

**MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
THURSDAY 20 JULY 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 12 January 2017 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS
(Pages 13 - 14)

- a. The Council is invited to note that the Board approved the following amendment to G Regulations:

Regulation G(C).4.h

TO:

- (1) Sit Stay: Dogs should remain in the sit position throughout the test. Barking, whining or minor movement such as sniffing the ground, shuffling or turning, without moving from the place where the dog was originally left, should not be considered to be a broken stay but may only be marked a nominal amount for minor movement or noise. **Marks must be graduated in accordance with the Kennel Club's specimen stay chart.**
- (2) Down Stay: Dogs should remain in the down position throughout the test. Barking, whining or minor movement such as sniffing the ground, shuffling, hip rolling or turning, without moving from the place where the dog was originally left, should not be considered to be a broken stay but may only be marked a nominal amount for minor movement or noise. **Marks must be graduated in accordance with the Kennel Club's specimen stay chart.**
- (Insertions in bold)

The specimen stay sheet was also approved for use. Note: this is available for download from the Kennel Club website at:

http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1132818/obedience_standardised_stay_marking_sheet.pdf

(Annex A refers)

- b. Proposed New Regulation G(C)4.h.(5)
The Activities Committee, at its meeting on 23 March 2017, considered the proposed new Regulation, as follows:

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

TO:

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

(Insertion in bold)

The Committee requests that the Council give further consideration to the above proposal. Whilst accepting that its intention was that stays would take place after all ring work had been completed, allowing 15 minutes after the last dog had worked, it noted that existing Regulations did not stipulate that the scent exercise must take place once all ring work had been completed, and therefore under the terms of the proposed amendment, it would be potentially possible for stays to take place at any point during the competition which was not desirable. Further, the proposal did not specify any time frame as to the interval between completion of ring work and the commencement of stays.

c. Proposed amendment to Regulation G30.f(1)

The Committee considered the Council's proposal to amend the above Regulation, which was as follows:

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 5 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).

It noted the Council's stated reasons for its proposal, but raised concerns regarding its practicality, noting that where the entry for the class was low it may not be possible to implement the 5 dog minimum. Accordingly it was suggested that the amended Regulation should state 'where possible'.

The Committee also noted that the proposed amendment made reference to competitors who had entered multiple dogs within Championship Class C. It was of the view that it should be made clearer that this referred to competitors who had entered more than one dog into either dog or bitch Championship Class C.

It was also queried whether there was a necessity for any amendment to the Regulations, noting that where dogs owned by one competitor were

drawn consecutively, the situation was usually dealt with by means of judges taking short breaks to allow competitors time to swap dogs.

The Council is requested to give further consideration to the proposal in light of the Committee's comments.

d. Proposed amendment to Regulation G(A)3

The Committee considered an amendment to the above Regulation which would allow a dog to be entered into a special class without the necessity for it to be entered into a standard class.

The Committee raised a query regarding shows which offered 'pay on the day' classes. It was clarified that at obedience shows these were available whether or not a dog had already been entered at that show, either for competition or as 'not for competition', and that pay on the day classes could include special classes. However, the Committee was concerned that allowing dogs to be entered only for a special class if not already entered at that show may set an undesirable precedent which could have implications for other disciplines, and accordingly, did not recommend for approval the proposed amendment.

e. Survey Monkey

At its previous meeting, the Council noted that some representatives had used Survey Monkey as a way of obtaining feedback from the obedience community, but the free service only allowed them access to the first 100 responses. The office was requested to check whether the Kennel Club had an account which could be made available on a free of charge basis, and subject to prior approval, for Council representatives in order for them to obtain feedback from the obedience community.

The Council is invited to note that the Kennel Club could provide the use of a Survey Monkey account for appropriate surveys, requests for which should be channelled via the office as representatives would not be given direct access to create their own surveys.

f. Training for commentators

The issue of training for commentators had been discussed by the Training Board at its meeting in March. It was noted that there was a need for training for commentators at major events and the office undertook to investigate how this may be provided..

A further update will be provided to the Council in due course.

