



Photo of the Britten Pears Building credit Britten Pears Arts. All images available [here](#).

Upgraded Britten Pears Building opens as Britten Pears Arts completes the first phase of its Capital Programme

The Britten Pears Building will be home to the O’Hare Music Centre

Public Fundraising Campaign launches to raise the remaining £3.6 million of the Capital Programme

Britten Pears Arts today announces the opening of the upgraded Britten Pears Building at Snape Maltings, marking the completion of the first phase of its Capital Programme, which will deliver increased activities for the organisation’s communities, enhance lives and improve health through creativity.

The modernisation of the Britten Pears Building – originally converted in 1979 - was led by architects [De Matos Ryan](#) and built by [Hutton Construction](#). A new lift has been installed to ensure that everyone can use the revamped studios and performance spaces, creating a more welcoming and inclusive environment for all. Five larger music studios have been created, and all the technical facilities modernised. The upper floor has been transformed into a state-of-the-art Clore Learning Space thanks to generous support from the Clore Duffield Foundation. The building is now thermally and acoustically insulated, part of Britten Pears Arts’ ongoing drive for more sustainable buildings.

The Britten Pears Building will be the home of the O'Hare Music Centre, which is the umbrella term for the organisation's work focussed on growing the future of classical music, encompassing their Artist Development and Children, Families and Young People strands, as well as their work at the intersection of arts & health. A new significant partnership with the Norfolk & Suffolk Music Hub will enable Britten Pears Arts to grow their work for and with Children and Young People significantly across the next few years. This includes termly performance opportunities for pathways programmes within the Hub as well as a term-time, weekly Saturday school for children of all ages. There will be a new focus on developing musical engagement with young people who are unable to access mainstream education and introducing opportunities for home schooled young people or those attending Pupil Referral Units, as well as a greater focus on developing resources for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) music provision. The Britten Pears Young Artist Programme is also based here, and this Festival sees the inaugural Festival Academy taking place, led by James Baillieu with Lise Davidsen, Nicky Spence, Julia Faulkner and Caroline Dowdle as tutors. The Summer Academy (to take place in August) led by Ryan Wigglesworth will welcome a cohort of international young artists to work alongside tutors such as Adrian Brendel, Imogen Cooper and Steven Osborne.

The upgraded space will enable increased levels of community use and the expansion of the Britten Pears Arts Creative Health programmes. This includes the following:

- The building will allow more artists to work in BPA's [Residencies](#) Programme, which is currently oversubscribed.
- Expansion of Britten Pears Arts' work with adults living with long-term health conditions including [SkyLarks](#) – Britten Pears Arts' singing group for people living with Parkinson's and their companions and [Participate](#) – relaxed and fun music workshops for adults in Suffolk.
- Increased activity for Families & Young people with accessible programmes for all ages, including new programmes for under-5s, an extended [Friday Afternoons](#) singing programme, a Saturday school for all ages and including their flagship programme for talented musicians aged 15-18, [AYM](#) (Advanced Young Musicians). These will be launched in September.
- Over the next decade, Britten Pears Arts will continue to increase and embed their programmes centred on Creative Health across the wider music programme, bringing together a diverse community of musicians, practitioners, researchers, clinicians and communities to develop and deliver a nationally impactful programme. This includes [Think Tanks](#); [Cross Sector Training](#) [Creative Retreat](#) & [Leadership](#) Programmes.
- More space for Britten Pears Arts to host local community groups.

Phase Two of the Capital Programme: Restoring Snape Maltings Concert Hall

Britten Pears Arts was recently awarded a £1.9 million Creative Foundations Fund (CFF) grant by Arts Council England, enabling the second phase of its major capital programme to proceed. The grant will go towards the cost of restoring Snape Maltings Concert Hall, with work commencing in January 2027 and will be completed in time for the 2027 Aldeburgh Festival.

