

**MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON  
THURSDAY 12 JANUARY 2017 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE  
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

**A G E N D A**

**ITEM 1.      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**ITEM 2.      APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2016 (copies previously distributed).

**ITEM 3.      MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

a.      Results of recommendations

The General Committee has approved amendments to the following Regulations which had been recommended for approval by the Council at its meeting on 6 July 2016:

- Regulations G9.d. and G27. relating to the removal of the requirement for publication of catalogues.
- Insertion of new Regulation G(A)13 relating to the introduction of capped classes at Open shows. A consequential amendment to Regulation G(A)3 had also been approved by the General Committee.

b.      New representatives

- (i) The Council is invited to note the appointment of Ms K Allen as a representative for the South West area.
- (ii) The process for the appointment of a representative for the North West area is currently under way and details of the successful candidate will be announced in January 2017.

c.      Obedience Information Stand at Crufts

At the previous meeting it was noted that there was currently no budget available for the stand from the Kennel Club but it was suggested that efforts could be made to attract sponsorship to cover any necessary costs, or that a budget could be provided by Crufts. Mr Harlow had agreed to raise the issue with the Chairman of the Crufts Sub-Committee and to provide a report for the Council. The Council is invited to note a verbal update.

d.      Details of sire and dam

At its previous meeting, the Council had suggested that

following its recommendation that the necessity for show societies to produce catalogues should be removed, details of the breeding of dogs on the Activity Register should be publicly available as they were for dogs on the Breed Register.

The Council is invited to note that the office has confirmed that information held by the Kennel Club not already within the public domain could not be released due to data protection laws. Information on sires and dams was published in the yearly Stud Book (for dogs which had qualified for entry in the Stud Book) and in various other publications.

e. Proposal for a new scheduled class

At its meeting in July, the Council had considered a proposal to introduce a new class between Beginners and Novice, suggesting that it be named Pre-Novice or Intermediate. The rationale was based on feedback from competitors regarding the difficulty of making the transition from competing in Beginners classes to Novice classes.

The Council had not supported the proposal but was sympathetic to the reasoning behind it, and it was agreed that an alternative proposal would be submitted to the Council at its January meeting in order to address the issues highlighted.

The issue had been discussed by the Obedience Strategy Working Party which was of the view that it would be best addressed by means of amendments to eligibility for handlers competing in Beginners. The matter appears on the agenda under item 5.d.

f. Crufts commentary

At its previous meeting, the Council had suggested that training for future commentators would be of value in improving the quality of commentary. It is invited to note that the possibility of providing a training course for commentators was currently under investigation.

**ITEM 4. FEEDBACK FROM COMPETITORS**

All Council representatives are requested to provide a short verbal report of activities undertaken in their area to gain feedback from competitors since the previous meeting.

**ITEM 5. OBEDIENCE STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Pages 13 - 14)**

a. Clashing shows - proposed additional wording to Regulation G5.

The Council had referred the proposal to the Obedience Strategy Working Party, which was of the view that procedures were already in place within the office to minimise clashes of show dates, and that it did not consider that any change to Regulations would be helpful or effective. Accordingly it did not suggest any further action on this issue.

b. Bonus Wins

This matter was referred to the Obedience Strategy Working Party which considered that the issues relating to bonus wins would be addressed by the proposed introduction of points-based progression. The Council is requested to note the Working Party's view that the matter did not require further consideration at this time.

c. Progression on points – proposed new Regulation G(A)5 and amendments to Regulations G(A)8 and G(A)9:

The Council is requested to consider a proposal which would allow an option for a dog to progress on points from Novice and Class A. This would address issues regarding progression experienced by handlers in some classes.

Acknowledging that some handlers would welcome the opportunity to progress on points whereas others would prefer to progress on the basis of wins, the Working Party was of the view that providing an option for progression via either route would allow handlers to select their preferred route.

