

Wrexham Dog Agility Club

Mr C Huckle

Proposed Amendment of Regulation H(1)(B)2.a.b.c. (Height Limit for Dogs)

TO:

- a. Large Dogs - For dogs measuring over ~~430mm (1ft 5 ins)~~ **510mm (1ft 8.1 ins)** at the withers.
- b. *Intermediate Dogs – For dogs measuring over 430mm (1ft 5ins) and measuring 510mm (1ft 8.1ins) or under at the withers**
- ~~b.c.~~ Medium Dogs - For dogs measuring over 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) and measuring 430mm (1ft 5ins) or under at the withers.
- ~~c.d.~~ Small Dogs - For dogs measuring 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) or under at the withers. (Insertions in bold. Deletions scored through.)
*or another suitable name

Proposed Amendment of Regulation H(1)(B)3.a. (Hurdle)

TO:

Hurdle—The height of the hurdle must be 650mm (2ft 1.6ins) for Large Dogs, **550mm (1ft 9.65ins) for *Intermediate Dogs**, 450mm (1ft 5.7ins) for Medium Dogs and 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) for Small Dogs. Width: 1.219m (4ft) minimum. The top bar or plank must be easily displaced by the dog. A wall should have displaceable units on the top. The height of hurdles in special classes may be lower than those listed above but the height must be included in the schedule (Insertions in bold. Deletions scored through.)
*or another suitable name

**** The Proposer feels that the name of this height should be decided by the Agility Community and/or the ALC. The terms Intermediate and Regular are two that have been suggested that might be appropriate.***

Wrexham Dog Agility Club (The Proposer) speaks on behalf of themselves and the very many agility competitors who believe that there is a need for another height category between the existing categories of Medium and Large. The existing hurdle heights have largely evolved over the years and the most recent changes have occurred to bring them in line with FCI Regulations. Therefore, this proposal does not wish to complicate or disturb that alignment by repositioning any of these. This proposal also does not seek to challenge the existing worldwide convention that dogs are categorised by height at the withers. It simply proposes the introduction of a fourth hurdle height midway between the existing Large and Medium heights. This would benefit a great many breed types and smaller Large dogs and make Agility a more inclusive activity.

The Proposer understands fully the concerns that were expressed by the ALC (attached as APPENDIX 2) when the subject was raised as a discussion item in 2013. Entering 2015, it has become clear that researching the question of the impact of jumping on dog welfare is unlikely to be answered without the input of considerable funding and a lengthy timescale.

The Proposer believes that as there is a good level of support for this change from within the agility community, it is sensible to allow experience to inform this decision. This has been the case for the acceptance of other recent equipment changes such as weave spacing and seesaw weighting. It is argued that this proposal is no different.

The impact of this change on aspects of class definition, show management, measurement of dogs, eligibility for classes and qualification for some international and domestic events is not underestimated. No doubt some of these questions will need time to be answered comprehensively. However, the Proposer has consulted within the agility community and a plan for implementation and transition is attached (APPENDIX 1), including proposed supporting amendments to class definition, progression, etc.

General Regulations for Agility and Flyball Competitors as at January 2014

The following is a list of amendments of the above regulations to incorporate a new height category for dogs of Intermediate height that measure over 430mm (1ft 5in) and are 510mm (1ft 8.1in) or under at the withers.

A further update will be required to incorporate any relevant section changes in the amended 2015 regulations.

H.1 Specific Agility Show regulations:

5. Championship Agility Certificates (Large, **Intermediate**, Medium and Small Dogs)
 - a. A Kennel Club Agility Certificate will be awarded to any Large Agility Dog, **Intermediate Agility Dog**, Medium Agility Dog or any Small Agility Dog winning a Championship Agility Class provided such a dog has no faults in the final round of the Class. If the winning dog does have faults in the final round of the Championship Agility Class the award must be withheld.
 - b. A Reserve Agility Certificate will be awarded to any Large Agility Dog, **Intermediate Agility Dog**, Medium Agility Dog or any Small Agility Dog placed second in the Championship Agility Class provided it has gained a clear round in the final round of the Class. If the second placed dog has faults in the final round the award must be withheld.
6. Agility Championships
 - a. The Kennel Club will offer at Crufts Dog Show each year the Kennel Club Agility Championships Large Dog, **the Kennel Club Agility Championships Intermediate Dog**, the Kennel Club Agility Championships Medium Dog and the Kennel Club Agility Championships Small Dog. A dog awarded one or

more Agility Certificates during the calendar year preceding Crufts Dog Show shall be entitled to compete.
(Insertions in bold.)

