

**PADDLE**  
SCOTLAND

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

PROUD PARTNER OF & SUPPORTED BY:

**sportscotland**  
the national agency for sport

**spòrsalba**  
am prìomh bhuidheann  
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**PADDLE<sup>UK</sup>**



# CONTENTS

- 3** *Interim CEO Report*
- 4** *Interim Chair Message*
- 6** *Pathways & Performance*
- 8** *Financial Report*
- 9** *Equality, Diversity & Inclusion*
- 15** *Environment & Access*
- 17** *Membership & Events*
- 19** *Discipline Reports*
- 31** *Award Winners 2024*



# INTERIM CEO REPORT

The year to 31 March 2025 marked another significant step in delivering our long-term vision, Paddlesport for All (2022–2025). Paddle Scotland continues to champion participation, inclusion, and excellence across every level of paddlesport, from grassroots clubs to international competition.

## **Key Achievements**

Through the report, you'll be able to read about growth in female membership, a wide variety of events, the continued expansion of opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to access our sport, ongoing development of talented athletes and some incredible performances by Scots on the World Stage – including a Paralympic Silver medal for Hope Gordon.

Meanwhile, June 2024 saw the completion of the £1.4M redevelopment of Grandtully Station Park and the reopening of the site, delivering state-of-the-art, accessible facilities and training spaces and, importantly, the ability to generate additional income from non-paddlers for the benefit of paddlesport. The future success of the site has the potential to allow additional investment into key areas



of development, including clubs, leadership, access and environment.

## **Key Challenges**

The year ended with a period of leadership and structural change. CEO Stuart Smith and COO Andy Murray both left the organisation in early 2025. We are grateful for their decades of service to the organisation and wish them all the best for the future.

While this leadership and subsequent structural change certainly has an impact on our ability to deliver for the members in the short term, it provides an opportunity to refresh, and the focus of the '25-'26 financial year is to stabilise and rebuild to ensure a strong organisation that can deliver for and support its members and volunteers well into the future.

We're aware that Standards for Deployment are putting pressure on clubs and we are looking at how we can best support clubs through these challenges. This is a key risk and an important focus for our work.

## **Looking Ahead**

As Paddle Scotland moves into the next phase of its strategic journey, our focus will be on consolidating our foundations and addressing challenges head-on. Priorities include strengthening governance, developing a new long-term strategy, supporting clubs and increasing connection with members and the staff team.

Our thanks go to our members, volunteers, staff, funders and partners whose passion and dedication continue to make paddlesport in Scotland thrive. Together, we are building a stronger, more inclusive and sustainable paddling future.

**Kevin Pringle**  
Interim CEO



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR INTERIM CHAIR

It is my pleasure to present to you the 2024-2025 Paddle Scotland Annual Report. This year has been one of both achievement and transition for Paddle Scotland. The redevelopment of Grandtully Station Park marks a milestone in our vision of Paddlesport for All, while ongoing organisational change positions us for a stronger future.

This has been a year of significant leadership transition. We said farewell to our previous CEO Stuart Smith and COO Andy Murray, who together contributed more than 35 years of service to Paddle Scotland. Their leadership has helped drive a sustained period of growth, and we thank them for their commitment to the organisation.

Paddle Scotland had the privilege of welcoming Kevin Pringle as our Interim CEO in February as we focused on stabilising and resetting the organisation. I am deeply grateful to Kevin for stepping into this leadership role with such commitment, and to every member of our staff team for their dedication and professionalism. On behalf of the Board, I extend our sincere thanks to them all.

At Board level, we were pleased to welcome our new President, Stewart Pitt, whose strong connections across the paddling community bring valuable insight. We also welcomed new directors Alison Byers, Mark Mulrain, Niamh Lee and Ken Nicol who join continuing board members Andy Dorin and Richard Sant. The breadth of experience across our Board is a real

asset, and I am sincerely thankful for the support they have offered both to me and to the wider organisation. The Board remains firmly committed to good governance, financial sustainability, and providing strong support to our members and volunteers.

In closing, I would like to give heartfelt thanks to the entire Paddle Scotland community. Our clubs, coaches, officials, parents and volunteers contribute so much to the health and success of paddlesport in Scotland. Your passion, generosity and commitment continue to drive us forward.

With our work continuing into a refreshed shared vision, purpose and values, I am confident that we are entering a new and exciting chapter for paddlesport in Scotland.

**Allan McKay**

*Interim Chair of the Paddle Scotland Board of Directors*









# PATHWAYS & PERFORMANCE



After the long winter grind the season started fast and furious with Canoe/Kayak Slalom and Kayak Cross selection, which took place across two venues, Lee Valley White Water Centre and Holme Pierrepont. As is now expected, the Scottish athletes were challenging for Team GB places across all the disciplines, seeing athletes selected across all areas - Senior, U23 and Junior categories.

Never far behind, the sprinters also took to the water with selection in April. Kristina Armstrong led the way and was selected for both the World and European Championships at U23, a feat that should be congratulated given this was her first year within this age group. Not to be outdone, Hope Gordon continued her fine form and was selected for her respective World and European Championships. More importantly, this kept her Paralympic selection alive.

As the racing season progressed, the selected athletes travelled Europe either on training camps or to take part in International competitions, but whatever the event, they were always at the sharp end of the competition and left having been on the podium or very close to the podium on every occasion.

July became another high intensity month with GB selection for the Paralympic Games. Hope didn't take anything for granted, she prepared well and delivered on the race weekend and was successful in being selected for Team GB. It was also at this regatta where 6 Junior Scottish athletes were selected for Olympic Hopes which was taking place at the home for Canoe Sprint in Szeged, Hungary, in September.

