



Boat Building Academy
Lyme Regis

Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy

Lyme Regis, Boat Building Academy

Report on Current and Future Community Engagement Initiatives - 2023



Lyme Regis, Boat Building Academy

Report on Current and Future Community Engagement Initiatives.

1	Introduction	3
2	Engagement with Statutory & Other Agencies in Dorset	3
3	Wider & Local Community Engagement	4
4	Conclusions & Next Steps	9

Appendices - Photographs

- **Boat Launch**
- **Furniture Exhibition**
- **Open day**

Will Reed
Director, Lyme Regis Boat Building Academy
Will.reed@boatbuildingacademy.com
07786861791 / 01297 445545

Simon Williams
Footprint Futures – Planning & Regeneration
simon.williams@boatbuildingacademy.com
07980730004 / 01297 443551

April 2023

Lyme Regis, Boat Building Academy

Report on Current and Future Community Engagement Initiatives.

1 Introduction

1.1 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.



1.2 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. 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 local Lyme Regis area. This report therefore sets out current, recent and planned engagement proposals and projects.

1.3 Clearly informal consultation and engagement with the public 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>

2 Engagement with Statutory & Other Agencies in Dorset

2.1 In the past few years, closer links and relationships have been developed with a number of statutory and other agencies, including the **Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership**, with regard to potential grant aid and its future strategy, promoting the contribution that the boat building and the maritime sector in general can make to the local economy and its development. The maritime sector is *now* a priority for the LEP and its strategy.



2.2 Likewise, a relationship has been developed with the **Dorset Council's Economic Development Team**, which has resulted in the receipt of government grant aid to assist the BBA's bursary scheme and also with the **Dorset Growth Hub**, who also supported the BBA's fundraising post Covid 19 initiative with some grant support.

2.3 Links have also been developed with the **Dorset Coast Forum, which is** a strong partnership within Dorset that has been established for many years, and as the name suggests, addresses all issues linked to the coast. The BBA has become a member of the Forum and indeed, Will Reed the BBA Director was invited to give a presentation about the work of the Academy at the last annual meeting in October 2022.

2.4 The BBA has been a partner in the **Dorset Maritime Training Feasibility Study** together with Weymouth College, Dorset Council, the Marine Society/Sea Cadets and others. This explored the potential for maritime training course to be based at Weymouth College, but with organisations such as the BBA contributing towards the training. This project is still under consideration by the College.



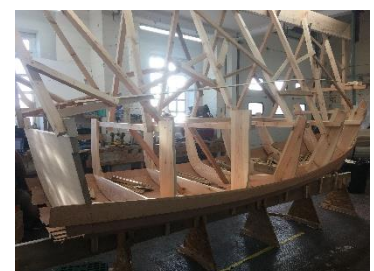
2.5 More widely, discussions have been promoted with **SS Great Britain in Bristol** who are planning to build a replica of the SS Great Western; one of Brunel's wooden ships and so conversations are planned with regard to the potential of the BBA working in partnership on the project, with some training for those involved potentially being delivered by the BBA, either in Lyme Regis or in Bristol.

2.6 As a result of local contacts, a relationship is also being developed and links planned with the **Adventure Under Sale/Seas Your Future** charity, which owns and operates the Tall Ship Pelican, with the potential for students who have benefited from a tall ships experience potentially joining with Boat Building Academy courses and also with potential for staff and students from the BBA to assist with some repair and maintenance works on the tall ship. This very much accords with one of the BBA's overarching objectives. Discussions are also taking place with Morning Star; a smaller 'tall ship'.

3 Wider & Local Community Engagement

Information and Viewing of the Boat Building Workshop

3.1 The Boat Building Academy is located in a very prominent position on the seafront in Lyme Regis, close to large areas of car parking, and as a result, during the summer in particular, many visitors pass the doors of the BBA. Visitors are welcomed and encouraged to enter the foyer, where there are information leaflets about the courses offered at the academy, as well as glass viewing



areas, so that the public may see first-hand, the different activities and construction underway, in the Boat Building workshop.

