

**MINUTES OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY 18 JANUARY 2018 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
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. Apologies were received from Mrs J Gardner.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2017 were approved.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Amendments to H Regulations

3. The Council noted that the following amendments to H Regulations had been approved by the Board:

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)

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)

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)

Breakaway Tyre

4. It was noted that the Board had approved designs for saloon door style tyres submitted by Longfield Agility Solutions (subject to confirmation that the opening would not swing through 360 degrees) and First Contact.

Issues reported in Incident Books

5. The Council noted a report from the office on the list of issues which had been reported in Incident Books during 2017.

Kennel Club Code of Conduct

6. At its previous meeting, a request was made that the Kennel Club issue a statement drawing the attention of the agility community to the Code of Conduct, with particular reference to the use of social media.
7. The Council noted an update from the office confirming that the Kennel Club was in the process of updating the Code of Conduct and Social Media, applicable to all disciplines. Once this had been completed, details would be issued via a press release and an announcement in The Scribe.

Dogs competing whilst subject to a ban

8. The Council had discussed 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. The same process may also be applied in the case of a person being banned from attendance at Kennel Club licensed events.
9. Following consultation, show processors had confirmed that they would note details of any dogs or individual banned from competing or attending shows, on receipt of relevant information provided to them by the Kennel Club.

Use of medicated collars to control fleas and ticks

10. At its previous meeting, the attention of the Council was drawn to the issue of dogs wearing medicated collars in the ring, and 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'.
11. Accordingly Mr Huckle proposed an amendment to Regulation H(1)10.c., which would allow for dogs to wear a medical (impregnated) collar whilst competing. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Croxford.
12. It was emphasised that only a single collar may be worn by a dog whilst competing, and that the amended regulation should allow for a medicated collar to be worn in place of, but not as well as, a flat leather or webbing collar. A revised proposal to this effect was made by Mr Cavill and seconded by Mr Hallam.
13. The Council voted on the proposal and unanimously **recommended** the following regulation amendment for approval. It was of the view that this was a health and welfare issue and accordingly requested that should the regulation amendment be approved, it should become effective from 1 July 2018.

Regulation H(1)10.c.

TO:

- c. Dogs must not wear any type of slip, half-slip collar or lead when under test. A **single** flat, close fitting, ~~leather or webbing~~ collar is permitted, providing the only attachment is a plain identification panel as an integral part of the collar i.e.: not attached by a ring.
(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through.)

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES COMMITTEEProposed amendments to Regulations H(1)(A)7 and H(1)(B)1.c

14. At its meeting on 14 September 2017, the Activities Committee considered amendments to Regulations H(1)(A)7 and H(1)(B)1.c. which had been proposed as the existing regulations did not make any provision for the length of the long jump to be altered between the Full

Height Option (FHO) and the Lower Height Option (LHO) and vice versa. It was suggested that although there was a range of lengths for the long jump (1.2 -1.5 m for large dogs) it would be preferable to allow for it to be reduced for the LHO.

15. Queries on the issue which had been received by the office were discussed by the Agility Liaison Council at its meeting in July. The Council had been 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.
16. However the Committee was of the view that regulation amendments which would allow for the long jump to be reduced in length for the LHO would be a positive step, and requested that the Council consider them.
17. Mr Cavill proposed the amendments. The proposal was seconded by Mr Hallam.
18. The principle that the length of the long jump may be reduced for LHO was supported by the Council, but it was suggested that similar provision should also be made to allow for a reduction in the spread of the rising spread jump. It was agreed that this should be the case and relevant wording was agreed.
19. In addition, it was agreed that it should be specified that the changes to the length of the long jump and to the width of the rising spread should be made within the permitted ranges for those obstacles. This would allow for decisions on such changes to be made at the discretion of the judge within the ranges specified elsewhere in the H Regulations.
20. A proposal for relevant amendments to Regulations H(1)(A)7. and H(1)(B)1.c. was made by Mr Chandler and seconded by Mr Huckle.
21. After a vote, the Council agreed, by a majority, to **recommend** for approval the following amendments to Regulations:

Regulation H(1)(A)7.

TO:

Societies may offer the Lower Height Option to all dogs in that height category and it may be offered at all grades. It is to be run as part of any Standard class as defined in these regulations and must be clearly identified in the schedule. Each relevant class will have two heights with a change part way through to raise/lower the jump heights **and may extend/reduce the length of the long jump and width of the rising spread, within the permitted ranges**, and competitors must run at their entered height...

(Insertion in bold)

Regulation H(1)(B)1.c.

TO:

No practice is allowed on the course save that competitors will be allowed to walk the course set at Small, Medium or Large height without their dog(s) before the class begins. **The height of the hurdles may be raised/lowered and the length of the long jump and width of the rising spread may be extended/reduced, within the permitted ranges**, during the course walking time if multiple heights are offered within the same class.

