£501,000 investment for Portsmouth charity to support young people

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The grant will enable the trust to employ apprentices to restore a historic junk yacht called Boleh. Local young people will be able to learn heritage skills and make Boleh fit to sail again, while gaining credits at Portsmouth's Highbury College towards their professional shipwright qualifications.

The funding also provides for significant community involvement in this exciting heritage project. Boleh's story and restoration will be harnessed to inspire pupils from the Portsmouth-based Charter Academy and introduce them to experiences and adventures that they would not normally encounter in their lives.

The restoration will be supported by the design expertise of third-year ship science students from the University of Southampton.

Once restored, Boleh – whose name means "Can Do" in Malay - will be used to help those facing challenges in their lives by giving them the chance to experience sailing this unique vessel and so build confidence, leadership and team working skills.

Boleh, a remarkable 40ft wooden junk yacht, was built after WWII in Singapore by a Naval Officer, Commander Robin Kilroy, DSC, who then sailed her back to Salcombe, Devon in 1950. She is constructed from traditional materials to a mixed junk/Bermudan rig design with many novel features – such as portholes made from the windscreens of Japanese fighter aircraft.

George Middleton, Chairman of the Boleh Trust, said: "We are extremely grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund whose support will allow the Boleh Trust to make a huge difference to the lives of young people in the Portsmouth area – both now, as we get our apprenticeship training up and running, and in the future when Boleh again becomes a sail training vessel. What's really wonderful about this funding is that it will help us to share Boleh's remarkable story and heritage with the local community."

Stuart McLeod, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund South East, said: "This rare vessel brings together European and Far East traditions and represents an important moment in sailing ship design. We at the Heritage Lottery Fund are delighted that Boleh will be fully restored, back to her former glory, allowing the Boleh story to be shared with local people and visitors alike. A particular highlight of this project for HLF is the young apprentices from Portsmouth who will be trained in shipbuilding during the process. Skilling up young people is so important and will ensure Boleh's legacy lives on beyond just the restoration."

Dame Sharon Hollows, Principal of the Charter Academy, said: "I'm delighted that Heritage Lottery Funding has been awarded to the Boleh Trust. The Trust, with its emphasis on helping young people through skills training and in offering sailing opportunities, together with its inspirational "Can Do" – anything is possible – approach to life, is just the sort of unique and inspirational activity that can enhance learning and life skills at Charter."

Notes to editors

The Boleh Trust is a Portsmouth-based registered charity (No. 1135117) formed with the twin aims of preserving the unique historic junk yacht ‘Boleh’ (National Historic Vessel No. 2281) and giving young people the opportunities to develop practical and life skills.
Boleh Trust website
Facebook: facebook.com/BolehProject
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Further information

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