carbon emissions. There will be auditorium seating improvements, upgraded lighting, an extra passenger lift, refurbished toilets and better kitchen facilities. Work is due to start in January 2027.
- **Snape Rooms**: as well as improvements to existing artist accommodation at Snape Maltings and in Aldeburgh, ten new bedrooms will be created at Snape Maltings for visiting musicians, arts practitioners and visitors. Work is due to start in late 2026.

The first planning request will be submitted in mid-December and after a validation review by the local Authority will begin the consultation process. Britten Pears Arts anticipates that the relevant information will be available on the Public Access system in early January 2025. Follow on planning requests are scheduled for January and will

appear on the Public Access system within a few weeks of submission. The planning applications will include Listed Building Consent (where necessary) and will detail the proposal against each of the buildings. Britten Pears Arts is intending to hold a number of open days for the public to be able to see the proposals in more detail at Snape Maltings, every Wednesday from 10.30 -11.30am in February 2025.

Flood Defences

Britten Pears Arts is working closely with the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET) and the East Suffolk Water Management Board (ESWMB) to ensure that the Snape Maltings site and its world-renowned Concert Hall will be protected. The flood defences will be raised to meet a 1:200-year event. The AOET and the ESWMB have secured funding from the Environment Agency for the Snape Maltings flood defence works and also to benefit the upper estuary communities of Snape, Iken and Aldeburgh. In parallel, landscape architects, Untitled Practice, will design improvements to outdoor public spaces and access routes. Work is due to begin in September 2025.

Britten Pears Arts's Chief Executive Andrew Comben commented, "Our Founders, Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears believed in the power of the arts to connect and be useful to communities. Their vision for Snape Maltings as a Creative Campus is a magnet for visitors, audiences and artists from around the world and we want to make sure it can have an even more vital and sustainable future. Our Capital Programme will mean that existing buildings will be fit for purpose, efficient and help the organisation to achieve its mission. Not only will these works help more people enjoy our sites, as visitors, audience members or artists and performers, but they will help protect the future of this organisation, safeguarding existing jobs and creating new ones. We are enormously grateful for the support we have already received for the project and we still have money to raise, but these planning applications are an important step towards realising our plans."

Capital Programme overview

- Britten Pears Arts to work with the **Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET)** and East Suffolk Water Management Board (ESWMB) to raise the Snape Maltings flood defences.
- The modernisation of the **Britten Pears Building** to enable increased levels of community use and the expansion of Britten Pears Arts community and creative health programmes. A new lift will be installed to ensure that everyone can use the revamped studios.
- A series of upgrades to **Snape Maltings Concert Hall** to improve access, audience comfort and programming flexibility. There will be auditorium seating improvements, upgraded lighting, an extra passenger lift, refurbished toilets and better kitchen facilities.
- Britten Pears Arts will significantly **lower carbon emissions** by installing roof insulation, use of photovoltaic panels, and by connecting the music buildings to a renewable heating system.
- As well as improvements to existing **artist accommodation** at Snape Maltings and in Aldeburgh, nine new bedrooms will be created at Snape Maltings for visiting musicians, arts practitioners and visitors.
- There will be a **new visitor exhibition** at The Red House and a **Discovery Centre** at Snape Maltings, to tell the fascinating stories about the heritage sites.

Funding

Britten Pears Arts has received vital funding from Arts Council England as well as individuals and trusts and foundations, including the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust, East Suffolk Council Rural Business Investment Fund, East Suffolk Council Rural Business & Community Hub Fund and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

Subject to securing the remaining money, the majority of the works are planned to take place in 2026 and 2027. Although some music activities will have to be re-arranged, most regular activity will be able to continue throughout this period. The Aldeburgh Festival and Britten Pears Arts summer performance programme will not be impacted.

A fundraising public appeal will be launched in 2026 and there will be naming opportunities for various elements of the project.

Further information about the campaign and how to contribute is available from Emily Stubbs (estubbs@brittenpearsarts.org) and Alison de Zoete (adezoete@brittenpearsarts.org).

Images are available [here](#).

Britten Pears Arts announced Aldeburgh Festival 2025 on Monday 16 December. Full details available [here](#).

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Notes to Editors

About Britten Pears Arts

Britten Pears Arts is a pioneering music, arts and heritage charity based on the Suffolk coast at two popular, historic visitor destinations: The Red House and Snape Maltings. Britten Pears Arts emerged from the creative partnership of Benjamin Britten, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, and his professional and personal partner, singer Peter Pears. Britten and Pears shared a progressive vision for music and the arts to be useful, helping people enhance and bring joy into their lives. Britten and Pears' vision inspires all our activity, from work with the local communities to our national leadership roles in the fields of talent development and music, health and wellbeing.

www.brittenpearsarts.org