

Saltash AR Trails

Cover Report on the Discovery and Feasibility Report

To: Saltash Town Team

From: Cllr. Hilary Frank

Date: 30th July 2026

Purpose of this report

To present Carbon Pixel's discovery report and invite the Town Team to consider whether the AR trails concept should be developed further.

Background

Saltash Town Team has been exploring whether seasonal augmented-reality (AR) trails could help attract visitors and encourage greater footfall in and around Fore Street. It commissioned Carbon Pixel to undertake a discovery and feasibility exercise.

As the Town Team's liaison with Carbon Pixel, Cllr. Gillies and I met with Carbon Pixel to provide an outline brief and explain the outcomes we were seeking. Carbon Pixel then completed a one-day discovery, reviewed a range of existing approaches and developed a small-scale, browser-based demonstration. Their findings are summarised in the 'Saltash AR Trails: Discovery and Feasibility Report'.

What the Report says

The report identifies several viable approaches, each with different strengths, limitations and costs. Ready-made products offer a proven and comparatively inexpensive way to run seasonal trails, while other platforms provide greater scope for bespoke content and ongoing development.

Carbon Pixel's conclusion is that a bespoke browser-based platform is worth exploring further because it appears to align most closely with the Town Team's preferences for simple access, Saltash-specific content, seasonal reuse and long-term control of the platform and its content. It may also offer opportunities to generate income through sponsorship of individual stops by local businesses or, subject to the ownership and licensing arrangements, by supplying trails to other towns.

Carbon Pixel's early working estimate for delivering a bespoke browser-based platform over five years is £50,000 excluding VAT:

- £20,000 for a reusable browser-based platform, including the first trail
- £10,000 for five years of hosting and maintenance
- £20,000 as a flexible drawdown budget to develop future trails and content

These figures are not a formal quote. The prototype demonstrates the core interaction on the devices tested, but has not yet been subjected to wider device testing or full production testing.

Initial Comparison of Approaches

Approach	Indicative Cost	Principal Advantages	Limitations and Questions
Ready-made seasonal Web AR trail	£999 + VAT for a standard trail. Approx. £7,000 + VAT for a bespoke ten-stop trail	No app download. Proven format. Quick to introduce. Comparatively inexpensive. Sponsorship-ready.	Standard version uses existing characters and content. Bespoke content costs more. Less ownership and control, and further trails may require additional purchases.
Established app-based trail platform	Price on enquiry, usually through a subscription	Proven engagement features. Analytics. Bespoke characters possible. Self-service content management	Users must download an app. Platform remains under the supplier's control. Continued use may depend on an ongoing subscription.
Self-service AR platform	From £2,100 a year + VAT, plus the cost of creating and maintaining the trail	Provides tools for producing bespoke AR experiences. Greater scope for Town Team or an appointed partner to create content directly.	Not a finished trail product. Design, development, testing and maintenance would still be required. Usage and project-size limits apply. Content may become unavailable if subscription ends.
Bespoke browser-based AR platform	Working estimate of £50,000 excluding VAT over five years, including the first trail, hosting and a content-development budget	No app download. Saltash-specific content. Reusable for seasonal and sponsored trails. Greater long-term control. Potential to appoint another supplier. May offer opportunities for sponsorship or supplying trails elsewhere.	Largest financial commitment. The prototype has not yet undergone wider device, outdoor or production testing. Scope, ownership, support and any commercial arrangements would need to be defined carefully.
Simpler non-AR digital trail	Not examined or priced in the report. Likely to cost less than a bespoke AR platform, depending on its scope	QR codes could open maps, stories, archive images, quizzes, rewards and digital passport stamps without an app. Likely to be simpler to build, maintain and make accessible.	Would not offer the novelty or visual impact of AR. Costs, ownership arrangements and likely levels of participation have not yet been explored.

These approaches are not just better or worse versions of the same product: they represent different levels of ambition, cost and long-term control. The Town Team will therefore need to decide what type and scale of experience we wish to have.

Questions for discussion

In considering whether the concept should be developed further, Town Team will need to discuss:

- **Purpose and audience:** Would the trails support the Town Team's objectives for increasing footfall, supporting businesses and promoting the heritage of Saltash? Who would be most likely to use them?
- **Scale and value for money:** Is the Town Team seeking a relatively inexpensive seasonal campaign or a reusable platform supporting a longer-term programme?
- **Funding and governance:** What funding or sponsorship might be available, and which organisation could act as the accountable body, enter into contracts and hold the assets?
- **Practical delivery:** What further assurance would be needed about accessibility, safety, privacy, permissions, device compatibility, maintenance and ownership?
- **Measuring success:** The proposed platform could provide basic analytics on trail starts, visits to individual stops and completions. Do we want other evidence to assess the trail's impact? e.g. repeat use, reward redemptions or feedback from participating businesses.

Proposed next steps

The Town Team is invited to consider whether the concept is sufficiently promising to justify further investigation, including seeking views from local traders and other potential participants.

If the Town Team supports further development, I recommend we set up a working group to:

1. review the principal purpose, intended audiences and desired outcomes of a Saltash trail
2. get feedback from local traders, residents and other potential users
3. compare the available approaches against agreed criteria (e.g. visitor experience, accessibility, flexibility, ownership, likely cost and maintenance requirements)
4. make proposals about whether the trail should use AR and what kind of approach would be most appropriate
5. identify a suitable accountable body and potential sources of funding
6. develop an appropriate brief or specification for the preferred approach
7. agree the commissioning process and go out to tender for detailed, capped proposals against the brief