

**MEETING OF THE KENNEL CLUB AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
17 JANUARY 2013 AT 10.00AM IN THE BOARDROOM AT CLARGES STREET**

AGENDA

ITEM 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL

ITEM 2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL

ITEM 3. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE FROM JUNE 2013 TO MAY 2015

ITEM 4. PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL ON KENNEL CLUB STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

The office will give a presentation to Council representatives giving details of the Kennel Club and Liaison Council structure and procedures and the role of Council representatives.

ITEM 5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ITEM 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2012 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 7. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Regulation Changes

a. The Council is invited to note that, at its meeting on 17 July 2012, the General Committee approved the following amendments, with effect from 1 January 2013:

- i. Amendment to Regulation H18.a. Approval of Judges
- ii. New Regulation H18.c. Approval of Judges
- iii. Amendment to Regulation H(1)9.e. Management
- iv. Amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)7 Progression
- v. Amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)8 Points Progression
- vi. Amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)9.f. Standard Classes
- vii. New Annex H(1)(D) Specific Regulations for Limited Agility Shows

Calculating Accurate Course Times

b. Further to its meeting in June 2012, the Council is invited to note a presentation from Mr D Jolly, a Judges' Working Party member, regarding the continued research on the methods of calculating a course time. One method is based upon

the dog's anticipated route and the second method is based on the straight line distance between obstacle centres. The Council is also requested to consider the following proposal which was deferred at its last meeting and to consider the next course of action.

Regulation H(1)(B)5.b (Marking)

FROM

- b. Cumulative Marking/Time Faults—Faults incurred for failure to negotiate obstacles will be added to the faults incurred for failure to complete course in set time. A single fault or part thereof will be added for each second over the set time. Actual time will be recorded and rounding up or rounding down is not permitted.

TO

- b. Cumulative Marking/Time Faults
- (1) Faults incurred for failure to negotiate obstacles will be added to the faults incurred for failure to complete the course in the set time. A single fault or part thereof will be added for each second or part thereof over the set time. Actual time will be recorded and rounding up or rounding down is not permitted.
- (2) An appropriate set time for each course shall be calculated by the judge, who shall take into account the course length, the height category of the dogs competing, and the grade or grades of the dogs competing in the relevant class, together with any other relevant factors. The course length must be measured by the judge using a commercially available measuring wheel. The set time shall be stated by the judge before judging commences.

(Insertions underlined)

International Agility Teams

- c. The Council is invited to note the reports on Team GB's attendance at the 2012 European Open and World Championship competitions.
(Annex A & B refers)

Agility Listed Status

- d. The Council is invited to note a verbal report on the progress of Agility Listed Status since its official launch in October 2012.

Dog Health Group Activities Working Party

- e. The Council is invited to note a report on the progress of the Dog Health Group Activities Working Party.
(Annex C refers)

ITEM 8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

Preventing Conflicts in Agility

- a. The Activities Sub-Committee requests the Council discuss the matter of course design with the objective of preventing potential conflicts between dogs at shows. The Council is invited to note that the issue of course design is covered in the

judges' training seminars however, it is accepted that only those who have attended the seminars would have obtained this information. The Sub-Committee is of the view that judges should take more responsibility for the ring and its immediate vicinity. The Council is requested to consider guidance on class/event management to be incorporated into the Agility Code of Conduct to highlight areas of concern and to ensure show organisers have a point of reference at all times.

Design Changes to Agility Equipment

- b. The Sub-Committee requests the Council to consider the possibility of introducing a regulation to ensure equipment suppliers consult with the Kennel Club over fundamental design changes to agility equipment. It is of the view that a review of any radical change is required prior to its introduction to an agility competition to safeguard the dogs' welfare.

ITEM 9. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

The Council is invited to note that all of the items are either in review or resolved. Representatives are invited to propose further items to the Council's five year strategic plan.