The Paralympics arrived, training camps were completed and then onto the biggest stage. Hope progressed with confidence in both her disciplines, making both A Finals, taking a silver in the Va'a VL3 Class and taking fifth place in the KL3 Final.

So as the season ended once again Paddle Scotland continued to have athletes competing at the highest of levels, but sport never finishes there, so after a short break and some intense planning the hard work begins all over again, with the athletes focusing on the areas that will give them the greatest gains.

Consistency is key to any Coach-Athlete relationship and as athletes came to the end of their season, Paddle Scotland lost two of their Coaching Team, Tomas Duarte and Sam Miles, who both moved onto new challenges. The programme employed Andzrej Wojs on a casual contract to work alongside Stuart Gerrie and the slalom team through the winter and through the selection races.

Sprint was similar through the Winter months where we contracted Ian Wynne for camps and regattas, which brought a different critical set of eyes on the athletes and we used Scott Simon to develop a suitable plan and deliver at the key sessions. This brought many different perspectives to the athletes which allowed a greater transference of knowledge and further developed a small Community of Practise for the coaches.

Further development in Scotland was focused on the Para disciplines where we offered opportunities to potential athletes and introduced them to racing. This progressed well with one athlete reaching the required standard to race at the September Regatta.

With many moving parts, the success of the programme would not happen without the close collaboration between many stakeholders: Paddle UK, sportscotland, Club coaches, volunteers and parents. A big thank you to you all and let's continue on this journey together.

**Visit this page** for further information on the Slalom athletes (**Lois Leaver, Sam Leaver, Jonny Dickson, Peter Linksted**).

**Visit this page** for further information on the Sprint athletes (**Deborah Kerr and Kristina Armstrong**).

For further information and to follow Paralympian **Hope Gordon** please **visit here**.

**Mike Chandler**  
Head of Pathways & Performance





# FINANCIAL REPORT

The 2024–2025 financial year saw total income rise to £1,165,684, **up 13.6 %** from the previous year (£1,025,626). Expenditure also increased to £1,193,343 reflecting higher staffing, project and facility costs linked to the completion and reopening of Grandtully Station Park and expanded delivery programmes. After other income and interest, the year closed with a **small surplus of £1,703**.

The continued investment by **sportscotland** remains pivotal, funding key posts, coach development, and talent programmes across the organisation. Additional income growth came from a strong year for campsite operations, increased income from qualifications, and additional discipline and event activity.

The organisation's balance sheet remains strong, with **net assets of £437,532**, reflecting healthy reserves and significant fixed-asset growth following the £1.5 million Grandtully project. These investments support long-term sustainability and expanded participation capacity for paddlesport across Scotland.

Looking ahead, while costs continue to increase, we are in a robust financial position and we expect Grandtully Station Park to provide increased resources to support the development of paddlesport throughout Scotland.

We extend our thanks to all funders, members, volunteers and staff whose contributions have enabled Paddle Scotland to maintain a balanced position while investing in the future of our sport.



**£1,165,684**  
TOTAL  
INCOME

**£437,532**  
NET  
ASSETS

**£1,703**  
TOTAL  
SURPLUS

# EQUALITY GROUPS

Paddle Scotland continues to be committed to making paddlesport inclusive and welcoming to all by breaking down the barriers both real and perceived to taking part, supported as ever by our Equality Groups.

Due to the limited staff time to support the various groups, towards the end of the year it was decided that all members of the equality groups would be invited to the Main Equality Group to reduce the staff requirement to support the individual groups and for the groups to focus on key projects.

What follows is a summary of the groups' ambitions and achievements during the year.



**Accessible Paddling**



**Female**



**LGBTQ+**



**Young Person**



**Lifelong**



**Mental Health  
& Wellbeing**

The **Ethnicity Equality Group** is currently inactive.

In 2022 Paddle Scotland obtained the Advanced Equality Standard in Sport and is now working towards the Moving to Inclusion framework which replaced this.

# ACCESSIBLE PADDLING



This year the Accessible Paddling equality group has once again been busy helping make paddlesport more accessible to those with differences and increasing the opportunities for them to take part, including supporting **Scottish Disability Sport (SDS)** parasport festivals around the country from Tayside to Shetland. This was thanks to the support of local clubs and providers supplying boats and equipment and, equally as vital, the volunteers to run the sessions safely, with lots of encouragement and enthusiasm.

The Group also delivered a webinar on how to include all individuals with differences in paddlesport and to help bust some of the myths around disabilities. In addition, an episode of the Scottish Paddlecast podcast focused on neurodiversity in paddlesport.

Within their advisory capacity the group visited Grandtully Station Park to help us review the new facilities and potential future developments, having been heavily involved with the initial concept and design.

The group's future plans include supporting the return of Wheels to Water in 2026 and organising another sharing practice day.



# FEMALE EQUALITY GROUP



The Female Equality Group's activity this year has significantly contributed to Paddle Scotland's overarching goal of promoting gender inclusivity, with data showing positive progress in female participation. The Group supported Paddle Scotland staff through targeted events, leadership development, and strategic planning.

The Group **prioritised tackling the gender gap in leadership roles**. Building on the success of the 2022/2023 initiative, the FEG provided significant support to Paddle Scotland staff in developing and launching the **new Women's Coach/Leader Development Programme** in winter 2024/2025. With 28 participants now enrolled, the programme is structured around discipline-specific 'pods'. These groups receive targeted online support sessions and practical days, matched with a mentor and team of peers to guide and support each other through the qualification process.

The annual Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium (SWPS) remains a hugely successful, signature event for Paddle Scotland. Delivering this large-scale event is a significant undertaking, requiring the efforts of a volunteer-led organising committee, Paddle Scotland staff, and the female coaching community. Though not a core focus, the Female Equality Group (FEG) members played an important supportive role in the event's continued success.

