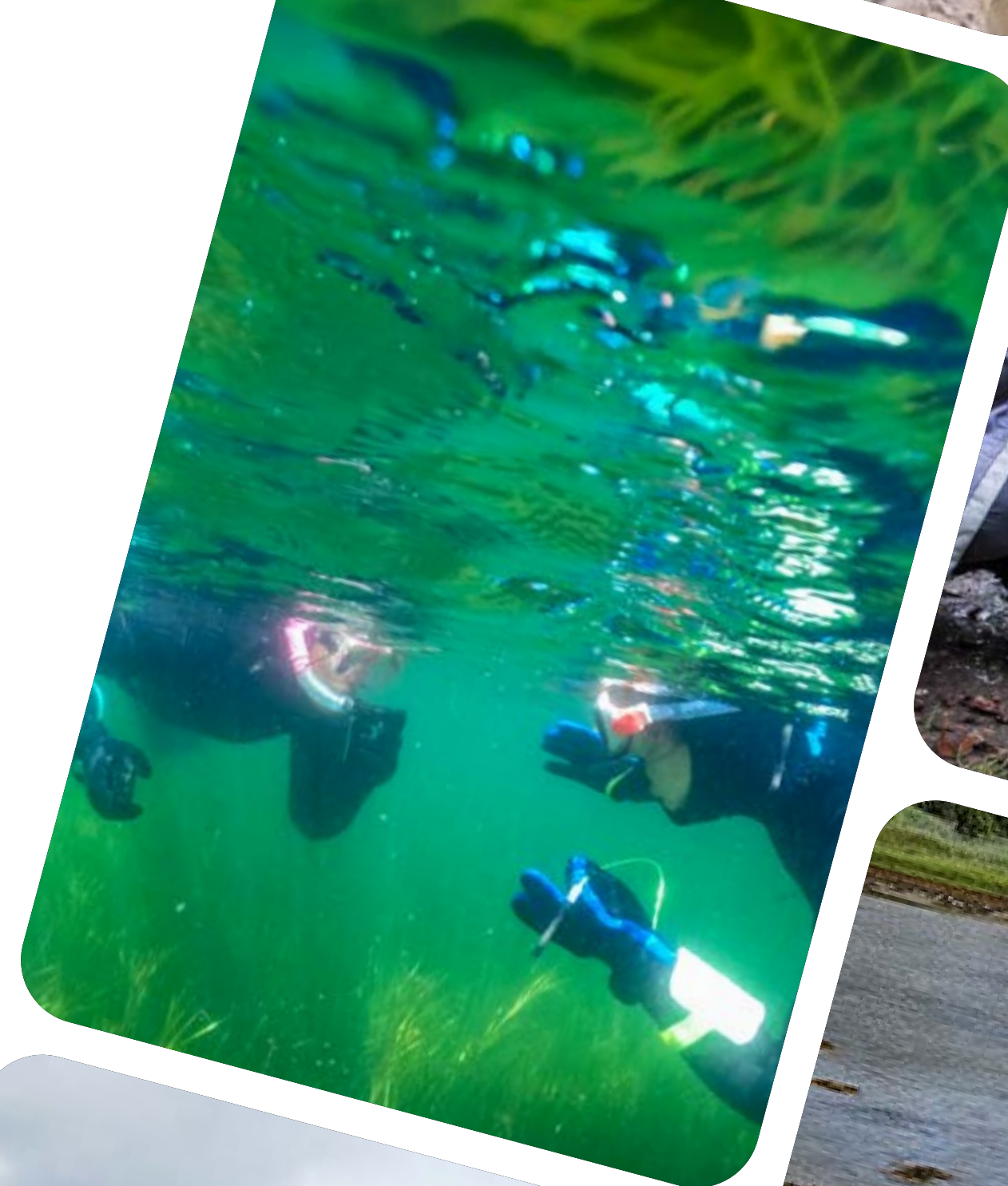




Handbook





Welcome to the Marine Champions community

We are delighted to have you on board!