ITEM 10. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Mrs Y Croxford

- a. Proposed Amendment of Regulation H(1)(B)3.n. (See-Saw)

FROM

See-Saw—This obstacle will consist of a plank firmly mounted on a central bracket. The length of the plank should be a minimum of 3.66m (12ft) and a maximum of 4.267m (14ft). The width should be 254mm (10ins) minimum and 305mm (12ins) maximum with the height of the central bracket being a maximum of 685mm (2ft 3ins) from the ground. The last 914mm (3ft) from each end should be a different colour to indicate the area with which the dog should make contact. The plank should have a non-slip surface with no slats.

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(Insertion underlined)

Due to the many different types of manufacture and design of the see-saw ranging from aluminium to wood, and various surface coating, the consistency of

the tip is now vastly different. Mrs Croxford states that it is noticeable how performance varies for all sizes of dogs, with some dogs alighting the obstacle sooner as a result of not being able to tip the pivot and, therefore, believes this amendment would help standardize the obstacle.

Mrs Y Croxford

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

FROM

Hurdle—The height of the hurdle must be 650mm (2ft 1.6ins) for Large Dogs, 450mm (1ft 5.7ins) for Medium Dogs and 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) for Small Dogs. Width: 1.219m (4ft) minimum...
(Deletion underlined)

TO

Hurdle—The height of the hurdle must be 650mm (2ft 1.6ins) for Large Dogs, 450mm (1ft 5.7ins) for Medium Dogs and 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) for Small Dogs. Width of pole/plank must be 1.524m (5ft)...
(Amendment underlined)

Mrs Croxford believes the pole/plank between the hurdle wings should be standardised to one set length. It is argued that many judges design a course with five foot poles in mind. Depending on which equipment is supplied, some poles are a lot shorter, many being four foot long. Although this is in line with current regulations, it makes the course a lot tighter and if a judge fails to make allowances for this, it may have the unintentional effect of altering the flow and dynamics of the course from that originally intended. Additionally, this could be injurious for larger dogs attempting to negotiate difficult sequences.

Mr I Mallabar

c. Proposed Amendment of Regulation H(1)4.b. (Marked Running Orders Championship Class)

FROM

Marked Running Order Championship Class – The Show Society must publish a marked running order containing the following.

- b. Championship Agility Class – An alphabetical index containing the names and addresses of competitors (unless withheld by competitors), the number and name of each exhibit and the number of the Championship Agility Class in which it is entered, giving a separate line to the name of each competitor, and the full particulars of the exhibit as given on the entry form completed by the competitor.

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(Deletion underlined)

This regulation currently requires a Championship Show Society to publish an alphabetical list containing the names and addresses of all competitors in the Championship Class unless a competitor requests this information be withheld. The application of this regulation differs between Championship Show Societies. Mr Mallabar, in the capacity as a show processor, has noted an increase in the number of competitors electing to have their address withheld in the interests of personal security and privacy.

Since this information is already held by both the Kennel Club and the Championship Show Society, it questions the need to include the address of every entrant in this particular class. Mr Mallabar believes that this regulation is outdated since competitors' information can be located on various internet or social media platforms and, therefore, removing the requirement to publish competitors' addresses would bring this regulation in line with modern times.

Mr A Dicker

Mr M Cavill

d. Proposed Amendment of Regulation H18.a. (Approval of Judges)

FROM

Show Societies must apply to the General Committee for approval of Championship Agility Class judges for Championship Agility Shows, at least nine months before the date of the Show on the approved form. All first time appointments must be applied for a minimum of eighteen months before the date of the Show on the form provided.

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(Deletion underlined)

The current procedure for the appointment of a potential Championship judge is dependent on a club/society inviting a prospective judge to officiate at their Championship show. It is further dependent on their approval by the General Committee to award Championship Certificates for the first time. The earlier deadline for submitting the necessary paperwork for the judge in question can prove very stressful for both the club/society and judge.

Mr Dicker suggests that judges wishing to be considered for Championship appointments should apply directly to the Kennel Club. Once approved by the General Committee, the judge should be put on a list of "Approved Championship Judges" which could either be circulated annually to Societies, or

issued upon request. This would allow a smoother and stress free application process, since both the club/society and the Judge would know the status of their eligibility. Mr Dicker believes that in order to further promote agility, the Championship judging pool needs to be expanded. This regulation amendment would allow experienced judges to be considered to award Agility Championship Certificates without having to wait for a club/society to nominate them first.