# LGBTQ+ EQUALITY GROUP



The LGBTQ+ Equality Group arranged and ran the fourth Paddling with Pride event again supported by Glenmore Lodge with participants camping over the weekend and using the Lodge's fantastic facilities. The event is open to participants from the LGBTQ+ community and their allies and is a perfect mix of social and paddling fun. It allows those that are new to come along and mix with longer-term paddlers in a friendly and safe environment. By the Lodge kindly lending out equipment, it allowed those new to the sport or those wanting to try a new craft to get on the water and join the excitement.

The Group is looking forward to organising next year's event.

The Group also delivered a workshop at LEAP Sports Scotland's (Leadership, Equality and Active Participation in Sports for LGBTI people in Scotland) conference at Stirling Court Hotel with three members attending.





# YOUNG PERSON EQUALITY GROUP



This year saw the first cohort of Young Ambassadors (YA) reach the end of their term as Young Ambassadors. The progress these young people have made over the last two years has been amazing, including seeing them achieve coaching and leadership awards and growing in confidence in all situations.

The YA final act was to organise and take part in the Great Glen Expedition from Fort William to Inverness. This further highlighted the progression of the Young Ambassadors in taking leadership roles and supporting each other throughout the expedition.

Several of the young Ambassadors have also joined various other Equality Groups.

The Young Persons Equality Group has progressed to planning the second Young Ambassador cohort with the individuals having been selected and the first get together due to take place at Grandtully Station Park in August 2025.





# LIFELONG PADDLING



This year the lifelong Equality Group focused again on increasing media content that reflects the participation of older paddlers within Paddlesport including publishing Ten Top Tips for Creating a Welcoming & Supportive Club Atmosphere.

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING



The Mental Health & Wellbeing Equality Group have continued to be strong advocates for Mental Health Awareness Training and have supported the delivery of formal Mental Health First Aid Training for people involved in delivering paddlesport.

The Group also ran a sharing practice day at Grandtully Station Park based around the idea of "How does paddling impact Mental Wellbeing?" both positively and negatively, and began to share and plan what activities could be introduced and/or embedded within paddling experiences.

# ACCESS & ENVIRONMENT

The **Access and Environment Group** is made up of dedicated volunteer members. Alongside representing the organisation, we are fortunate to include professional paddlesport providers, ecologists and environmental specialists - though such expertise is not required for membership. (We currently have one vacancy for any member interested in joining our work.)

Bringing access and environment back under a single committee this year has been a very positive move. It is almost impossible to address an access issue without an environmental dimension - and vice versa - so the combined approach has proven both practical and effective.

Throughout the year, the committee has advised members and responded to consultations on behalf of Paddle Scotland. We continue to face major challenges: legal and practical barriers to water access are increasing, with parking restrictions and regulations in ports and other areas. Meanwhile, biodiversity loss, pollution, invasive species, and climate change all pose growing threats - issues that directly affect paddlesport.

We handled a significant volume of casework, including planning and development proposals such as new weirs and pumped storage schemes. We also contributed to a Cairngorms National Park study on improving access to the River Spey and made representations to local authorities on boat hire licensing. Unfortunately, there were also a few incidents of paddlers being abused on rivers. Though rare, these are unacceptable, and we encourage members to report any such incidents to the police and local authority access officers. Local clubs also play an important role in tackling local access issues.







As paddlers, we can be guardians and ambassadors for nature while enjoying Scotland's waters. Through Scottish Paddler, we've promoted both access and environmental awareness - particularly the "Check, Clean, Dry" message, highlighted at the SWPS and Club Volunteer Conferences. Our online seminars have featured excellent environment-focused talks, and we again supported the Big Paddle Clean Up.

A major focus this year has been developing an Access and Environmental Strategy for Paddle Scotland. Even with staff support, the Group cannot keep pace with the growing volume of casework, much of which treats symptoms rather than root causes. The new strategy sets a 10–15-year vision to improve paddlesport infrastructure, reduce our environmental footprint, and manage casework sustainably. Securing funding for a dedicated Access and Environment Officer will be key to delivering this. Member consultation will follow soon.

We were deeply saddened by the passing of Eddie Palmer, a long-standing champion of access and the environment. His experience and wisdom will be greatly missed.

