

Andrew Shenstone



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

Current Honorary Secretary

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

As an active Diving Officer and Open Water Instructor I know from direct experience how difficult the past few 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 Honorary Secretary is crucial to pursuing these aims, working with the CEO and Council 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 (and from 20th March will be the CEO of the National Examination Board for Occupational Safety and Health).

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

- Charity or National Sports Governing Body (NGB governance) – critical to the role of Honorary Secretary
- Brand development and marketing
- Implementing EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) strategies
- International business development and partnering
- 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 have designed and led the analyses for the last two BSAC member surveys most recently earlier this year).

While it is not necessary (or practical) for the Honorary Secretary to be skilled in all areas, they do need to understand where Council would benefit from additional expertise. For example, 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 Honorary Secretary 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 to modernise how BSAC is governed.

As Honorary Secretary I would continue the modernisation of BSAC's Articles of Association and support attracting new talent into Council from other adventurous sports. It is not only about the skills that you bring, but also about your use of common sense and this can be found in people 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 Honorary Secretary should support a constructive but challenging working relationship with the CEO – and recognise the proper separation between governance and executive management and avoid their involvement in the day-to-day running of BSAC.

Personal statement

I admire the commitment, passion, and professionalism of BSAC's volunteer and instructor community – without which we could not function.

I have now served on Council for four years - three as an 'ordinary member' and for the past year as Honorary Secretary and typically spend between 3 and 8 hours a week supporting BSAC as a volunteer - so I understand this is a role that demands a high degree of commitment as well as expertise.

The Honorary Secretary of BSAC is responsible for governance effectiveness and for administering the processes and policies underpinning the management of Council business.

As a governance professional my aim in seeking election as Honorary Secretary is to maintain and accelerate the implementation of our strategy to secure BSAC's future.

As Honorary Secretary I will continue to drive the modernisation of Council to enable BSAC to be more effective and inclusive. 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.

As the Diving Officer and an active instructor/diver in a fairly 'typical branch' (c35 members year to year), I know what it takes to keep a branch running – it is very demanding.

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.

I propose four key priorities for the Honorary Secretary of BSAC:

- Continue the modernisation of BSAC's Articles of Association so we meet the requirements of the Sport and Recreation Alliance and attract new talent and skills to Council.
- Through Council, support and hold to account the CEO and HQ in delivering a clearly prioritised and resourced strategy.
- In doing so, prioritise retaining existing members and also attracting new members from a wider group alongside modernising the Diver Training Programme (DTP).
- Promote and personally demonstrate the values of an inclusive, diverse and welcoming community that shares a love for the underwater world.