(Insertions in bold)

22. The Council agreed that that this was a health and welfare issue and accordingly requested that should the above regulation amendment be approved, they should become effective from 1 July 2018.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

23. The Council noted a written report from Mr Huckle following meetings of the Accredited Trainers Seminar on 24 October 2017, and the Activities Judges Sub-Group on 8 November 2017.

24. A number of issues were highlighted, as follows:

Accredited Trainers Seminar - 24 October 2017

25. Miss J Lewis had been welcomed to the seminar as a newly-appointed Accredited Trainer for agility.
26. A new-style Course Design and Practical Judging Seminar had taken place, and had been well received. There had been positive comments from the Accredited Trainer who had presented it and from the participants.
27. The course measurement and time matrix had been updated and extended to reflect the changes in the regulations covering distance between obstacles. Additional data would be collected over the next twelve months to ensure that it remained appropriate. The matrix was available on the Kennel Club website at:
- https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/426667/calculating_accurate_agility_course_times_guidance.pdf
28. The Accredited Trainers discussed the use of whistles to signal that the judge was ready for the competitor to start, or to mark an elimination. They were not of the view that this was helpful, and considered that it may be confusing for competitors. Accordingly, they did not recommend their use. (Note: further discussion of the use of whistles took place later in the meeting – paragraphs 126-129 refer).
29. It was highlighted that only the Judge had the authority to close a class, or part of a class (if they were judging both LHO and full height.)

30. The Accredited Trainers discussed the practice of judges pointing at contacts to indicate that a dog had successfully achieved the contact. They had expressed the view that this practice was unnecessary and potentially distracting to both the competitor and dog, and could be construed as showmanship by the judge for the spectators. The judge's attention should be focused solely on the dog and handler.
31. The Council supported the view of the Accredited Trainers that the practice was undesirable and did not conform to recommended judging practice.
32. A discussion had taken place in respect of the way in which a refusal should be judged. The Council noted the difficulties involved in providing a clear definition of a refusal, and expressed its view that judges should continue to have discretion as to what constituted a refusal, and must judge the performance of each dog on the merits of the individual circumstances.
33. Mentoring of new judges should ideally be carried out by Accredited Trainers, with a championship judge being invited to carry out the role if an Accredited Trainer was not available. The Council wished to highlight a reminder to mentors that they should not mentor a judge for a class in which they were competing.
34. It was suggested by the Accredited Trainers that review and reassessment of championship judges every five years would ensure that they kept up to date with current regulations. The Council agreed that it was very important that they did so. It was noted that with effect from 2019, breed show judges at all levels would be required to pass a Requirements of a Dog Show Judge examination every five years, and that Heelwork to Music judges must pass the equivalent examination every four years. The Council was in agreement that a similar principle should be applied to all agility judges, and Mr Huckle was requested to make a proposal to the Activities Judges Sub-Group to require that agility judges, at all levels, should be required to pass the Agility Judges Regulations and Judging Procedure examination every five years. It was noted that the seminar was available online on the Kennel Club Academy.

Activities Judges Sub-Group - 8 November 2017

35. Work was continuing on the development of content for the Kennel Club Academy for all disciplines. Additional content for agility, in the form of short films, would be developed and added in due course.
36. The Sub-Group had discussed a request from the International Agility Working Party to consider the provision of education for UK judges regarding FCI courses as it was of the view that this would be helpful to those wishing to compete overseas. It was noted that the possibility of developing such a course was under discussion.

37. The Sub-Group had considered the introduction of 'Prestige' level judges but had considered that an informal structure was already in place to develop and progress judges. The Council discussed the concept and noted that in some other disciplines, limits were set as to what levels of judging were permissible, based on the experience of the judge. However, it noted that at present the Kennel Club only held lists of championship judges. The Council was not of the view that the development of judges should be further formalised at the current time.
38. The Sub-Group had clarified the way in which marking of the wall obstacle should be addressed as there appeared to be some inconsistencies. It confirmed that if any part of the wall, including the pillars, were displaced, the dog would incur faults.
39. Issues regarding the situation where a dog broke a wait, and was reset on the start line, had been discussed by the Sub-Group. However, the matter required further clarification and would be further discussed by the Sub-Group at its next meeting.
40. Some Accredited Trainers for agility had stepped down from the role, and the Sub-Group wished to record its thanks for their efforts on behalf of the Kennel Club. A press release would be issued in the near future inviting applications from suitably qualified individuals with an interest in becoming Accredited Trainers.
41. Mr Huckle was thanked for his report.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

42. The Council noted a verbal report from Mr Chandler on the progress of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group following its meeting on 18 September 2017.