Schedule of Tests, Courses, Obstacles and Marking H(1)(B)

1. Courses

a. (2) Championship Class

- (i) The Agility Rounds (Large, **Intermediate**, Medium and Small) must contain the following elements: "A" Ramp, Dog Walk, See Saw, Hurdles, Hoop (Tyre), Long Jump, Pipe Tunnel, Collapsible Tunnel and Weaving Poles, together with any other obstacles as described in these Regulations, at the discretion of the judge.
- (ii) The Jumping Round (Large, **Intermediate**, Medium and Small) must contain the following elements: Hurdles, Hoop (Tyre), Long Jump, Pipe Tunnel, Collapsible Tunnel and Weaving Poles and must exclude contact obstacles.
- (iii) The Final Agility round (Large, **Intermediate**, Medium and Small) may contain the Table obstacle and must contain all the obstacles described in (i) of this Regulation, together with any other obstacles as described in these Regulations, at the discretion of the judge.

(Insertions in bold.)

2. Height Limit for Dogs.

See main proposal which relates to adding a fourth category Intermediate height for dogs measuring over 430mm (1ft 5ins) and measuring 510mm (1ft 8.1ins) or under at the withers.

3. Obstacles

- a. Hurdle - *See main proposal which relates to adding a fourth hurdle height of 550mm (1ft 9.65ins) for Intermediate Dogs*
- b. Rising Spread Jump—Rising Spread Jump - A maximum of 2 single jumps as in Item a - (Hurdle) placed together to form a double spread, there must be no more than 2 elements to this obstacle. The top bar on the first hurdle must be at least 150mm (5.9ins) to 250mm (9.8ins) lower than the second hurdle. The maximum spread to be: Large Dogs - 550mm (1ft 9.6ins), **Intermediate dogs - 500mm (1ft 7.7ins)**, Medium Dogs - 400mm (1ft 3.7ins), Small Dogs - 300mm (11.8ins). There must be only one pole on the back hurdle. The feet of the side supports (wings) should not be interlocking but touching and must not be out of line by more than 76mm (3ins).
- d. Hoop-(Tyre)—Aperture diameter 533mm (1ft 9ins) minimum. Aperture centre from the ground: Large Dogs - 800mm (2ft 7.5ins). **Intermediate dogs 700mm (2ft 3.5ins)**. Medium Dogs - 550mm (1ft 9.6ins), Small Dogs – 490mm (1ft 7.3ins). The hoop to be of a consistent shape, constructed of an impact-absorbing material. The height of the hoop should not be lowered. The tyre/hoop must be directly mounted in a substantial frame structure which must be secured in such a way that dogs cannot knock the obstacle over from either direction; the frame shall not have a beam across the top.

