



**THE KENNEL CLUB**

*Making a difference for dogs*

### **The Strategic Plan for Agility**

One of the KC's strategic objectives is to be the first port of call on all canine issues. It's an objective that is taken very seriously, but one that we sometimes struggle to keep up with in the fast moving world of modern communications. In recent times it has become apparent that we need to better support the world of agility – the sport is growing rapidly and we need to respond to the needs and wants of the agility community.

The number and different types of organisation wishing to run KC agility events has expanded far beyond the traditional set up of registered societies. The KC is committed to supporting all organisations and individuals who wish to enjoy the sport and who believe in the same standards of quality and care that we do. Provided that an event is well organised and run safely for the benefit of both people and dogs (bearing in mind considerations like the need for risk assessment and appropriate insurance) we think we should be supporting that event. That is why, after a period of consultation, the concept of Listed Status organisations is being expanded into the world of Agility.

Dog agility has been the most popular and fastest growing canine sport we have ever known. It was felt that after nearly 34 years it was time to review the whole spectrum of dog agility shows and events and in particular KC licensed agility shows.

So where are we now? We've gone from a very manageable small sport with enthusiasts running small events to a situation where the sheer size of the sport makes it difficult for clubs to know what decisions to make regarding a show they wish to run.

When looking at a strategic plan for the future, a small working party was set up to look at the areas causing concern. These included:

- The emergence of independent shows
- The 'sale' of KC licences to independent organisers
- The management of show size
- How to control class size and entries in an event open to all
- Lack of winter KC shows
- Falling levels of membership of KC registered clubs
- Future economic conditions and travel costs

Agility is unique in the way that independent shows run by other organisations and private individuals have grown. This has not happened in breed nor has it happened in obedience in fact the only parallel that can be drawn is with the equine world where unaffiliated shows have run alongside affiliated shows amicably for many, many years. The KC take no issue with independent events and these fulfil the competitive need and many are targeted at a local area.

We have seen the emergence of independent show organisers buying licences from KC registered clubs, sometimes at substantial prices. A show licensed by the KC is expected to follow KC show regulations, these cover everything from facilities, insurance, health and safety, and the knowledge that if a problem arises at an event the KC will be there to help deal with the aftermath. It is also expected that the show society having been issued with the licence actually have officials at the show as guarantors ensuring the event is well run and of course that monies received as income for the show are paid into the licensed clubs' accounts.

This has been the subject of ongoing discussion for some years, everyone appears to agree that something needs to be done but no one has been able to come up with recommendations to deal with it.

Those shows with Championship classes or qualifying heats accept that they have to manage their entry using the scheduled classes, number of runs allowed and the number of camping units which we all accept happens. The big worry is for the next level down, the straightforward open show and it is where we appear to have lost our way, in addition there is concern that the KC has far less control of shows run under licenses sold to private organisers by KC registered clubs. The KC has been gathering information from registered agility clubs who do not run shows and asking them a very simple question, why? And actually there is a very simple two part answer that will cover them all – they do not have enough competitive members to manage a show and secondly there is no way they could control their entries to be able to run a manageable show.

The above actually answers the question why there is a lack of winter shows. If we take a well known licensed show held later in the year annually, their entry has seesawed over the years based on how they try to manage the classes to suit a four ring show. They either have an entry too low as the class choice has been cut down too much or to satisfy need if they put on extra classes then they have too many entries. Their problem would be solved in a stroke by capping.

The current economic difficulties are having an effect on all areas of the canine world and we are definitely seeing a shift towards handlers being more selective in the shows they enter based on the distance/travel costs. This means the main qualifiers/Championship shows will still attract good, albeit, reduced entries but other KC shows suffer much more without the additional flexibility to manage entries.

So where do we go from here? The KC certainly feels that doing nothing is not an option and we think most would find it difficult to disagree with this statement.

A Working Party was formed to look at all aspects of the show scene and the members of the WP were drawn from KC agility clubs, independent agility organisers, a show admin business organiser and KC staff. Together they came up with a proposal for a new strategy on registration and the expansion of licences offered for running agility shows. The aims of the proposed changes are:

- To reflect the importance of existing KC clubs and strengthen their position
- To give KC clubs the flexibility to run events to suit their situation
- To give independent organisers the opportunity to run their own KC licensed events
- To enable the proper issue of licenses to all show organisers
- To provide more flexibility in the future and in particular to help clubs operate in more difficult economic conditions

The consequences of these proposals are likely to be:

- Establish an alternative route to KC recognition of agility clubs / organisations – listed status
- Independents who choose this route could offer competitors KC standard progression classes
- Open shows would be able to cap classes without limiting progression
- Limited shows could have some capped classes counting towards progression
- The introduction of new types of show to suit those who prefer more relaxed and a less competitive type of show
- Competitors would have the peace of mind to know that minimum standards and regulations cover each event
- Some KC registered clubs may choose to change their registered status.

To reflect the importance and to differentiate the different type of shows they have been renamed. This name would be reproduced on the schedule as a title for the event.

#### CHAMPIONSHIP AGILITY SHOWS

The crème de la crème of agility and no different to the Championship shows currently taking place.

