

**MINUTES OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
THURSDAY 13 JULY 2017 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE  
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

**PRESENT**

Mrs P Baltes	North West
Mr M Cavill	Wales
Mr S Chandler	South East & East Anglia
Mrs Y Croxford	Midlands
Mr A Dornford-Smith	Northern Ireland
Mrs J Gardner	Midlands
Mr M Hallam	North West
Mrs S Hawkswell	Scotland
Mr C Huckle	South and South West
Ms J Hudson	North East
Mr I MacDonald	South East & East Anglia
Miss L Olden	South & South West
Mr K Smith	North East

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Miss D Deuchar	Senior Manager - Canine Activities Governance
Miss R Mansfield	Officer - Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary - Working Dog Activities Team

**IN THE CHAIR**

**MR M CAVILL**

**ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. There were no apologies, all members of the Council being present.

**ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017 were approved.

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

3. Decision making process within the Kennel Club  
The Activities Committee, at its meeting on 23 March 2017, had noted the Council's dissatisfaction regarding the way in which the decision to

remove the Collapsible Tunnel from the list of obstacles had been made. It was unclear as to whether this would lead to any changes in the decision-making process in future, but it was agreed the issue would be discussed further as a part of the report from the Governance Panel.

#### Use of external show management companies

4. The Activities Committee agreed with the Council's view that a formal procedure to approve such contractors was unnecessary, but requested that guidance should be published on the Kennel Club website, with the proviso that it be reiterated that ultimate responsibility for proper management of the show remained with the licence holder. [**Afternote:** the guidance note may be found at [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1155759/wt83\\_external\\_show\\_management\\_companies\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1155759/wt83_external_show_management_companies_guidance.pdf)]

#### Use of treat bags

5. The Committee noted that the Council had debated the issue at length but that in view of the difficulty in providing a clear definition of a 'training aid' it had agreed to seek the views of the agility community with a view to a formal proposal being submitted to the Council at its next meeting. A proposal would be considered by the Council later in the meeting (paragraphs 100-102 refer).

#### Introduction of new Panels

6. The Council noted that the Board had approved the introduction of three new Panels, the Agility Governance Panel, the Height Classification Panel, and the Judging Panel.

#### Recognition of Agility as a sport

7. The Council noted that the pre-application submitted to Sport England for recognition of agility as a sport had received a negative response. The reasons cited included the governance structure of the Kennel Club, and its membership, noting that Sport England required that an applicant should evidence a current membership level in excess of 1,650. The Council noted these but accepted that resolution of these issues lay outside its own remit. Other issues had also been raised in connection with the description of the sporting activity and the purpose of the activity, which would require considerable effort to resolve.
8. The Council agreed that the application should be placed on hold as it was not considered to be an important priority at this time. It may be reconsidered in the future when issues relating to governance of the Kennel Club had been resolved, and other priorities relating specifically to agility had been addressed.

#### Issues reported in Incident Books

9. At the Council's previous meeting, the office was requested to provide a list of issues which had been reported in Incident Books during 2016 as it was considered this may provide useful information as to any recurring problems which it may be possible for the Council to address.

