



**Boat Building Academy**  
Lyme Regis

## **Submission to Lyme Regis Town Council Funding Proposal for Short Courses for Local Young people**



**Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy**  
**May 2023**

## **Preface**

### ***The Boat Building Academy's Heritage Credentials***

*At the Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy, we are passionate about and committed to providing high quality training and the development of skills in traditional wooden boatbuilding, drawing upon the strong heritage of this craft and industry from the UK and across the world.*

*Maintaining and enhancing these heritage skills and passing them on to future generations via our students, underpins what we do and also helps place the more modern boat building techniques we also teach, within their historical context.*

*Our training and the resulting work of our students, when they enter the industry, helps to raise the profile of our work, maintaining and enhancing interest in traditional boat building, by the public and within the industry. This is enhanced by the publicity within all aspect of the media, for our boat launch days, as well as attendance at boat shows and other events, to promote the Academy and the traditional boat building training we offer, which always attracts keen interest.*

*Our boat building course provides a broad-based grounding and training in traditional and heritage techniques and maintaining and developing these heritage skills, techniques and traditions of wooden boatbuilding is therefore at the heart of what we do and have delivered for the past 25 years and will continue into the future.*

*We now have a renewed focus on attracting young people with the benefit of bursaries of up to 100%, for those who are unable to fund the fees themselves and with view to taking them through a progression of training from our one-day 'Taster Days' through to one or more 2 – 5 days short courses, which could ultimately lead to them attending the full 40 week Boat Building Course or the 12 week Furniture Making Course.*

***This submission is being made to Lyme Regis Town Council, following discussion with John Wright the Clerk to the Council, with a request for grant aid to support the delivery of the Short Courses to these young people.***

**Will Reed**

**Director, Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy**

## 1 Background

***“Fast paced and intense course... learning new skills every day...the quality of training and instruction is first rate with a diverse knowledge base.”***

***“This course was undeniably the best training I have ever received and I cannot recommend it enough.”***

1.1 The Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy is a national and internationally recognised Centre of Excellence in its field and since its inception in 1997, has trained over 2500 people on both the practical and intensive 40-week, modern and traditional boat building course as well as the 12 week furniture making course and a wide range of further courses from 2-days to 6-weeks. The full range of courses offered can be seen on the BBA’s website... <https://www.boatbuildingacademy.com/>

1.2 The Academy was approved by the Charity Commission as a Charitable, Company Limited by Guarantee on 7 January 2020. It is registered at the Lyme Regis Marine Centre, Monmouth Beach, Lyme Regis DT7 3JN with the Charity Number of 1187235. It is located adjacent to the renowned, Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and is probably the westernmost business in Dorset! There are currently a Director, 14 permanent staff, with a number of other experts attending to offer specialist advice and training sessions occasionally, together with 6 Trustees.

1.3 It is important to emphasise that we receive no public funding at all, with all costs, which are mainly staff salaries, being met by course fees, fundraising and donations.

### **The BBA’s mission statement is as follows:**

*“To teach men and women to build boats and design and make furniture of the highest quality to accepted industry standards using traditional and modern methods and materials, thus enabling our students to fully realise their potential” .*

### **The charity objects are:**

- a. To advance the education of the public in the art, craft and science of boat building, fine woodworking and related skills;*
- b. To educate young people through the provision of sailing or sailing related activities and other training to develop their physical, mental and social capabilities.*

1.4 Many of the students leaving the Academy enter good quality employment within boat building, furniture making and other businesses. A number of former students have returned after working in the industry to teach at the Academy, including the Director.

## 2 'Taster Days' Project

2.1 Following a presentation to sixth form students by Will Reed the BBA's Director over 25 students expressed interest in attending a Taster Day and these are now being planned with the school. The BBA Taster Days will involve the following:

- Students will be provided with detailed and illustrated presentations by the Director and a range of specialist tutors, so that the students gain a good understanding of the breadth of work that is undertaken at the BBA and the different courses that are offered...Boat Building & Furniture Making. It will also be emphasised that commitment, enthusiasm and willingness to learn, are more important at the outset than skills or experience with wood, as this is what is taught.
- Tours of workshops, to see the different stages of boat building - planning and 'lofting' [*making up measured drawings of the boats that are to be built*], as well as seeing the boats under construction, showing the various techniques employed, clinker, laminated etc. They will also be briefed on the machining and furniture making workshops and shown examples of past furniture projects – chairs, cabinets etc.
- The second half of the day will involve a guided but 'hands on' experience in the woodworking workshop, which will involve students gaining an understanding of different woodworking tools and having the opportunity to try out some sawing, planing and simple jointing.
- There will be breaks for tea and coffee in the morning and afternoon, which will also provide an opportunity to engage with the current BBA students, to hear about their experiences first hand, which will be most beneficial. Light refreshments will be provided at lunchtime, or students can bring their own lunches, if they prefer.
- The students will be invited to attend future boat launches at Lyme Regis Harbour after the end of each boat building course, with dates being provided to the school in advance. They will also be welcome at 3 furniture exhibitions which run each year and the annual Open Day in April.

2.2 The BBA does have funds to help support the delivery of these Taster Days for the current year. The outcome of these days could be that a number of students do express genuine interest in the potential of attending the BBA courses on offer. However, prior to undertaking a full-time course, it is considered important and indeed essential that those expressing such interest have the opportunity to attend the short courses offered by the Academy.