ITEM 4. KENNEL CLUB ACCREDITED INSTRUCTOR SCHEME

The Council is invited to receive a presentation regarding the Kennel Club Accredited Instructor Scheme.

ITEM 5. 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 6. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

- a. The Council is invited to note a report from Mr Burbidge-Grant regarding developments in relation to the YKC.
- b. It is also invited to note that a list of child-friendly clubs is now available on the YKC website. Schedules for shows holding YKC obedience qualifiers are also available on the website but this was dependent on such schedules being submitted to the YKC office from clubs.

ITEM 7. ACTIVITIES HEALTH & WELFARE SUB-GROUP (Pages 15 - 18)

The Council is invited to note reports from Mrs Patrick following the meetings of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group held on 22 February 2017 and 17 May 2017.

(Annex B refers)

ITEM 8. ACTIVITIES JUDGES WORKING PARTY (Pages 19 - 20)

The Council is invited to note a written report from Mrs Garner on the work of the Activities Judges Working Party following its meetings on 14 November 2016 and 4 April 2017.

(Annex C refers)

ITEM 9. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY (Pages 21 - 24)

Representatives are invited to propose further items to the Council's Five Year Strategic Plan.

(Annex D refers)

ITEM 10. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

- a. Proposed amendment to Regulation G.35.h.
Miss F Godfrey

Mr K Fernandez

Mr Fernandez, an individual, wishes the Council to consider a proposed amendment to Regulation G.35.h as follows:

Dogs may only wear ~~a slip chain~~, a half-check collar or a smooth collar when in the ring.

(Deletion struck through)

Rationale

The proposal is made in view of the Kennel Club’s stance on canine welfare. ‘Check chains/slip collars’ have been used extensively to train dogs where the collar tightens and releases around the dogs neck. The principle behind the collar is to deter, deflect or correct.

Mr Fernandez wishes the Council to note that it has been well documented that the use of check chains can cause a great deal of physical pain and damage to the dogs spine, neck and psychological welfare, and that every effort should be made to utilise reinforcement based methodologies.

b. Proposed amendments to Regulations G(A)10.b and G(A)10.b - Stay times

Mr S Rutter

Mr Rutter wishes to propose the following amendments to G Regulations:

Regulation G(A)10.b Class B

TO:

- (4) Sit 2 minutes, handler ~~out of~~ **in** sight. 20 points
- (5) Down ~~5~~ **4** minutes, handler out of sight. 30 points

Regulation G(A)11.d. Class C

TO:

- (4) Sit 2 minutes, handler out of sight. 20 points
 - (5) Down ~~10~~ **5** minutes, Handler out of sight. 50 points
- (Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

Whilst stays are, and should remain, an integral part of Obedience tests, the feeling amongst competitors is that there needs to be a ‘bringing up to date’ of the length of the stay exercises in Classes B and C (including Championship Class C). There is no necessity for a stay to be longer than five minutes. Teaching a dog to do a 10 minute down stay just because it is possible to do so is a pointless exercise. Information collated from judges and from observation at over 30 shows across the last 2 years indicates that continuing beyond 5 minutes does not serve to demonstrate a dog’s ability. The majority of dogs which break, do so within the first 2 minutes or on return, as indicated by the following statistics:

‘C’ DOWN STAY:

0 - 2minutes 85%

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| 2 - 3 minutes | 7% |
| 3 - 4 Minutes | 3% |
| 4 - 5 minutes | 3% |
| 6 minutes - on return | 2% |

By implementing these changes, the graduation between classes would be maintained.

Mr Rutter is of the view that there is widespread and overwhelming support within the obedience community for change, and although the specific stay times contained in the proposal are open to discussion, he does not consider that leaving them unchanged is an option.

ITEM 11. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Booking in documentation and practices

Mrs D Lavender

Mr D Strickleton

Mr Strickleton, an individual, wishes to suggest that the booking in class list on the judge's table should be made waterproof. This is an official document giving competitors the authority to compete in the class but in wet weather may become unreadable, as a result of which it may be impossible to tell whether a dog has been booked into a class or not.

Further, Mr Strickleton wishes the Council to discuss whether, in designing an official class list, it would be possible for a tick box to be included - people cross out numbers and names, again making it unreadable.