The Council is requested to consider the following proposed amendments to G Regulations:

**Insert new Regulation G(A)5 Eligibility**

**At the handler's discretion a dog may progress from Novice or Class A on points. A total of 30 points are required to progress, but points can only be gained in the relevant classes as follows: 1<sup>st</sup> place - 10 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> placed - 4 points, 3<sup>rd</sup> place - 2 points, 4<sup>th</sup> place - 1 point. There is no time limit on this progression, however, once a dog has progressed, it cannot return to a previous class.**

(Subsequent Regulations to be renumbered).

Regulation G(A)8 Novice

**TO:**

a. For dogs which have not won 2 First places in Obedience classes (Introductory Class, Pre-Beginners and Beginners excepted) **and have not elected to progress on points to Class A.**

**(Insertion in bold)**

Regulation G(A)9 Class A

**TO:**

a. For dogs which have not won 3 First Prizes in Class A, B and Open Class C in total **and have not elected to progress on points to Class B.**  
**(Insertion in bold).**

d. Eligibility to compete in Beginners

The Council is requested to discuss a suggestion regarding eligibility to compete in Beginners.

As part of its Five Year Strategy, the Council is tasked with finding new ways of assisting people into the Obedience world, and for those who have worked in the lower classes for many years to be recognised as achieving some success within the competitive ring. The Council is requested to discuss an amendment to Regulation G(A)7a. which has been suggested by Mrs Turner and Miss Godfrey:

Regulation G(A)7a

**TO:**

To compete in Beginners a ~~handler or~~ dog must not have won a total of two or more First places in Beginners Class or one First place in any other Obedience Class (Introductory Class and Pre-Beginners excepted) **A handler must not have won two First places in Novice Class (nor progressed out of the Novice Class using the points system) nor gained a third place or above in A, B or Open C Classes.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Rationale

The objective of the suggested amendment is to give handlers the option to compete in Beginners with a new dog subject to the level of placings they have won. There is evidence that competitors find it particularly difficult to win out of Novice and are lost to the discipline. The intention therefore is to not only to retain handlers in the discipline but also to help them gain additional valuable ring experience.

In particular the Council's views are sought as to whether the suggested revised eligibility for the Beginners class should be optional, and also whether it should be retrospective. If supported, a formal proposal for an amendment to Regulations will be submitted to the Council at its meeting in July.

- e. Stay judging  
 Following the issue of a Press Release on 21 July 2016 relating to clarification of the Stay exercise, the Working Party suggests that a specimen Stay Marking Sheet should be provided by the Kennel Club for use by all judges in order to ensure consistency of marking.

Accordingly, the Council is requested to consider the following:

- (i) The draft Universal Stay Marking Sheet  
**(Annex A refers)**
- (ii) The Working Party's proposal for the inclusion of the following wording in Regulations G(C).4.h.(1) and (2):  
 'Marks must be graduated in accordance with the Kennel Club's specimen stay chart.'
- f. Progression into Championship Class 'C'  
 The Working Party had discussed issues relating to progression into Championship Class 'C', noting that a relatively small number of handlers winning a high number of Open 'C' classes had led to a perception that other handlers were being prevented from winning the class and progressing into Championship Class 'C'.  
  
 The views of the Council are sought as whether the qualification required for Championship Class 'C' should be amended, and if so, in what way.
- g. Companion Shows  
 The Council is requested to discuss the issue of how Companion Shows may be used to promote Obedience. It is requested to appoint one individual to take on the project of promoting Obedience classes at such shows.

**ITEM 6. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB** (Pages 15 - 16)

The Council is invited a report following the meeting held on 17 October 2016 between representatives of the Council and the YKC.

**(Annex B refers)**

**ITEM 7. ACTIVITIES HEALTH & WELFARE SUB-GROUP** (Pages 17 - 20)

The Council is invited to note the written report from Mrs Patrick on the work of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group following its meetings on 27 January 2016 and 1 June 2016.

