

## Alexander Denny



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

PADI Pro Member

Trustee of the Nautical Archaeology Society

Diving Officer: Eden Divers (BSAC 1689)

Member: Holborn Sub-Aqua Club (BSAC 0130)

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

Member: UK Mine/Cave Diving and Exploration (UKMC)

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

As I said last year - I am an eternal optimist. BSAC faces several significant challenges, but with proactive strategies, these can present opportunities to strengthen the organisation.

- **Membership Growth and Retention:**

While membership numbers have plateaued recently, the long-term trend of declining recruitment among new divers is concerning. Many potential members perceive scuba diving as inaccessible or prohibitively expensive. BSAC must continue to challenge this perception through innovative marketing, emphasising affordability and community benefits. Expanding the use of social media and platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Lemon8 can help reach younger, more diverse audiences. Fast-track training programs, which cater to modern lifestyles, should also be prioritised to attract those who prefer more flexible training options.

- **Financial Sustainability:**

The economic environment remains challenging, with inflationary pressures increasing costs for both BSAC and its members. Pool closures and rising training expenses are squeezing club finances. To address this, BSAC should focus on

diversifying revenue streams, such as corporate sponsorships, grant applications, and merchandise sales. Enhancing member value through benefits like digital tools, improved training resources, and exclusive content can also justify membership costs and encourage retention.

- **Adapting to Changing Demographics:**

The UK population is ageing, and BSAC's membership reflects this trend. At the same time, younger audiences increasingly expect digital engagement and inclusivity. BSAC must double down on efforts to make diving accessible to underrepresented groups, including women and ethnic minorities. Programs emphasising snorkelling and environmental conservation can serve as entry points for younger participants, creating pathways to scuba diving.

- **Competition from Other Agencies:**

The diving industry is competitive, with commercial agencies such as PADI and SSI dominating the international market. BSAC's unique strengths - its club structure, high training standards, and focus on UK diving - must be better marketed. Collaborating with other agencies where beneficial and continuing to highlight the highlights of British diving, such as in Scapa Flow or St Abbs, will differentiate BSAC.

- **Environmental and Technological Evolution:**

As an organisation committed to protecting marine environments, BSAC has a vital role to play in conservation advocacy. Supporting environmental programs and incorporating sustainability into training will not only align with member values but also enhance BSAC's reputation. Simultaneously, embracing technology, such as the new Association Management System, will streamline operations and improve member experiences.

By addressing these challenges with forward-thinking strategies, BSAC can secure its position as the premier community for divers in the UK and beyond.

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

I have extensive experience in governance, marketing, fundraising, and strategy which equips me to contribute significantly to BSAC's strategic ambitions:

Governance: Over a decade, I've honed my governance skills as a trustee and Director for multiple organisations, including charities, the Nautical Archaeology Society and MARINELife. I am also a professional Non-Executive Director of Apax Global Alpha (a FTSE 250 Private Equity firm) and the Association of Investment Companies (the trade body for listed investment funds). I am an invited member of the IoD Commission on 'The role of Non-Executive Directors' chaired by Baroness

Evans of Bowes Park. This reflects my commitment to accountability, transparency, and aligning organisational decisions with member needs.

**Brand Development and Marketing:** At Fidelity (where I was Head of Investment Companies), I led the rebranding and relaunched marketing strategy, successfully doubling the size of the funds for which I was responsible from £3billion to £6billion. I've spearheaded campaigns and digital transformations, including new websites and social media initiatives. My work demonstrates how storytelling and digital outreach can drive engagement—a skill set directly applicable to BSAC's goals to attract a younger and more diverse audience.

**PR, Media, and Communications:** My early career was in public relations. This, and my later roles managing high-stakes communications at Pantheon and Fidelity, prepared me to navigate reputation management and media relationships. I will leverage this expertise to guide BSAC's communications, ensuring consistent and positive messaging across platforms.

**Sources of Funding:** For various charities I've raised funds through grants, sponsorships, and corporate partnerships. For example At MARINELife I secured significant grant funding from Garfield Weston to support the charity through covid lockdowns, and at the Nautical Archaeology Society I led volunteer fundraising through events such as the London Marathon. These experiences position me to explore sustainable funding avenues for BSAC.

**EDI Strategies:** I authored the Nautical Archaeology Society's diversity policy and championed inclusion initiatives. At BSAC, I would focus on fostering an inclusive environment, encouraging participation across underrepresented demographics.

**International Development:** My leadership roles in launching international funds and collaborating with global regulatory bodies equip me to explore BSAC's international opportunities, such as partnerships with overseas diving organisations.

As a long-term BSAC member and keen diver I have both the will and the skill to contribute effectively across each of these areas. My professional background and volunteer leadership roles demonstrate my ability to support BSAC's mission.

## **Personal statement**

This is the second time I have stood for BSAC's Council. I was disappointed to miss out last year, but remain committed to using my experience to do my part. I have real world professional experience in governance and a passion for diving which I think is what BSAC Council really needs.

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?

Having qualified, I caught the bug and subsequently advanced to BSAC Dive Leader, Instructor and Explorer Mixed Gas Diver. I am working on my Advance Diver qualification (though it is slow going!) 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 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.

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.