

NEWS RELEASE
12 FEBRUARY 2021

**THE BOAT BUILDING ACADEMY ISSUES CROWDFUNDER
TO HELP KEEP STUDENTS SAFE DURING COVID-19**

The Boat Building Academy in Lyme Regis, renowned for the high quality of its training and graduates, is aiming to crowd fund £20,000 in order to undertake covid-inspired building work.

And, within a couple of weeks of the launch (<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lrbba---meeting-the-challenge-of-covid-19>), it's almost 80% of the way to its target.

The building work – primarily expanding a mezzanine to allow space for students to socially distance – is projected to cost around £76K, with £26K already raised from trusts. After the crowd funder is complete, the remaining £30K will be covered by the Boat Building Academy.

The academy, which gained charity status in early 2020, normally sees 36 students a year through its boat building courses and also runs a 12-week furniture making course.

The building work will achieve a significant 60 per cent expansion of the mezzanine within the academy's workshop. This will allow each course's students to maintain 2m distancing using individual workstations instead of sharing benches.

Converting some of the existing accommodation into workshop space is also within the project's scope. Once works are completed, the academy will be able to run two boat building courses and a furniture making course as planned - at the same time – in a covid-secure manner.

"We obviously don't want our doors to be shut for a minute longer than we have to," says Will Reed, principal and trustee. "As soon as the science deems it safe for us to reopen, we want to be able to welcome our students back into an area that they feel confident to be in. That means increasing individual's workspaces, and to do that we need to raise the capital. Covid has raised unexpected situations for everyone, but we're throwing ourselves into the challenge.

"We've had some generous donations from the trustees and staff and were delighted to receive a direct payment of £1,000 from a graduate of the boat building course."



Boat Building Academy

Lyme Regis

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Support is also coming from further afield. The academy has also called on companies who employ BBA graduates to donate if they can. It's received a pledge of £5,000 from the Dorset LEP (dependent on the Boat Building Academy achieving its crowd funding target).

Will is confident that the fundraising target, and subsequent building works, can be achieved in a timely manner.

"We've had brilliant support," he says. "We've been humbled by the amount we've received from our former students who are now working for companies like Spirit Yachts, and T Nielsen. It's obvious to us that they valued their time here highly. And we are determined to make sure that the legacy we started in 1997 - of incredible boat builders and highly skilled wood workers - can continue."

Providing the funding target is achieved, building work can start as soon as possible in March - when Will hopes the first boat building cohort will be in residence. Then the race will be on to expand the space so that when the second cohort begins in May, the space will be even better to learn skills such as joinery and planking, and also be socially distanced.

Donations can be made online at: <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lrbba---meeting-the-challenge-of-covid-19>.

The academy is really keen for this work to take place not least because the charity awarded four bursaries at the end of 2020, with a bursary student due to start on the furniture making course in March. Find out more about the furniture making course <https://www.boatbuildingacademy.com/courses/12weekfurnituremaking/>.

For those who have found themselves interested in a change of career over the past twelve months, a few places are available on the boat building course starting in May. This 40-week course is full time and offers a thorough grounding in modern and traditional boat building. Find out more via <https://www.boatbuildingacademy.com/courses/40-week-boat-building-maintenance-and-support/>.

Donate to the Boat Building Academy's crowd funder appeal:
<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/lrbba---meeting-the-challenge-of-covid-19>

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Editors' notes

High res images are available from <https://maa.agency/gallery/the-boat-building-academy-issues-crowdfunded-to-help-keep-students-safe-during-covid-19/>

- The Boat Building Academy was started in 1997 by Commander Tim Gedge and since then it has gone from strength to strength. The students are the lifeblood of the academy; from school-leavers to bankers, military personnel and retirees. Their boundless enthusiasm and energy enable the BBA to exist.
- The BBA also offers a variety of 2 to 5-day short courses, from basic woodwork and furniture making, to boat building, GRP repairs, wooden boat restoration and sail making. Find out more online at boatbuildingacademy.com.
- When students enrol on a boat building course, they spend the first 20 weeks preparing for their boat build. Techniques such as joinery and planking are taught on the mezzanine before students move to the ground floor and start their individual boat builds.
- For more information contact the Boat Building Academy on 01297 445545 or email office@boatbuildingacademy.com.