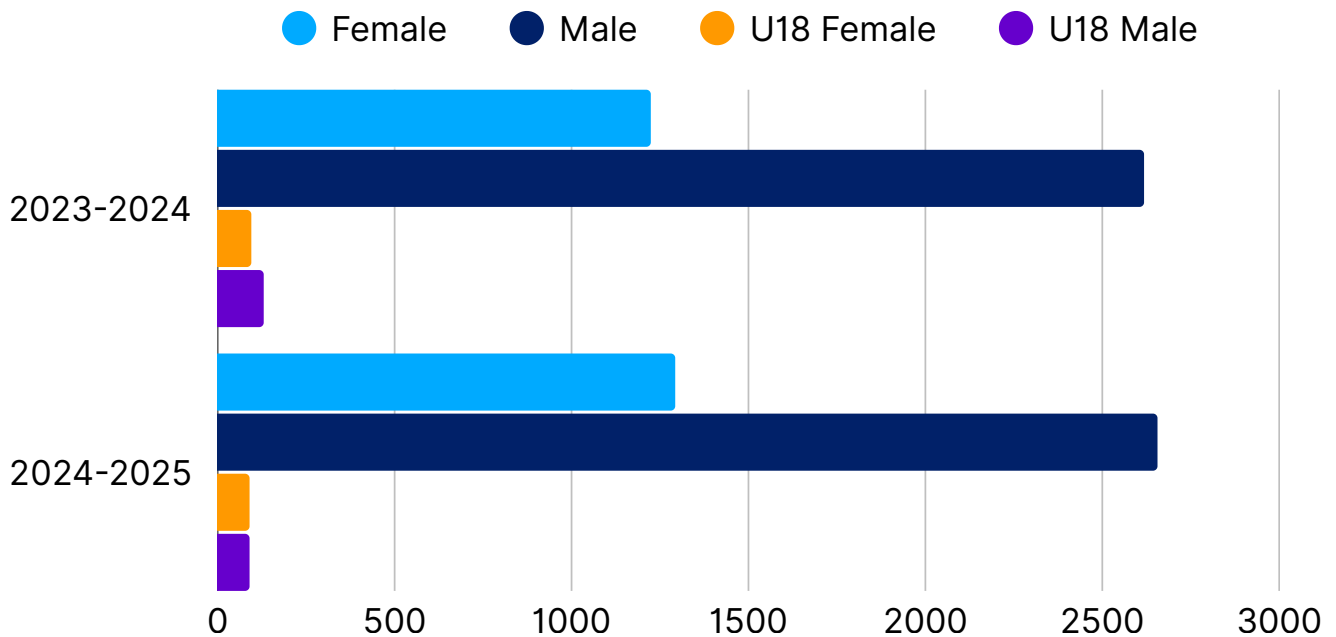
On a brighter note, we were delighted that Grant Dollier received the Andy Jackson Award for Contribution to Access and Environment in recognition of his many years of dedicated work, including representing Paddle Scotland on the National Access Forum.



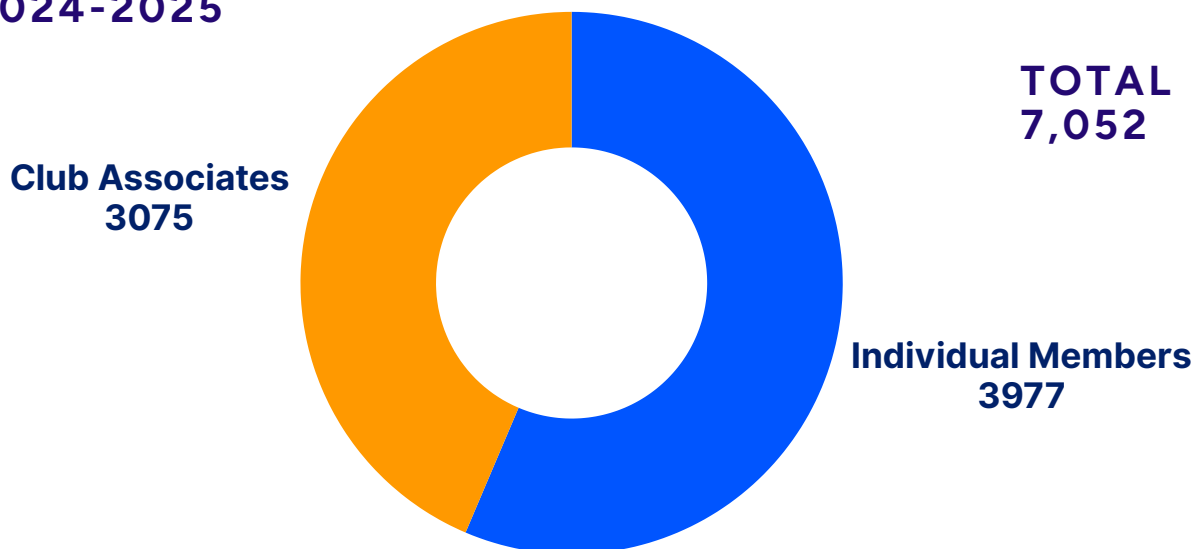


# MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

Paddle Scotland saw membership decrease ever so slightly, dropping from 4,086 in March 2024 to 3,977 at the end of 2024-2025. Notably, however, there was a **6% increase in female members**.