See <https://www.boatbuildingacademy.com/courses/short-courses/>

These last for 2-5 days each and include:

- Introduction to Woodworking [2 days] £295 per student
- Woodworking Skills 1 [5 days] £695 per student
- Woodworking Skills 2 [5 days] £695 per student

2.3 In order to make it easy for students to attend these short courses, it is proposed to offer grant aid/bursary funding, so that no student who is economically disadvantaged is barred from attending. Therefore, to avoid any form of stigma, and to encourage as many students as possible to have this experience, it is considered important that these short courses are offered at no cost to students.

2.4 Following these short course and subject to the outcome, there is then potential for some students to progress to either the boat building or furniture making course. This incremental approach to training and indeed assessing students by the BBA, is considered to be most appropriate and valuable, so as to ensure that both the students and the Boat Building Academy are sure that taking a further 40 or 12 week course is the correct path for the student. It would not be the interests of any party, for a student to start one of the full-time courses, only to decide after a few weeks, that it was not for them.

2.5 Since becoming a charity in January 2020, the BBA's has offered bursaries for these full time courses, but due to limited funding, in the past this has been limited to 50% grant. However, since 2022, the BBA has embarked upon a major fundraising campaign aimed at securing additional funding, so that grants of up to 90-100% can be offered. This will provide opportunities for training to disadvantaged young students, who are unable to afford the fees, but who nonetheless show aptitude, enthusiasm and commitment.

2.6 This campaign continues, but to date this initiative, which has involved submitting bids to numerous Charitable Trusts and Foundations and other organisations, has raised £140,000. This includes the £1000 grant that the Town Council has just provided to help deliver the Taster Days for Woodroffe Students and for which the BBA is most appreciative.

2.7 The BBA also has longer term aspirations to develop more workshop space and accommodation for bursary students and a short summary of this is in **Appendix 1**. Photographs illustrating the student work at the BBA are in **Appendix 2**.

### **3 Funding Request to Lyme Regis Town Council**

3.1 In order to help deliver the short courses to local young people, further funding is required. As noted above, the 2 day short course cost £295 per student and the 5 days courses £695. This means that if say, there were 12 students taking these courses over the next 12 -24 months, it would cost in the region of £11,880.

3.2 The request to the Town Council is therefore to assist with the delivery of these courses through the provision of a 50%+, match funded grant of £6,000. Clearly this would be 'ring-fenced' for this initiative only. If this sum is provided by the Town Council, it will enable up to 12 young aged 16-25 to benefit from one or other of these course per annum. We will embark on a promotion campaign to recruit students who live Lyme Regis to benefit from these courses.

### **4 Community Engagement**

4.1 The Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy is a small, but important organisation within Lyme Regis and is based in a busy part of the town, close to the seafront and harbour. Since approval of its charitable status in January 2020, it has made considerable efforts to engage with organisations within the wider, Dorset community, as well as with the local community in Lyme Regis and its environs; notably those involved in the Cultural and Heritage sector.

4.2 It is considered important that an outward looking and engaging philosophy should be an integral part of the Academy's operation and future, especially with regard to the Lyme Regis itself. The separate Community Engagement Report provided with this submission, sets out the BBA's recent, current and planned engagement proposals and projects.

4.3 Clearly informal consultation and engagement with the public also takes place via social media and the BBA is active in ensuring that the various sites are kept up to date. See:

<https://www.boatbuildingacademy.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BoatBuildingAcademy/>

<https://www.instagram.com/boatbuildingacademy/?hl=en>

4.4 In summary, categories of engagement currently include the following and which are explained further in the separate document:

- Engagement with Statutory & Other Agencies in Dorset
- Wider & Local Community Engagement via:
  - Boat Launches
  - Furniture Exhibitions

- Open Days
- Lyme Regis Town Council
- Local Public Facing Activities and Engagements
- Boat Shows
- Women in Boat Building Group
- Woodroffe School – ‘Taster Days’
- The Lyme Regis Culture & Heritage Group

## **5 Concluding Comments**

5.1 It is hoped that the above information will both provide a good update of where the BBA is currently positioned with developing some of its future plans and also an indication of its funding requirements for the short course project described.

5.2 The interest of the Lyme Regis Town Council in the Boat Building Academy is much appreciated and a response to the above proposals would be welcomed, but clearly if a further meeting to discuss the proposals is considered appropriate, then that is of course welcomed. Councillors and staff are also invited to visit the BBA at any time to see the work underway for themselves.

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## **Appendix 1**

### **A1 Development Phase for the Planned New Workshop and Expansion**

A1.1 Part of the BBA's future plans are to provide an additional workshop within the courtyard at the rear of the premises and also to provide more students accommodation, targeted at bursary students in particular. This would be on the site of the current small machine shop, which would be relocated elsewhere within the site.

A1.2 Initial discussion have taken place with architects Grainge, from Exeter who have produced some basic potential design options. If the BBA is to achieve this objective of new buildings, then more detailed plans do need to be prepared and planning permission sought.

A1.3 Without this in place there is no prospect of the project being progressed through to the fund-raising stage. The BBA does not currently have the resources to fund this initial stage of work, as it is still recovering from the impact of the Covid situation and so finds itself in something of a conundrum with regard to these larger projects at present.



## Appendix 2 - Photographs Workshops & Open Day