Clarification is also sought as to whether competitors should write their numbers on the large scoresheet or not – current practices on this matter are inconsistent and vary depending on the area of the country in which the show is located.

b. Exercises in Pre-Beginners and Beginners classes

Miss F Godfrey

Ms K Smith, Ms J Mayston, Ms H Strevens
and Ms L Ward

The Council is requested to discuss a number of proposed amendments to G Regulations.

The objective of the suggested amendments is that newcomers to Obedience are likely to be training on their own, or only intermittently with a trainer. This means they are missing out on a wealth of experience to help them make the right decisions for a long term obedience career. Winning out of the lower classes can happen before a handler and dog are ready, they lose heart in the next class and many give up. The following suggestions allow the exercises to progress more

naturally from one class to the next, and to enable handlers to gain more ring experience before they progress from one class to the next. It also corrects the imbalance of having three classes nearly identical at lower levels which can also be demotivating to the lower classes. This should encourage handlers to stay in the sport for longer, which is highly desired.

Regulation G(A)5.b. (Introductory)

TO:

To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have won one Introductory Class or have achieved a ~~4th place~~ **1st place or above** in Pre-Beginners or **4th place or above** in any other class. (Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

Rationale

This removes the chance of 'accidentally' winning out of Introductory by gaining a place in a small Pre-Beginners class before the dog and handler are ready (not retrospectively applied).

Regulation G(A)6.a. (Pre-Beginners)

TO:

To compete in Pre-Beginners a handler or dog must not have won a ~~First place~~ **total of two or more First places** in either Pre-Beginners or **a First place in** Beginners nor gained a third place or above in any other obedience class (Introductory Class excepted). (Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

Rationale

It is proposed that two wins are needed to win out of Pre-Beginner (not retrospectively applied). This allows handlers to remain in the class for longer, gaining ring experience. It also removes the chances of 'accidentally' winning out of Pre-Beginners in a small class well before a team is ready. This can lead to struggling in Beginners, which can demotivate handlers from wanting to stay in the sport.

Regulation G(A)6 b (Pre-Beginners)

TO:

The detailed tests will be:

(1) Heel on lead 15 points

~~(2) Heel free 20 points~~

(2) Play with dog for 15-30 seconds off lead. Handlers may use a silent toy 15 points

~~(3) Recall 10 points~~

(3) Recall 15 points

~~(4) Sit one minute, handler in sight 10 points~~

~~(5) Down two minutes, handler in sight 20 points~~

(4) 1 minute stay off lead in either the sit or down at judge's choice 15 points

~~(6) TOTAL 75 points~~

(5) TOTAL 60 points

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

Rationale:

Remove Heel Free, One Stay only: while this may appear to make the test easier with only one set of heelwork and one Stay, this allows for more natural progression from Introductory to Beginners. It allows for new exercises to be added for each class, and current exercises increase in difficulty, without having three classes (Pre-Beginners, Beginners and Novice) nearly identical. It allows handlers to concentrate on fewer exercises and build better foundations for a long term career.

Add Play: adding play into a second class allows competitors to progress the Play section from Introductory and ties in with the GCDS Special Pre-Beginner Obedience Stakes Test. It also builds motivation and reward for the other exercises and keeps the enthusiasm of both handler and dog.

Points have been slightly adjusted for the new exercises and to better bridge the gap between Introductory and Beginners.

Regulation G(A)7.b. (Beginners)

TO:

The detailed tests will be:

(1) Heel on lead 15 points

(2) Heel free 20 points

~~(3) Recall 10 points~~

(3) Recall 15 points

~~(4) Retrieve any article 25 points~~

(4) Retrieve any article 15 points

(5) Sit one minute, handler in sight 10 points

~~(6) Down two minutes, handler in sight 20 points~~

(6) Down one minute, handler in sight 10 points

~~(7) TOTAL 100 points~~

(7) TOTAL 85 points

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

Rationale

Two stays, one sit, one down, both one minute long. This allows progression from Pre-beginners with the introduction of the second Stay, but allows the Novice class to also be progressive with its longer down stay.