*Societies running Championship shows will have full KC registration.*

### PREMIER OPEN AGILITY SHOWS

This is a new name for shows that are not Championship but have qualifying heats for any of the KC major events. This could be for Olympia, Discover Dogs, Crufts or any future KC qualifying event.

*Societies running Premier Open Shows will have full KC registration.*

### OPEN AGILITY SHOWS

This show would suit clubs wanting to hold a KC event but have space constraints, want progression classes but in manageable numbers or perhaps are holding a show for the first time.

Open shows can have standard and special classes and can have capped classes that still count towards progression.

*Societies running Open Agility Shows can either have full KC registration OR the new Listed Status.*

### LIMITED AGILITY SHOWS

The new Limited Show is to steer the event away from the main competitive scene but can still have a competitive edge. Classes don't need to conform to KC standard classes or dog height categories. BUT, you can hold up to three KC capped standard classes which will count towards progression. Normal KC rules and heights would obviously apply to these capped classes.

*Societies running Limited Agility Shows will have full KC registration OR the new Listed Status.*

### GAMES AGILITY SHOWS

This is the KC name for events that are popular in the independent sector, there would just be some very basic KC standards attached to running this type of event. Any type of class could be scheduled. The intention is to introduce a new and exciting points related certificate of merit to cover Games Shows and Limited Shows.

*Societies running Games Agility Shows will have full KC registration OR the new Listed Status.*

- The above system would give existing KC registered clubs a much wider choice when it comes to deciding what kind of show to run or indeed to run extra events
- Would ensure that qualifying heats and Championship classes are open to everyone
- Would allow registered clubs to hold open shows with the ability to cap classes and manage their entry but still have progression classes thus retaining the importance of the event to competitors
- Would offer existing clubs not currently running shows the opportunity to have a show in a more manageable way
- Would allow organisations to apply for Listed club status which will have a more limited set of criteria to meet

- Would ensure that the organisation running an event was the same organisation that actually obtained the licence and that the basic 'Recognised Status Organisation' show rules are the minimum applied
- Would allow the individual to be covered by KC show regulations when competing at a wider variety of agility events
- All agility competitors would have recourse to the KC

The KC does recognise that some societies may wish to change from full KC registered status to Listed status. We believe that giving societies the choice can only be of long term benefit for the sport.

We were hoping that these new initiatives could be implemented sooner rather than later but to ensure that the whole new system is widely understood we are going to extend the consultation time until January 2012 when it will be discussed at the Agility Liaison Council meeting.

We would really value constructive views from both societies and individuals.

**Agility Liaison Council Representatives**  
**1 January 2010 – 31 December 2012**

Listed below are the Area Liaison Council Representatives that can be contacted to contribute your views and for any further information that should be required.

**Midlands**

Mr Richard Jordan, 2 Passmore, Tinkers Bridge, Milton Keynes, MK6 3DZ  
**Tel:** 01908 667798 **E-mail:** richard.jordan@talktalk.net

Mr Dave Ray, 13 Helmdon Close, Rugby, Warks, CV21 1RS  
**Tel:** 01788 561253 **E-mail:** drayped@aol.com

**North East**

Mr Ian Mallabar, The Granary, Spen Lane, Rowlands Gill, NE39 2BZ  
**Tel:** 01207 544406 **E-mail:** ian.mallabar@btinternet.com

Mrs Janet Nero, 6 Northgate, Oulton, Leeds, LS26 8NZ  
**Tel:** 0113 2823445 **E-mail:** jandcnero@btinternet.com

**North West**

Mrs Pauline Baltes, 45 Well Orchard, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancs, PR5 8HJ  
**Tel:** 01772 494852 / 07803 261808 **E-mail:** pabq@blueyonder.co.uk

Mr Mike Hallam, Hollins View, Leek Road, Bosley, Macclesfield, SK11 0PP  
**Tel:** 01260 223190/07711058910 **E-mail:** m.hallam@btconnect.com

**Northern Ireland**

Mr Ronnie McAleese, 27 Dermott Walk, Comber, Newtownards, County Down, BT23 5NU  
**Tel:** 02890 527114 **E-mail:** [ronnie@patchagility.com](mailto:ronnie@patchagility.com)

**Scotland**

Ms Morag Kelly, 5 Broompark Crescent, Murthly, Perthshire, PH1 4HH  
**Tel:** 01738 710354 **E-mail:** moragkelly\_@hotmail.com

**South & South West**

Mr Tony Griffin, 20 Monmouth Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 5JR  
**Tel:** 01305 777856/07743 655311 **E-mail:** tonygriffin20@tiscali.co.uk

Miss Lesley Olden, Birchwood House Cottage, Sherfield English, Nr Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 6FF  
**Tel:** 01794 323037 **E-mail:** lesleyolden@aol.com

**South East & East Anglia**

Mr Simon Chandler, 16 Hawth Hill, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 2RW  
**Tel:** 07772 670086 **E-mail:** sjabbaman@aol.com

Mr John Gilbert, Keba Cottage, 100 Bedford Road, Barton-le-Clay, Beds, MK45 4LR  
**Tel:** 01582 882366 **E-mail:** faldoagility@aol.com

**Wales**

Mr Mike Shaw, Ewyn-y-Don, Llanon, Wales, SY23 5HZ  
**Tel:** 01974 202347 **E-mail:** somethingferal@aol.com