



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING TRIALS
LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT 10.30 AM ON
TUESDAY 7 JUNE 2022 IN THE BOARDROOM, THE KENNEL
CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

PRESENT:

Mrs P Bann	Essex Working Trials Society
Miss J Carruthers*	North East Counties Working Trials Society
Miss L Cottier	Scottish Working Trials Society
Mr D Craven	Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Mr M Drewitt	New Forest Working Trials Society
Mr B Gilbert*	ASPADS Working Trials Society
Mr N Hines*	Lincolnshire German Shepherd Dog & All Breeds Training Society
Mrs J Holt	North West Working Trials Society
Mrs J Howells	Hampshire Working Trials Society
Mrs D Ling	East Anglian Working Trials Training Society
Ms L Marlow	Southern Alsatian Training Society
Mr D Robertson*	Association of Bloodhound Breeders
Mr N Sutcliffe*	Bloodhound Club
Mr C Taylor	British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Mr J West	Wessex Working Trials Club
Mr J Wykes	Leamington Dog Training Club

* Indicates attendance via Microsoft Teams

IN ATTENDANCE:

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss C McHardy*	Manager - Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team
Miss R Mansfield	Senior Officer - Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary - Working Dog Activities Team

GUEST:

Mr S Jenkinson	Access and Countryside Advisor to The Kennel Club (item 7 only)
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IN THE CHAIR: MR C TAYLOR

NOTE: any recommendations made by the Working Trials Liaison Council are subject to review by the Activities Committee and The Kennel Club Board, and will not come into effect unless and until Board approval has been confirmed.



ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Mr A Laws and Mrs S Wright.
2. It was noted that Mr M Lewindon, representing Surrey Dog Training Society, had stepped down from his role on the Council.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 5 April 2022, approved the following amendments to regulations:

Regulation I(B)1 Method of Handling

TO:

1. Method of handling.—Although implicit obedience is necessary, dogs and handlers must operate in as free and natural a manner as possible; persistent barking, whining, etc. in any exercise other than location of person or speak on command should be penalised. The handler must not have food or a toy on their person whilst the dog is being tested. **As far as reasonably practical, competitors should not watch any dog working the nosework in the same stake, prior to competing.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2023)

Note: the wording for the amendment was amended slightly by the Activities Committee from 'competitors must not watch any dog...' (as recommended by the Council) to 'competitors should not watch any dog...' having noted that that it was often necessary, for reasons of logistics and timing, for competitors to be making their way to areas of the trial whilst the nosework round was being worked by another competitor, and that in doing so they may pass the nosework area. It was acknowledged that it was custom and practice in such circumstances that competitors would not take the opportunity to closely observe the nosework round in order to gain any unfair advantage.

Amendment to the minutes

5. The Activities Committee, at its meeting on 17 March 2022, noted that the Council had approved an amendment to the minutes of its meeting held on 6 July 2021, which now read:

'The Council noted that two reports, from a veterinary surgeon and a physiotherapist, on the effects of bitework technique on dogs, had been circulated by Mr Lewindon to Council members prior to the meeting. However, it was noted that the reports had not been independently commissioned, and therefore they were not discussed further.'

Selection of judges for the Kennel Club Working Trials Championships

6. The Committee had noted the Council's wish for an amendment to the time frame for the selection of judges and the request for host societies to come forward. It accepted that for any other working trial, host societies would select their own judges, but in the



case of the Championships host societies had no input or control over the selection of judges, and as a result there was a potential for issues to arise.

7. The Committee was in agreement with the views expressed by the Council, and approved the change in the timeframe whereby in future, judges would be appointed prior to issue of the request for host societies to come forward.

Working trials research

8. The outcome of the research, and associated proposals and discussion items, were considered later in the meeting under item 8 (paragraphs 39-52 refer).

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

9. The Council noted a written report from Mr Gilbert on the work of the Sub-Group following its meeting on 4 April 2022.
10. The main topics of relevance to the Council were as follows:
 - Potential research into the A-frame used in agility competitions, to ascertain whether it would be a positive step to remove the necessity for a dog to touch the contact area on the upward part of the obstacle, thus allowing it to enter it at a different angle than was currently possible.
 - Funding had been approved during the current year for research projects by the Sub-Group. It was likely that some of the funding would be used to purchase equipment such as accelerometers, high-speed video equipment, and canine activity monitors, which could be used for multiple projects.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

11. Mr Gilbert provided a report following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 5 May 2022. Four new Accredited Trainers for working trials had been appointed: Mr L Newman, Mr L Theobald, Ms A Tohme and Mr J Wykes. All four would be available for the nosework and control and agility presentations, with Mr Theobald and Mr Wykes also presenting seminars on the PD stake.

ITEM 6. KENNEL CLUB WORKING TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

12. The Council noted that the results of the ballot for judges for the Kennel Club Working Trial Championships 2024 would be submitted to the Activities Committee for ratification.
13. Mrs Bann, on behalf of Essex Working Trials Society, offered to host the championships in 2024.
14. It was noted that the process for the ballot for the Championships in 2025 would commence in the near future.