10. The Council considered the report provided by the office, noting that only 146 incidents had been reported. A concern was raised as to whether all incidents occurring at shows were being reported, but the office clarified that it could only record those incidents which were reported to it. It was also confirmed by the office that show organisers were not required to submit an incident book where no incidents had been logged. A suggestion was made that all clubs should be required to submit nil returns, but it was acknowledged that this would require significant office resources.
11. It was clarified that incidents were not followed up by the Kennel Club where they were marked as having been resolved at the show, unless they were considered to be serious in nature. However, repeated incidents involving the same handler or dog would be flagged up and would be subject to investigation.
12. Should an individual have a concern that a reported incident had not been followed up within an appropriate time frame, he or she was advised to contact the office.
13. A concern was expressed that some show organisers were not aware of the necessity to have an incident book available. However, it was emphasised that Regulation H9 clearly stated that 'A Kennel Club Incident Book, containing details of all incidents occurring at the show, a copy of which must be submitted to the Kennel Club within 14 days'. Guidance was available on the Kennel Club website as to how this should be completed. [**Afternote**: guidance may be found at: [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/incidents-at-events](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/incidents-at-events) ]
14. Previous guidance was reiterated, that anything out of the ordinary occurring at a show should be noted within the Incident Book, and that show secretaries should not prevent any individual from making a report in the Incident Book. Where an individual had been prevented from doing so, he or she should make a report directly to the Kennel Club.
15. It was clarified that an objection fee was not required in the case of complaints relating to incidents such as dogs out of control, cases of harsh handling reported by the judge, or judges not fulfilling contracts. However, in other cases where a complaint was being made regarding another person, a £35 objection fee was required in order to prevent private or personal issues being addressed via an objection. Should the objection be upheld by the Kennel Club, the fee would usually be refunded.
16. The office was thanked for providing the report and was requested to produce an updated version for the Council's next meeting in January 2018.

**ITEM 4. KENNEL CLUB ACCREDITED INSTRUCTOR SCHEME**

17. The Council received a presentation from Mrs Carney which gave a brief overview of the Kennel Club Accreditation Scheme for Instructors.
18. The purpose of the Scheme was to provide a means for the public to identify competent and experienced dog training instructors to enable them to make informed choices in their selection of instructors. This was achieved via KCAI Scheme membership where dog training instructors and canine behaviourists may gain accreditation as evidence of their knowledge, skills and experience as instructors.
19. The Scheme was UK-wide and was aimed at dog training instructors and canine behaviourists across a wide range of canine disciplines. It offered its members the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised, vocational accreditation award, based on standards set by the Kennel Club, and certificated by City & Guilds.
20. Applicants were required to successfully complete nine online assessments to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in key canine-related topics, after which an application for accreditation may be submitted. A practical and oral assessment was then conducted, feedback given to the applicant, and a recommendation made to the KCAI Board by the Assessor, after which the applicant would be notified of the outcome.
21. It was noted that a concern had been raised by the Activities Judges Working Party that in order to be accredited as a competitive agility instructor, a candidate was required to judge agility at all levels. The Working Party had requested that the KCAI Board consider whether this should continue to be a requirement, and the outcome was awaited.
22. In response to a query, it was confirmed that candidates seeking accreditation as agility instructors would be assessed by specialist agility assessors.
23. Mrs Carney was thanked for her presentation which had been very informative.

**ITEM 5. JUDGES WORKING PARTY (ACTIVITIES)**

24. The Council noted a written report from Mr Huckle on the progress of the Judges Working Party following its meeting on 4 April 2017.

Accredited Trainers

25. There had been nine applicants to become Accredited Trainers, four of which had been assessed by three members of the Working Party,

including Mr Jolly, representing agility. The outcome of the assessments was awaited.

26. It was noted that the annual Accredited Trainers seminar was due to take place on 24 October 2017.

Kennel Club Academy

27. Development of the KC Academy was continuing, with the agility video going 'live' on 1 July 2017. Two members of staff, Miss Mansfield and Miss McHardy, were thanked for their invaluable assistance, which was much appreciated.
28. The Agility Regulations and Judging Procedure examination would now be taken online rather than at a one day seminar. This allowed for the Agility Course Design and Judging seminar to be extended to two days' duration in order to cover the complex practical issues involved in judging agility.
29. A short video would be available in the near future which would cover generic issues which were common to all activities disciplines, such as contractual issues relating to judges, and the way in which complaints were dealt with.
30. The script used for the agility video was to be shared with other disciplines in order to assist them in developing their own.

**ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP**

31. The Council received a verbal report from Mr Chandler on the progress of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group following its meetings on 22 February 2017 and 17 May 2017.

Injury surveys

32. It was hoped that data received from surveys into injuries sustained by competing dogs, and by companion dogs, would be subject to professional analysis by an epidemiologist at the University of Surrey. However it was likely that this may take some time.