**(Annex C refers)**

**ITEM 8. ACTIVITIES JUDGES WORKING PARTY (Pages 21 - 22)**

The Council is invited to note a written report from Mrs Garner on the work of the Activities Judges Working Party. A verbal update will be provided by Mr Harlow regarding any issues discussed by the Working Party at its meeting on 14 November 2016.

**(Annex D refers)**

**ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

- a. Mr R Burbidge-Grant  
Mrs A Neal  
Proposed amendment to stay times for Championship Class 'C'

New Regulation G(C)4.h.(5)

**For Championship Class C, stays must take place either before or after the scent exercise at the discretion of the judge.**

(Insertion in bold)

Rationale

Mrs Neal wishes to propose that stays for Championship Class 'C' take place when all competitors in the class have completed ringwork exercises, but allowing 15 minutes after the last dog has worked. The intention of the amendment is to ensure fairness for all competitors in the class. Mrs Neal is of the view that having timed stays is disruptive to the smooth flow of the running order and is also unfair on a competitor who has just finished the ring work and must do stays when the dog may now be tired. After stays the competitor does not have the same amount of time to get their dog ready for the ring, so the same conditions do not apply for all competitors in the class. Timed stays in other classes would still take priority. The decision on whether to do scent before stays should be left to the judge on the day. Some Championship 'C' classes have low entries so would probably do scent first, classes with larger entries may have stays before scent.

- b. Mr R Burbidge-Grant  
Mr R Clowes  
Proposed amendment to Regulation G30.f(1)

Regulation G30.f(1)

**TO**

A draw for the running order in Championship Class C must be made prior to the Show. The Kennel Club will conduct the ballot for this running order **ensuring that exhibitors who have entered multiple dogs should**

**have a minimum of 10 dogs between them.** Show Secretaries must forward the names of the exhibitors and dogs involved, together with their merit scores, **highlighting any exhibitors who have entered multiple dogs within Championship Class C** to the Kennel Club by recorded delivery, registered post or e-mail within seven working days of the closing of entries. (Insertions in bold).

Rationale

Recently exhibitors competing with multiple dogs have been drawn consecutively in Championship Class 'C', whereas within Open classes exhibitors are only drawn once. Mr Clowes is of the view that having exhibitors' dogs drawn consecutively disrupts the flow of judging of the class, whilst the handler swaps dogs. Judges are having to take enforced breaks and fellow competitors are unsure of how long they will have to wait before competing. A handler competing with two dogs is at a disadvantage both mentally and physically after competing with their first dog, and Mr Clowes considers that there should be a sufficient break before the handler competes with another dog.

- c. Mr S Rutter  
Mrs J Greene  
Proposed amendment to Regulation G(A)3

Regulation G(A)3

TO:

A dog not qualified to enter Championship Class C must be entered in the lowest available class for which it is eligible and may also be entered in another class if desired plus one additional class at the society's discretion. Only qualified dogs may be entered in Championship Class C and these dogs may also enter Open Class C and one additional class at the society's discretion. (Note the qualifications for Championship Class C and Obedience Warrant.)

Exemptions from this regulation are:-

A dog entered in a Good Citizen Dog Scheme Special Pre-Beginner Obedience Stakes Class or

**A dog entered into** a Young Kennel Club (YKC)

Obedience Class which may also be entered in a maximum of two other scheduled classes (including YKC classes) for which it is eligible **or**

**A dog entered only into a Special class (or classes)**

(Insertions in bold)

Rationale

Mrs Greene considers that "special" classes like the ABC

and charity classes which are held by some clubs would attract more competitors if they were permitted to only enter the special class. Many people who have retired dogs from competition, those who are just starting out in obedience, and those about to start in Novice with a new dog would take advantage of the opportunity to enter the special class without the added expense of another class that they may not be ready for, or may not wish to compete in. It would allow handlers and their dogs to gain valuable ring experience without any pressure and would also be an informal way in to obedience from pet clubs.