3.2 Future plans to enhance this provision include, investigating the potential for developing a larger room for exhibits and further information, together with the a raised and screened balcony within the Boat Building workshop itself, accessed from the existing stairway to the first floor, so that people would be able to see more readily, the 'hands-on' work that this is underway.



3.3 During good weather and especially the summer, the large workshop's roller shutter door is usually open, which again means that the public are able to view the activities within the workshop themselves. All of this clearly provides an informal opportunity for the public to learn about the courses available at the academy, with mutual benefits.

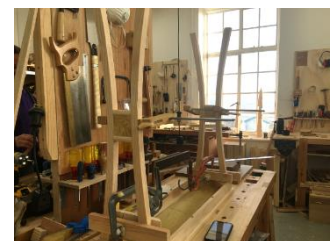
Boat Launches

3.4 Boat launches, following the completion of every 40 week boat building course are an important and very popular activity within Lyme Regis, with the boats being launched from the nearby slipway, into Lyme Regis Harbour. This event is widely published in the local media, on the BBA's social media and is attended by local dignitaries, with usually a speech by the Town Mayor. This is very much an 'event' within Lyme Regis, taking place usually during the Summer and late Autumn. See **Appendix** for further photographs. The next boat launch will be in Lyme Regis Harbour on **Wednesday 7 June at 09:00**.



Furniture Exhibitions

3.5 Likewise, at the completion of the 12 week Furniture Making courses which are held regularly, members of the public are invited to view the completed works within the workshop and these are proving to be increasingly popular, as more and more people become aware of the courses and these events. See **Appendix** for further photographs of the most recent exhibition.



Lyme Regis Town Council

3.6 It is recognised that within a small town such as Lyme Regis, it is very important that businesses engage, not only with other businesses, but also with local elected representatives. As a result, invitations have been extended to Lyme Regis Town Council Officers and Members, who have attended the Boat Building Academy to view the activities, so they have a greater understanding of what takes place at the Academy.



3.7 It is also considered important that the Council appreciates the contribution that the BBA business makes to the local economy, as a result of employing 14 members of staff who live locally, as well as the students who stay locally and spend money in the local economy.

3.8 The Council has recently provided a grant to assist in the funding of 'Taster Days' for Woodroffe school students with dates for these visits being arranged. This is to become an annual event, with the potential to roll out the programme to Beaminster and Colfox Schools.

3.9 Further engagement is underway and planned with the Town Council to foster closer working relations into the future.

Local Public Facing Activities and Engagements

Fossil Festival

3.8 In recent years, these have included attendance at **the Lyme Regis Fossil Festival**, with a stand showcasing, boats, furniture and other material, promoting the courses and generally informing the public, both local people and visitors, about the courses offered by the academy. One result of this initiative was to raise awareness of the many one week short courses that are offered at the BBA and which many people were simply unaware of.,



3.9 Other local events attended, with a display stand, include the Uplyme Village Fete and other similar events. In addition Open Days are held for the public to attend.



April 2023 Boat Building Academy Open Day

3.11 This was held on a day of great weather on 15 April and attracting over 500 people; both locals and visitors. The event was hive of activity, with visitors seeing for themselves the variety of current boats under construction and were able to talk to both students and their tutors about the heritage craft skills that are taught at the BBA. Completed boats were also on display in the BBA's car park. Also featured were examples of recent and past pieces from the furniture making courses.



Southampton Boat Show

3.10 In order to maintain and enhance links with more commercial maritime businesses, as well as the wider public, the BBA attends Southampton Boat Show each year, again to promote its activities and courses and to engage with potential employees of students completing the boat building courses.

Women in Boat Building Group

3.11 The BBA director has been actively engaged in the national, 'Women in Boat Building' group, [<https://www.instagram.com/womeninboatbuilding/>], which is, as the name suggests, encourages more women to take part in boat building training and work. At present, BBA generally has a reasonable proportion of women attending its courses, but it's looking to increase this still further.