Veterinary assessments at prestige events

33. The possibility of carrying out veterinary checks on dogs competing in agility at prestige events such as Crufts, Olympia, and Discover Dogs, and the International Agility Festival was still under consideration. It was hoped that a formal proposal would be considered by the Sub-Group at its next meeting.

Measuring

34. The Sub-Group was considering alternative methods of measuring dogs. It was of the view that the measuring hoop currently in use was simple

and cost-effective and it did not suggest any immediate changes to the way in which dogs were measured, however it wished to assess other measuring devices which may be required in future, particularly if it became necessary to record the actual height of a dog rather than its height classification.

#### A-ramp research

35. A presentation had been given to the Sub-Group by Dr J Williams of Hartpury University, regarding the results of her research into limb and back angles on the A-ramp. The main conclusions were:
- Dogs displayed non-significant differences in limb angles and spinal kinematics over the A-ramp regardless of experience level
  - Inexperienced dogs varied their head and neck position more than experienced dogs
  - Further research utilising more dogs at different levels was required to confirm these preliminary findings
36. There was some concern within the Council at the way in which experienced and inexperienced dogs had been defined, as this would be crucial in assessing the value of the research.

#### Jump heights

37. The Sub-Group had noted a paper produced by Miss Emily Birch on the topic of jump heights for agility dogs. However, the Sub-Group did not consider that any evidence was available which would support an absolute definition of an appropriate jump height for all dogs. The issue of jump heights would remain under review, but at present there was no scientifically-backed evidence to suggest that dogs jumping at any of the three existing heights resulted in injuries.
38. It had agreed that a summary statement outlining the Sub-Group's views would be prepared and once approved by the Dog Health Group, would be presented to the Council by either Dr Boyd or Mr Doyle at its meeting in January 2018.
39. This was noted, and a request made that the summary statement be provided to Council members as soon as possible as it would be highly relevant to the work of both the Height Classification and Grading Panels. The office agreed to request a preliminary copy, with the proviso that it should remain private and confidential until the Council's meeting in January.

#### Dissemination of information

40. The Sub-Group had requested that a summary of recommendations document be published after each of its meetings but the Dog Health Group had been of the view that such a document may highlight what may be perceived as negative issues, and had not supported the recommendation. However, it did suggest that any points of information that the Sub-Group wished to publicise could be referred to the DHG and

if agreed, the office could then disseminate them as appropriate. The Sub-Group also suggested that the reports made to the Liaison Councils should be comprehensive and detailed in nature in order to ensure the effective dissemination of information regarding its work.

## **ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL**

41. The Council received a written report from the Equipment Panel.

### Breakaway Tyre

42. The Council noted that the Equipment Panel had undertaken discussions with equipment manufacturers regarding the breakaway tyre, and wished the Council to discuss four different tyre designs, some of which were still at the prototype stage. It was noted that the manufacturers were very keen to resolve the issue and to bring new designs into use as soon as possible. The Council was of the view that the breakaway tyre should be used in place of the fixed tyre for health and safety reasons and that use of the fixed tyre should be phased out as soon as was practically possible.
43. It was agreed that it was problematic for the Council to produce a specification for a breakaway tyre. It was preferable for manufacturers to submit proposals for their own designs, although it was accepted that they may be reluctant to produce a number of prototypes for testing purposes.
44. A lengthy discussion took place as to the merits of the four individual designs which had been submitted, noting that the paramount consideration was the safety of competing dogs. It was agreed that different designs offered different advantages and challenges, and that a number of factors needed to be taken into consideration. These included the impact required to 'break' the tyre, the degree of swing on a saloon door type design (so that the 'door' section did not swing back and hit the handler), and whether there were any parts which may fall onto the dog.
45. A design for a saloon door style tyre submitted by Longfield Agility Solutions was **recommended** for approval, subject to confirmation that the opening would not swing through 360 degrees.
46. A design submitted by First Contact for a saloon door style was recommended for approval.
47. A design for a saloon door style tyre, from a manufacturer in Europe and submitted by WesLo K9, was not recommended for approval, due to concerns that the breakaway section may be unduly difficult to displace. However, it was agreed that the supplier would be contacted to provide further evidence on this issue.