ITEM 11. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Course Design – Positioning of Collapsible Tunnel

- a. Ms Weaver requests the Council discuss the importance of correct positioning of the collapsible tunnel in course design. It is emphasised that tight turns out of the collapsible tunnel seem to be increasingly more prevalent in Grade 6/7 courses over the last few years. There appears to be many more injuries as a result of the positioning of the entrance and exit of these tunnels. It is believed that these course designs are not intended to cause injuries, but there may be a lack of knowledge as to what is potentially dangerous. Dogs have become increasingly faster in agility over the years and, therefore, safe course design is becoming ever more important. Ms Weaver states that judges need to have knowledge of the dogs' prospective course path and this means having experience of running and judging the particular size of dog to determine an appropriate course design. Furthermore, it seems logical that judges should design safe courses by having straight approaches to contact equipment and collapsible tunnels, as well as no sharp turns following the collapsible tunnel.

Introduction of a Fourth Hurdle Height – Standard

- b. Ms Doble requests the Council discuss the possibility of integrating a fourth hurdle height in agility. It has been suggested that a "Standard" height hurdle should be introduced at 550mm (21.65ins) which is exactly half way between the current Medium and Large heights. Ms Doble states that this height should be optional for dogs currently competing in Large that measure over 430mm (1'5ins) at the withers and measuring 510mm (20.07ins) or under at the withers. Handlers choosing to compete at this new height would need to have their dogs re-measured. Furthermore, handlers with dogs eligible for this new height would also have the option to continue competing in the Large height category for life. Ms Doble emphasises that the reason the choice is optional rather than compulsory is to permit competitors to remain eligible to qualify for FCI competitions and other international events that do not recognise this additional height. It is also a mark of respect for those people who feel strongly that they wish to continue to compete in the Large height category, regardless of the size of their dog. This height is intended for dogs that are not eligible for the Medium height category, whose handlers feel more comfortable running them at an intermediate height between the current Medium and Large heights.

Course Design – Distances Between Obstacles – Option 1

- c. Mrs Croxford requests the Council discuss the possibility of stipulating an increase in the current distance between obstacles. It is felt that courses have become a lot more technical over the years with an increased number of tight turns since this measurement was first introduced into the regulations. Repeated exercises involving tight turns could be potentially injurious for dogs and,

therefore, by encouraging judges to set more appropriate distances between obstacles it may help lessen potential risks. Mrs Croxford suggests that a minimum of five metres for Large height classes and a minimum of four metres for Small/Medium height classes, between obstacle centres at all times would be more appropriate.

Course Design – Distances Between Obstacles – Option 2

- d. Mrs Croxford requests the Council discuss the possibility of stipulating an increase in the current distance between obstacles. The second suggestion would be the same as the first option, but would include the maximum distance of seven metres between obstacles' centres at all times.

Cancelled Show Refunds

- e. Ms James requests the Council discuss the possibility of stipulating the approximate percentage of refund that would be made available to competitors in the event of a show cancellation due to unforeseen circumstances. Currently, the specimen schedule requests show societies to state their refund policy in the event of a cancellation, but it does not provide guidance as to the approximate amount of refund that should be made available for competitors. Ms James suggests that if a maximum percentage was applied to the refund policy, it would enable competitors to know in advance the amount of refund they would be entitled to in the event of a cancellation. It is felt that this would not only be fairer for competitors, but may encourage show societies to seek alternative venues before declaring a cancellation of an event.

"Anysize" Classes

- f. Ms Swann requests the Council discuss the possibility of standardising height categories for Small, Medium and Large in "Anysize" classes. This would provide clarity for competitors entering this class of which height their dog would be expected to jump regardless of which show they enter. Ms Swann explains that through her experience of having a Medium sized dog, that most shows set a small height for Large dogs and a "micro" height for Small dogs, but there appears to be a lack of uniformity of height set for Medium dogs. It is felt that when compared with the percentage reduction in height for Large and Small dogs, that the standard small height is not a sufficient reduction in height for Medium dogs recovering from injury, or for veteran dogs and will unfairly end their agility career earlier than Large or Small dogs. "Anysize" classes are not meant to be competitive, they are intended to enable dogs to begin or end their agility career when they are unable to run on their full height. Ms Swann states that a stipulation to standardize the heights for "Anysize" classes, so that Large dogs negotiate the standard small height and Medium/Small dogs negotiate a "micro" height, would ensure consideration for the safety and welfare for those dogs entered in this class.