3.12 One of the BBA's Trustees is a renowned boat builder, who has recently held two day courses at the BBA – '*Disappearing Lines*' which teaches the essential techniques of steam bending and riveting used in traditional and heritage boat construction. These have attracted a large proportion of women.



3.13 The issue of encouraging more women into boat building was featured in the BBC South West's Spotlight News programme on February 28.

See <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001jpx7/spotlight-evening-news-28022023>

This issue has also been addressed on a recent maritime blog:

<http://www.offwatchpodcast.co.uk/>

Discussions are also underway with the Group, with regard to seeking bursaries specifically for women students.

Woodroffe School Sixth Form Taster Days

3.14 One most recent initiatives is the delivery of a presentation at Lyme Regis' Woodroffe School's sixth form, to inform and enthuse local young people about the BBA in its courses. This has resulted in offering students the opportunity to attend a 'Taster Day' at the BBA, to see for themselves what goes on and to assess whether working in wood, whether boat building or furniture making, may be a training route they wish to follow. Over 25 students expressed interest in this innovative initiative.

3.14 The first Taster Days are being planned with dates being agreed and if this proves successful, it is likely to be rolled out to Beaminster and Colfox School. Furthermore, it has been agreed with the school that the presentation and this Taster Day initiative will become an annual event. This is therefore seen as a very good way of the BBA to engage with the local community and especially with one of its target audiences; young people.

3.15 Specific funding has been secured to enable some students who are enthused by the Taster Day to have the opportunity to continue their experience, through attending one or more, one-week, short course offered by the BBA.

3.16 Further initiatives planned for the future could include developing the Taster Day concept, so that adults, as well as young people have the opportunity to explore and experience the Boat Building Academy. Providing them with a hands-on experience will provide a good understanding of the work carried out and with a view to encouraging them to enrol on a course, initially a one-week short-course, and potentially future longer courses.

The Lyme Regis Culture & Heritage Group

3.17 In considering the wider role of the BBA within Lyme Regis, an initiative that has recently been launched by the BBA, is to engage more closely with other heritage and cultural organisations in the town, so there is better communication and the potential for some joint working. Clearly the Boat Building Academy is actively engaged in training people

in the traditional heritage skills of Boat Building. The other organisations include the following: **Town Mill**; an historic working mill and visitor attraction, that includes the operational mill, which attracts many visitors and local people, with a mix of retail, craft and catering facilities as well as the Malthouse Art Gallery, **Lyme Regis Museum**; **Lyme Regis Marine Theatre**.

3.18 These are the core organisations in the town involved in a diverse range of cultural or heritage activities. The **Lyme Regis Cultural & Heritage Group** has therefore been established and its first meeting held in April, with a view where appropriate, to joint approaches to statutory or other funding organisations, to support future initiatives that would benefit, not only the organisations but more significantly, the town as a whole. This is only an informal group, just to facilitate engagement a few times per annum.

3.18 In view of their broader remit within the town, the **Lyme Regis Town Council** as the local statutory authority, as well as **Lyme Regis Development Trust**, that is a long-standing community focused organisation in the town are also involved, so there is wider coordination between all of these organisations.

4 Conclusions & Next Steps

4.1 This report sets out the Boat Building Academy's current and proposed initiatives relating to wider and local community engagement and partnership working. This is seen as an essential and increasingly important aspect of the BBA's work. This report should therefore be seen as interim and continuing '*work in progress*', with regular updates being provided as new initiatives and plans develop, over the future months and years.



4.2 The BBA has aspirations to develop additional workshop space and improved student accommodation on the site and exploration of the feasibility of these projects will be progressed, with where appropriate, external partners and agencies.

April 2023

Lyme Regis BBA, Monmouth Beach, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3JN

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

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

Appendix

Photographs of Boat Launch



Furniture Exhibition March 2023



Open Day April 2023