ITEM 7. USE OF FIREARMS

15. The Council received a presentation from Mr S Jenkinson (Access and Countryside Advisor to the Kennel Club) on legal issues relating to the use of firearms during Kennel Club licensed events. A copy of Mr Jenkinson's presentation is attached at **Annex A to the Minutes**.
16. The following points were particularly highlighted in respect of rights of access:
- Public access rights are usually independent of land ownership
 - Most public access rights are across privately-owned land
 - Equally, there is no right of public access to land in public ownership
 - Rights of public access across almost all land in Scotland
 - Also private access rights for neighbours and utility companies
 - Duty of care towards trespassers
17. In relation to the carrying and use of firearms, it was emphasised that in general terms (bearing in mind differences across the UK and under a range of statutes) the provisions of the Highways Act 1980 and the Firearms Act 1968 took a pragmatic and proportionate approach, as set out below:

Highways Act 1980

161 Penalties for causing certain kinds of danger or annoyance.

[F2(2)] If a person without lawful authority or excuse—

- (a) lights any fire on or over a highway which consists of or comprises a carriageway; or
- (b) discharges any firearm or firework within 50 feet of the centre of such a highway,

and in consequence a user of the highway is injured, interrupted or endangered, that person is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.]

Firearms Act 1968

19 Carrying firearm in a public place.

A person commits an offence if, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse (the proof whereof lies on him) he has with him in a public place

- [F1(a)]**
- (a) a loaded shot gun,
 - (b) an air weapon (whether loaded or not),
 - (c) any other firearm (whether loaded or not) together with ammunition suitable for use in that firearm, or
 - (d) an imitation firearm.]

18. The ultimate duty lay with a firearms user to always act lawfully, however working trial societies were advised to take the following measures in relation to the use of firearms:
- Written access risk assessment: public, private, trespassers
 - Record due diligence when selecting firearms user
 - Obtain written landowner permission for firearm use to show 'reasonable excuse'
 - Take care to recognise legitimate public concerns
19. A query was raised in regard to the use of imitation firearms and starting pistols, which were commonly used in working trials. Societies were advised that these should in practical terms be treated in the same way as a 'live' firearm, as an imitation weapon



may be a cause of concern to a member of the public who may be unaware that it was not a live firearm; it was also good safe practice to do so, to avoid potentially tragic consequences where there had been a mix-up between real and imitation weapons. Training sessions in which a firearm was used should be treated in the same way as if at a Kennel Club licensed trial, as the same duty of care would apply at any time when a firearm, or an imitation firearm, was in use.

20. Societies were also reminded of the importance of good practice when using an imitation firearm, which should be treated with care and kept secure at all times. As noted above, an imitation gun may not be easily distinguishable from a genuine weapon, especially at a distance or by a member of the public, and had the capacity to cause concern or alarm. The perception of risk should be carefully considered by the society and appropriate measures taken to manage it.
21. There being no further questions, Mr Jenkinson was thanked for a highly informative and useful presentation. Mr Jenkinson left the meeting at this point.

Proposal to remove the Steadiness to Gun exercise

22. The Council went on to discuss the proposal which had been submitted by the Equipment and Progression Panel, which was included on the agenda under item 10.
23. The Panel wished to propose the removal of the Steadiness to Gun exercise with the proviso that, if approved, the removal could not be implemented until the reallocation of marks had been agreed. The proposal was submitted with consideration for the safety, liability and practicality of firing and carrying a blank firing gun, all of which issues had been addressed by Mr Jenkinson in his presentation.
24. It was highlighted that over the past few years, two polls had been carried out in respect of the gun test, and both results indicated a majority of respondents in favour of its removal. There had also been feedback that some working trial competitors, judges and trials managers were uncomfortable about having the responsibility of the gun within their vehicle or on their person, should it be stolen or lost. The Panel also noted that there were concerns regarding the potential for some blank firing pistols, if stolen, to be converted into live-firing weapons, and that some UK athletics clubs had already agreed to stop using certain kinds of starting pistol after talks with police.
25. In view of the above issues, the Panel did not consider that it was justifiable to retain use of the gun in trials.
26. The Council discussed the proposal in detail. Some queries were raised in respect of the way in which the polls had been carried out, and whether their results presented an accurate reflection of the views of the working trials community. In particular, there were concerns that some respondents were not active in working trials and that therefore their views should not be taken into account when making decisions about the discipline. However it was clarified that some participants were training to compete, or were just beginning to compete, in working trials, and were therefore legitimately entitled to take part in the polls.
27. There were mixed views as to whether the gun test should be removed. Whilst noting the concerns raised by the Panel, some members were of the view that the test was part of the history of the discipline, and that it should be retained. The presentation given by Mr Jenkinson had allayed many of the concerns regarding the use of a firearm, which was not considered to be unduly problematic provided the society acted responsibly and took adequate measures to manage risk and to comply with relevant legislation, as outlined earlier in the meeting.