As your club's new Marine Champion, you will be at the forefront of BSAC's commitment to protect our marine environment and influence change.

Within this handbook, you'll find everything you need to get started as a BSAC Marine Champion and engage your club in a host of exciting initiatives that can make a real difference.

And don't forget, the BSAC team is always on hand to support you – if you have any questions, please email us at marinechampions@bsac.com

"A heartfelt thank you for stepping up to be a Marine Champion. You will be part of a positive wave for change, not just in preserving the marine environment, but also in helping others to experience the fulfilment of diving with a purpose."

Katherine Knight
Chair - BSAC Environment Committee

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Overview

Working together to champion our precious marine environment

In its **Strategic Plan 2025-2029**, BSAC set out its mission 'to be the go-to community for anyone wanting to learn about, enjoy and protect the underwater world'.

To support this diving with a purpose, BSAC has a growing number of exciting marine environment projects for its clubs, divers and snorkellers to get involved in. We are also currently developing additional resources for eco-conscious members and those interested in participating in restoration or citizen science projects.

And this is where the BSAC Marine Champions initiative comes in!



The role of Marine Champions

The club structure is at the heart of BSAC, and our Marine Champions will play a pivotal role in the delivery of BSAC's environmental projects at grassroots level.

With the support and endorsement of their club's committee, each Marine Champion will coordinate in-branch conservation activities such as Underwater Litter Picks, beach cleans, seagrass and oyster surveys as well as promote BSAC's environmental messages and associated campaigns.

It is important to note that our Marine Champions are not expected to lead any diving but should work with their club's Diving Officer to help organise the event and promote participation.



What's expected

The role of a Marine Champion is an important one. You will not just be helping your fellow divers get more enjoyment and fulfilment out of their diving experiences, but you will be inspiring and instigating positive action for ocean health.

The following commitments are required from our Marine Champions:

- To work with your club members, Branch Officers and BSAC's Environment Committee.
 - You can also organise your own club-specific environmental initiatives in line with the objectives of **BSAC's strategic plan**.
- Attend occasional online Marine Champion meet-ups, updates and training events.
- To organise one or more of the following this year:
 - An Underwater Litter Pick and/or beach clean
 - A Great Seagrass Survey
 - An Operation Oyster survey
- Support your club to get involved in BSAC's wider marine environment messaging and associated campaigns.
- Share images and/or video of your club's marine environment activities on your club's own socials as well as sharing through BSAC's channels.

As a BSAC Marine Champion, you will also be regularly updated on the current BSAC marine initiatives, new projects to get involved in, online support and training opportunities and all the latest news from BSAC's Environment Committee.

Current initiatives

As we build our BSAC Marine Champions community, we have our sights set on some ambitious projects, including the new Dive In – Litter Out recycling project which is set to be launched in 2026.

We will also be encouraging and supporting our Marine Champions to work within their clubs to devise and deliver their own marine environment projects. In the meantime, over the following pages you can find out more about the current BSAC marine environment activities you can champion within your club.



Underwater Litter Picks/Beach Cleans



Whether it is a one-off event or incorporated into your club's dive trip season, organising regular marine litter picks both underwater and along the shoreline means that all of your club can get involved.

What you can do:

As your club's Marine Champion, you'll encourage all your members to take part, whether it's an organised beach clean for members, family and friends or a coordinated underwater litter pick on your club's favourite wreck. Litter picks are perfect for divers and snorkellers, as well as non-divers, families and youngsters and are a great way to bring your club together with a purpose.

Or challenge your diving and snorkelling members to litter pick on every dive they do this season then photograph your collective results and share your impact via your social media (and BSAC's too!)

Access BSAC's [Underwater Litter Pick](#) and [Beach Clean](#) resources, including safe diving guidance.



Operation Oyster

This is one of BSAC's largest citizen science projects, gathering data on the location of the remaining populations of the UK's native oyster (*Ostrea edulis*).

