

MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL AND THE YOUNG KENNEL CLUB HELD ON MONDAY 17 OCTOBER 2016

The meeting was attended by Mr R Burbidge-Grant, Mrs D Lavender and Mrs L Turner representing the Council, and by Mrs V McAlpine (Events & Education Executive) and Mrs C English (Young Kennel Club Membership & Website Co-ordinator) on behalf of the YKC.

The meeting discussed ways in which the Obedience Liaison Council and the YKC could work together to encourage the participation of young handlers in competitive Obedience.

Encouraging young handlers

It was noted that despite a number of rule changes over the years there had been a decline in the number of YKC members competing in Obedience. Some shows had been reluctant to schedule YKC classes due to poor entries, and where they had done so, had experienced difficulties in appointing judges willing to judge them.

A concern was expressed that many young members of the Obedience community felt themselves to be distanced from the YKC office, and that there was no single contact point within the YKC from which they could access assistance.

To address this, Mr Burbidge-Grant was designated as the YKC representative and would act as a liaison point for young handlers. As an ex YKC member, Mr Burbidge-Grant had an excellent understanding of the issues facing young handlers, and as a current competitor in Obedience would be present at a number of shows and would therefore be easily accessible.

It was highlighted that the YKC made regular contact with clubs and societies to encourage them to find ways of attracting and developing young handlers, however, response rates had not been good. It was agreed that more personal contact would be more effective, and Mr Burbidge-Grant offered to contact some clubs himself to encourage them to offer special classes for children, 'taster' events (possibly on a weekend), etc. It was hoped that if some clubs did so, others may follow.

Mr Burbidge-Grant would also contact those clubs which had previously scheduled YKC qualifiers to do so once again.

Child-friendly clubs and judges

Mrs Turner had carried out some research into child-friendly clubs within the South West and a list had been submitted to the YKC department. Other Council representatives had also been requested to carry out similar research in their own areas. It was agreed that lists of child-friendly clubs should be made available on the Kennel Club and YKC websites. In addition, it was hoped that Council members

would provide lists of child-friendly trainers and of individuals who were happy to judge YKC classes. This information would also be made available on the Kennel Club and YKC websites.

The YKC confirmed that it would be very happy to accept suggestions for suitable trainers and judges to officiate at its own events, and it was anticipated that show organisers would also welcome such a list to assist them when selecting judges for YKC classes.

It would be important to ensure that any promotion of services for young handlers should be on a UK-wide basis to ensure accessibility for all. The involvement of Council members from all areas was therefore vital.

Communication Channels

It was agreed that a representative from the Council should be appointed to act as a communication point and to provide input regarding Obedience to any YKC activities such as competitions and training activities. This would include liaising between the Council and the YKC in respect of identifying suitable trainers for YKC events. Mr Burbidge-Grant agreed to undertake this role in addition to his designation as the representative of the YKC and the liaison point for young handlers. This would provide a good channel for two-way communication between the Council and the YKC which would be a very positive development.

Mr Burbidge-Grant would be invited to attend a meeting of the YKC Management Team in the near future to provide a presentation on the subject of YKC Obedience.

YKC Obedience Regulations

The proposed new Regulations were discussed and a number of amendments were proposed. The revised Regulations would come into effect on 1 January 2017.

Rebecca Pointer Trophy

It was confirmed that the Rebecca Pointer Trophy was now awarded to the winner of the YKC Pre-Beginner Stakes final held at Crufts. However, it could be reallocated to its previous use in future if necessary, with the input/agreement of Rosie Pointer. Under previous rules, members were able to collect and submit points from wins and places throughout the qualifying year at a wide range of Obedience shows.