The second phase of the Capital Programme will deliver essential, urgent repairs and upgrades to Snape Maltings Concert Hall, the largest and best known of the site's music buildings. The Hall has remained largely unchanged since 1999, with some of the infrastructure dating back even further to 1970 when it was rebuilt after a fire. These works are vital to ensure the site remains open and operational, replacing failing end-of-life systems with sustainable alternatives and supporting necessary repairs. They will increase the economic and environmental sustainability of the organisation by reducing maintenance costs, improving energy efficiency, and enabling us to adapt to the changing climate and needs of audiences.

Areas of work include:

- **Roof of the Concert Hall** – essential remedial work and thermal insulation.
- **Seats in the Concert Hall** will be refurbished to significantly improve comfort and durability and handrails will be installed.
- **Acoustic flexibility** – retractable drapes will support amplified and spoken word events.
- **New LED lighting** to cut energy use, carbon emissions and running costs.
- **Concert Hall lifts** will be refurbished, and an additional lift will be created to further improve accessibility.

- A new **finishing kitchen** will increase restaurant capacity and dining options.
- **Toilet facilities** will be modernised, and a new Changing Places facility will be created.
- **Air handling system** – new plant will be installed.
- **Brickwork repairs** throughout the building.

Public Fundraising Campaign

Having already raised £14.1 million for work on the Britten Pears Building and Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Britten Pears Arts has launched a seat naming campaign, with supporters invited to name concert hall seats for £1,000 (front section of the hall) and £600 (rear section). Prototype seats will be available in the inner foyer for audience members to test and give their feedback on.

Britten Pears Arts' fundraising efforts are now focused on raising a further £3.6 million for flood defences and air cooling to protect against climate change. For many years it was planned that Snape Maltings would be protected through a comprehensive estuary-wide scheme, delivered by the East Suffolk Water Management Board and funded by the Environment Agency. However, the wider project has suffered delays and set-backs, and there is currently no major public funding available. As this work is a high priority, Britten Pears Arts has taken the decision to pursue an independent scheme.

Britten Pears Arts' Chief Executive, Andrew Comben said:

'It is thrilling to see the Britten Pears Building opened and in use for this year's Aldeburgh Festival and it will be transformational in the expansion of our work with children, young people, the community and Creative Health. We are so grateful to all the funders who have contributed to the £14.1 million we have so far raised, that has enabled our vision to start to become a reality. We now need to urgently focus our attention on securing the remaining funds needed to raise the Snape Maltings flood defences, as we are at high risk of flooding. Snape Maltings is a special place, and I hope people might consider donating even a small sum. When all phases are complete, Britten Pears Arts' £17.7 million Capital Programme will realise the organisation's plan to create a truly sustainable and accessible creative campus. Our founders Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears believed in the power of the arts to connect and be useful to communities. Their vision was for Snape Maltings to be a Creative Campus, and this work will help more communities enjoy this very special place, from artists and performers through to visitors and audience members.'

Funding for the Capital Programme

The Britten Pears Arts Capital Programme is supported with public funding from Arts Council England, and trusts & foundations, including Paul Hamlyn Foundation; 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust; East Suffolk Council Rural Business Investment Fund; East Suffolk Council Rural Business & Community Hub Fund; The Foyle Foundation; Garfield Weston Foundation; the Wolfson Foundation; the Clore Duffield Foundation; the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership; the John and Penelope Lebus Trust; the Vanneck Charitable Trust.

Individual donors include Charles & Pascale Clark; Angela & John Crowther; In memory of Stefan T Edlis; Matthew Greenburgh & Helen Payne; Keith & Frances Griffiths; Margaret Hyde, Peter & Veronica Lofthouse; Angela & Lawrence Mallinson; Lindy & Mark O'Hare; David Robbie & Fred Goetzen; Garth and Lucy Pollard, Simon & Victoria Robey; Clive & Eileen Schlee; Alan Swerdlow & Jeremy Greenwood; Sarah Zins; Paul & Sybella Zisman and other anonymous donors.

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

Aldeburgh Festival takes place from 12 – 28 June. Full details [here](#).

For further press information, please contact:

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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