48. A design submitted by First Contact for a 'multibreak' tyre was not recommended for approval due to concerns regarding the potential for breakable parts falling onto dogs and causing injury.
49. It was confirmed that approval for all designs was subject to confirmation by the Activities Committee and, subsequently, the Board. It was agreed that the Equipment Panel would advise the three suppliers of the decisions, subject to Board approval being received.
50. It was clarified that equipment from any manufacturer may be used provided it complied with Kennel Club Regulations.
51. The Council discussed the way in which Regulation H(1)B.3.d should be amended in order to ensure that suitable breakaway tyres were used. After careful consideration, the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation H(1)B.3.d

**TO:**

d. Hoop-(Tyre)—Aperture diameter 533mm (1ft 9ins) minimum. Aperture centre from the ground: Large Dogs - 800mm ((2ft 7.5ins). 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.

**All tyres must have easily displaced element(s). For saloon style tyres, both opening sides must have an ability to swing open to approximately 90-140 degrees from the closed hoop position. They must not self-return and must be manually re-set.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective date 1 January 2018)

52. It was noted that if approved, the amended Regulation would come into effect on 1 January 2018, and there was some discussion as to whether this would give suppliers adequate time to prepare. However it was accepted that as breakaway tyres had been in existence for some time, suppliers would already have suitable equipment available for use.
53. The following new Regulation regarding the way in which the tyre should be marked was also **recommended** for approval:

New Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(10):

**Tyre – 5 faults for displacing any part of the tyre. If the dog displaces any part of the tyre without negotiating it and making it impossible for it to be negotiated successfully – elimination.**

(Insertion in bold)

(All subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective date 1 January 2018)

54. It was noted that the above discussion addressed the proposal submitted by Miss N Wildman under item 12, albeit via a different approach from that which had been proposed. (paragraphs 98-99 refer).

Potential impact of the LHO and the use of spread, long jump and tyre for the LHO dogs.

55. The Equipment Panel reported that some manufacturers had been adapting their equipment to allow a LHO spread to be used. However not all manufacturers were doing so, and it was suggested that shows running LHO classes should check that this was an option when hiring equipment.
56. It was suggested that a recommendation be made that judges who used a long jump should not set it to the maximum length for their class if LHO was included. However, the Council was of the view that a range of lengths for the long jump was already permissible and it was not necessary for any amendment to be made to H Regulations to cover this scenario.

Ongoing issues

57. It was anticipated that a meeting with equipment manufacturers would take place in the near future with the objective of discussing ideas and solutions to help agility progress as a sport, whilst ensuring the safety and consistency of all equipment.

**ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE GRADING PANEL**

58. The Council received a written report from the Grading Panel regarding its activities since the Council's previous meeting, and considered the issues raised.
59. The Panel had gathered data and after review, it had agreed upon seven aspects of a revised grading system, which were discussed individually:
60. **The target profile for competing dogs would be a pyramid structure with the majority of dogs in the lowest level and fewest in the top**  
Some feedback indicated that the use of the term 'pyramid structure' had caused some confusion and it was agreed that it should not be used, but should be replaced with a reference to an increasing level of difficulty as a handler progressed through the grades.
61. **The same grading structure and progression approach should apply to all heights of dogs**  
The Council was in agreement that this should be the case.
62. **Dogs should never move down the levels/grades**

The Council was in agreement with this recommendation.