## MEMBERS & CLUB ASSOCIATES 2024-2025



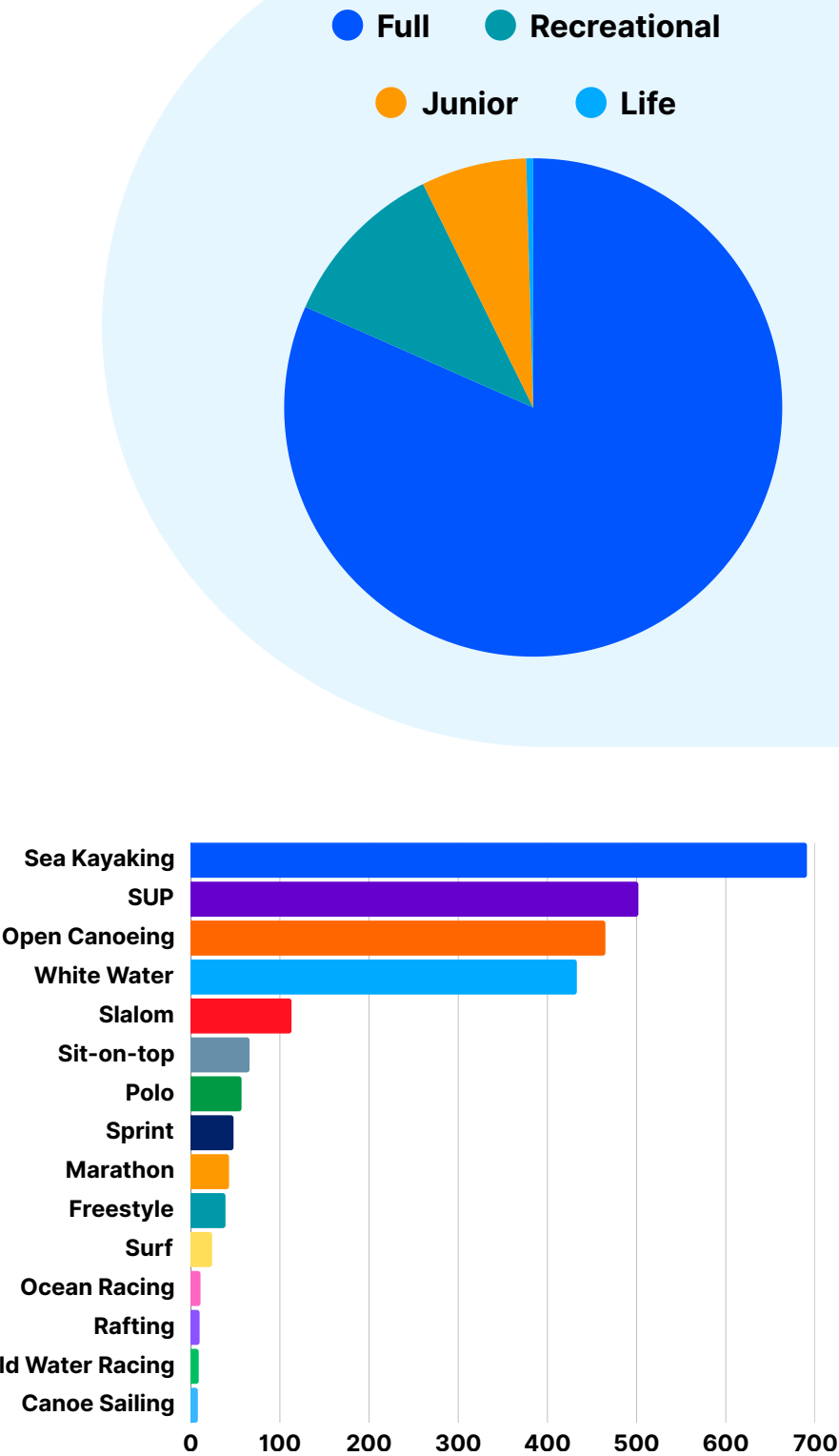
# MEMBERSHIP & EVENTS

## TOTAL EVENTS & COURSES 2024-2025

Club Events	28
Coaching Course	348
Competition Event	71
General Meetings	3
Leadership Course	277
Personal Performance Awards	7
Provider Event	77
Recreation Event	23
Safety Course	99
Stanley Gate Code & Other	24
Online Webinars	88
Women-specific Events	2
TOTAL	1,047

## PRIMARY DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

## MEMBERSHIP TYPE





# PADDLESPORT DISCIPLINE REPORTS

# CANOE POLO

Canoe Polo is a fast-paced, five-a-side team sport. Teams typically take part in league fixtures or standalone weekend competitions, usually involving 6–8 teams, with each team playing around 4–6 matches per day.

Over the past year, we have seen fantastic growth in participation. The leagues expanded to the point where we were able to **reinstate Division 3** for the 2025/26 season - an exciting milestone that reflects the sport's ongoing development.

We also successfully hosted the **Scottish Open 2024**, which welcomed 28 teams from Germany, Ireland, England and Wales. This was the largest polo event in recent Scottish history and marked the first of the International Editions of the Open. Held in Glasgow, it not only showcased top-level competition but also saw the reinstatement of the **Scottish Championships**.

Looking ahead, the Scottish Open 2025 is projected to feature around 44 teams - almost double last year's total - making it the largest polo event in the UK for 2025 and the biggest in Scottish Polo history.

In terms of facilities, we are excited to be working with Angus Alive (Angus Council) to launch a new free polo venue at Monikie Country Park near Dundee. Additionally, we are partnering with Winchburgh Developments to establish another new polo venue near Edinburgh, planned for 2027.

These developments represent a major step forward for polo in Scotland, creating more opportunities for **participation**, **competition** and **community engagement** across the country.





# FREESTYLE

The freestyle group have put activities on the backburner for a little while now due to injuries, relocations and work commitments. Plans are now underway to get some more freestyle kayaking action happening again soon. Watch out for news on informal freestyle sessions, coaching and perhaps some modern freestyle boats to try out too.



# MARATHON

2024 built on the success of the previous year with around 150 competitors racing during the year ranging in age from 8 to over 75. We returned to Loch Ken for the Scottish K1 Championships after a long hiatus - our thanks to Kirkcudbright Canoe Club for organising an event universally praised by everyone racing. We also had a successful new descent race on the Nith on the same weekend.

Thanks goes to all the volunteer organisers and organising clubs - without their dedication in planning and delivering events, we would not be able to run a full calendar.

The Linlithgow Winter Time Trials ran during the winter - our thanks to Derek Marshall and LKR for organising them.

The annual Glasgow to Edinburgh Challenge took place with a large field of competitors completing the challenge across the weekend. Some paddled the whole distance themselves and some took part in relay teams.

Our Marathon Discipline Development Group continues to meet to plan marathon racing in Scotland and are already looking forward to what we have to come next season.



# OCEAN RACING

The past year has seen steady progress for Ocean Racing in Scotland, with a number of sea kayak and surfski races taking place across the country. These races showcase Scotland's unique coastal environments and the commitment of a small but dedicated paddling community.

While participation numbers at several events were encouraging, overall growth in the discipline remains modest. Many organisers have noted the need to attract new paddlers, particularly younger participants and those coming from other areas of paddlesport. Increasing accessibility, both in terms of equipment and opportunities to try the discipline, will be essential to ensuring the sport's future sustainability.

