



Photo of Snape Maltings Concert Hall credit Britten Pears Arts. All images available [here](#).

Britten Pears Arts awarded a £1.9 million Creative Foundations Fund grant by Arts Council England towards the cost of restoring Snape Maltings Concert Hall

Britten Pears Arts is delighted to have been 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. The first phase of work, on the neighbouring Britten Pears Building, is nearing completion, and the building will open for the Aldeburgh Festival this June.

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 for over 25 years, 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 a new platform lift will be created.
- 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.

When all phases are complete, Britten Pears Arts' £13.86 million Capital Programme will realise 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 net zero carbon emissions. This work will also be transformative for Britten Pears Arts' Artist Development, Community and Creative Health programmes and will allow the charity 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.

Britten Pears Arts' Chief Executive, Andrew Comben said:

'We are delighted to be awarded this grant from the Creative Foundations Fund and are enormously grateful to Arts Council England for this endorsement of our project. Securing this award enables us to move forward with essential updates to Snape Maltings Concert Hall and to start the second phase of our Capital Programme. Our founders Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears believed in the power of the arts to connect and be useful to communities and this work will help more communities enjoy this very special place, from artists and performers through to visitors and audience members.'

Culture Secretary, Lisa Nandy said:

"I want everyone, everywhere to feel a sense of pride about where they come from. Cultural organisations across the East of England are important custodians of local identity and play a key role in the story we tell ourselves as a nation. Our Arts Everywhere Fund is delivering on our commitment to support cultural assets across the country, increasing access and preserving them for future generations. This is demonstrated by grants announced today that will benefit twelve culture venues, museums, and library services across the East of England. Arts and culture are the beating hearts of our communities; they have the power to unite us in the face of division and break down barriers to opportunity. We want to harness the power to help us build a brighter future for the people of the East of England."

Hazel Edwards, Southeast Area Director, Arts Council England, said:

"We are proud to support this new wave of investment through the Museum Estate and Development Fund, the Libraries Improvement Fund, and the Creative Foundations Fund. These programmes are strengthening the cultural infrastructure that communities rely on every day, from vibrant local libraries and much-loved museums to the creative organisations that bring imagination and innovation to our towns and cities. This funding will help safeguard historic buildings, modernise essential public spaces, and ensure that cultural organisations can continue to thrive, adapt, and inspire. By investing in the foundations of our cultural lives, we are helping to secure a more sustainable, more accessible, and more creative future for people across the East of England and beyond."

Capital Programme overview

- The modernisation of the **Britten Pears Building** (the first phase, currently under construction) will enable increased levels of community use and the expansion of the Britten Pears Arts Artist Development, Community and Creative Health programmes. A new lift tower will ensure that everyone can use the revamped studios. The building is on course to reopen in June 2026.
- A series of upgrades to **Snape Maltings Concert Hall** (the second phase) will improve access and audience comfort, programming flexibility and will reduce carbon emissions. There will be improvements to auditorium seating (including handrails), upgraded lighting, flexible acoustic baffles, an extra passenger lift, refurbished toilets and better kitchen facilities. With the CFF grant, work can start in January 2027.
- Britten Pears Arts will significantly **lower carbon emissions** by installing roof insulation, photovoltaic panels, and by connecting the music buildings to a renewable heating system.

- Britten Pears Arts has worked with the **Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET)** and **East Suffolk Water Management Board (ESWMB)** to develop a scheme to raise the Snape Maltings flood defences to ensure that the Snape Maltings site and its world-renowned Concert Hall will be protected against major tidal surges in 2050. Subject to a separate fundraising campaign, work will commence in 2026/27.
- **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 2027.
- 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 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; Peter & Veronica Lofthouse; Angela & Lawrence Mallinson; Lindy & Mark O'Hare; David Robbie & Fred Goetzen; Simon & Victoria Robey; Clive & Eileen Schlee; Alan Swerdlow & Jeremy Greenwood; Sarah Zins; Paul & Sybella Zisman and other anonymous donors.

A public seat naming appeal will be launched in May 2026 and there will be additional 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).

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

About Arts Council England

Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Between 2023 and 2026 we will have invested over £467 million of public money from Government, alongside an estimated £250 million each year from The National Lottery, to support individual practitioners, arts organisations, museums and libraries, and to help ensure that people in every part of the country have access to culture and creativity in the places where they live. Visit [our website](#) to learn more about our work.