28. A short discussion took place regarding the reallocation of marks, should the gun test be removed. It was clarified that at this point in the meeting, the Council was being requested to solely consider whether or not the gun test should be removed. The reallocation of marks would then be considered as a separate matter.
29. The proposal for an amendment to Regulation I(B)8 to remove the steadiness to gunshot test, which had been submitted by the Equipment Panel, was seconded by Mrs Bann.
30. A vote took place, and by a majority, the Council supported the removal of the gun test, and the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I(B)8

TO:

~~Steadiness to gunshot.—No gun test will be held in buildings, or other confined areas, nor will shotguns be used at working trials. Guns used must be constructed to fire blanks only. Prior warning must be given to the handler, who will be instructed to work the dog 'heel free', or leave the dog within a controlling distance and where the handler has sight of their dog. The dog must not be provoked by excessive display of the gun, nor should the gun be pointed at the dog or handler except in Group IV Patrol. Any sign of fear, aggression or barking must be penalised. This test must not be incorporated into any other test.~~

(Deletion struck through)

Discussion item – reallocation of marks from the Steadiness to Gun exercise if removal was agreed.

31. The Council then went on to consider a discussion item submitted by the Equipment and Progression Panel regarding the reallocation of marks. This item appeared on the agenda under item 10 but was brought forward.
32. It was noted that 5 marks were currently allocated for the steadiness to gun exercise.
33. The Council was reminded of a poll which was held in 2019, which asked the question 'If the Gun Test is removed, where would you want the marks to be reallocated?' The results of the poll had indicated support for the introduction of a new element.
34. The Council's attention was also drawn to a previous discussion which took place at its meeting on 27 April 2016. The Council had agreed at that time that in the event that the use of guns became impossible due to legislation regarding the use of firearms, the gun test should be deleted and the qualifying marks adjusted accordingly so that that the group total for Control would be reduced from 35 to 30 with a mark of 21 needed to qualify. Total marks for the Stake would also be amended.
35. It was suggested that a consultation process should be initiated in order to obtain the views of working trials societies as to whether a new element should be introduced, and if so, to ascertain what it should consist of. Until such time as the matter could be considered, the 5 marks could be simply removed as agreed in 2016.
36. A number of suggestions for allocation of the 5 marks were noted. These included allocating them as style marks for the heelwork round, emergency stop or down on recall, recall or retrieve in UD, speak in WD, retrieve using judge's article in TD, extra point for each article in the square + 1 point for style, bravery test, or noise test.



37. After consideration, the Council agreed that if approved by the Board, implementation of the removal of the gun test should not come into effect until 1 January 2024, in order to allow adequate time for consideration of the way in which the marks should be allocated. This would be discussed further at the Council's next meeting.
38. A proposal was made by Mr Craven that the marks should be allocated to an exercise within the Control section, either by being added to an existing exercise, or via the introduction of a new exercise, the nature of which was to be agreed. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Bann, and following a vote, was fully supported.

ITEM 8. WORKING TRIALS RESEARCH

39. At its meeting on 13 January 2022, the Council had considered the main recommendations made in the report, which were:
 - From the findings, it was recommended that consideration be made with regard to the scale being lowered from 6ft to 5ft 6 ins. Whilst lowering to 5ft would further reduce the impact on joints and landing force, this in turn encouraged the dogs to 'jump' rather than 'scale', changing the nature of the obstacle.
 - There was evidence to suggest that shortening the length of the long jump may be of benefit to the dogs. Whilst not formally measured as part of the study, the capacity of the dogs to avoid overjumping the shorter distances suggests a sudden reduction of the long jump distance did not appear to impact dogs experienced in jumping a 9ft long jump.
40. The Council had been in broad support of making changes to the obstacles, subject to feedback from the working trials community which would form an important part of the decision-making process.
41. Following publication of the research results, a number of proposals and discussion items had been submitted for consideration by the Council, many of which were similar in nature. It was agreed that these items should be discussed as a whole and not considered separately. A summary of the proposals and discussion items, which were made in the interests of the welfare of dogs competing in working trials, is shown below:

ASPADS Working Trials Society: Proposal for amendments to Regulation I(B)10.g to shorten the long jump to 8ft and lower the scale to 5ft 6 ins.

Leamington Dog Training Club: Proposed amendments to Regulation I(B)10.g to lower the maximum height of the scale from 6ft to 5ft 6ins., and to reduce the maximum length of the long jump from 9ft to 8ft.

North West Working Trials Society: Proposed amendment to reduce the height of the scale to 5ft 6 inches

Wakefield Dog Training Club: Proposed amendments to Regulation I(B)10 whereby the height of the scale be reduced from 6ft to 5ft 6ins, and a reduction in the length of the long jump from 9ft to 8ft.

Scottish Working Trials Society: Proposal to reduce the height of the scale to 5 ft 6ins, with a caveat that further research be conducted, either in a practical or desktop manner (or both), to identify potential risks posed by the scale under working trials conditions. The Society's initial preference was to submit a proposal for a type of A



Frame, but the society recognised that this required more time and research with regards any risks, costs, manoeuvrability and any other factors raised. Due to this, the reduced scale was the only alternative option available to attempt to reduce the risks from the current scale.

Equipment and Progression Panel: Proposal to reduce the length of the long jump to 7ft.

Equipment and Progression Panel: discussion item - A frame & further jump research: request for discussion regarding a recent poll result which showed overwhelming support for the A Frame (known as the 'A' Ramp in agility) in preference to the 6ft scale and 5 ft 6ins scale. **Note:** North West Working Trials Society had also requested that the Panel consider designing an A frame which would perhaps incorporate a height of 5ft 6 ins, which would further reduce the element of risk on landing but would retain an exercise which retained the element of challenge.

