



Risk Assessment

Compiled by: Lawrence Smith
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Location: Gwithian

Date of Activity: Ongoing

Activity: Kitesurfing on the sea and launching and landing of LEI kites on land.

Location background information:

Gwithian Beach is a North Westerly facing beach located in St Ives Bay. The full beach is approximately 3 miles long and stretches from Hayle estuary mouth (known as The Bluff) at the Southern end up to Godrevey at the North end.

There can often be considerable swell on Gwithian however there are usually good flat sections of water between the waves for beginners. Swell height is usually smaller further towards the southern end of the beach and larger at the Godrevey end. The whole beach is soft sand, however there are outcrops of rocks at Gwithian and Godrevey. Some of these are only viewable at low tide and therefore it is advisable to kite over the low tide period if it is your first time kiting there so that the rocks are visible.

During spring tides there can be considerable water movement and rips in certain places. On an outgoing tide the water generally moves along the shore from North to South and vice versa on an incoming tide.

RNLI lifeguards patrol the beach during the peak season and there are swim zones indicated by red and yellow flags located at intervals along the entire beach. Kitesurfing in these swim zones is strictly forbidden and care should be taken when kitesurfing upwind of these zones in case the rider gets into difficulty and drifts downwind into the swim areas.



There are now summer restrictions in place for kitesurfing and other wind powered sports on the water and on the beach. Details of these can be found at www.gwithianbeach.org and also on signs located at the Gwithian Car Park. The restrictions are in place over the peak season to coincide with the start and finish RNLI cover.

The kitesurfing restrictions are no kitesurfing being allowed on the water or launching and landing on the beach during the restricted summer period anywhere North of Peter's Point as indicated on the accompanying map and signs at the car park. The beach to the South of Peter's Point has no restriction at any time of year.

There are tall cliffs at the Gwithian car Park end of the beach and these can cause turbulence with onshore winds. It is advisable therefore, to only kite here 2 hours after high tide and stop 2 hours before high tide.

Further along the beach to the South there are lower height sand dunes and during neap tides this section of beach can be used from 1 hour after high tide up until 1 hour before high tide.

Wind Directions:

Gwithian beach can be used in wind directions ranging from SW round to NE. SW winds are cross-shore and so care needs to be taken if kiting up at the Godrevey end of the beach as any escape route down wind is hampered by rocks and the headland. NE winds are also cross-shore and can be gusty at Gwithian Car Park due to the headland at Godrevey Lighthouse. It is advisable to move to the Mexico and Phillack Towans area of the beach for cleaner wind.

Gwithian works best from a Westerly round to a Northerly when the winds are more cross onshore. A NE wind is more directly onshore and beginners may find it difficult to get out through the waves in these conditions.



Who is at Risk: Kite Flyer and other kitesurfers. All third party beach and water users and pets.

Risk Control Measures:

Location	Risk	Control Measure
Gwithian Beach	<p>Kite Lines: Can cause lacerations if grabbed or someone is hit by them at speed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching and landing of kites to be done with assistance from an experienced kitesurfer. Solo launch and landing should be conducted with extreme care and vigilance for other beach users with ample clear space downwind. • Kite killer, safety leash system to be checked and fully functional. • Ample space should be left between each kite flyer. At least two line lengths.
	Risk of collision with other water users or entanglement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All kitesurfers to know and understand the ‘rules of the road’ or right of way to avoid collisions. • Kitesurfers entering the water have priority.
	<p>Kites: Can be heavy and cause injury if hitting someone at high speed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to secure the kite well when not in use. • Ample space to be left between each flyer and they must watch out for people and animals in the flying zone. • Horses use this beach occasionally, so either land kites or hold kites still in neutral zone if animals appear in the flying area. • All kitesurfers must use a safety leash system.



	Risk	Control Measure
	<p>Board: If the rider is hit by their board it can cause an injury. A loose board may create a hazard to other water users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helmets should be worn by all kitesurfers, especially in waves to prevent head injuries.
	<p>Launching surface: Can pose a risk to the kite flyer when on land especially when launching. Sometimes large, deep sand hollows and ridges form on the beach. Tripping on these when launching the kite and getting dragged can cause the flyer to lose concentration or control.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure launching area is free from rocks downwind and on smooth sand.
	<p>Windsurfers and other kite surfers: Possible collision with other water users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The kitesurfer must keep a look out for windsurfers and other kitesurfers and follow the 'rules of the road'
	<p>People on the shoreline: Risk of collision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitesurfers must keep vigilant for people wandering into their downwind flying area and either land their kite or take it to the neutral zone until they have passed.
	<p>Swimmers/Surfers: Risk of collisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwithian is a popular surf beach and kitesurfers should show respect especially when catching waves that surfers are trying to catch. Kitesurfers can catch waves much easier than surfers and should show consideration. • Kitesurfers should never enter the designated swim zones but out of season these zones are not enforced. Kitesurfers must be vigilant for swimmers in the water



		and bear away from them if encountered.
	Waves: Risk of losing control of the kite when flyer caught by shore break.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gwithian can experience large swell and waves. Kitesurfers must assess the conditions and only enter the water in conditions they are comfortable in and must wear appropriate safety equipment.• Do not go out further than you are prepared to swim in considering the prevailing conditions.• Be aware of swim zones and other water users and pack down if the kite is caught in heavy waves and is dragging towards other water users.

Hayle Bluff to Gwithian Map