Paddle Scotland has recognised this challenge and is progressing options to support wider access, including collaboration with clubs and entry-level opportunities for paddlers interested in making the transition from touring or performance kayaking.

One noticeable change in the ocean racing landscape is the growing popularity of racing paddleboards, with many events seeing a growing number of competitors using SUPs. Paddle Scotland is exploring ways in which we can engage and develop this discipline within the ocean environment.

Despite these challenges, the season's events were well organised and delivered to a high standard, and many thanks go to the tireless volunteers who are credited with their successful organisation.





# OPEN CANOEING

The number of individuals obtaining leadership qualifications in canoeing has decreased compared to the previous year. While this is disappointing, several factors may have contributed, including adverse weather affecting assessments, availability of mock clients, and some candidates opting for the PSTL pathway over Canoe Leader due to overlapping environmental remits.

However, there was a notable **33% increase in Advanced White Water Leader** certifications compared to the previous year, demonstrating clear pathway progression and highlighting opportunities for paddlers to reach the highest levels of canoe leadership in Scotland.

The **Scottish Canoe Symposium** at Glenmore Lodge was exceptionally well-attended by Paddle Scotland members, with many Scottish coaches volunteering their time and expertise. Their contributions greatly enhanced the quality of the event, bringing passion, knowledge, and extensive experience in open canoeing. The exchange of ideas, best practices and innovative coaching techniques created an atmosphere of collaboration and inspiration, reinforcing Scotland's reputation as a leading nation for canoeing expertise and coaching excellence across all levels, from beginners to advanced. This culture of professional growth and peer support continues to strengthen the overall quality and sustainability of canoeing in the region.

A primary aim for 2025–2026 is to foster the development and long-term growth of open canoeing by increasing participation, improving access and creating opportunities for paddlers of all abilities and backgrounds. This will involve strengthening pathways from grassroots to advanced levels, supporting skill development, and promoting open canoeing as an inclusive, enjoyable, and environmentally responsible activity.



# SEA KAYAKING

Over the past year, Paddle Scotland has continued to play a leading role in supporting and connecting Scotland's sea kayaking community. With a focus on leadership, inclusivity, and safety, the organisation has worked to ensure the discipline grows through skilled leaders, confident clubs, and strong national standards.

A major focus has been supporting clubs to implement Standards for Deployment. Through guidance, resources, and direct engagement, the Development Team has helped coaches and leaders within clubs strengthen operations, build confidence, and ensure consistency in how sea kayaking is delivered across Scotland's coasts.

Leadership development remains central to this progress. The addition of several new Sea Kayak Leader Providers has expanded training and assessment opportunities nationwide, giving aspiring leaders greater access to mentoring and progression. Paddle Scotland has also invested in community days for Sea Kayak and Advanced Sea Kayak Leader Providers, fostering collaboration, sharing best practice, and strengthening the national network of leaders.

Addressing the gender imbalance within leadership continues to be a key priority. Paddle Scotland is encouraging more women into leadership roles through targeted development opportunities, supportive networks, and visible role models. This commitment to diversity is helping to ensure that leadership across Scottish paddlesport remains inclusive, representative, and welcoming to all.





# SLALOM

Following the disbandment of the Slalom Committee in early 2024, the community of paddlers and volunteers came together and managed to run a successful programme of race events across Scotland. In parallel, there was a significant community focus on working with Paddle Scotland and the Pitcastle Estate to enable a return of slalom paddling to the Grandtully rapids. This culminated in a weekend of action with an army of volunteers spending hours cutting back the greenery and re-installing stanchions, lines and gates. A massive thank you to everyone that helped and fantastic to see a return of slalom to its spiritual home.

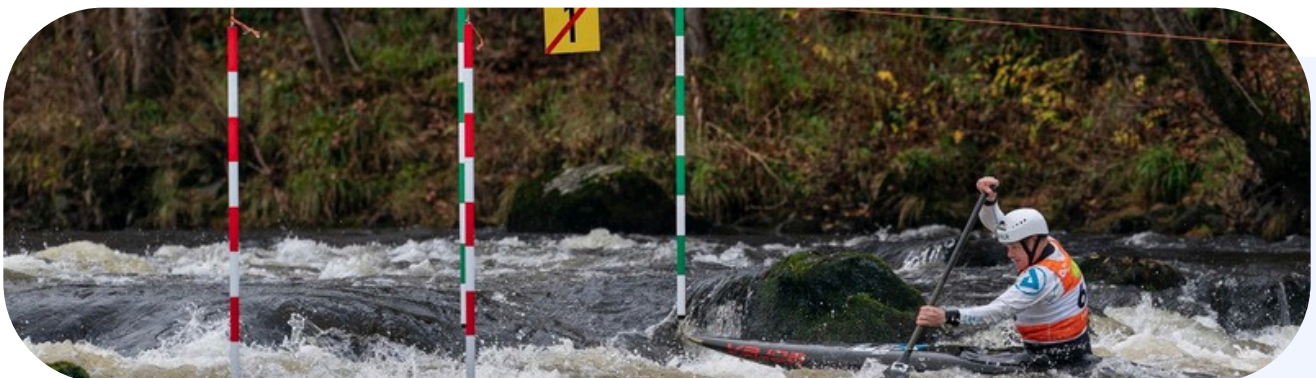
Club collaboration across Scotland continued to grow throughout the year, with a growing schedule of joint training sessions held, multiple training camps at HPP and Lee Valley, and active support provided at a number of race events across England and Wales. Of course, no year should pass without an overseas excursion and the summer of 2024 saw an extended European trip involving paddlers attending two different venues in France before some then headed on to Krakow and Prague to train and compete in ICF events at both.

