

## Alex Denny



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

Diving Officer: Eden Divers (BSAC 1689)

Member: Holborn Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC 0130)

Member: Nautical Archaeology Society Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC 2574)

Trustee of the Nautical Archaeology Society

PADI Pro Member: Divemaster & Emergency First Response Instructor

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

I'm a perpetual optimist, so I tend to see challenges as opportunities if they can be overcome, but clearly there are a number of obstacles which BSAC needs to tackle as well as risks that it needs to consider.

- a difficult economic environment
- keeping up with changing demographics
- a rapidly evolving tech and leisure sector
- competition from other agencies

Despite the recent successes in increasing membership, BSAC must still address these matters, all of which have implications for UK domestic diving.

The financial impact of the rising cost of living is one of the key external challenges, putting pressure on members and clubs. As a potential council member, I recognize the importance of addressing these financial concerns while retaining the benefits that members value. I aim to support BSAC's staff to develop solutions that keep diving with BSAC the best value, increasing revenues and fundraising activity and improving promotion of UK diving.

Additionally, the ongoing challenges for clubs, such as pool closures and increased costs, necessitate support and innovative solutions. Drawing on my experience in financial governance and strategic planning, I propose collaborating on initiatives like facilitating pool sharing (which can be particularly useful for smaller clubs), advising on grants, and providing fast-track training for new recruits to address these challenges.

Internally, the need for continuous adaptation to changing times is evident. The BSAC Council's commitment to embracing technology aligns with my own interest in digital solutions and AI. I am excited to see how the implementation of a new Association Management System enhances efficiency and service delivery.

The UK's demographics continue to change. The population is both growing and ageing. The same is true for the membership, though we are not proportionately keeping pace with growth. I would like to see BSAC doing more with digital media and marketing to attract a more diverse and younger membership base (clearly while still looking after our existing members!) highlighting the joys of British diving. We are competing in this space with other agencies as well as other locations. Scuba diving is often seen as an expensive, rich person's sport – perhaps driven by the idea that it can only be done in the Maldives or St Lucia. However, we BSAC members all know the joys of Portland, St Abbs or Scapa Flow – and that our club system can make the activity more affordable and attainable for the next generation.

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

Charity or NGB Governance: I have a decade of experience in governance, including for charities in related fields. I am currently a trustee of the Nautical Archaeology Society, a role I have held since 2019, and was previously a trustee of MARINELife from 2015 to 2023. I was also a trustee of a large pension fund on behalf of Fidelity for 10 years from 2013 to 2023. In my professional career I have specialised in the Corporate Governance of publicly listed investment trust companies (as Head of Investment Trusts for Fidelity and Pantheon). I will work ensure BSAC's decisions align with its objectives and needs of its members.

Brand Development and Marketing: I have extensive experience in brand development both professionally and as a volunteer. I led projects to new websites, and ran marketing campaigns for Fidelity, MARINELife, and my long-term dive club, Eden Divers. My success in doubling assets under management at Fidelity demonstrates my ability to enhance brand visibility.

PR, Media, Comms, and Reputation Management: In my early career, I was a senior account executive at a Public Relations firm, before transitioning to customer-facing

communications roles in financial services. I have continued to develop media and communications skills and an extensive network, throughout my professional career, managing complex communications at Pantheon and Fidelity. I'll employ this expertise to strengthen BSAC's communications, managing its reputation and fostering positive media relationships.

**Other Diving Training Agencies:** My multi-agency qualifications, including TDI Full Cave Diver and PADI Divemaster (and further qualifications with SSI, SDI, IANTD and PSAI) afford me a comprehensive understanding of different training methodologies. I'll use this knowledge to foster collaboration between BSAC and other agencies.

**Sources of Funding:** I have background in finance and extensive experience in managing investment trusts, I'll explore diverse funding avenues and build sustainable financial strategies for BSAC's growth. My work with charities has seen me raise funds through multiple channels including successfully grant applications, sponsored events, merchandise and corporate sponsors.

**EDI Strategies:** I am committed to fostering inclusivity. As a trustee, I actively promoted EDI initiatives and, for example, drafted the diversity and inclusion policy for the Nautical Archaeology Society. I'll bring this dedication to BSAC, ensuring our programs resonate with a diverse audience.

**International Business Development and Partnering:** Having led international business initiatives, I'll harness my global networks to explore partnerships, expanding BSAC's influence beyond national borders.

## **Personal statement**

I have always loved the sea, and the UK's other watery environments (its rivers, lakes and quarries). As a kid I was obsessed with duck diving and was happily bubbling around underwater with a snorkel and 'flippers' before I could properly swim.

I remember the very first time I tried scuba diving. I was a young teenager at Bewl Water, a reservoir not far out of Tunbridge Wells, and the local BSAC club had set up a confined water environment in the reservoir. I donned my tank and happily followed the surprised perch around the scaffold-built pool.

It wasn't until I was in my 20s that I started diving properly – but it quickly became a passion. Having watched divers below me on a day snorkelling in Thailand, I decided it was time to learn to dive. Where better than a cold quarry in the UK to start?

I qualified originally with PADI (because there was no local club with pool access at that time), but crossed over to BSAC to carry on my diving career. Subsequently I advanced to BSAC Dive Leader, Instructor and Explorer Mixed Gas Diver. I actively contribute to the diving community and have taught often with the Southern and South East regions, focusing on skills improvement and specialized training.

I am eager to contribute to BSAC's future. The growth in membership and training participation in 2023 is encouraging, and I want to build on this momentum.

My dedication extends to addressing the financial challenges highlighted by council and in BSAC's annual reports. As a council member, I will prioritise keeping diving with BSAC affordable while retaining essential benefits. My governance experience positions me well to support clubs facing external challenges by exploring innovative solutions and providing strategic guidance.

The commitment to embracing technology aligns seamlessly with my digital and AI background. I look forward to seeing the impacts of the new Association Management System, making processes easier for members, clubs, training centres, and staff.

Moreover, the focus on diversifying offerings, growing the volunteer instructor network, and promoting environmental initiatives aligns with my ethos. I am particularly passionate about safeguarding the UK's waters, heritage and marine life, as evidenced by my roles as a trustee in marine-related charities.

I am excited about the prospect of contributing to BSAC's growth and ensuring a vibrant and inclusive future for our diving community.