There has been a 95% decline in native oyster populations over the past 200 years due to a variety of reasons, including historic overfishing (in the 1800s in particular), habitat loss, pollution and the introduction of diseases. BSAC's Operation Oyster initiative aims to help turn the tide on this decline by gathering useful data to support the scientific community in their work to restore native oyster populations.



What you can do:

To support the work of Operation Oyster as a Marine Champion, you could organise surveys which can help us create a better picture of the locations of our remaining native oyster populations.

Oysters can be found in many different areas around our coastline, from muddy seabed to the structures of wrecks, and from depths of 40m or more to the shallow intertidal range. Surveys can also include oyster shells washed up on the beach, meaning it is a project that could involve all the members of your club.

It can be as simple as making every club dive an Operation Oyster dive by looking out for these elusive creatures on your club's favourite wreck, reef or shore dive sites and even the beach or shoreline over the summer. Or you could work with your Diving Officer to organise a specific Operation Oyster survey dive.

You can then record your oyster survey findings directly on the BSAC website. If you can, try to get some pictures to upload too. And even if you don't find any oysters it is still worth completing the form so a more complete picture of their locations can be created.

Access [Operation Oyster](#) information and support materials, including our Oyster ID Guide and survey recording forms.

The Great Seagrass Survey

Working in partnership with marine charity Seawilding, BSAC is inviting clubs and members to help protect the UK's seagrass habitat.

Our seagrass meadows are vital to the ocean's health yet they are under pressure like never before. The Great Seagrass Survey aims to help protect these precious underwater habitats using citizen science to identify and record their locations to create a more accurate UK map.



What you can do:

To date, the Great Seagrass Survey has mapped over 1,000ha of seagrass meadows around the UK. And our Marine Champions can help to build this map by getting their club involved. Seagrass thrives in shallow water and so organising a club survey or taking part in a Seawilding project means most divers and snorkellers can get involved.

To organise a seagrass survey, check out our [Great Seagrass Survey](#) guidance and online resources before you start.



Motion for the Ocean

As divers and snorkellers, we all have a role to play in protecting our precious oceans.

That's why BSAC has teamed up with Motion for the Ocean – a powerful initiative helping local councils (both inland and at the coast) to take real action to improve the health of UK rivers and seas.



What you can do:

As a BSAC Marine Champion, you can engage your club in the Motion for Ocean initiative within your own community.

Local councils play a crucial role in protecting our rivers and seas – from tackling pollution to supporting marine conservation. But they need public support to take action.

The **Motion for the Ocean toolkit** provides step-by-step guidance to help Marine Champions and BSAC club members contact their councils, start conversations and encourage real change.



Top tips for organising an event

Organising an event or project as your club's Marine Champion is a great way to make a difference to the health of our seas and marine life.

To help get you started, we've put together a list of our top tips for event organising as a Marine Champion:

1. Identify which types of marine environment events fit best with your club's location, travelling ability and the type of diving/snorkelling that your members like to do.
2. Then speak to your club's Diving Officer, club committee and/or the members who usually organise your club events, to discuss how your environmental events plan can fit in with the club's activities schedule.
3. When planning your event, make the most of BSAC's [online resources](#), including guidance on safe diving and participant welfare, as well as promotional and marketing support.
4. If your event(s) involve diving or snorkelling – remember, you are not expected to lead the diving side of your plan. You should always work with your club's Diving Officer to help safely organise the event and promote participation.
5. Don't do it alone – identify like-minded members who will be keen to get involved and help you generate a buzz in the club so you can get as many members participating as you can.
6. Don't forget – you can also organise marine environment events for non-divers, or friends and family members of your club. Topside activities such as [beach cleans](#) can be a great way to bring your club together.
7. Ensure everyone is in the loop. Whether it's via a WhatsApp group, Facebook, direct email or your club noticeboard, find the best way to communicate your marine environment projects to maximise participation.
8. Keep a record of your successes! For example, log the number of participants on each event, collect data such as types of marine litter retrieved and quantities, fill out project-related surveys, take photos/video, and record first-hand feedback from your club members. All this data not only records what you are achieving but also tells your club's story when it comes to protecting the marine environment.