The end of the 2024 saw Paddle Scotland establish a Slalom Development Group, endeavouring to bring an official focal point, coordinate management of event equipment and support planning and coordination for the subsequent race season.

Across the broader UK Slalom, discussions were undertaken with the whole slalom community regarding the current competition structure and the diminishing numbers within the sport. Alongside the World Class Programme, practitioners from Talent Athlete Scholarship Scheme (Tass) administered a deeper dive into this, which was followed up with a comprehensive report of possible changes which went to broader consultation towards the end of the season.

Overall, and despite the many disruptions and challenges, Slalom had a productive year, with success on the water across age groups and disciplines. The re-establishment of Tully, closer cooperation between the community and Paddle Scotland, and the relentless effort of volunteers helped to build into 2025 with confidence. There is a renewed focus to further grow clubs, coaches, athletes and volunteers to ensure that we can continue to promote this amazing sport at the highest level and to enable all levels of paddlers to be able to paddle.

Nothing happens without the dedication of an army of volunteers, so on behalf of Paddle Scotland and the Slalom Development Group, please accept this as a big thank you and here's to even more success and growth during the 2025/26 season.



# SPRINT

The Sprint Development Group had planned to run two regattas at Strathclyde Park in 2024; however, the June regatta had to be cancelled due to the venue withdrawing our booking.

The Scottish Championships Regatta later in the year went ahead as planned, with excellent attendance and some outstanding performances. The Sprint Development Group is a small team, and these events would not be possible without the invaluable support of additional volunteers, to whom we are extremely grateful.

Several other successful events were organised by clubs throughout the season, notably the Summer Series 10K/6K/2K races hosted by Linlithgow Kayak Racing and the Kinghorn Regattas run by Kirkcaldy Canoe Club. The varied nature of these events attracts a wide range of paddlers, helping more athletes take part in sprint racing in different formats.

Looking ahead, the Sprint Development Group will continue to implement the Strategy developed in 2024, focused on supporting the community that helps paddlers reach their full potential — in their clubs, at local and national regattas, and on the international stage.





# SUP

2025 has been a relatively quiet year for the **Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP)** Discipline Development Group, as members have focused on expanding personal projects and activities. Nevertheless, the group has continued to promote SUP safety, building on the progress made in 2024. This has included direct engagement in Ayrshire through Craig, work with the Scouts Association via Liam and Sam, SUP expeditions led by Emy and Donald, racing initiatives with Martin and Angela, and an Advanced Whitewater Safety Course specifically tailored for SUP delivered by Jim and Sam. In addition, Niamh has maintained valuable contact with non-NGB members, broadening community reach.

Summer 2024 saw the launch of the first **South West Paddle Fest** in Largs (pictured) in partnership with local clubs and providers. Although not specifically a SUP event, the majority of those attending were drawn to the SUP 'Come & Try' sessions, exemplifying the interest in safe SUP training and information.

Participation trends indicate a shift in SUP NGB course interest from coaching and instruction toward leadership qualifications, particularly in Sheltered Water, Tidal and the newly updated Inland disciplines - all delivered by members of the group.

To better support competitive paddlers, we have also established a **dedicated Race Group** to help coordinate and facilitate SUP Race events across Scotland.

Looking ahead, plans are underway for a White Water SUP event at Pinkston in Glasgow, as well as support for a major new event inspired by the success of Wales' White Water Fest, aiming to bring a similar celebration to Scotland, in collaboration with Ant, Jess, and Cameron.



# SURF

The Surf Development Group continues to support a broad range of activities across development, competition, and technical areas, with a particular focus on surf kayaking. Following the 2023 survey, the group has increased its efforts to grow the sport, highlighted by successful initiatives such as the **Women & Girls Surf Weekend** at Sandend, which saw a rise in participation and equipment purchases among women paddlers.

A major achievement this year was the collaboration with Lost Shore Wave Garden, where **more than 60 paddle surfers** took part in events that strengthened community connections. The group also remains active on Facebook, fostering wider engagement and communication within the surf community.

In competition, Scottish paddlers delivered strong performances at the European Championships in Ireland, with **Sam Clegg** and **Ian Sherrington** (pictured) achieving impressive results, including Ian's first-place finishes in the Veterans category. Although the British Championships were cancelled due to poor conditions, preparations and optimism remain high for 2026.

On the technical side, Scottish representatives continue to contribute to the British Canoeing Surf Technical Group, developing leadership, coaching, and rescue awards, as well as new online educational content.

This year also saw the introduction of the Hobson Eclipse RM surf kayak, an excellent addition that will help support club-level development and encourage wider participation in surf kayaking.





# WHITE WATER KAYAKING

2024-2025 has been an exciting year for white water kayaking in Scotland, with a fantastic range of competitive and community events catering to paddlers of all abilities. The **Moriston Enduro**, **Nesk Race**, **McLaren's Giant Slalom**, **Garry Boater X**, and **Wet West** were all highly successful. Seeing these events back in full swing post-Covid has been a brilliant reminder of the strength of Scotland's kayaking community, bringing people together to socialise, train and challenge themselves.

These events are organised and run entirely by teams of volunteers, whose dedication makes them possible. It has been inspiring to see the white-water community unite to deliver such vibrant gatherings, attracting paddlers from across Scotland, Wales, England and beyond.

The coaching and paddling community in Scotland remains exceptionally supportive, with a strong culture of collaboration and shared learning. It has been a privilege to witness the growing number of coaches working together to offer high-quality courses that help paddlers develop their skills. Each coach brings unique expertise and style, enriching both their own practice and that of the wider community.