42. The Council agreed to focus its discussions on two proposals: the proposal submitted by Leamington Dog Training Club, which had provided details of the regulation amendments which would be necessary to facilitate changes to the length of the long jump and to the height of the scale to 8 ft and 5 ft 6 respectively, and on the proposal submitted by the Equipment and Progression Panel to reduce the length of the long jump to 7 ft.
43. Some concerns were raised regarding the validity of the results of the research, which had never been intended to ascertain if injuries were being caused by the scale and the long jump. It was highlighted that in fact the original objective had been to provide reassurance that dogs were not being placed at risk of injury. Further, the research had not been carried out under working trials conditions, particularly with reference to the ground surface conditions.
44. It was also queried whether there was adequate evidence to suggest that there was a significant welfare issue to dogs competing in working trials with the existing long jump and scale, although some members were of the view that there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that some dogs may retire early from competing in the discipline due to long-term injury.
45. At this point, an extract from a letter received from Ms C Zink, a consultant in canine sports medicine, was read out in respect of the long jump, as follows:

'It is clear that the 9-ft long jump requires a dog to reach full extension and hyperextension of various joints of the forelimbs, hind limbs and spine. The risk of repetitive strain injury to the joints and the soft tissues supporting them in this position is very high.

Dog sports should not push a dog's skeleton to this extreme range of motion. I strongly recommend that the length of the long jump be reduced, preferably to 6ft or 7ft. This would facilitate a better balance between those vertical and horizontal forces experienced on the limb without pushing the joints to full extension/hyperextension. This would reduce the injury risk to an acceptable level.

In assessing the components of this sport, we must always consider the behaviour of the dogs involved.

Many of these dogs will have developed an exceptional bond with their handler to achieve such a broad range of highly skilled activities in one sport. This bond, the



eagerness to please and the adrenaline surge experienced by these dogs during these activities may result in a dog complying to undertake/attempt these obstacles, even if that dog is not completely pain free.'

46. It was noted that the Equipment and Progression Panel had submitted a proposal that the long jump be reduced to 7ft and that this was supported by Ms Zink's view as expressed in her letter.
47. The Panel's proposal was seconded by Mr Hines, and a vote took place. By a majority, the proposal was not carried.
48. The Council then considered the proposal submitted by Leamington Dog Training Society, represented by Mr Wykes, for an amendment to regulations to reduce the length of the long jump to 8 ft. The proposal was seconded by Mr West.
49. By a majority, the proposal was supported and the following amendment to regulations was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I(B)10.g

TO:

g. Jumping heights and lengths:

(2) CD and UD stakes:

(b) Long Jump—

Dogs not exceeding 254mm (10in) at shoulder 1.219m (4ft)

Dogs not exceeding 381mm (15in) at shoulder 1.828m (6ft)

Dogs exceeding 381mm (15in) at shoulder ~~2.743m (9ft)~~ **2.438m (8ft)**

(3) WD, TD and PD stakes:

(b) Long Jump ~~2.743m (9ft)~~ **2.438m (8ft)**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

50. The Council went on to consider the proposal submitted by Mr Wykes on behalf of Leamington Dog Training Society, for an amendment to regulations to reduce the height of the scale to 5 ft 6in. The proposal was seconded by Ms Carruthers.
51. By a majority, the proposal was supported and the following amendment to regulations was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I(B)10.g

TO:

g. Jumping heights and lengths:

(2) CD and UD stakes:

(c) Scale—

Dogs not exceeding 254mm (10in) at shoulder 914.4mm (3ft)

Dogs not exceeding 381mm (15in) at shoulder 1.219m (4ft)

Dogs exceeding 381mm (15in) at shoulder ~~1.828m (6ft)~~ **1.677m (5ft 6in)**

(3) WD, TD and PD stakes:

(c) Scale ~~1.828m (6ft)~~ **1.677m (5ft 6in)**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

52. It was noted that having agreed the above amendments, it would also be necessary to consider further changes to the length of the long jump, and the height of the scale, for those dogs below 10ins and 15ins at the shoulder. As no proposals had been received for such amendments it would not be possible to consider them at the meeting,



however it was agreed that the office, in conjunction with Ms Cottier, would formulate suitable amendments for submission to the Activities Committee.

[**Afternote:** following consultation with Ms Cottier, the Committee will be requested to consider the following further amendments:

Regulation I(B)10.g

TO:

g. Jumping heights and lengths:

(2) CD and UD stakes:

(b) Long Jump—

Dogs not exceeding 254mm (10in) at shoulder ~~1.219m (4ft)~~ **1.092m (3ft 7in)**

Dogs not exceeding 381mm (15in) at shoulder ~~1.828m (6ft)~~ **1.626m (5ft 4in)**

Regulation I(B)10.g

TO:

g. Jumping heights and lengths:

(2) CD and UD stakes:

(c) Scale—

Dogs not exceeding 254mm (10in) at shoulder ~~914.4mm (3ft)~~ **0.838m (2ft 9in)**

Dogs not exceeding 381mm (15in) at shoulder ~~1.219m (4ft)~~ **1.118 m (3ft 8in)**

53. In respect of the proposal submitted by Scottish Working Trials Society to reduce the height of the scale to 5 ft 6ins, with a caveat that further research be conducted, Mrs Cottier agreed to withdraw the proposal as the issue of further research would be covered later in the meeting under discussion of the Council's five year strategy (agenda item 13).