Heel off lead: As this would now be a new exercise, consideration should be given to the length and complexity of the pattern set. It is suggested that guidance be provided within the Regulation for this exercise (for example X amount of turns of X type are recommended) but this should be left to the Judge's discretion to follow (or not).

Points have been slightly adjusted for the revised test, and to better bridge the gap between Pre-Beginners and Novice.

c. Flooring at Crufts
Mrs M Ray

It is noted that the carpeting within some areas at Crufts has been steadily improving over the years, culminating this year in another improvement that was widely applauded by the Agility community. However, the flooring in the Obedience Ring in Hall 5 is thin exhibition-style carpeting which this year seemed to offer even less grip for the dogs than previously. There was an adverse effect on the Obedience Championships and also especially in the Inter-regional competition.

The Council is requested to consider making an approach to the Crufts Committee to provide comparable carpeting to that within the main ring for Obedience's most important event of the year.

d. Introduction of Novice 'Fresher' category

Mr R Harlow

Mrs J Harknett

Mrs Harknett, an individual, wishes the Council to discuss a proposal for the creation of a 'Novice Fresher' class category in order to assist Beginner handlers.

Mrs Harknett notes that Beginner handlers who win out of Beginners are required to enter Novice as their lowest eligible class, which may be a daunting prospect for some who may have been in the lower classes for years. In the Novice classes they will be competing against the best handlers in the country with their young dogs and this can be a cause of anxiety.

Entering Novice classes as a Fresher would be totally the handler's own decision and it would not be mandatory.

A Beginner handler who has won out of Beginners would be allowed, when they begin entering Novice as their lowest eligible class, to work as a Fresher handler, in every Novice class entered for one year from the date of winning out of Beginners. The letter **(F)** would be written beside the dog's name on all the Novice class paperwork, including the entry form, to identify them. Any Fresher handler winning a Novice class would instantly lose their Fresher status and would be responsible for informing show societies at all shows for which entries had been submitted.

It is suggested that rosettes could be offered to 'Best Novice Fresher', and 'Reserve Best Novice Fresher'.

Show secretaries would need to identify from entry forms the 'Fresher handlers' and ensure that an equal number of Freshers is put into each part of Novice.

It is anticipated that once in place, it would be a good incentive for those people just starting up the obedience ladder. If the system was accepted and worked well in practice, it could be extended to cover all classes, so

that handlers entering their first A or B or C, if they have never worked in that class before as their lowest eligible class, could still have the bonus of a very real possibility of a rosette in a new and higher level class.

e. Obedience Catalogues
Mr S Rutter

Mr Rutter requests the Council to discuss the issue of obedience catalogues, following the Board's decision on 4 October 2016 to remove the requirement to produce them.

Feedback received by Mr Rutter indicated that many within the obedience community felt that the removal of the need to produce a catalogue was a retrograde step and detracted from the overall entertainment and enjoyment experience. Those who ordered and purchased catalogues found them an invaluable source of information on lines of breeding; additionally show secretaries also found them a useful resource to get names and addresses of potential judges.

Some judges had experienced difficulty in writing reports without a catalogue. Additional feedback also wished to raise the matter that just because production of class lists is a normal requirement in other disciplines there was no need for Obedience to do so.

As a result, the Council is requested to consider whether there is a demand for the return of the requirement to produce catalogues at Obedience shows.

f. Proxy votes at Council meetings
Mrs B Smith

At the Council's previous meeting, a concern was raised that there was no facility for proxy votes and that where a delegate was unable to attend a Council meeting, although their views may be reported, there was no mechanism by which their vote may be counted. The Council was advised by the office that there was no provision for proxy votes at any of the Kennel Club Liaison Councils.

Accordingly, Mrs Smith wishes the Council to discuss the situation and to consider whether a formal proposal should be considered at its next meeting.

ITEM 12. OBEDIENCE INFORMATION STAND AT CRUFTS (Pages 25 - 26)

The Council is invited to receive a report from Miss Benoist and Mrs Lavender regarding the Obedience Information Stand at Crufts.
(Annex E refers)

ITEM 13. 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 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Council will be confirmed in September 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.