- e. Table—914mm (3ft) square minimum. Height: Large Dogs - 600mm (1ft 11.6ins), **Intermediate dogs – 500mm (1ft 7.7ins)**, Medium Dogs - 400mm (1ft 3.75ins), Small Dogs - 300mm (11.8ins). To be of stable construction with a non-slip surface.
- f. Long Jump — Each unit a minimum length of 1.219m (4ft). Large Dogs - To comprise 3 to 5 units the overall maximum length to be between 1.2m (3ft 11.2ins) and 1.5m (4ft 11ins). The height of the front unit to be 127mm (5ins) and the height of the rear unit to be 381mm (15ins). **Intermediate dogs - To comprise 3-4 units, the overall maximum length to be between 1m - 1.3m (3ft - 4ft 3ins). The height of the front unit to be 127mm (5ins) and the height of the rear unit to be 305mm (1ft).** Medium Dogs - To comprise 3 to 4 units the overall maximum length to be between 700mm (2ft 3.8ins) and 900mm (2ft 11.4ins). The height of the front unit to be 127mm (5ins) and the height of the rear unit to be 305mm (12ins). Small Dogs - To comprise 2 to 3 units the overall maximum length to be between 400mm (1ft 3ins) and 500mm (1ft 7.7ins). The height of the front unit to be 127mm (5ins) and the height of the rear unit to be 229mm (9ins). Marker Poles with a minimum height of approximately 1.219m (4ft) shall be used, these should not be attached to any part of the obstacle.
- g. Water Jump—The overall maximum spread should be: Large Dogs - between 1.2m (3ft 11.2ins) and 1.5m (4ft 11ins). **Intermediate dogs between 900mm and 1.2m (2ft 11.4ins - 3ft 11.2ins).** Medium Dogs – between 700mm (2ft 3.8ins) and 900mm (2ft 11.4ins). Small Dogs – between 400mm (1ft 3ins) and 500mm (1ft 7.7ins). A low hurdle or brush, with a maximum height of: Large Dogs - 610mm (2ft), **Intermediate Dogs - 510mm (1ft 8ins)**, Medium Dogs – 356mm (14ins), Small Dogs - 228mm (9ins) may be placed in front of the water. Marker poles with a minimum height of approximately 1.22m (4ft), should be placed at all 4 corners, these should not be attached to any part of the water jump.
- h. Wishing Well—This obstacle will be of stable construction and will be able to be fixed to the ground. To ensure the safety of the dog, it will have no sharp edges. Should a design be utilised which involves a removable centre section then the resultant corners must be rounded or padded. It will have a roof of which the bottom will be no less than Large Dogs - 1500mm (4ft 11.1ns), **Intermediate dogs 1400mm (4ft 7ins)**, Medium Dogs - 1220mm (4ft) , Small Dogs - 950mm (3ft 1.4ins) from the ground. The roof must not project beyond the width or depth of the base. It will have a displaceable top bar the height of which will be: Large Dogs - 650mm (2ft 1.59ins), **Intermediate dogs 550mm (1ft 9.65ins)**, Medium Dogs - 450mm (1ft 5.72ins), Small Dogs - 350mm (1ft 1.78ins). The minimum space from the top of the bar to the top of the base will be Large Dogs - 160mm (6.3ins), **Intermediate Dogs 155mm (5.91ins)** , Medium Dogs - 150mm (5.91ins), Small Dogs - 105mm (4.13ins). The overall width of the base will be between 900mm (2ft 11.4ins) & 1400mm (4ft 7.12ins). The depth of the base which the dog jumps will be a maximum of Large Dogs - 550mm (1ft 9.65ins), **Intermediate Dogs 500mm (1ft 7.69ins)**, Medium Dogs - 400mm (1ft 3.75ins), Small Dogs - 300mm (11.8ins).

(Insertions in bold.)

**Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)4. Height Classification of Dogs -
See APPENDIX 1**

TO:

4. Height Classification of Dogs

- (1) The provisions of sub-paragraphs (2) to (14) below shall not apply to dogs competing only in special classes at Limited Agility shows.
- (2) Dogs competing in small ~~or~~, medium **or Intermediate** height categories must be measured for competition. Competitors must ensure that their dog is measured prior to their first competition and that the dog's Agility Record Book has been signed and dated by the measuring officials.
- (3) Large dogs entered for competition must be measured before they compete at their first agility show, if they have not competed prior to 1 January 2006. Dogs must be a minimum of 15 months old before the first official measurement takes place. Dogs that are, in the official measurers' opinion, obviously over ~~430mm (1ft 5 ins)~~ **510mm (1ft 8.1ins)** prior to reaching 15 months of age can be measured. (Dogs incapable of being measured at the time they are presented to the measuring officials will not be eligible for competition until such time that the official measurement has been successfully carried out.)
- (4) A second measurement must be carried out on the dog between 12 and 24 months after the first unless the dog is obviously ~~430mm (1ft 5 ins)~~ **over 510mm (1ft 8.1ins)** in which case the official measurers can strike out the second measurement in the Agility Record Book. The dog cannot be reclassified into the lower height category retrospectively if the second measurement is not taken up within the 24 month period. If the second measurement places the dog in the same height category as the first, this will be the final measurement. However, if the second measurement places the dog in a different category then a third measurement must be carried out within two calendar months by two measurers, both of whom must not have measured the dog on a previous occasion. The dog's height category will be that confirmed by two out of the three measurements. The dog should compete in the original height category until the final decision has been made.
- (6) The Kennel Club will nominate officials authorised to measure dogs for competition and to sign the Agility Record Book. The record book must be notated 'Small', 'Medium', '**Intermediate**' or 'Large' as determined by the official measurement.
- (10) Measuring devices will be of a fixed 'hoop' type and must be of a type approved by the Kennel Club. A separate measuring device is required for measuring each of small ~~or~~, medium, **intermediate** or large dogs.
- (12) A dog will be eligible to compete in small ~~or~~, medium **or intermediate** height categories only after the official measurement has been carried out. Where a dog is measured out of the height category in which it has been entered it is permissible, at the discretion of the organising club, for entries to be altered in order that the dog can compete at the correct height category.
(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