Start/Finish – Positioning of Electronic Timing Gates

- g. Ms Ullsten requests the Council clarify the definition of the start and finish of an agility course in relation to the positioning of electronic timing gates. Current regulations do not define when the dog is under test and where the timing gates should be placed with the exception of Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3), "...The distance between the finishing poles should be wide enough to allow a dog to pass through without impediment". Ms Ullsten provides an example of a recent

show where the first obstacle was the weaving poles, but the electronic timing gates were placed approximately a metre in front of the obstacle. Since the dog was expected to pass through these gates to trigger the time to start, it would make the timing gates an obstacle in itself. However, as the electronic gates are not a standardised agility obstacle, there is no standard marking stipulated as to how one should judge this because the dog should not be faulted for going around the timing gates. Furthermore, Ms Ullsten states that there have been instances of poor positioning of the gates where timing could be triggered by either dog or handler without any fault being incurred, but the dog should not be penalised because it has not attempted to negotiate the obstacle.

Ms Ullsten highlights that since further work is in progress to standardise the calculation of course times, it is therefore important that the start and finish of an agility course is clearly defined. It would seem reasonable that the timing should start when the dog begins negotiating the obstacles and finish when completing the last obstacle. Therefore, the Council is requested to consider the following suggestions and subject to support, to prepare proposals for the following meeting:

Definition of the start of an agility test

The start of an agility test and, therefore, marking of faults should begin when the dog makes an attempt to negotiate the first obstacle. Where timing gates are used, they should be placed immediately in front of the first obstacle as near as practically possible, but not more than 20cm in front of the obstacle. They should also be placed in such a way that they do not impede the dog's ability to negotiate the obstacle or obstruct the handler's route.

Definition of completion of an agility test

The finish/end of an agility test and, therefore, marking of the test should stop when the dog has cleared the last obstacle. Where timing gates are used, they should be placed immediately after the last obstacle as near as practically possible, but no further than 20cm. They should also be placed in such a way that they do not impede the dog's ability to negotiate the obstacle or obstruct the handler's route. Furthermore, the final obstacle should not be placed closer than eight metres in a straight line from the first obstacle. This is to prevent the dog or handler restarting the timing by accident after having completed the test.

ITEM 12. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL

To note a report on the arrangements for the 2013 Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 9-11 August 2013.

(Annex D – to be tabled)

ITEM 13. JUDGES' WORKING PARTY (WTOA)

- a. To note a written report on the progress of the Judges Working Party.
(Annex E refers)

Observation of Agility Judges

- b. The Working Party requests the Council to discuss its proposal regarding the observation of new and existing agility judges in order to retain high standards in judging. The Council is invited to note that the role of the agility Accredited Trainer would draw on comparisons with that of a Field Officer, but the role would purely focus on judging performance. It was stated that the Accredited Trainer would announce their presence upon arrival at a show. It is emphasised that this item is not urgent and should seek full consensus from grassroots competitors before any further action.

(Annex F refers)

Disabled Judges – Jumping Appointments Only

- c. The Judges' Working Party requests the Council's views on the possibility of creating a separate practical jumping assessment to enable disabled competitors, who are keen to judge, to accept appointments for jumping classes only. The Working Party is of the view that it should encourage all participants wishing to judge and that effective course design in jumping classes could be judged whilst seated. It supports the concept as a positive means of being fair and inclusive to all those involved in the discipline and seeks competitor consultation prior to any further action.

ITEM 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be 6 June 2013 and any items must be submitted by 8 March 2013.

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.*
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 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.**
- **Encouraging the development of all those concerned with dogs through education and training.**
- **Achieving a widening of the Kennel Club membership base.**
- **Encouraging more people to provide input in the Kennel Club’s decision making process.”**