ITEM 9. REPORT FROM THE PD STAKE PANEL

54. The Council noted that a display of the PD Stake and the way in which dogs were trained for it had been organised by the Panel. This would assist any societies with an interest in running PD stakes as well as potential competitors. The display would take place in July and would be hosted by Icení German Shepherd Dog Club.

ITEM 10. REPORT FROM THE PROGRESSION PANEL/ EQUIPMENT PANEL

55. The Council noted a report from the Panel.

Second attempts during the agility section

56. At its meeting on 6 July 2021, the Council had agreed that the Progression Panel should consider the issue of second attempts during the agility section, as currently there was considerable inconsistency between different judges, and different societies, as to whether competitors were offered the opportunity for a second attempt at an obstacle. It was accepted that in deciding whether a second attempt should be permitted, weather conditions should be taken into account, but it was also suggested that the issue should be considered in terms of progression.



57. It noted that the Panel would review the matter following the outcome of proposals to reduce the height and length of the scale and the long jump respectively.

Long Jump

58. The Panel had submitted a proposal to reduce the length of the long jump to 7ft. As there were a number of other proposals relating to the long jump, this was discussed earlier in the meeting under agenda item 7 (paragraphs 46-47 refer).

A frame & further jump research

59. The Panel had submitted a discussion item in relation to potential introduction of an A Frame in preference to the 6ft scale or 5 ft 6ins scale. This was considered as part of the discussion relating to future research (paragraphs 61-66 refer).

Proposal to remove the Steadiness to Gun exercise

60. The Panel's proposal had been discussed earlier in the meeting (paragraphs 22-30 refer).

Proposal - further research

61. The Council considered a proposal from the Equipment Panel that further research should be conducted, with the purpose of obtaining data in relation to impact and joint stress experienced by working trials dogs. This data could be used to determine if the scale or long jump should be altered or replaced to adequately protect the health and welfare of the dogs.
62. The Panel's view regarding the possible replacement of the scale with an A frame had been noted earlier in the meeting. It remained of the view that further research was necessary in order to carry out comparisons between the scale and the A frame.
63. It was reiterated that the Panel had some concerns regarding the working trials research which had already been carried out, as it had not replicated real-life conditions at working trials, particularly in respect to the surface on which the measuring sensor had been placed. The Panel was therefore keen for further research to be carried out on a more suitable surface.
64. It wished to propose that research be undertaken to obtain data in relation to impact and joint stress experienced by working trials dogs. This data could be used to determine if the scale or long jump should be altered or replaced to adequately protect the health and welfare of the dogs.
65. Objectives of the proposed research would be as follows:
- Determine the forces experienced by the hindlimbs when ascending the scale and A-frame.
 - Determine the forces experienced by the forelimbs on landing on grass from:
 - The scale
 - The A-frame (KC agility & IGP versions)
 - Determine the range of motion experienced at the following joints when landing from the scale and the two types of A-frame:
 - Carpus
 - Glenohumeral joint
 - Spine – cervical, thoracic, lumbar, lumbosacral
 - Determine the peak vertical force experienced by the forelimbs on landing over the long jump at differing lengths.
 - Determine the range of motion experienced at the following joints when traversing the long jump at each length:



- Carpus
 - Glenohumeral joint
 - Spine – cervical, thoracic, lumbar, lumbosacral
 - Discussion and likely metanalysis will be carried out in respect of the risks of a scale with a slope descent or platform.
66. A vote took place and by a majority, the Council **recommended** that the proposal be forwarded to the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group for progression.

Discussion item – reallocation of marks from the Steadiness to Gun exercise if removal was agreed.

67. The Panel's discussion item had been considered earlier in the meeting (paragraphs 31-38 refer).

Proposal to amend Regulation I(B)10.(b) (Clear Jump)

68. It was noted that a poll had been issued by the Panel asking whether the clear jump and the long jump be of a standard build/colour. Feedback had been received indicating that the majority of respondents were not in favour of this. The Panel also accepted that there was no necessity for the material used in the jumps to be standardised. However, the Panel wished to propose an amendment to the above regulation which was submitted with the objective of reducing the risk of injury.
69. The Panel noted that some clear jumps currently had a fixed top bar which may increase the risk of injury to the dog should it knock the jump when negotiating it. This proposal would reduce the risk of injury with a top bar that would be easily displaced if hit by the dog. Having a further bar approximately halfway below allowed for consistency in the construction of the Clear Jump used at trials.
70. The Council was in agreement with the principle of the proposal but there was some discussion regarding the precise wording to be used. A revised version of the amendment was proposed by Ms Marlow and was seconded by Mrs Bann.
71. A vote took place, and the following amendment was unanimously **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I(B)10.(b)

TO:

The Clear Jump ~~should~~ **must** be so constructed that it will be obvious if the dog has exerted more than slight pressure upon it. **All poles or bars must be easily displaced by the dog.** ~~The rigid top bar may be fixed or rest in cups and the space below may be filled in but the filling should not project above the bottom of the top bar.~~ **There must be a further removable pole or bar approximately halfway below. No further pole or bar is required if the jump is lower than 3ft.** Appreciable pressure exerted by the dog on the clear jump shall be considered to be a failure.
(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)