63. **One grade/level to be retained for completely new handlers**  
It was agreed that there would be one class for new handlers only, and that experienced handlers with new dogs would commence in the next grade.
64. **Dogs to achieve success in agility classes to progress, not just jumping, at every level**  
There were mixed views on this issue, with some concern that requiring agility wins at all levels may lead to bottlenecks in progression at some levels. Feedback from some areas indicated support for jumping wins not to be taken into account at all whereas others were of the view that they should be counted.
65. A suggestion was made that each dog should be graded separately for agility and for jumping, which would give recognition to the skills required for each area, but this was considered to be too complex in nature and was not supported.
66. After discussion, the Council was in agreement that at least one win in agility should be required at every level in order to allow a dog to progress.
67. **Eligibility for championship classes would require a dog to have shown recent success against its peers. Dogs that have been awarded an Agility Certificate or a Reserve Agility Certificate would be eligible for championship classes for life**  
There was no specific discussion on this point.
68. **Progression to take into account the competition. Wins against a larger number of dogs would be more valuable. This would mean using a points system for progression**  
There was some concern that implementing such a system would be highly complex in nature and confusing to competitors. Further, it may be unfair to competitors in some geographical areas where entries were low as less points would be available, although it was also highlighted that small entries would make it easier to obtain a win. Competitors would not know in advance how many were entered into a class so would not know whether or not they would be eligible to claim points. It was agreed that any system used must be simple, and easy to enforce, and the Council was not of the view that valuing some wins more than others would fulfil this criteria.
69. An issue was raised in respect of course times for small classes, where a dog may win even on the basis of a very slow time. It was agreed that as the minimum distance between obstacles had been changed, the course time matrix should also be revised. Mr Huckle undertook to contact Mrs Shore regarding this matter.

70. A discussion took place as to whether progression should be on the basis of wins only, as was currently the case above Grade 4, or whether progression on points should be permitted, noting that a 2nd, 3rd or 4th place in a large class may be equivalent to a 1<sup>st</sup> place in a smaller class. However opinions were divided on this issue.
71. After consideration, the Council agreed that a separate system for progression on points once a dog had progressed into Grade 4 would not be beneficial. Accordingly no change should be made to the current system.
72. The Grading Panel would continue to consider available options, taking into account the views expressed by the Council, prior to formulation of a proposal.

## **ITEM 9. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL**

73. A written report from the Agility Governance Panel was noted. The Panel had not as yet had the opportunity to meet but hoped to do so in the near future. Its aims would be as follows:
  - To consider and draw together the conclusions of all Council Panels to formulate an updated and concise set of H Regulations
  - To consider what measures were necessary to support clubs, competitors, judges and show organisers
  - To consider how the Council could be more effective in making decisions on behalf of the agility community
74. Specific issues to be addressed in the light of concerns raised within the agility community included making H Regulations more accessible and easier to understand, the use of social media, handling of incidents at shows, the establishment of a results database, show licensing, and the role of the Council within the Kennel Club.
75. A request was made that the Kennel Club issue a statement drawing the attention of the agility community to the Code of Conduct, which included guidance on the use of social media. The Council was of the view that it should be made clear that there may be consequences to making inappropriate statements on social media. The office undertook to discuss this with the Kennel Club's legal department. It was clarified that any such statement would be in the form of a press release and it was hoped that it would be shared within the agility community to reach as wide an audience as possible.
76. A query was raised as to whether, in the event of a dog being subject to a temporary or permanent ban, show processors could be advised to ensure that the dog was not permitted to compete whilst under a ban. It was agreed that this would be a positive move and the office undertook

to consult with the show processors. The same process may also be applied in the case of a person being banned from attendance at Kennel Club licensed events, although this was rare.

77. The development of a central results database was currently under consideration, and would be subject to preparation of a business case and feasibility study via the Kennel Club's Marketing and Finance departments. Although it was not currently possible to state a time frame for the project, the Council was assured that it would be kept informed of developments.
78. It was highlighted that the Kennel Club was in the process of undergoing a full review of governance which may result in changes being made to its structure, however it would be some time before the outcome was known.