- d. Mrs Fran Godfrey                      Working Belgian Shepherd Dog Society

Content and Marking of Obedience Exercises

The Committee of the Working Belgian Shepherd Dog Society requests the Council review the current structure and approval process to changes made to the G regulations, specifically in relation to the content and marking of exercises within the discipline. Currently, the Activities Committee and the General Committee have the power to vote against an amendment referred to them by the Obedience Liaison Council.

Overall control of decisions should be made by individuals representing the discipline rather than individuals representing other disciplines. Therefore, they are requesting that the Obedience Liaison Council should be in sole charge of making decisions on the content and marking of exercises and the Activities Committee would be unable to overrule them.

**ITEM 10.      FIVE YEAR STRATEGY (Pages 23 - 26)**

Representatives are invited to propose further items to the Council's Five Year Strategic Plan.  
**(Annex E refers)**

**ITEM 11.      REWORDING OF DESCRIPTIONS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES FOR OBEDIENCE TESTS**

The Council is invited to note the rewording of the relevant section of the Descriptions and Explanatory Notes for Obedience Tests. This will be effective from 1 January 2017.

These amendments have come about as a result of concerns expressed within the world of canine activities, about a small number of dogs which appear to have been taught to hold a position in heelwork which entails the dog effectively walking on

its pasterns. This poses a potential issue with regard to the health and welfare of dogs which must remain paramount in all Kennel Club licensed events. Judges should be aware that dogs should be balanced, with rear pasterns vertical, and that dogs which do not conform to this standard must be penalised as a major fault.

The amendment is as follows:

Regulation G(C)1.a.

**TO:**

- a. In all classes the dog **and handler** should work **as a team. In all exercises the dog will work** in a happy and natural manner **whilst maintaining its natural topline. Its head position should in no way compromise its topline or impair the natural movement of the dog.** ~~but~~ At no time should **the dog** ~~not~~ impede the ~~handler~~ **handler's movement.** ~~and prime consideration should be given to judging the dog and handler as a team.~~ The dog may be encouraged and praised except where specifically stated. **The emphasis of all exercises is that the dog must be judged for accuracy.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

The following additions to *Notes for Judges* have also been made:

- In some cases the tendency to work with almost horizontal pasterns is a result of trying to achieve an extreme head position. It should be noted that most dogs adopting a high head position can do so without compromising rear end movement and careful thought should be given to the difference.
- It is important to stress that this rule should not be used as an excuse to mark any particular style that is not to the judge's individual taste.

A Press Release regarding the above rewording was issued on 1 November 2016.

**ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Please give at least two weeks advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the Office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Chairman.

**ITEM 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Council will take place on 20 July 2017 and any items for the agenda must be submitted by 21 April 2017.

**NOTES:**

1. The Kennel Club will reimburse standard rail fares to all representatives attending the meeting, from their addresses as recorded at the Kennel Club. Claim forms will be available at the meeting.
2. Those resident in Northern Ireland or Scotland may apply in advance for authority to substitute shuttle air travel for standard rail fare, although it is requested that tickets are booked well in advance to take advantage of any reduction in fares.
3. Please give advance notice of matters to be raised under Any Other Business. This assists the Office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Council Chairman.
4. Kennel Club Liaison Council Regulations state that the Kennel Club will bear the cost of all reasonable and externally incurred costs connected with a Council, if agreed in advance. Therefore, representatives should apply to the Kennel Club for approval of any costs they may wish to claim prior to the expense being incurred.

**THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

**'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' *This is to be achieved through:-***

- **Promoting the Kennel Club as the leading national organisation for referral and advice regarding all canine related matters.**
- **Encouraging the responsible breeding of pedigree dogs.**
- **Encourage the responsible ownership of dogs.**
- **Facilitating the breeding of healthy dogs**
- **Promoting the positive benefits of dogs in society.**
- **Promoting and regulating canine activities and competitions.**
- **Providing opportunities for education and training through Kennel Club led initiatives.**
- **Investing in canine health and welfare.**
- **Engaging with the wider dog owning audience/fraternity.**