

# Skills Training Forum Summary Sheet

## Overview

SHTP 2 aimed to address the skills gap in the traditional skills needed to maintain and operate historic vessels. This forum explored traditional maritime skills training, shared knowledge of training courses and discussed routes to funding. Our three guest speakers included:

- Roger Crumpton: Trustee & Secretary at Pilgrim Heritage Sailing Foundation.
- Barbara Bridgman: Director at Lynher River Barge CIC.
- Felicity Less: Operations Manager at Pioneer Sailing Trust.

## Training Routes

- 1) **Kickstart Scheme:** Pilgrim have been involved in the governments Kickstart scheme, and while it has been beneficial in providing funded backing for skills training there are several issues. Firstly, there are bureaucratic challenges, in terms of the lengthy process from registering as an employer to hiring a candidate. Secondly, to be an employer under Kickstart you must have a minimum of thirty vacancies, so for smaller organisations partnering up with another organisation is important for them to be eligible. It was also highlighted that the £1500 grant offered to cover employer's set up and employability training costs, has eligibility issues as if your organisation is already receiving funding then you are no longer eligible.
- 2) **Apprenticeships:** Pioneer have been offering 4-year apprenticeships in boatbuilding, where apprentices work on several projects to learn traditional boatbuilding skills. Pioneer are now looking to adapt their apprenticeship to make it more suited to their own needs. The Heritage Engineering Apprenticeship will focus more on teaching apprentices the history of the vessel, how to research the vessel's history, and how to evaluate which restoration route to go down, with the aim that the apprentice will gain a broader understanding of boatbuilding, which will be more advantageous in their next steps.

## Challenges

- 1) **Funding:** A common challenge that the speakers discussed was the issue of funding. It is essential for organisations to have funded backing to provide training. This funding issue also exists for young people who often cannot afford the low wage at entry level or unpaid volunteering needed to gain experience.
- 2) **Reliance on volunteers:** With little opportunity to offer paid employment, it means these organisations depend heavily on volunteers. While this brings benefits in skills training and recruiting crew, it also means that there is a less consistent workforce as volunteers have their own commitments and there is always the risk volunteers may decide to move on.

## Top Tips

- 1) **Increasing Recruitment:** A common theme within the forum was the struggle in recruitment. This led to discussions on how to devise a recruitment style that attracts applicants. Sea selection days were deemed beneficial in allowing the employer to review the applicant in an informal and natural way, while also giving applicants a taster of the sector to see if they are interested enough to pursue a role. The new Kickstart 'speed dating' event was also discussed where applicants must speak to every employer, giving both the employer and the applicant the opportunity to get to know one another.
- 2) **Future of Training:** To address the skills shortage, Barbara suggested that the creation of a localised training scheme would be beneficial. This would involve a pool of trainees that are shared amongst organisations to provide a varied training route. With the end of SHTP, it is the aim that this project can be used as a building block for other organisations to develop their own training programmes.