Excerpt from K Regulations

Proposed Amendment for Regulations for Entries in the Stud Book, Champions and Warrants.

2. Championship Qualifications.

TO:

2. Championship Qualifications.

g. Title of Agility Champion (Ag Ch). The following dogs shall be entitled to be described as Agility Champion.

(1) Large Agility Dogs.

(a) Any dog awarded three Agility Certificates under three different judges, in accordance with the Kennel Club Regulations for the Championship Agility Classes.

(b) Any dog which has won a Kennel Club Agility Championship.

(2) Intermediate Agility Dogs.

(a) Any dog awarded three Agility Certificates under three different judges, in accordance with the Kennel Club Regulations for the Championship Agility Classes.

(b) Any dog which has won a Kennel Club Agility Championship.

~~(2)~~ **(3) Medium Agility Dogs**

(a) Any dog awarded three Agility Certificates under three different judges, in accordance with the Kennel Club Regulations for the Championship Agility Classes.

(b) Any dog which has won a Kennel Club Agility Championship.

~~(3)~~ **(4) Small Agility Dogs**

(a) Any dog awarded three Agility Certificates under three different judges, in accordance with the Kennel Club Regulations for the Championship Agility Classes.

(b) Any dog which has won a Kennel Club Agility Championship.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

APPENDIX 1 - FIRST SUPPORTING DOCUMENT TO PROPOSAL

IMPACTS AND CONCERNS

ALIGNMENT WITH KENNEL CLUB STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

“To raise the relevance of the Kennel Club in the eyes of the public at large, dog owners and those who take part in canine events, so as to be better able ‘to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs.’ This objective to be achieved through:-

- Ensuring that the Kennel Club is the first port of call on all canine matters.
- Improving canine health and welfare.
- Popularising canine events focusing on the retention of existing participants and the attracting of new.
- Achieving a widening of the Kennel Club membership base.
- Encouraging the development of all those concerned with dogs through education and training.
- Encouraging more people to provide input in the Kennel Club’s decision making process.”

Agility has evolved into a very different activity from its early beginnings with a single jump height. There have been many positive changes, such as the introduction first of the Mini category and then the Midi category, which were then renamed as Small and Medium. Both of these were big steps forward in supporting the Kennel Club’s aim to popularise and promote canine events, opening up the activity for many smaller dogs.

The introduction of a height category that encourages the inclusion of more typically smaller Large breeds such as the Springer Spaniel, the NSDTR, many of the larger Terriers, plus dogs of mixed breed and those at the smaller end of their breed standard, such as the smaller Labradors and Collies, is completely aligned with the first, third, and fourth objectives listed above and does not contradict the fifth or sixth objective. There is also no evidence whatsoever that it would contradict objective number two. Without the inclusion of this height category Kennel Club Agility cannot be said to be “the first port of call” for these dogs – objective number one.

ELIGIBILITY & MEASURING - an introduction plan

All dogs measuring over 430mm (1ft 5ins) and measuring 510mm (1ft 8.1ins) or under at the withers after the new height is introduced will be categorised at that height.

