

Hywel Dyer



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

IDEST Inspector

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

BSAC faces several interlinked challenges that reflect the realities of today's sport and volunteer landscape. One of the most important is sustaining and growing participation in a world where people have limited time and many competing leisure choices. Commercial dive operators often promote fast-track products, whereas BSAC's strengths lie in structured training, a powerful coaching scheme, and a uniquely supportive branch network. To remain attractive, BSAC should continue to champion those strengths while making coaching routes more visible, more flexible, and easier for volunteers to progress through. A strong coaching community increases confidence, improves training delivery, and underpins member retention.

A related challenge is maintaining meaningful physical training and in-water interaction. Online learning can enhance theory, but diver competence, confidence and belonging are forged in pools, clubhouses, and open water. To support clubs, BSAC should help branches maximise the use of local and regional assets - boats, compressors, pools, and equipment stores - and encourage cooperation through clearer terms of reference. Well-designed Terms of Reference make expectations explicit, reduce ambiguity, and enable volunteers to focus on delivering training rather than wrestling with governance.

Cost pressure and the perception of value for money are now central issues. Rising pool hire, fuel, and kit prices affect members directly; meanwhile, clubs and headquarters must demonstrate that every pound is well spent. BSAC should continue to emphasise the quality and safety benefits of its programmes, while

openly communicating what membership fees fund - from insurance to standards development and safeguarding. At headquarters, applying lean techniques to back-office processes would further improve value. Activities that do not add member-facing benefit should be streamlined, automated or stopped. This might include simplifying approval chains, rationalise duplicated forms, and adopt digital tools where they reduce workload.

Lean thinking also matters at branch level. Many clubs are run by a small number of busy volunteers; anything that removes waste activity gives them more time to train divers, run trips and build the community that sets BSAC apart. Headquarters can reinforce this by providing standard templates, simple compliance guidance, and practical toolkits.

Ultimately, the challenges - competing leisure demands, costs, volunteer capacity, and operational efficiency - are significant but manageable. By focusing on our core strengths, reinforcing coaching and interaction-based learning, maximising use of assets, and embedding lean working both in clubs and at HQ, BSAC can continue to provide high-quality diver development and clear value for money to every member.

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

BSAC's most significant challenges mirror those faced by many charities and membership-based National Governing Bodies: delivering high-quality member experience, demonstrating value for money, and operating efficiently within limited resources. My background provides relevant insight into how these challenges can be met. Across a 30-year engineering career - including senior management roles, capital programme leadership and responsibility for safety, quality, and compliance - I have repeatedly delivered improvements under strict governance, budget, and regulatory constraints. These skills map directly to BSAC's need for strong oversight, transparent decision-making, and disciplined use of member funds.

Membership organisations succeed when members feel supported, developed, and connected. BSAC's greatest strengths - structured training, coaching schemes and in-person interaction - align well with my experience of leading large teams, planning workforce development and embedding competency frameworks. In a work environment, I delivered training strategies, cross-functional skill development, and formal competency review processes - elements that parallel instructor development, branch support, and volunteer HR needs within BSAC.

Financial resilience is a core challenge. I have held responsibility for multi-million-pound production and capital budgets, routinely balancing cost control with investment in capability. In every organisation I have worked in, I have applied

structured payback analysis and waste elimination to maximise return. Introducing lean tools, standard work, and visual management - delivered measurable savings, increased throughput, and freed staff time for value-adding activity. The same lean principles can strengthen BSAC headquarters operations: simplifying processes, reducing duplication, and improving speed of service to clubs and members. Demonstrating HQ value for money is critical to retaining and growing membership. Finally, AI represents both a challenge and a strategic opportunity. While not a specialist, I have led digitalisation and system adoption throughout my career. Used appropriately, AI can support learning delivery, automate administrative burden, improve safety reporting, and help BSAC make data-informed decisions - without replacing the hands-on coaching that defines BSAC.

In summary, BSAC's challenges - membership growth, value perception, governance, financial resilience, and operational efficiency - require disciplined leadership. My experience in lean operations, regulatory compliance, HR development and strategic budgeting positions me to help BSAC maintain quality, maximise its strengths and deliver outstanding value for every diver.

Personal statement

I joined BSAC in 1991 and have been an active member ever since, progressing through a wide range of roles that have given me a deep understanding of the organisation at both branch and regional levels. I have held branch offices from Chair to Training Officer and Diving Officer, gaining first-hand experience of governance, volunteer leadership, and delivering high-quality diver development. I am a First Class Diver (No. 796, 2001) and a National Instructor (No. 269, 2019), and have also worked commercially as an instructor, bringing professional rigour and practical teaching experience to my volunteer roles. Additionally my roles as an IDEST Inspector and a Chartered Engineer has reinforced my focus on safety, standards, and structured processes.

Between 2020 and 2023, I served as Seamanship Chief, supporting branches and members in the delivery of boating and seamanship training. I have twice served as a Wales Regional Coach and currently act as Area Coach for South Wales, roles that have strengthened my skills in mentoring instructors, developing regional programmes, and promoting best practice. I have also been an active member of ITS since 2000, demonstrating long-term commitment to the wider technical and recreational diving community.

As an ex-RNLI crew member of 8 years, I own my own boat and enjoy sailing, which has given me a practical understanding of vessel operations, seamanship, and the importance of asset care - insights I bring into my coaching and advisory work. My experience spans teaching, technical inspection, and operational

leadership, which allows me to approach challenges with both strategic oversight and practical insight.

Throughout my BSAC journey, I have been committed to maintaining high standards, supporting volunteers, and promoting diver safety, quality, and enjoyment. I am confident that my combination of long-standing membership, professional qualifications, leadership experience, and practical diving expertise uniquely positions me to contribute effectively to BSAC's continued development, supporting both members and clubs to achieve their full potential.