

Biographies of HSC trustees 2026

Simon Bannister - Chair

A member since 2018, I am a very keen swimmer and never happier than when I am wet. The Lake is where I go to switch off from the day job, and I want to use the skills I have picked up to benefit our club. I see technology as an enabler, and I hope it can help keep the Lake the special place it is. You will often find me hitting the diving boards, which is one of my favourite things to do with my children, or swimming to the bay on a sunny day.

A bit about me professionally. I have 28 years in the IT industry, from IT support technician in 1998 to Chief Information Officer of an AIM-listed plc today. I am accountable for IT operations and governance across the group, leading a team of 32 and running a £5m annual budget, and I write and deliver its IT, AI and digital strategies. That mix of hands-on delivery and governance is what I bring to the club, both as Chair and as the IT-aligned trustee.

Patric Bulmer

I am a Chartered Environmentalist and Fellow of the Institution of Environmental Sciences, with a degree in Geochemistry and postgraduate qualifications in water & environmental management. As the former Head of Water Resources and Environment at Bristol Water, I have over 30 years' experience in water and environmental management - in this role I was responsible for site management across an area of over a thousand square miles, including the Mendip lakes (Chew, Blagdon, Cheddar and several others). The role included invasive species management, site biodiversity enhancements, public access, and work with landholders in the catchment of the lakes to protect and improve water quality.

I'm familiar with environmental surveys and water quality testing, having started my career as a Water Quality Scientist managing treatment systems to protect drinking water quality for over a million people, and I've led projects on climate change research, developing long-term plans for water resources. These plans include one idea now heading into development: the re-use of a former limestone quarry for use as a reservoir! It's a bit bigger than the lake - about two thousand times bigger – but the principles are very much the same although my idea of a large pump system is one that could drain the swimming lake in 40 minutes. I won't be proposing anything like that.

Charles Booth

I have been a member of the Swimming Club since the mid-1990s and have always loved it as a local haven, sharing it with family – as my daughters grew up - and friends and other lake members.

My professional background is in local government and then higher education – I worked for Bristol Business School for almost 30 years; retiring as an Associate Professor in January 2021. I am a trustee of another Bristol charity, and have been a trustee of the Swimming Club since 2019. Like the other trustees I am immensely proud of the Club's achievements and development over the past few years, particularly of our resolute pursuit of our charitable objectives, supporting greater access and diversity at the lake.

Ellie Day-Zylinski

Having always had a preference for outdoor swimming, we applied to join the Club before we moved to the area in 2022, so we clearly had our priorities straight! Seeing and experiencing the massive positive impact the Lake and the Club has on so many, I'm keen to safeguard this for our Community, so feel privileged to have this opportunity to do so.

Alongside being a Trustee, my day job is in HR and I am also an emergency responder for REACT - an emergency and crisis response charity operating in the UK and overseas, which also allows me to

repurpose my previous military skills and experience. In between work and volunteering I love getting to the Lake as much as possible with my family and am always looking to build up my winter dipping resilience.

Ian Duncan

I have been a member of the Lake since 2019 and enjoy the excellent swimming experience year round – warm or cold. I especially like the winter swimming experience and will be starting my 4th winter season this year. I love swimming in the UK (especially the Lake District and Scotland) and overseas (Portugal is a favourite), and have encouraged the rest of my family to follow suit - although i have yet to get them winter dipping!

In my professional career, I am a project director at an engineering consultancy working in the field of geology & civil engineering on national and overseas major infrastructure projects. I am used to designing, specifying and supervising construction works, skills that i hope to use in the coming years on proposed upgrades to the lake's facilities.

I have undertaken numerous committee roles in the past, representing national technical bodies. For the Engineering Group of the Geological Society, based in London, I was Treasurer, Vice Chair and Chair over a period of 10 years, working alongside a diverse team of volunteer professionals delivering training, hosting events and representing the ground engineering sector as a voice to government scientific committees.

Alan Giles

Since childhood I have always swum outdoors, initially at Tooting Bec Lido, South London and then at The Lake after moving to Bristol.

I fully appreciate the great benefits, mental and physical, of open water swimming and how fortunate we are at Henleaze Lake to have such a beautiful environment.

In the past I organised the Gloucester County Open Water Championships at the Lake to provide opportunities for County Club swimmers, adults and juniors, to participate in open water swimming .

I was a practising chartered accountant until retirement a few years ago.

I have served as a Trustee since the establishment of the Charity, and I have been involved with sub-committee work as and when required.

Bearing in mind the public benefit responsibilities which the Club has as a charity, I have been pleased greater usage of the Lake has been achieved all year round. I fully support greater communication, access and diversity at the Lake and improved use of the Club grounds.

Daphne Hall

I have worked in the advice sector for over 30 years first as an adviser with Citizens Advice and then as a welfare rights adviser at a psychiatric hospital and at Bristol City Council. Since 2014, I have worked for a small charity (rightsnet) that runs a specialist social welfare law website (covering social security, employment, housing, debt and community care law) that serves the advice sector.