Sharing your successes

Once you have organised and run a fantastic event, make sure you share your group's achievements. This not only provides a 'feel-good' as they can see how their valuable work is contributing, but it can also raise the profile of your club and potentially bring in new members.



You could do this by:

- Checking out BSAC's [top tips guide to club marketing](#)
- Posting updates and successes on your club's social media channels, including short videos and photos
- Sharing and liking your participants' posts to widen your reach
- Tagging your posts @BSACdivers and #DiveInMakeaDifference so that we can share your posts on the BSAC channels
- Use other relevant hashtags to get your post noticed - #OperationOyster; #GreatSeagrassSurvey; #Motion4theOcean
- Adding your story to the newsfeed on your club's website
- Contacting your local press or distributing a press release showcasing your event's success

If you have a great event story to share, email the [BSAC Marine Champions Team](#) and we can share via the BSAC Blog and in SCUBA magazine.

Check out BSAC's [top tips guide to club marketing](#) for more inspiration on organising and promoting your events

Further training opportunities

As a Marine Champion, you may also want to develop your diving and conservation skills to get the most out of the role and enhance the experience.

BSAC has several marine environment-related Skill Development Courses (SDCs) you may want to consider. These are great courses for other like-minded members of your club too!



Shore Surveyor

Delivered by eLearning, Shore Surveyor has been designed to engage people, particularly children and young people, in the issues that face our precious marine life. With a focus on the UK's protected native oyster and seagrass beds, this eLearning course equips participants with the skills needed to help identify seashore-based habitats and record what they find. The online course is suitable for ages 8+.

[Find out more](#)



Underwater Surveyor

This course aims to enable you to get involved in protecting the ocean and its habitats. By providing you with the skills to use a variety of survey techniques while snorkelling or scuba diving, Underwater Surveyor empowers you to play a valuable part in ocean science and conservation. This course is suitable for Ocean Divers and above.

[Find out more](#)



Marine Life Appreciation

BSAC's one-day Marine Life Appreciation course is a great way to find out how you can contribute to marine science and conservation. The four sessions covered include: The main groups of marine creatures, key marine science processes, human impact on the marine environment and what divers and snorkellers can do to protect and preserve our marine environment. This course is suitable for divers and non-divers.

[Find out more](#)



Seasearch

This environmental project, coordinated by the Marine Conservation Society, aims to upskill recreational divers and snorkellers to collect marine life data on their dives. They offer Seasearch Observer courses for BSAC members new to marine data recording.

[Find out more](#)

You may also be interested in other BSAC Skill Development Courses, including: Underwater Photography, BSAC Beachcomber and Dive Planning and Management. [View the full list of SDCs](#)



Additional resources

BSAC has a range of online guidance and information sheets to support you in your role as Marine Champion.



These include:

- [Diver and Snorkeller guide to protecting our seas](#)
- [Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code](#)
- [Guidance on seal interactions](#)
- [Organising Beach Cleans](#)
- [BSAC's Safe Diving Guide](#)
- [Duty of Care and Welfare resources](#)

If you have any questions regarding your Marine Champion role or associated club activities, do get in touch. Email us at marinechampions@bsac.com



Want to get more involved?

As a BSAC Marine Champion, you are an essential part of BSAC's marine conservation work. As well as championing the marine environment within your club, there are other ways you can get involved, including:

- Representing BSAC at events
- Volunteering on conservation projects
- Producing reports and communication materials
- Developing citizen science projects
- Supporting youth and student development
- Becoming part of BSAC's Environment Committee

If you would like to get involved with any of these activities, or have some great ideas of your own, do let us know at environmentchair@bsac.com

"As part of BSAC's Marine Champions community, you will be a force that initiates positive ripples of change. I hope you enjoy your journey in the world of ocean conservation."

Katherine Knight
Chair - BSAC Environment Committee



Keep in touch

The Marine Champions team is always on hand to support you. Email us at marinechampions@bsac.com