Anyone who owns a dog competing in Agility that is already registered with the KC and has already been measured into the current Large height category will have a period of 12 months in which to decide to either:

have their dog re-measured and re-categorised as Intermediate or confirmed as Large

or

take the option of remaining categorised as Large (regardless of the dog's height at withers) for the lifetime of the dog

Therefore: -

- Changes to the rules to be implemented from January 2016, expecting standard Intermediate classes to be scheduled for 2016
- All new dogs compete at the new height from Jan 2016
- Dogs that currently measure Large that may measure lower may opt to continue in Large for the lifetime of the dog or may be re-measured into the new category forever
- Measuring and re-measuring to start as soon as the category is approved
- The cut off date for re-measuring existing Large dogs to be the end of 2016

TRANSITION PHASE FOR IMPACT ON CHAMPIONSHIP CLASSES, QUALIFIERS AND CRUFTS/OLYMPIA

Intermediate Championship classes should be made available for 2016. An additional benefit will be a reduction in the size of the existing Large Championship class.

Championship judges are appointed two years in advance at present, but the time scale for Championship judges can be waived for special circumstances and there are precedents for this.

Discussions should be held (key stakeholders) to agree the timetable for introducing the Intermediate height at prestige domestic events.

OTHER MEASURING CONSIDERATIONS

It is encouraging to note that the ALC is already debating improving the measuring system (Ref ALC Minutes July 2014). The height category bands are currently defined to + or - 1mm. In order to increase the reliability of measurement, measuring equipment should be capable of being calibrated to a corresponding level of accuracy.

IMPACT ON SHOW MANAGEMENT

Show organisers will have a big change to cope with, but we have done it before and can do it again. There will be more classes and the majority of the dogs in them will come from the existing Large category although it will open up Kennel Club shows for those who do not work their smaller Large dogs at full height.

Large dog classes are often split two or even three ways so it is likely that one of those parts would become Intermediate instead. Rosettes would be the same as it is normally to 10% of entry. There will be additional cost for extra trophies unless the new class replaces an existing part of a class. Trophies would be dependent on numbers, so less for a small class and paid for by a bigger one.

Time will be needed for course walking as the current regulations require that competitors must be able to walk the course at the correct height. There are ways though to minimize the extra time. Many classes at different heights at the moment have the same course. There is a longer time allowed either first thing or lunchtime for everyone to walk the course and then just a short break for additional walking at the correct height in between. Another possibility is for jumps to be changed during walking to allow competitors to see the course at their own height. Many people don't think it's appropriate for all sizes to have the same course but Small and Medium currently often do the same course, this would also be possible for Intermediate and Large.

REPLACEMENT EQUIPMENT

Most equipment suppliers now supply equipment with multiple height settings, there will be an impact on the Wall and possibly the Wishing Well.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Q Several dogs were successful at FCI Worlds that fall into the proposed new category – so why do we need it?

A These are only a few dogs at the peak of their performance, with owners/handlers that have the knowledge, experience and support teams to look after their dogs to achieve this. There will always be dogs with more natural athletic ability, as there are with humans, but only a few out of the thousands that compete reach the very top. FCI is also “exclusive” in the more literal sense, in that only pedigrees can compete there – thereby narrowing the band of dogs affected even more. FCI Worlds have already used lower heights, making allowances for conditions and judges preference.

Q What about the Large heavy breeds that struggle to jump the existing height?

A Possibly regulations could be changed later on so that heavy Large dogs could jump lower, once this height is established. A proposal to make this change would be much simpler to implement when the proposed new height is in place.

Q How will this affect GB eligibility and try outs? Would the new height be excluded from eligibility and tryouts?

A The selection process for international competitions which fall outside the current Kennel Club regulations may need to consider the proposed new height, so as not to exclude currently eligible 'smaller Large dogs' - this is relevant where eligibility is collected on a points basis from qualifiers such as Crufts and Olympia. Trial days should remain 'open'.

Q Is it true that unless we stay aligned with FCI heights, we will not be able to compete there because we have different heights here?

A The FCI is an umbrella organisation for kennel clubs in mainly European countries. Its rules for various canine disciplines only apply to events hosted by the FCI, and this includes agility events such as the FCI World Champs.

FCI allow a range of jump heights for each dog height: 55-65cm for large, 35-45cm for medium, 25-35cm for small. Dogs can compete nationally at a lower height than they do at FCI. There is no reason why FCI should be prohibitive to the proposed new height in this country.