Discussion item - progression through the stakes of small dogs

72. The Panel requested that the Council discuss the difficulties which it perceived in allowing small dogs to work right through the stakes to TD (not PD), and to discuss the possibility of reduced jump heights for smaller dogs as were currently available in the lower stakes.
73. The Panel was of the view that it would be a positive step to encourage new handlers with dogs of a wide range of breeds, whereas at present it was not possible for small dogs to progress beyond UD. Feedback indicated that more and more owners were



choosing smaller breeds in preference to larger 'working' breeds, however the current jump heights prevented small dogs from progressing as a result of which owners of such dogs were discouraged from taking part in the discipline.

74. A short statement from Mr J Rogerson was noted, in which he expressed his support for the participation of small dogs in working trials.
 75. The Council was in agreement with the views of the Panel, noting that Introductory stakes were not currently well supported and this may be partially because owners of small dogs were not keen to commit to training for working trials if their progress in the discipline would be limited. However it was also acknowledged that Introductory stakes were not always actively promoted by societies.
 76. A view was expressed that working trials should be open to the widest possible range of dogs, and that small dogs should be encouraged to participate.
 77. It went on to briefly discuss how this may be achieved. It was acknowledged that lowering jump heights for small dogs may take extra time at trials which would have to be taken into account. However it did not consider this to be unduly problematic. It also accepted that there was a current difficulty in respect of the dog having sight of its handler at the other side of the scale (and vice versa) and this would need to be considered.
 78. It was noted that dogs competing in agility were measured into one of four heights: small, medium, intermediate, and large, and it was suggested that a similar model may be adapted for use in working trials. Alternatively, a three-height system may be adopted, with dogs being categorised as small (14 ins and under), medium (17 ins and under), and large (over 17 ins).
 79. The Council was in agreement that the Panel should consider the matter further, with a view to submitting a formal proposal to the Council at its next meeting.
- Discussion item - Introductory Stake and CD Open Stake
80. The Equipment & Progression Panel requested that the Council discuss making the lower stakes more beginner friendly, in view of feedback that some new handlers found it daunting when competing against experienced handlers in the Introductory Stake. Further, it was highlighted that CD open stakes, which tended to have low entries, have the same exercises as CD championship stakes.
 81. Suggestions included reducing the length of the long jump for new competitors in Introductory, CD and UD to assist them in developing within the discipline, although it was noted that societies already ran special stakes with no jumps, which had proved to be very successful and a good starting point for those with little or no previous experience. It was also suggested that there should be some progression throughout the stakes, noting that jump heights in CD for dogs over 15ins were currently the same as those in TD/PD championship stakes.
 82. The Panel would continue to consider the eligibility of handlers and dogs in the Introductory stake with a view to making CD Open more beginner friendly. CD Championship would also be reviewed. The Council was thanked for its feedback which would be taken into account as part of the review.



ITEM 11. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Proposed amendment to Regulation I25.d.

83. The proposal was presented by Ms Marlow, on behalf of Southern Alsatian Training Society. At the Council's previous meeting, it had considered whether qualifications to judge should be simplified, with particular reference to the requirement for judges for a CD stake at a championship working trial to have judged all groups in at least two working trials, and whether this should be reduced to any combination of one nosework round and one control round at CD open or UD open, plus having qualified CDEx or above. The majority had been in support of the simplification of qualifications to judge and it had been agreed that a suitable proposal should be submitted.
84. The society noted that some trials appointed separate judges for nosework and control rounds, and that the existing regulation may cause difficulties in appointing new judges who fulfilled all of the current requirements. The proposal had been submitted with the objective of addressing this issue by simplifying the current system. It was highlighted that the proposal included the wording 'as a minimum' which would allow societies to use their discretion as to whether a prospective judge was suitable.
85. After a brief discussion, the Council concluded that the measure would be a positive step which would provide clarity, and would assist societies in appointing suitably-qualified judges. A vote took place, and by a majority, the following amendment to regulations was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation I25.d.

TO:

- d. Societies must be satisfied that the following minimum conditions have been met for the first appointment of judges for C.D., U.D. and W.D. stakes at a championship working trial:
- (1) For C.D. Stake—Must, **as a minimum**, have judged all groups in ~~at least two open working trials~~ **a C.D. open or U.D. open trial or above**, and have as a handler qualified a dog **C.D. 'Excellent' in a Championship C.D. Stake or higher stake above**.
 - (2) For U.D. Stake – Must, **as a minimum**, have judged all groups in ~~U.D., W.D., P.D. or T.D. stakes at two Open Working Trials~~ **a U.D. open trial or above**, have judged C.D. **Excellent**, ~~stake at a championship working trial~~ and have as a handler qualified a dog **U.D. 'Excellent' in a Championship U.D. stake or above**.
(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)

Proposed amendment to Regulation I(C)1

86. At the Council's previous meeting, Mr Sutcliffe advised the Council of his intention to submit a proposal for consideration at its next meeting in relation to the regulation which required handlers at Bloodhound trials to drop their leashes within 200 yards of the line up on the run in to the end of the line. The requirement for them to drop the leash came into effect on 1 January 2020, stating that leashes should be dropped within 300 yards of the line up. A further amendment to regulations reducing the distance to 200 yards came into effect on 1 January 2021.
87. Accordingly, the Bloodhound Club, represented by Mr Sutcliffe, wished to propose an amendment to Regulation I(C)1 in order to remove the sentence requiring that the leash must be dropped before a judge can consider the hound to have made a satisfactory identification.
88. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Ling.