#### **ITEM 10. REPORT FROM THE HEIGHT CLASSIFICATION PANEL**

79. The Council noted a written report from the Height Classification Panel. The main objectives of the Panel would be as follows:
  - To consider issues relating to jump heights
  - To consider health and welfare issues relating to jump heights
  - To consider ways of determining optimum jump heights for all dogs dependent upon height and conformation
80. The Panel had noted a number of concerns raised within the agility community in regard to jump heights, and would be providing recommendations for the Council's consideration in due course.
81. The Council acknowledged that the scientific research currently available did not provide sufficient evidence of injuries being sustained by dogs on which to base decisions, but it was agreed that the potential for dogs being injured was an important consideration which should be borne in mind in any discussion.
82. It also agreed that it may be necessary to make major changes to the existing system, however care was required when considering any such changes and their potential consequences. These may include the need to remeasure all dogs and to record their actual heights, which may present logistical and financial difficulties which would need to be addressed. Should jump heights be changed, clubs may be required to invest in new equipment for shows and for training, which may be costly. An additional jump height may also cause timing issues at some shows.
83. One suggestion was that dogs should not be required to jump more than 125% of their own height. However it was also accepted that a dog jumping at a lower height may also move faster which may present its

own welfare issues, such as a risk of injuries on turns. It was acknowledged that it was not possible to set heights which would be ideal for every individual dog.

84. The main issues for consideration included whether or not the existing three jump heights were sufficient or whether additional heights were necessary; the potential impact of any changes on dog welfare; what the jump heights themselves should be and how these should relate to dog heights; whether LHO should continue; the impact of any changes on the current agility environment such as regulations, remeasuring, equipment changes and the effects on shows.
85. The Panel would work with Nottingham Trent University to assimilate the available data and recommendations, and would review this together with the input received from the agility community. It would consult all Council members as part of the process before providing a report to the Council at its meeting in January 2018 with a view to submitting a formal proposal to the meeting in July 2018. If approved, implementation would take place as soon as practically possible.

#### **ITEM 11. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL**

86. The Council received a report from the Judging Panel, noting that in order to consult widely with the agility judging community, a closed social media site had been set up for Kennel Club agility judges. The take up had been excellent with over 500 people joining in order to discuss judging issues, provide support and comment.
87. In particular, views had been sought on the following issues:
88. **Why were experienced judges giving up judging at KC shows?**  
Feedback indicated that the two main reasons were as follows:
  - The use of social media to criticise judges and the decisions that they make and the perceived lack of support from shows and the Kennel Club to take action against individuals making these comments.
  - High numbers of dogs to be judged in a day, especially in view of the changes with the lower height option and numerous smaller classes, leading to long days which may be in excess of eight or nine hours.
89. **Whether it was necessary to improve the standard of judging**  
The feedback received expressed a view that the standard of judging could be improved.
  - The Continuing Professional Development scheme received many favourable comments in regards to its concept, but there was a concern that it had only been used in a very limited way and that its application and use should be improved.
  - There was a perception that the Kennel Club should improve methods of communication in order to reach a wider audience of judges to

ensure that they were aware of any changes to H Regulations and updated guidance.

90. The Council wished to suggest that clear guidance for judges be provided along similar lines to that offered by the FCI to its judges. It was agreed that this would be a positive step and the Judging Panel undertook to consider this further.
91. It was noted that all judges were assessed prior to their first championship appointment, and may be subsequently re-assessed at any time.
92. All Accredited Trainers for agility were required to undergo re-assessment every three years.
93. In respect of methods of communication, it was noted that any individual may register to receive press releases from the Kennel Club, however, it was not possible to limit these to a particular topic. Individuals may also register to receive online copies of The Scribe. All members of the Council would receive press releases unless they chose to opt out.
94. **What changes should be implemented and why?**  
 Suggestions received via the social media site included the following:
  - Wider use of the Continuing Professional Development scheme to improve the standards of judging
  - A greater degree of support from the Kennel Club when investigating comments/complaints made on social media.
  - More robust approach from the KC when issues were reported, perhaps with the appointment of judging field officers, rating the standards of judges in a similar manner to field officers' ratings of shows.
  - The appointment of a Head Judge (similar standing to the show manager) at each show to act as an arbiter and provide advice and act as a lead in resolving any issues appertaining to judging that may arise.
95. **Should judges meet certain criteria before judging certain grades or competitions?**
  - A range of responses had been received on this issue in respect of the levels/grades at which new judges should start, and the levels of experience gained as a competitor.
  - It was suggested that the mentoring scheme should become mandatory for all new judges, to provide support and assistance as they developed.
96. The Council discussed the issue of mentoring, noting that few requests for mentoring were being received by the office. It was confirmed that mentoring must be carried out by a championship judge or by an Accredited Trainer for agility. However, it was acknowledged that a great

deal of 'unofficial' mentoring took place with experienced judges offering advice and support to newer judges.

