



Chairperson's Report

As we reflect on another year with the British Kitesports Association (BKSA), it's clear that 2024 was a year of incredible highs and some sobering challenges. Let's start with the positives, because there's a lot to celebrate.

Achievements and Highlights

Olympic Gold for Ellie Aldridge - Ellie Aldridge made history by winning gold in the inaugural women's kite event at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Her performance was nothing short of brilliant, showcasing the strength of British kiteboarding on the global stage. This achievement is particularly special as Ellie emerged from the *Kite for Gold* program, which aimed to bring more women into kiteboarding. Seeing her rise to the top is a testament to what we can achieve as an organization.

King of the Air Victory - Francesca Miani brought home another accolade for Britain by winning the King of the Air competition in the female division. It's fantastic to see British riders excelling across disciplines.

New Initiatives and Events

Last year, we introduced downwind clinics with Mark Shinn, focusing on wingfoil, wing drop and stand-up paddleboarding development. Mark's expertise and contributions to kiteboarding make this initiative particularly exciting.

We also hosted one of the best Big Air competitions in years with the PUKL team, thanks to perfect weather conditions, exceptional rider quality, and strong audience engagement. Additionally, our wave competition in Rhosneigr was a standout event, featuring a multi-discipline foiling session that saw incredible local participation.

Looking Ahead: A Packed 2025 Program

For 2025, we've put together an ambitious program covering all kite disciplines—from wing foiling to freestyle big air and kite racing—spanning locations across the UK. I'm especially excited about our event in Troon, Scotland, where I'll personally be lending a hand. These events are designed not only to showcase talent but also to drive participation and foster community spirit.

Challenges

While we've had much to celebrate, it hasn't been without its difficulties:

Retail Struggles

The retail sector is facing significant challenges. Local shops are vital to our community—they provide expertise, foster connections, and support our sport's growth. I urge everyone to support their local retailers rather than shopping online whenever possible.



Community Engagement

On a personal note, I was disheartened to see criticism of the BKSA on local forums. While everyone is entitled to their opinions, I want to emphasize that BKSA is run by people who dedicate their time and energy out of passion for this sport. If you have concerns or suggestions, please reach out directly—we're always open to constructive dialogue and eager for more hands-on support.

The Road Ahead

2025 promises to be a big year for kitesports in the UK. We're doubling down on community-driven initiatives and working closely with retailers and clubs to ensure that our events benefit everyone involved. From supporting emerging disciplines like parawing (yes, it's a thing—look it up!) to fostering talent through programs like *Kite for Gold*, BKSA remains committed to nurturing and growing this incredible sport.

Let's continue working together as a community—supporting each other, celebrating our successes, and tackling challenges head-on. Here's to another exciting year ahead!