Member countries (and, obviously, affiliated countries such as the UK) are free to adopt their own national agility rules and many do. For example, in Sweden this has included the use of different-spaced weaves for large and medium/large dogs (using the widest possible setting for large dogs and narrower gaps for smaller dogs) and, more recently, allowing handlers with borderline large dogs to choose whether they want to run their dogs as medium or large dogs. The rules make it quite clear that if a handler wants to compete outside Sweden, he or she has to comply with whatever height category the dog is measured into in that country.

APPENDIX 2 – SECOND SUPPORTING DOCUMENT TO PROPOSAL

RESPONSES TO ALC MINUTES OF JANUARY 2013 MEETING RE 4TH HEIGHT

Extract from the Minutes of the ALC meeting 13 January 2013 (responses to these points are in bold italics, responses using extracts from other docs are in normal italics)

Introduction of a Fourth Hurdle Height – Standard

26. Ms Doble requested the Council discuss the possibility of integrating a fourth hurdle height in agility on behalf of Ms Doble. It was suggested that a “Standard” height hurdle should be introduced at 550mm (21.65ins) which was exactly half way between the current Medium and Large heights. A lengthy discussion ensued with each representative giving a full account of the views expressed at their area meetings.

27. Whilst it appeared that there was majority support for the concept of introducing a fourth hurdle height, the Council recognised that there were a great many issues which would need to be addressed before any firm proposal could be discussed. During the Council’s discussion the following key points were made:

a. To support the suggestion of a fourth height, more research was required to support the premise this would be beneficial to the welfare of agility dogs. Nevertheless it was recognised that it was for individual owners to ensure their dogs were fit enough to compete.

The ALC responded appropriately in January 2013 and referred the item to the Activities Health & Welfare Sub-Group. Despite requests for the research results, nothing has been made available to date. There have however been results produced for different Jump spacings, which was researched at the KCIA Festival in 2013. The Minutes of the July 2014 ALC meeting records the following report from the Sub group.

“The Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group had plans to investigate this issue further but it was emphasised that it would be essential to carry out any such research with care and that caution should be applied in setting up new research. Every study had faults and limitations and it was not possible to completely avoid these. For example, it may be problematic to obtain consistent results from a dog required to jump over heights with which it was not familiar or experienced.

42 The Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group would continue to investigate this and other issues prioritised for it by the Activities Sub-Committee, and was working to an agreed timetable.

43. As part of the ongoing programme of research studies into the subject of jump heights it was noted that a grant of £7000 had been secured from the Kennel Club Charitable Trust for further research into jump heights to be carried out by the Royal

Veterinary College.

44. Mr Croxford emphasised that the objective of the Sub-Group was to review scientific evidence relating to the welfare of dogs involved in sporting activities, but that so far only small steps had been taken. However, the research was ongoing.

45. It was accepted that ongoing research would provide objective and unbiased data but would not in itself provide specific answers. It would be a matter for the Council and the Activities Sub-Committee to draw conclusions and make decisions based on the information provided from the research. “

Key to this research is Dr Jacqueline Boyd, a member of the Activities Health & Welfare sub-group, who has helped our understanding of this with the following response to a query we made in September of this year

“..... I have been undertaking a range of research related to dog agility with the support of various people (both within my own institution and other organisations). The opportunity arose for data collection at the kciac in 2013 and a research idea had to be rapidly drawn up and ethical approval granted (from my own institution). On this basis and also on the basis that current data does not really tell us much about what is actually happening to dogs under current rules/regs etc, I proposed that a simple study with some potentially interesting outputs would be to examine jump distance (based on KC and FCI min/Max distances). We have done extensive analysis and are hoping the paper will be published in the scientific press soon. At that point we can fully release findings but to do so before then would affect scientific process and also the peer review process. I feel that the heights of jumps are important and interesting but a robust study of that sort needs several things - time, funding, a decent sample population of ideally naïve dogs (ones without prior jumping experience under existing heights ideally!), to be prospective rather than retrospective and ideally be long term. This probably won't answer all your queries but I hope it helps a bit”

b. Background to current hurdle height.

The current hurdle height was lowered from 726mm (30ins) to be in line with FCI Regulations; the large height category was between 550mm-650mm until three years ago when the Council supported a fixed hurdle height and the large category was altered to 650mm.

