

ASGBI Presidential Report 2025–2026 - Christian Macutkiewicz

Innovate – Inspire – Belong

It continues to be an immense privilege to serve as President of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland during what has been an extraordinarily busy, productive and rewarding period for our Association.

Over the last 12 months, we have continued to build upon the momentum generated in previous years, whilst striving to ensure that the ASGBI remains relevant, visible, collaborative and aspirational for modern surgeons. Throughout this year, our guiding theme of *Innovate – Inspire – Belong* has shaped much of our work and has underpinned our ambition to create an Association that not only delivers educational excellence, but also fosters pride, inclusivity, community and professional identity across all stages of surgical practice.

The challenges facing surgery across the UK and Ireland remain considerable. Workforce pressures, waiting lists, training challenges, sustainability concerns and evolving patient expectations continue to test our profession. Against this backdrop, I believe the ASGBI has continued to provide an important national and international voice for surgeons, whilst also delivering value to our members through education, advocacy, collaboration and professional support.

ASGBI International Surgical Congress 2026 – Brighton

Our recent International Surgical Congress in Brighton represented a major highlight of the year and, I believe, an important milestone in the continuing evolution of the Association.

Under the theme *Innovate – Inspire – Belong*, the congress sought to combine academic excellence with collaboration, inclusivity and community. The response from delegates, faculty and industry partners has been overwhelmingly positive and I have been deeply humbled by the many messages received from members and international colleagues describing the meeting as one of the most enjoyable, welcoming and energising ASGBI congresses in recent memory.

We were delighted to receive a record-breaking 765 abstract submissions, reflecting both the scientific quality of the meeting and the continued enthusiasm for engagement with the Association, particularly amongst trainees and early-career surgeons. The congress programme showcased innovation across all surgical specialties and included high-quality plenary sessions, specialist symposia, collaborative sessions with partner organisations, skills-based education, sustainability discussions and trainee-focused initiatives.

One of the most gratifying aspects of the congress was the atmosphere created throughout the meeting. There was a genuine sense of optimism, collegiality and belonging which resonated strongly with delegates. As an Association, we should be proud that we are creating meetings which not only deliver outstanding education, but also strengthen the identity and community of surgery itself.

International Collaboration and Global Engagement

Over the last year, the ASGBI has continued to strengthen and expand its international profile through meaningful collaboration with surgical organisations across the world.

Our relationship with the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) continues to flourish and represents one of the Association's most important strategic international partnerships. It was a privilege to represent the ASGBI at the SAGES Congress in Tampa, where our joint sustainability symposium was exceptionally well received and highlighted the Association's growing international reputation in this area.

The ongoing collaboration with SAGES has also enabled the continued development and promotion of the Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery (FLS) programme within the UK, helping to support surgical training and technical skills development for the next generation of surgeons.

In addition, the Association has strengthened relationships with the American College of Surgeons, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS), the New Zealand Association of General Surgeons (NZAGS), the Argentine Surgical Society, the Uruguayan Surgical Society and colleagues at the Pan-Hellenic Congress of Surgery. These collaborations have facilitated educational exchange, faculty participation and shared learning, whilst reinforcing ASGBI's reputation as an outward-looking and internationally engaged surgical association.

It was also a privilege to contribute to the delivery of the RCSEd Laparoscopic Skills in Emergency Surgery course both in Edinburgh and internationally at the Pan-Hellenic Congress, reflecting the growing importance of practical surgical skills education and collaborative faculty development.

Education, Training and Professional Development

Education remains central to the mission of the ASGBI and I am pleased that we have continued to expand and modernise our educational offering over the last 12 months.

Our Four Seasons webinar series has continued to provide accessible, high-quality educational content covering a broad range of contemporary surgical topics. In parallel, the "Precision" webinar series has allowed us to deliver focused specialist updates in areas such as HPB, colorectal surgery, emergency general surgery, trauma and wound care.

These initiatives have been extremely well received and demonstrate the Association's ability to deliver relevant, flexible and modern educational opportunities for surgeons at all stages of their careers.

Trainee engagement has remained a major priority throughout the year. It has been especially encouraging to see increasing trainee involvement in congress activity, abstract submission, research presentation, debate and educational participation. The future of surgery depends upon nurturing talented, motivated and engaged young surgeons, and I believe the ASGBI continues to play an important role in supporting that development.

Advocacy, Workforce and National Representation

The ASGBI has continued to maintain an active voice in national surgical discussions through ongoing engagement with the Federation of Surgical Specialty Associations (FSSA) and other key stakeholders.

Much of this work has focused upon workforce pressures, surgical training, patient safety, service delivery and the future sustainability of surgical practice within the NHS. Recent discussions surrounding workforce census data and consultant working patterns have further highlighted the increasing pressures facing the surgical profession and reinforce the importance of strong national surgical advocacy.

Patient safety has also remained a central focus. The Association has continued to support initiatives aimed at improving surgical safety, sharing learning and promoting best practice across the profession.

In addition, we continue to champion the importance of sustainability within surgery, recognising that environmental responsibility must increasingly form part of modern surgical leadership and organisational strategy.

Strategic Partnerships

The work of the Association would not be possible without the support of our strategic partners and industry collaborators.

Over the last year, we have continued to maintain and strengthen our partnerships with J&J MedTech, Baxter and Radar Healthcare, whilst also securing an exciting new strategic partnership with Stryker. These collaborations have enabled us to continue delivering high-quality educational activity, congress innovation and member engagement opportunities whilst maintaining the independence and professional integrity of the Association.

I would like to thank all of our partners for their continued support and shared commitment to surgical education and professional development.

Organisational Culture and Member Engagement

One of my personal ambitions during this presidency has been to help ensure that the ASGBI remains not only educationally relevant, but also welcoming, approachable and representative of the modern surgical community.

Over the last year, I believe we have continued to strengthen the visibility and accessibility of the Association through improved communication, increased social media engagement, enhanced international collaboration and a greater emphasis upon community and belonging.

Surgery remains a profession built upon teamwork, mentorship, friendship and shared experience. In an increasingly pressured healthcare environment, maintaining that sense of professional identity and community is more important than ever.

I have been particularly proud to see so many members actively engaging with the Association, attending meetings, contributing educationally and speaking positively about the direction of the ASGBI. That collective enthusiasm is ultimately what drives the Association forward.

Closing Reflections

Finally, I would like to thank Council, the Executive team, our staff, faculty, industry partners and members for their continued support, hard work and commitment to the Association.

Serving as President of the ASGBI continues to be one of the greatest honours of my professional career. This year has reminded me not only of the extraordinary talent and dedication within our profession, but also of the importance of collaboration, kindness, mentorship and community within surgery.

I look forward with great enthusiasm to continuing our work together over the coming months as we continue to innovate, inspire and ensure that every surgeon feels that they belong within the ASGBI.



Christian Macutkiewicz

President, ASGBI