

Report to Snape Parish Council May 2025

A project to construct a public boardwalk from Snape Village and the Sailors' Path to Snape Maltings – or more simply, a safe and accessible place to walk this route.

1 Project outline

- Following much discussion over the last few years, we are now formally planning a boardwalk route across the fields between the Crown PH and Snape Bridge; the route may also be extended towards the Sailors' Path via the Canser footpath if the permissions, risks, costs and benefits indicate this would be feasible. The boardwalk will be constructed similarly to the existing path between Snape Maltings and Iken, where essential, and may also consist of simple surface improvements/treatments in part. The Boardwalk will be open to all, and there will be no restrictions on time of use.

2 Progress to date

- We have indications of support in principle from Phase 1 landowners and land managers, including Adnams (for the Crown PH) and Britten Pears Arts. Following an extended period of support within the community for the idea, we have created an informal committee, supported by the Parish Council, to take the idea forward by producing a programme of works, a project plan and a funding and support strategy. We have made a start on this since the beginning of 2025, and this is the Committee's outline report from their work so far. The Committee is chaired by and advised by Parish Councillors, but is independent of the PC. Membership of the Committee is set out below.

3 Governance arrangements

- The PC's Finance Subcommittee has been asked to advise on appropriate arrangements, and is taking advice from SALC. The options will include forming a charitable organization, which might be suitable for fundraising purposes but has an administrative load attached, and we are actively looking at other options. The Parish Council has indicated that it would not be able to manage the project as part of its own statutory business. Our intention in the relatively short term is to ensure that the Boardwalk is adopted by the appropriate statutory agency (current reorganization permitting) for future management and maintenance purposes.

4 Support and funding required

- We will need at least £200k to commit to the project, and rather more than this if we extend to the Sailors' Path. We have one quotation so far, and one more contractor ready to quote if we wish to proceed. Potential funding sources will include the Heritage Lottery Fund, Suffolk Community Foundation, the various energy developers' community funds, and the standard list of national heritage, landscape and community funding bodies. We

would like to raise at least part of the funding locally to promote engagement, but the bulk of the funds will necessarily have to come from larger organisations.

- Organisational Support will be essential, from the Parish Council, the (current) District and County Councils, and interested parties such as the Water Management Alliance, who plan to be reinforcing flood defences on the river walls in the next 18 months. We are in touch with all these agencies, but without a clear and detailed building proposal, we cannot obviously yet expect actual commitments from these bodies.

4 Action requested from Snape Parish Council

- We ask the PC to review and comment on this update and the 'next steps' proposals set out below, and to continue their current support-in-principle for the project. We hope that the PC will assist us in raising funds, and take a hand in the launch, publicity and future oversight of the Boardwalk, but we are not seeking either approval or funding from the Parish Council.

Snape Boardwalk

Next steps and programme proposal

5.1 Programme outline

- The proposal will be taken forward in two phases, the first being the Snape Village to Snape Maltings route, with the second phase extending from the Crown PH towards the footpath leading up to the Sailors Path (see outline diagram attached) Potential funders and those from whom permission is sought will be made aware that this is our intention, but support for the second phase will not be essential for completion of the first phase.
- The programme items below have all been the subject of discussion within the project group, and now need to be taken forward in detail. It's worth emphasizing that until a formal structure and legal governance arrangements are in place, this is an independent project supported informally by the Parish Council, and looking of course for support from the village community, but not at this stage seeking *approval* from any official body.

5.2 Timetable

- Works on flood defences in this flood cell are planned to start later this year, and will be going forward over the summer of 2026 if all goes to plan. There could be great advantages in planning the boardwalk work to take place at roughly the same time, and therefore we are setting a target of completing Phase 1 work in the **summer of 2026**.

- With one contractor having provided an outline specification, and at least one other contractor familiar with the programme and willing to quote, we can be reasonably confident that the work can start and finish within this timetable. The major risk is of course the fundraising for both capital and future maintenance costs, and this is therefore the critical timing issue.

5.3 Management

- The management of the programme of works and fundraising will be carried out by the local group already in place, supported where necessary by professional assistance. We are taking advice on the legal form the group will need to establish, and aim to make a decision on this within the next two months.
- The longer term management of the boardwalk will need to be established with support and advice from landowners and managers, capital funders and statutory bodies. This is clearly a critical issue, and will need to be decided in principle before any work starts or capital funds are expended. We aim to have a decision and agreement on this by the end of September 2025.

5.4 Permissions

- Formal permission from landowners and interested parties will be sought once the Phase 1 design and detailed route has been agreed within the programme group with the support of the Parish Council. We will try to agree at least in-principle permissions for the second phase at the same time. There will be legal and other fees involved in this process, and the responsibility and governance issues will need to have been made clear before permissions are granted, and the timetable to that extent will be determined by our fundraising progress.

5.5 Funding

- We aim to raise £200k for Phase 1, with additional support in cash or kind where possible to cover administrative, legal and planning fees. We will seek professional fundraising assistance *pro bono* if at all possible, and will have a draft fundraising programme in place by the end of June 2025. As noted in our progress report, whilst raising smaller, individual funding will help both in funds and in raising engagement, we will depend on larger grants, almost certainly from regional or national grant-funding bodies, and including the energy developers currently offering community funding. There is quite a wealth of local experience in this area that we will seek to build on. We will need a definite and significant offer of funds by the year end for the project to proceed.

5.6 Future Management and Maintenance

- This is the second critical issue for the programme, and it is unhelpful that a realignment of local authorities is currently taking place. Whilst future maintenance costs are not going to be a major burden, given the simplicity of the designs we have in mind, we cannot

proceed even in principle without an agreement on future liabilities and accountability. Over the next two (or three) months the programme group will research similar schemes elsewhere for potential solutions and precedents, and seek advice and support from local authority sources.

5.7 Planned completion dates

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| - Management & Governance | End July |
| - Future Management and Maintenance: | |
| - Research | End July |
| - Agreement | September 2025 |
| - Fundraising programme start | End June 2025 |
| - Major funds committed | End December 2025 |
| - Phase 1 works | End summer 2026 |

5.8 Route for Phase 1 and Phase 2 (notional)