These changes were made without any reference to research on Jump Heights

c. That agility shows should be inclusive and provide opportunities for all dogs to compete.

There remain a significant number of breeds and of smaller Large dogs who are disadvantaged by the absence of a height category and associated hurdle height midway between the existing Medium and Large categories.

This aim was addressed by the ALC when Small and Medium heights were introduced, as recorded in the following extract from relevant Q and As at the time.

(Document ref no.137.04 Amendments to Kennel Club Agility ‘H’ Regulations)

“ At its meeting on 14 July 2004 the Agility Liaison Council agreed unanimously to recommend a package of changes to the ‘H’ Regulations for Agility Competitions and also recommended they be implemented by 1 January 2005.

Q. Why has the Council decided to propose reducing the height of the large dog jumps to 65cm?

A. The Council is responding to the desire to encourage more and different types of dog into the Large height category. Although senior and advanced classes are dominated by the Border Collie / Working Sheepdog, many other breeds compete at the lower levels. The Council felt that it was important to ensure that jump heights suited most breeds of dog competing and not just those at the higher levels. It is felt that a reduction of jump height will be beneficial to all breeds of dog in the long term”

d. To introduce a fourth height category could lead to the request for other height categories.

Possibly – is that a good enough reason to reject this proposal?

e. That each dog’s height measurement would have to be precisely recorded.

Why? This doesn’t happen now. On the other hand, maybe that would be a good thing. A more accurate method of achieving a dog’s height measurement would help in many other arenas of competition

f. If a fourth category was introduced each dog would be fixed into one of the four categories. The swapping between heights for those dogs on the boundaries between different heights would not be allowed.

Agreed

g. To introduce a fourth hurdle height would require a substantial review of all Agility Regulations including re-evaluating the current categories of competition at Prestige Finals.

Agreed and done (see proposal for consequential Regulation changes)

h. It was likely that agility shows would have to accommodate increased time for additional course walking with the need to provide more prizes and likely increases in other costs.

Show organisers will have a big change to cope with, but we have done it before and can do it again. There will be more classes but the majority of the dogs in them will come from the existing Large category, although it will open up Kennel Club shows for those who do not work their smaller Large dogs at full height.

Large dog classes are often split two or even three ways so it is likely that one of those parts would become the proposed new height instead. Rosettes would be the same as it is normally to 10% of entry. There will be additional cost for extra trophies unless the new class replaces an existing part of a class. Trophies would be dependent on numbers so less for a small class and paid for by a bigger one.

Time will be needed for course walking as the current regulations require that competitors must be able to walk the course at the correct height. This regulation could possibly be changed in the future if necessary. There are ways though to minimize the extra time. Many classes at different heights at the moment have the same course. There is a longer time allowed either first thing or at lunchtime for everyone to walk the course and then just a short break for additional walking at the correct height in between. Another possibility is for jumps to be changed during walking to allow competitors to see the course at their own height.

Many people don't think it's appropriate for all sizes to have the same course but Small and Medium currently often do the same course, this would also be possible for Intermediate and Large.

28. Due to the complexity of this item and the logistics of implementing such a large change to the agility discipline, the Council supported the need for extensive research for all hurdle heights. Therefore, it was agreed to refer the matter to the Dog Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group to continue with its objectives. It was envisaged that the findings from this research would disclose evidence and establish which hurdle height would be most suitable for different heights of dogs, which may amend the current hurdle heights in the regulations and introduce new hurdle heights. This would finally resolve the ongoing debate for which hurdle heights would be most suitable and ensure that the welfare of agility dogs' was at the forefront of any discussion.

The Sub-Group has reported that research into hurdle height will be a lengthy, expensive and complicated process. The existing hurdle heights were set without any such information, the Minutes of the ALC meeting July 14th 2004 demonstrate this with the comment " It is felt that a reduction of jump height will be beneficial to all breeds of dog in the long term".

A significant number of people in the Agility community are supporting this proposal based on experiences and comparisons of their own dogs' performances, as demonstrated by the number of people in favour two years ago when this topic was last raised. If and when definitive answers are provided by suitable research, no doubt there will need to be a review of most pieces of equipment, not just existing hurdle heights