This spirit of cooperation extends well beyond the formal coaching network. Across the Highlands, groups of experienced paddlers continue to share wisdom and knowledge freely, creating a welcoming, motivated, and passionate white-water community.



# WILD WATER RACING

This year, Morna Campbell has continued her outstanding work encouraging young people into Wild Water Racing (WWR) in Scotland, which is why we have so many active young paddlers. Fraser Gormal has maintained regular training and coaching at Pinkston, passing on knowledge and skills to the next generation. Calum Urquhart remains a cornerstone of our programme, keeping up to date with courses and knowledge so we can continue to run races at all levels. Thank you to Morna, Fraser and Calum.

Our dedicated development group members work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure races run smoothly and that we comply with Paddle Scotland governance. Thank you to all of our hardworking members. Special thanks also to Paul Anderson, Vice Chair, for his exceptional work preparing the **bid to host the European U23 and Junior Championships at Grandtully**, liaising with Paddle Scotland, Paddle UK, and the European Canoe Association. We are extremely grateful to Paul and everyone at Paddle Scotland for their support.

Looking ahead, we are excited to host the European U23 and Junior Championships from 10th to 16th August 2026 on the River Tay, and the BUCS University Championships at Grandtully in November 2025, welcoming over 200 participants.







# 2024 RECOGNITION AWARD WINNERS



# ★ Willing Hands Quaich ★

## WINNER: Dave Marquis

This award recognises outstanding service to our sport, celebrating a paddler who acts in a voluntary capacity and makes a significant contribution to the sport.

Our winner is **Dave Marquis** of Castle Craigs Canoe Club, who has been instrumental in developing the personal skills and competencies and equally the confidence of so many members. Dave has done some sterling and innovative work with disabled kayakers, enabling them to quickly and safely move from pool to sea conditions. With his long history of coaching and his many contacts in the sport, he has helped the club to meet members' training needs, always ensuring that courses are delivered to the very highest standards.

A huge thank you to Dave for his decades of hard work.





## Young Volunteer



### WINNER: Ava Barton

This award recognises a young person who commits time and effort to their club, centre or community.

Congratulations to our winner **Ava Barton**. Ava is a Paddle Scotland Young Ambassador and a volunteer at Carse Canoe Club as well as a member of the Young Person Equality Group and has helped on the Scottish Women's Paddle Symposium organising committee as well. Ava started paddling when she was 8 and is incredibly accomplished for being only 16 at the time of winning the award - what an inspiration!

Congratulations Ava - everyone is excited to follow your paddlesport journey!



# ★ Andy Jackson Award for Contribution to Access and Environment ★

## WINNER: Grant Dolier

This award is open to those who have achieved great things working to improve or preserve access, and/or conserve the paddling environment.

Congratulations to our winner **Grant Dolier**, Grant chaired our Access Committee for many years and is now very active in the new, combined Access & Environment Group.

Thank you, Grant, for all the work you have been doing and thanks to all the other volunteers working in this area, for our benefit.





# ★ Committee Volunteer ★

## WINNER: Maxime Biret

This award recognises a member of a committee - whether that's a club committee or Paddle Scotland volunteer group - who deserves to be recognised for their commitment to the 'job'! This person is the driving force for getting things done, doing all the jobs no one else wants to do all the while holding down their day job.

This year's winner of the Committee Volunteer Award is **Maxime Biret** - someone who does all of the above for Titans Canoe Club, working from early 'til late to ensure training sessions and competitions run smoothly and are well attended.

Congratulations to Max who has helped transform Canoe Polo in Scotland!



# Community Engagement



## WINNER: Debi Ives

This recognition celebrates those individuals, groups or clubs who have gone above and beyond in making a positive impact in the wider community.

The winner of this award is **Debi Ives** because of her incredible dedication and positive influence in her community. As a passionate science teacher in a Fife secondary school, Debi is an inspiring role model, promoting not only science but also sports. In the words of her nominator SJ, her enthusiasm is contagious, and her commitment to helping others is evident in the many roles she takes on.

Thanks so much Debi!





# Impact on Equality & Diversity



## WINNER: Bethan Radcliffe

This award is for an individual or a group who have made a difference to make paddlesport more accessible to all, increasing opportunities for under-represented groups to participate.

This year's winner is **Bethan Radcliffe** of the Titans Valkyries! Bethan has been instrumental in developing women's canoe polo in Scotland.

Congratulations to Bethan, a very worthy winner!



## Coach of the Year



### WINNER: Margaret Pearson

This award celebrates a coach that has gone above and beyond their usual role. Perhaps they've come up with ingenious ways of coaching, or perhaps they've been extra supportive to their paddlers.

Our winner this year is **Margaret Pearson** of Inverness Canoe Club. Margaret is being recognised for her huge contribution to coaching across the Highlands over more than two decades. Margaret is not only a dedicated coach, but has also been active on the Club's Board and previously its committee, almost continuously for over 15 years. She has just stepped down from being the Vice Chair.

Big congratulations to Margaret - very well deserved!





## Club of the Year



### WINNER: Shetland Canoe Club

This year the club of the year is Shetland Canoe Club! In the words of one of their nominators, the club is “going from strength to strength. It is introducing many new members to the wonderful sport of sea kayaking and it is retaining members who are able to progress to leadership and coaching awards. The club organises a wonderful symposium to facilitate many paddlers from elsewhere to appreciate the amazing coastline of Shetland. The club has excellent links to the community, evident from the support that is provided to enable coaches to come to Shetland to help with the training and assessment of local paddlers.”

Big congratulations to Rachel, Masha, Frank, Hamish and everyone involved in the successful activities of **Shetland Canoe Club!**

# CONTACT



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