



## **PUBLIC STATEMENT – Coronavirus Outbreak**

**Brixham, Devon, UK – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

### **Pilgrim takes a turn to Port!**

Pilgrim has just completed her winter refit programme and we have invested more than £10,000 this winter to make her ready for our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. She's in really good shape and now suddenly we have had to face the global threat of the Coronavirus Pandemic. It is therefore with heavy hearts that we must announce that we are suspending our 2020 sailing program.

We were out sailing our stunning heritage sailing trawler 'Pilgrim of Brixham BM45' in the bay just last weekend. Our crew training programme has continued through the winter but now we've had to curtail that and return to port, but not in the circumstances we had hoped!

The Pilgrim Heritage Sailing Foundation, like many others, is facing an unprecedented situation due to this pandemic. As Charity Trustees, our obligation is to be true to our charitable mission to preserve, maintain, operate and protect Pilgrim of Brixham for the nation, for our South Devon community and as the oldest surviving Brixham built example of our fishing heritage.

Our overriding obligation however, is to protect the health and wellbeing of our volunteers, crew, sailing guests and visitors. Many of whom are classed by the Government as "vulnerable". Pilgrim offers accommodation with guests and crew living in close quarters. This is not consistent with our present duty of care. Furthermore, our Government has asked us all to stop non-essential travel and non-essential social interactions.

We are also suspending our Open days, school visits and public events until further notice.

These are unprecedented times and we know it will be a big disappointment to the many guests who have booked to sail with us this year, but it's the right thing to do in these circumstances. We need to look after our supporting community and make sure we protect Pilgrim so she can resume sailing as soon as is practicable. That means utilising our hard-earned financial reserves and managing our cashflow very carefully.

We will be back sailing her in the traditional manner as soon as we can. We owe it to our sailing guests to be clear about our intentions and how we will respect their bookings. We will be

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#### **PILGRIM Heritage Sailing Foundation**

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communicating with all of you individually in the days ahead and seek your patience whilst we work through this.

Our permanent professional skipper Richard Smith will be staying with Pilgrim in Brixham to look after her with help from some of our amazing volunteers. However, we also have volunteers who are in vulnerable groups and are self-isolating. The weeks and months ahead will test us all but we'll be back out there with our red sails in the sunset before long. We can't wait.

Fair winds and stay safe

Ends

For further enquiries

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