I am also the Vice Chair of the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers (NAWRA) - an umbrella organisation of welfare rights organisations across the UK. I represent NAWRA as a stakeholder in meetings with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and I have also given evidence to Parliamentary Committees to help them hold the DWP to account.

I think I bring to the Board an understanding of employment issues, particularly in relation to rights and

responsibilities as well as skills in liaison and communication. I also have a keen interest in increasing our social prescribing and our wider usage membership to bring the benefits of the lake to as many people as possible.

I have lived in Henleaze since 1998 and am a huge fan of outdoor swimming. I applied to join the lake as soon as we moved here and have been a member I think since 2000. The lake is hugely important to me as I know it is to all its members - a place of serenity in the middle of the city. I want to use my skills to help maintain and enhance the lake and its surroundings, to bring together the lake community, and to enable as many people as possible to share in such a special place.

Since the start of 2024 I have also been a member of the Social Security Advisory Committee - an independent statutory body that scrutinises social security legislation and provides impartial advice to the government.

Valerie Harland

I am a professional fundraiser with over 30 years' voluntary sector experience. I started my career in London, working for national charities, before moving to New Zealand for five years where I became a fundraising consultant. I now specialise in gifts in wills, encouraging individuals to leave something to their favourite charities when they die.

Not wishing to return to London after living in Auckland, in 2007 I decided to make Bristol my home. When I first came to Bristol I was fortunate to rent a room from someone who was a member of Henleaze Swimming Club and had my first experience of the lake in the summer of 2007. I have been a member for over 10 years. I have always enjoyed outdoor swimming, growing up in London with a choice of lidos (most of which are no more, sadly) and am so grateful to have Henleaze Lake so close to home.

Nicola Harwin – Vice Chair

A Bristol resident for 45 years, I've been a Winter Dipper and Lake member for the last 7, and was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2021.

I have over 40 years' experience in the charity sector, 25 of those at national level with Women's Aid, the national domestic violence charity, including organisational and strategic development, financial management, fundraising, training and resource development, HR, and communications. As CEO, I worked with internal and external stakeholders – local membership services, service users, staff, government, funders, politicians, legislators, media, research bodies, and a wide range of other organisations both in the UK and internationally.

Since I retired from full-time work, as well as my voluntary work at the Lake, last year I became a founder trustee of a new charity, childrenofkigezi.org, which feeds 1000 children every day at 3 schools in Uganda and supports their education and community development.

I love singing and am a member of four wonderful Bristol choirs, am a volunteer steward at St George's Hall, Bristol, and have also organised the Lake Sing and Swim afternoon for the last 3 years.

I am fully committed to helping maintain the Lake as a special and unique resource for the Bristol community and enjoy using my skills and experience to support the governance and development of the Club. As a member of the Board's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group, I welcome the commitment to increase diversity and to widen access, and am supporting the work of the management team and the Board to achieve that objective.

Andrew Lambert

I have lived in Westbury on Trym for over 30 years, have always enjoyed outdoor swimming and have loved being a member of the Lake with my wife since 2020. Professionally, I trained as a Chartered Accountant

with a major accounting firm and worked for them in Bristol and Australia before leaving to work in senior roles with a number of international companies. I have been a director of many of these, with financial and general management responsibilities. My last role before retiring in Summer 2026 was as Head of Financial Reporting for a company that owns and manages over 2,500 vet practices globally.

I have previously volunteered with the Prince's Trust and the Scouts, and have raised money for charities through walks, long-distance bike rides and swimming events. Aside from swimming, I play football, am a keen cyclist and enjoy spending time with my grown-up daughters and wider family. I know how lucky I am to be a member of the club and enjoy being trustee to be able to share my skills and experiences to help ensure the lake and its facilities continue to develop for future generations.

Julian Pyrke

I am a keen swimmer (I used to swim competitively many years ago) and as with most members a lover of the lake, as it provides a haven of tranquillity and calm. It's a place that I love to go to chill out both mentally and physically

I have been a member of the lake since about 2016. Prior to this I was a member around 1990, but gave up my membership due to working away from Bristol at the time and having young children. I am currently on year 4 of winter dipping (where have you been in my life I ask ?) which I find just incredible and I feel very lucky to be able to swim in such a beautiful place. I am pleased the lake continues to be popular and would love to see groups who have never experienced "wild swimming" to be able to come and 'have a go'.

Workwise I have just retired from a legal career, having been a solicitor for 32 years specialising in commercial property. My skills and knowledge as a lawyer and specifically dealing with property matters should be of assistance to the lake.

I currently have a very part time role as an Associate lecturer (in law) at the UWE which I really enjoy.

Charity wise, I have advised charities both professionally on land issues as well as having direct experience. I was a trustee of an alms house charity (based in Cheltenham) for about 20 years so I am well versed in the responsibilities that being a trustee entails.