97. The comments received had provided a great deal of useful feedback which would be used as a basis for developing future strategy, both short-term and long-term.

## **ITEM 12. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

### Proposal to amend Regulation H(1)(B)3.d

98. The Council noted that a proposal from Miss N Wildman which sought to amend H Regulations in respect of the hoop/tyre had effectively been addressed by the earlier discussion regarding the breakaway tyre (paragraphs 42-54 refer).

99. Accordingly no further action was considered necessary.

### Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)10.e.

100. Mr Chandler requested the Council to consider a proposed Regulation amendment in order to address an increasing number of queries about the wearing of treat bags, and in respect of leads worn about the competitors' person being construed as being training aids. The proposal was seconded by Miss Olden.
101. There was some concern regarding the definition of a 'treat bag' and it was proposed by Mr Chandler that the word 'treat' be removed. The revised proposal was seconded by Mrs Gardner.
102. A vote took place and, by a majority, the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation H(1)10.e.

**TO:**

Except for mobility aids, nothing shall be carried in the hand while the dog is under test and food shall not be given to a dog whilst in the ring.

**Competitors are prohibited from wearing bags or leads around their bodies whilst under test** – elimination.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Effective date 1 January 2018)

## **ITEM 13. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### Scribing at shows

103. The discussion item was presented by Mr Smith on behalf of Mr Mallabar, who requested that the Council discuss the issue of scribing at shows. Mr Mallabar was of the view that the role was an important one

and it was essential that it was carried out to a high standard. However a number of issues had arisen at shows in respect of scribing, such as illegible handwriting, a lack of consistency, and other errors occurring. Mr Mallabar wished the Council to consider whether there was a necessity for official guidance notes to be produced by the Kennel Club.

104. The Council accepted that it was not possible to regulate the performance of scribes, particularly in respect of issues such as handwriting, but it was in agreement that the development of guidance notes may be helpful, and that they should be incorporated into the existing Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards. It was highlighted by the office that the document was already undergoing review, and that a suitable section relating to scribing would be added.
105. Miss Hudson would liaise with the office to provide appropriate wording.

Proof of posting

106. Mr Smith, speaking on behalf of Mr Mallabar, requested that the Council consider whether there was any necessity for proof of posting to remain in use as evidence of an entry having been made. He was of the view that with the increasing use of online entries this was no longer necessary, and that competitors who had not received running orders should raise a query with the organisers before the event. He noted that entries made 'on the day' using proof of posting presented practical difficulties to show organisers.
107. The Council considered the matter but was of the view that some competitors still wished to make entries by post, and that there was still a necessity for a facility to accept entries on the day to accommodate situations where entries had not been received by the show organiser. Whilst accepting that it was the responsibility of the competitor to ensure that he or she had received running orders, it was not of the view that any formal deadline for checking would be appropriate.
108. The Council did not consider that there was any evidence of a significant issue, and was not of the view that any amendments to existing procedures were necessary.

Distance between rings

109. Mr M Bacon, represented by Miss Olden, wished the Council to discuss reviewing guidelines on the distance between rings, in the interests of safety. He considered that a review was necessary due to the increasing number of people attending shows, and also that the introduction of lower jump heights and longer distances between obstacles may result in dogs running faster and turning wider and possibly leaving the ring.
110. Whilst the Council was sympathetic to Mr Bacon's intent, it considered that there would be practical difficulties in implementing the suggested minimum distance of 10m if the space between the rings was a thoroughfare, or 5m if there was no access, or the placing of a barrier

where the gap was less than 5m. Should such minimums become mandatory, it was likely that a number of existing venues may well be lost.

