

Chair

Andrew Shenstone



Please give details of all diving industry related interests, whether remunerated or not, and any other potential conflicts of interest

n/a

What do you think are the key challenges facing BSAC, and what should we be doing to address them?

As an active Open Water Instructor and branch officer I know from direct experience how difficult the past two years have been for our members.

Three key challenges face BSAC: ensuring our sustainability, enhancing our inclusivity, and maximising the value of membership to attract and retain divers. These are all inextricably connected.

BSAC's membership has shrunk every year for the last 20 years. People still want to learn to dive, but we know they wish to do so more flexibly and alongside other pursuits.

Our membership is aging and we need attract and retain a more diverse community of divers. BSAC needs to promote an environment where everyone can have the

opportunity to progress. We need to become a club where our younger members can see themselves reflected in our instructor and volunteer community.

The present strategy is the right one for BSAC. It is the result of an extensive consultation with our members and a thoughtful assessment of the opportunities open to us. It has also been informed by examining approaches taken by bodies like BSAC that are facing similar challenges – and in getting to grips with why so many leave us after only a year of membership.

BSAC should continue with the adaptations made for Covid and the Branch/Centre Partnership scheme. In this strange 'post' by not quite 'past' Covid world, we must coordinate and harness the full resources of our diving community and modernise how we deliver training and support to members.

We need to train our members more quickly, offer an increasingly flexible and modularised Diver Training Programme, improve our training products, and diversify our instructor base.

The focus of Council needs to be upon supporting and assuring the work of HQ in delivering a sustainable outcome for our members. This includes ensuring BSAC offers value for money and invests wisely in support of our long-term sustainability.

BSAC is a global community of over 18,000 divers and snorkellers. We need to continue to modernise how we communicate and deliver services, in addition to promoting and implementing effective environmental practice.

The role of Chair is crucial to pursuing these aims, holding the CEO and HQ to account in the interests of our members, assuring effective stewardship of the club, and ensuring BSAC supports the divers of the future.

Please describe how you would contribute to any / all of these areas

When I am not diving, instructing, or balancing the books of my branch I am the Business Development Director of a member based globally active education charity.

In respect of the published list I can make a solid contribution to some of the skills listed:

- Strategy formulation and risk management underpin many aspects of my current work.
- Business development and product / commercial development reflects my core professional area of expertise both in the UK and overseas.
- I am very financially literate and can interrogate accounts, I&E and P&L and business cases.
- I have worked as a consultant in business analysis and strategy development, and have good qualitative analytical skills (I designed and led the analyses for the BSAC member survey in 2019/20).

While it is not necessary (or practical) for the Chair to be skilled in all areas, they do need to understand where Council would benefit from additional expertise. For example, marketing and the effective use of social media is a particular priority. BSAC needs to become more effective in engaging with potential members who don't read SCUBA or visit our website.

The Chair of Council needs to be able to work with both volunteers and staff in a mutually productive partnership. This means that in addition to a range of 'technical' skills they need to be adept in bring people together to work towards a set of common goals – in short, they need to provide effective leadership

As Chair I would promote and encourage a diverse range of voices in Council. It is not only about the skills that you bring, but also about your use of common sense and this can be found in members of all ages and walks of life.

I also believe in establishing and maintaining clear boundaries between the responsibilities of HQ and those of Council (BSAC's Board of Directors). The Chair should establish a constructive but challenging working relationship with the CEO. The Chair should also recognise the proper separation between governance and executive management and avoid their involvement in the day-to-day running of BSAC.

In summary, it is the role of the CEO and HQ to deliver the strategy. It is the responsibility of the Chair and Council to seek assurance, hold HQ to account on behalf of our members and ensure we deliver on the commitments we have made.

Personal statement

I have served on Council for three years as an 'ordinary member' and admire the commitment, passion, and professionalism of BSAC's volunteer and instructor community – without which we could not function.

As the Diving Officer (and until very recently Training Officer and Treasurer), and an active instructor/diver in a fairly 'typical branch' (c35 members year to year), I know what it has been like to get through the past two years – it has not been easy.

My aim in seeking election as Chair is to maintain and accelerate the implementation of our strategy to secure BSAC's future.

Alongside Mary Tetley (CEO) and Rachel Quinn (Vice Chair), I facilitated many of the consultative conversations held with members in 2019/20 that gave shape to the current strategy. This has given me a strong sense of our members' priorities.

The Chair of BSAC is responsible for the leadership of Council and for ensuring that its business is undertaken efficiently and effectively.

As Chair I will push for Council and our wider membership to become more inclusive and reflective of wider society. We need a variety of skills and approaches. Doing so will ensure we are attractive to the divers of the future.

I also believe we need to accelerate our investment in BSAC's Diver Training Programme and in improving instructor development and support.

BSAC has worked hard to support our members through Covid, responding to changing public policy and supporting the return to diving. The e-learning programme is a testament to the commitment and expertise of our volunteers and the HQ team.

Looking forward I propose four key priorities for the Chair of BSAC:

- Through Council, support and hold to account the CEO and HQ in delivering a clearly prioritised and resourced transformation programme to deliver on our strategy.
- In doing so, prioritise retaining existing members and also attracting new members from a wider group to generate the investment needed to modernise the Diver Training Programme (DTP) and wider member services.
- Challenge and support the CEO and HQ team to enhance how BSAC promotes and communicates its purpose, values and services beyond the current membership.
- Promote and personally demonstrate the values of an inclusive, diverse and welcoming community that shares a love for the underwater world.