89. The club was of the view that it was not possible for a handler to interfere in the identification before the last five metres, and that from that distance it was possible for judge or assistant to see and hear whether there was interference from the handler by voice, leash or manoeuvres, whether the hound is still on a leash or not. Other minor amendments were also proposed in the interests of clarity. In response to a query, it was confirmed that the Working Trial Certificate would only be awarded where the judge considered that the identification was made without interference.
90. A vote took place, and by a majority, the Council **recommended** the following amendment for approval:

Regulation I(C)1 Bloodhound Working Trial Certificates

TO:

A Kennel Club Bloodhound Working Trial Certificate may be awarded to a Bloodhound winning a senior stake ~~without assistance~~ at a Championship Bloodhound Trial if it has clearly identified the ~~runner~~ **line-walker, without assistance**, to the satisfaction of the judge or judges. ~~Handlers who choose to work/hunt their hounds leashed must drop their leash within a minimum of 200 yds/183m of the line up, so that a natural identification takes place that is free from any handler interference.~~ A hound will be considered to have made a satisfactory identification if it is seen to approach and clearly select the ~~runner~~ **line-walker** from a group of three people at the end of the line. Judges may award a Certificate of Merit in all stakes to any hound not being placed which has given a good performance.

(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through)

91. At this point a concern was raised that representatives of working trials were being requested to vote on matters regarding the way that Bloodhound Trials are governed, and vice versa. Views were expressed that despite both disciplines being covered by the I regulations, they were very different and there was often little mutual understanding of the issues affecting each. The Council requested that its views on this matter be referred to the Activities Committee.

ITEM 12. DISCUSSION ITEMS

92. No discussion items, other than those included on the agenda under item 8, and those submitted by the Equipment and Progression Panel had been received.

ITEM 13. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

93. At its previous meeting, the Council expressed a concern that the existing strategy document was rather static in nature, and it agreed that Miss Cottier would review the document with a view to including specific and actionable points, with timeframes. This would make the strategy dynamic in nature, allowing for progress to be made.
94. The document was reviewed, and the following issues raised:
95. **Item a. To ensure the health, fitness, safety and welfare of dogs taking part in WT are at the forefront of the sport, specifically researching the scale and long jump.** As discussed earlier in the meeting, the Council reiterated its strong wish to progress further research in the interests of health and welfare for all participants.



96. **Item b. That Kennel Club Working Trials is at the forefront of nosework activities and highlighted as an all-round, multi skilled activity and the pinnacle of KC dog sports in the UK.**

It was noted that in the working trials leaflets issued by The Kennel Club and issued at Crufts, most pictures were of dogs negotiating the scale. The Council was of the view that it would be preferable for nosework to be promoted as one of the main features of working trials.

97. **Item e. To develop Kennel Club WT as a more attractive product to newcomers, increase numbers in the sport, as well as looking after its customer base, specifically looking at the early stakes for consideration of changes that would encourage newcomers to compete.**

The Council's attention was drawn to the page on The Kennel Club's website titled 'Attending your first trial' where the photograph used was not considered to be appropriate as it pictured a dog taking part in a PD Stake. The office undertook to request that this and other photographs be reviewed and, where necessary, updated.

98. **Item f. To create more channels of communication with a wider audience, using social media and canine newspapers to promote WT events and news.**

The Council was keen to ensure that as many channels of communication as possible should be used. It was noted that The Kennel Club's Facebook page may at present only be used for the promotion of its own events, but it was suggested that societies should be as active as possible in promoting the discipline, via their own websites and social media pages.

99. Further, societies and individuals were encouraged to submit suitable articles to publications such as Our Dogs (weekly) and Dog Sports UK (monthly).

100. **Item g. To ensure the KC website is user friendly in respect of promoting and accessing information about working trials. That the Find a Club function is effective and up-to-date.**

In response to a query, it was confirmed by the office that the Find a Club facility was not as yet available. Development work was ongoing.

101. The Council expressed its concerns, raised at previous meetings, that some societies had previously been shown on Find a Club as having an interest in working trials whereas this was not actually the case. As noted at the Council's meeting in January 2022, it was reiterated by the office that this situation had arisen as a result of societies incorrectly indicating an interest in the discipline on their documentation.

102. It was also highlighted that some judges listed on Find a Judge were no longer active, or in some cases, were deceased. Council representatives, and other members of the working trials community, were requested to contact the office with details of any such judges so that its records could be suitably amended.

ITEM 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Incidents at trials

103. Mrs Bann noted that when an incident occurred during a competition, and was reported to The Kennel Club, no timely feedback was available to societies which may wish to exclude a dog involved in such an incident from being present at a trial. The office was requested to advise trial organisers as to when a dog was under investigation so that they may consider what action was appropriate. This would also allow for societies to assess and manage potential risks at trials.