111. It was however accepted that start and finish areas were the most likely areas for incidents to take place, and it was agreed that it was advisable for show organisers and judges to ensure that both the first and last obstacles should be placed a minimum of 5m into the ring. It requested that guidance to this effect be issued to show organisers, also stressing that reasonable distances should be provided between rings.

Fixed Jump Cups as Unnecessary Protrusions

112. Mr C Huckle wished to raise the above issue in light of the outcome of discussions in 2012 by the Activities Committee to the effect that fixed jump cups formed unnecessary protrusions.
113. The Council wished to draw the attention of clubs to Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(5) which stated that ‘Safety—Obstacles and equipment in the test area must not include unnecessary protrusions...’
114. It reiterated that jumps should not have fixed jump cups, and clubs should ensure that their equipment used at shows met this criteria.

Use of medicated collars to control fleas and ticks

115. Mr C Huckle wished to draw the attention of the Council to the issue of dogs wearing medicated collars in the ring, as recommended by some veterinary practitioners, to control fleas and ticks. Noting that such collars were not designed to be removed and replaced frequently, the Council’s view was sought as to whether their use was compliant with existing H Regulations which specified the use of a flat leather or webbing collar. Dogs were not permitted to wear more than one collar whilst competing.
116. It was agreed that a formal proposal would be made at the Council’s next meeting to amend the relevant Regulation by removing the words ‘leather or webbing’.

**ITEM 14. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR AGILITY PARTICIPANTS**

117. At its meeting on 23 March 2017, the Agility Strategic Review Working Party noted that a Code of Conduct for Agility participants was in place but it had been some time since it was updated. It wished to request that the Agility Liaison Council carry out a review in order to ensure that the Code of Conduct was up to date, and to raise its profile within the agility community.
118. It was noted that some discussion on this issue had taken place earlier in the meeting (paragraph 75 refers)

119. It was agreed that the existing Code of Conduct should be publicised to ensure that all competitors were aware of its existence. Further, the Council was of the view that the issue of social media should be addressed by the Kennel Club, however, it was acknowledged that there were inherent difficulties in doing so.

Note: the Code of Conduct was available at

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1158895/agility-code-of-conduct.pdf>

#### **ITEM 15. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL**

120. The Council noted a written report from the office on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 10 – 13 August 2017.

- The Festival would take place at Rockingham Castle which had also provisionally been booked for 2018, 2019 and 2020.
- It would continue to be a four day event with qualifiers for Crufts and Discover Dogs, and would also host Kennel Club Olympia Quarter and Semi-Finals.
- 53 trade stands would be present.
- Online entries and bookings for camping had been taken by Agility Shows Online.
- Camping had been fully booked, with a waiting list.
- In previous years competitors from up to 25 countries had attended. Due to the Border Collie Classic (BCC) being held before IAF, it was anticipated that there would be an increase in the number of international competitors from a wider range of countries.
- First Contact would be the agility equipment supplier and would be supplying rubber chip contacts in all rings.
- The Kennel Club would like to thank the International Agility Festival's principle sponsor, CSJ Specialist Canine Feeds, for its continued support.

#### **ITEM 16. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY**

121. The items on the Council's five year strategic plan were noted. The Council was of the view that all of the items on the plan were being addressed and accordingly it requested that the item should no longer appear on the agenda for future Council meetings.

**ITEM 17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Use of whistles

122. It was noted that a letter had been received from Mr N Ellis querying whether the use of whistles by judges was acceptable.
123. It was agreed that the issue should be referred to the Judging Panel and discussed in more detail at the Council's next meeting so that it may be given adequate consideration.

Standard of equipment

124. It was noted that there were concerns regarding the standard of equipment used at some shows. The Equipment Panel confirmed that it was already considering the issue and would report back in due course. It was also considering issues relating to the use of different types of equipment at any one show.

**ITEM 18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

125. The date of the Council's 2018 meetings would be confirmed in September 2017.

**The meeting closed at 3.30 pm**

**MR M CAVILL**  
**Chairman**

**THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT**

'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'

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