

Council

Paul Tarn



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

I don't see any conflicts of interest and I don't work in the diving industry, remunerated or otherwise. I am a member of PETA, League Against Cruel Sports, Greenpeace and the RSPCA.

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

Like many organisations, BSAC faces a range of challenges, many of them directly a result of Covid-19 but some are endemic to its strengths; what makes it a great organisation also leaves it vulnerable at times of stress. These vulnerabilities will not disappear with the pandemic. Falling membership, an aging diving population, and high entry costs into the sport will continue to challenge us. Covid will leave us with a legacy of austerity, high unemployment, and uncertainty. BSAC will also need to respond to competition from other forms of leisure activity and from other diver training agencies. There is also a growing culture of impatience and a yearning for instant gratification. Any strategy for growth and development needs to use that knowledge to strengthen our offer by utilising our network capacity.

There are opportunities. International travel will not instantly recover, camper van sales have been huge. People have sought solace in a greater engagement with nature and UK holidays. This is our time. Many dive shops have closed taking the clubs with them. BSAC is ideally placed to grow club-based diving, develop partnerships with boat charters and local dive shops, and respond to multiple generations of new divers through our branch network and our Centres of Excellence. I believe that BSAC training is amongst the best diver training available. However, it should not take a year or more to qualify as an Ocean Diver. Branch training depends on availability of instructors, opportunities to train, and willing volunteers; all of which need to co-exist with a trainee's work or shift patterns etc. There is another way.

BSAC is a data rich organisation but has not used that data to provide information to support and inform its strategies.

For instance, why not utilise the membership database and online diver records to map diver progress – signpost training opportunities at an inter-branch level, promote cross branch collaboration and then use the regional teams strategically to fill the gaps. We need the capacity to respond at pace. Sports Divers and SDC participants remain members; recruit, train, and train to retain should be our mantra.

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

We have identified that the Board would benefit from the following areas of knowledge, skills and experience:

- Legal Expertise
- Commercial / contract management
- Human resources / Organisational transformation
- Business development and product development
- Finance
- Numerical or analytical skills
- Strategy and Risk Management
- IT, especially IT-enabled business change and programme management
- Policy development
- Marketing and Branding
- Communications and Social Media

I'm currently Chief Executive Officer, Director and Accounting Officer for one of the country's largest academy groups. I train Principals, Executives, and mentor other Chief Executives. I have also worked closely with the DFE and the previous Education Minister to develop systems to model and analyse education finance.

At the time of my appointment as CEO at (SPTA) now Delta Academies Trust, it had poor outcomes, was being stripped of schools and had a predicted £8.6m in-year deficit budget. The organisational transformation was comprehensive, rapid, and inclusive. In the first three years, the trust became one of the highest performing large groups of schools. Staff morale rose quickly, and staff turnover fell. The trust now operates with a very large in-year surplus.

Key to these changes, was the establishment of a clear vision and the alignment of structures and systems with that vision.

In practical terms, we injected purpose and belief, adopted high impact systems, underpinned by comprehensive staff development. The company was relaunched, rebranded, had a root and branch staffing re-structure. The HQ was physically relocated.

The changes at Delta were based on detailed analytics and monitored using an appropriate set of metrics.

BSAC data analysis is the key that will allow us to strategically intervene to support members and ultimately retain them. Branch support, especially where diver progression is slow, is essential. I also believe that we need to look at how we develop the next generation of instructors. Especially how we bridge that gap between IFC and full OWI status.

Finally, in my role as CEO, Director and Accounting Officer, I'm responsible directly to the Board of Trustees (Directors) and lead the Executive team. The trust workforce is about 4,500 and we have an income of about £130m for 51 Academies. As CEO, I build teams. I'm supported by a great team with a range of skills. In the same way BSAC Council need to be able draw on a range of skills. I have a range of experience, knowledge, and expertise in the following areas: policy development, change management, human resources, data and analytics, corporate risk management, finance, communications, organisational sustainability planning, and growth strategies. I would be delighted to put something back to the organisation that has given me so much.

Personal statement

I'm 57 Years old and I've been a passionate diver for over 20 years. I'd like to think I'm starting to get the hang of it. I'm a member and instructor in two very successful South Yorkshire based clubs. Dearne Valley Divers (DVD) and Barnsley BSAC (BBSAC). Five years ago, DVD was struggling, it had instructors but only a small and dwindling membership. BBSAC had the opposite problem. It was then that the two clubs began a collaboration that would transform them both. They each now have about 50 members. That partnership has delivered more training opportunities, more diving trips, shared instructor access, and a wider range of SDCs delivered in house. More importantly we have more friends. I enjoy all types of diving; shore, rib, hard boats and liveaboards. Even the local swimming pool has its attractions when you're a Yorkshire man, it's £3 entry, and you can drink as much as you want.

I instruct regularly in both branches. I recently joined the Yorkshire regional team to support the

delivery of their SDCs programme, delivering ADP and twinset courses. I wouldn't describe myself as a technical diver, but I do some AMG CCR diving because it allows me to indulge my passion for wreck exploration off the coast of Scotland.

Diving is a huge part of my life and fortunately my wife, Pam, is equally passionate about it. She also instructs for both clubs.

I suppose my personal story is a little unusual. I left school aged 16 with no qualifications and went to work as a miner at Grimethorpe Colliery with my father and grandfather. I worked at Grimethorpe for 10 years and I spent a year on strike; a kind of Yorkshire style gap year.

While working, I studied at night school and eventually left to study at university. I qualified as a teacher and taught science and IT. I was a Principal and I'm now Chief Executive Officer in one of the country's largest academy groups. Today, 30 years after leaving the colliery for the last time, if I to reflect on those early life experiences, the lessons I would take from it would be a sense of humility, coupled with a willingness to recognise the potential in each of us.