104. The Council was advised of the process which was in place within the office, whereby should there be an allegation that a dog had bitten a person, a temporary ban would automatically be placed on the dog until such time as an investigation could be carried out, and the matter considered by the Activities Committee. A temporary ban may also be placed on a dog where there was a serious incident regarding another dog or livestock.
105. However, it was not possible to release details of any incidents until they had been considered by the Activities Committee, and the owner advised of the outcome, and of any penalties imposed.
106. It was further clarified that all incidents recorded within Incident Books were logged by the office, even where shown as having been resolved at the trial. Where it was apparent that the same dog, or the same owner, had been involved in a number of incidents, the office would automatically investigate further. However, it was not possible to divulge information to trial organisers, although should a penalty be imposed by the Activities Committee, details would be published within the Kennel Club Journal.

Marking up of catalogues

107. At its meeting in April 2019, the Council was invited by the office to agree a standard method for marking up Championship Working Trial catalogues to indicate qualification marks. It was agreed that in the interests of clarity and consistency, catalogues would be clearly marked to show dogs which had qualified in the Tracking or Patrol Dog stake, and those dogs which had gained Excellent qualifications in these Stakes.
108. However it appeared that there were some issues in the way in which catalogues were being marked up. All working trials societies were therefore requested to standardise the way in which catalogues were marked up. The office requested that rather than adding a separate table at the bottom of the catalogue, the following details should be shown next to the dog's name:
 - Whether it qualified Excellent
 - Score
 - Placing (if any)

109. This would greatly assist the office in ensuring that results were accurately processed.

Use of social media

110. All Council representatives were requested to make themselves as accessible as possible to members of the working trials community, and that the use of social media may play a role in achieving this. However, care should be taken when responding to issues raised via social media. It was highlighted that the role of the representative was to represent the interests of a society (or societies).

Polls

111. In respect of the way in which polls were carried out, it was suggested that when a poll was being undertaken, details should be circulated to secretaries of societies requesting that they be disseminated to all of their members. This would ensure that as wide a range of views as possible could be gathered, which was helpful in making decisions.



ITEM 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

112. The date of the Council's next meeting would be announced in September 2022.

The meeting closed at 3.30pm. with a vote of thanks to all present.

MR C TAYLOR
Chairman

THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

'The Kennel Club is the national body which exists to promote the general improvement, health and well-being of all dogs through responsible breeding and ownership'



Liaison Societies for Non-Championship Working Trials Societies

Working Trials Society

Avon Working Dog Training Society
 Australian Cattle Dog Society of Great Britain
 Banbury & District Dog Training Society
 Bavarian Mountain Hound Society
 Beagle Club
 Beauceron Club UK
 Benfleet Working Trials Society
 Birmingham & District German Shepherd Dog Association
 Black and Tan Coonhound Club GB (Provisional)
 Briard Association
 British Rottweiler Sports Dog Club
 Cermar Dog Training Club
 Cheshire, North Wales & Shropshire Retriever & Spaniel Society
 Chipping Norton & District Dog Training Club
 Cosford Dog Training
 Cotswold Boxer Club
 Donyatt Dog Training Club
 East Riding Working Trials Society
 Field Spaniel Society
 Golden Valley Dog Training Club
 Grampian German Shepherd Dog Association
 High Peak Dog Training Society
 Hucknall & District Canine Training Society
 Jersey Dog Training Association
 Korthals Griffon Association (Provisional)
 Midland Basset Hound Club
 Midlands Border Collie Club
 National Australian Shepherd Association
 Newfoundland Club
 Newlands Working Dog Society
 North Eastern German Shepherd Dog Club
 Northern Newfoundland Club
 Odin Canine Services
 Rough & Smooth Collie Training Association
 Rugby Dog Training Club
 Scottish Kennel Club
 Spanish Water Dog Club
 Wakefield Dog Training Club
 Weimaraner Club of Great Britain
 Welsh Kennel Club
 Ynys Mon Dog Training Society

Representative Society

Wessex Working Trials Club
 Yorkshire Working Trials Society
 Leamington Dog Training Club
 ASPADS Working Trials Society
 New Forest Working Trials Society
 Hampshire Working Trials Society
 Essex Working Trials Society
 Leamington Dog Training Club
 East Anglian Working Trials Training Society
 Southern Alsatian Training Society
 ASPADS Working Trials Society
 Essex Working Trials Society
 Hampshire Working Trials Society

 British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
 Leamington Dog Training Club
 Wessex Working Trials Club
 Wessex Working Trials Club
 Yorkshire Working Trials Society
 New Forest Working Trials Society
 ASPADS Working Trials Society
 Scottish Working Trials Society
 North West Working Trials Society
 Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
 British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
 Hampshire Working Trials Society
 Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
 Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
 Icen German Shepherd Dog Club
 East Anglian Working Trials Training Society
 Surrey Dog Training Society
 North East Counties Working Trials Society
 British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
 East Anglian Working Trials Training Society
 Leamington Dog Training Club
 Leamington Dog Training Club
 Scottish Working Trials Society
 Lincolnshire German Shepherd Dog & All Breeds
 Yorkshire Working Trials Society
 Essex Working Trials Society
 Southern Alsatian Training Society
 British Association for German Shepherd Dogs