Instructors at registered clubs

43. It was noted that the Sub-Group had discussed the possibility of instigating a recommendation that all Kennel Club registered training clubs should have at least one instructor who was a member of the Kennel Club Accredited Instructor (KCAI) scheme. The intention of such a requirement would be to ensure that dog owners may be confident of receiving training of a good standard. However, following a further meeting of the Sub-Group, in which the difficulties of applying such a requirement were discussed, it had recommended that the following statement should be published on the Kennel Club's 'Find a Dog Club' web page:

'Dog owners should use dog training instructors who have proven specialist knowledge, skills and experience. Instructors can prove their commitment to good practice by being part of the Kennel Club Accredited Instructors Scheme which encourages its members to gain accreditation based on a robust assessment standard set by the Kennel

Club. On joining the scheme, all members agree to abide by a code of practice which sets out the principles governing both their professional conduct and training practices.’

44. It was noted that use of the above wording would be subject to approval by the Activities Committee.
45. The Council supported the Sub-Group’s recommendation, noting that many instructors at registered clubs did not have formal qualifications in dog training but a great deal of knowledge and practical experience.

Statement regarding jump heights

46. The Council noted a statement from the Sub-Group which provided a summary of progress relating to the issue of jump heights. The full statement was attached as **Annex A** to the minutes.
47. In particular, it acknowledged the conclusion that the Sub-Group could not make a clear recommendation, based on existing scientific findings, to either reduce jump heights or maintain the status quo.
48. It also noted the Sub-Group’s statement that the acquisition of definitive data regarding ‘ideal’ jump heights was unlikely to permit definitive recommendations due to the large number of variables involved.
49. The Council thanked the Sub-Group for its statement, and noted that its conclusions would inform discussions due to take place later in the meeting.

ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL

50. The Council noted a written report provided by the Equipment Panel, and discussed the issues arising from it.
51. The Panel confirmed that its focus had been on equipment supplied by the hire companies but noted that not all shows used hired equipment. This would be taken into account when formulating any recommendations.

Equipment used at shows

52. Whilst not wishing to be unduly restrictive on the materials and style of equipment used at shows, the Panel wished to make a recommendation that equipment used at a show should be consistent in all rings. It was of the view that doing so was in the best interests of competing dogs, as differing styles of equipment may perform differently, one example being of an aluminium see-saw in comparison to a wooden see-saw. It was anticipated that consistency across all rings may help to ensure that safety was not compromised by the use of differing styles.
53. It was noted that in practice this would necessitate the procurement of all equipment for any one show from a single supplier.

54. The Council was in agreement with the principle involved and wished to make a recommendation that equipment should be consistent across all rings.
55. The office undertook to publicise the recommendation via its inclusion in specimen schedules, and by the issue of a press release.

Hurdles

56. Wing height: the Panel noted that current regulations stated that the upright must be appreciably higher than the part to be cleared by the dog. It wished to suggest that this be amended to include a minimum height.
57. The Council was in agreement with the Panel's views and requested that the Panel progress the matter once agreement had been reached in respect of the issue of jump heights.
58. Poles: The Panel had received queries relating to the materials used for jump poles. No problem had been identified in regard to the plastic or wood most commonly used at shows. However, the Panel wished to suggest that only poles should be used as the top element of a hurdle, and the reference to planks be removed from Regulation H(1)(B)3.a.
59. The Council discussed the matter but was not of the view that there was any issue with the use of planks, which in some cases were lighter than poles. It considered that the most important feature of the top element was that it was easily displaceable, and that this was already provided for within existing regulations.
60. Extra poles, fillers and gates: the Panel noted that there were no regulations covering the use of these, and it suggested that only pole cups should be used. The Council agreed this issue may be simply addressed by amending existing regulations to state that all bars and planks must be easily displaced. The Equipment Panel would progress this matter.

Pipe Tunnel

61. The Council noted that guidance was issued in January 2014 in relation to pipe tunnels. The Equipment Panel reported that there were some concerns regarding the way in which some equipment was maintained, and wished to recommend that tunnels were inspected prior to use with particular attention to their shape and the wire coil.
62. There were also some issues in respect of reductions in diameter caused by fixings being pulled too tight, the use of metal cradles and many tunnels (including 5 meter ones) only being secured by three sets of fixings.

63. It was acknowledged that equipment suppliers were required to confirm within their contracts that equipment supplied would adhere to the specifications as outlined in Kennel Club H Regulations, and that it was fit for purpose.
64. However it was agreed that the Equipment Panel should be requested to review the guidance issued in 2014 in respect of the way in which tunnels should be secured, and to recommend any revisions thought to be necessary.
65. It was also noted that the Guide for Judges highlighted that 'S' shaped pipe tunnels should not be used, but it was suggested that this should be added to the H Regulations. The Equipment Panel undertook to progress this issue.

Non-slip tunnels

66. The issue of non-slip tunnels was raised, but it was acknowledged that the matter was a complex one. The Council had previously discussed the use of non-slip surfaces when considering issues related to the collapsible tunnel and had not been able to specify any clear definition for suitable types of material. It agreed that it was not possible to take any further action on this issue.

Dog walk

67. The Council considered whether there was any issue with dog walks which were excessively bouncy. It was of the view that there was probably a variation between equipment sourced from different suppliers. It was agreed that the issue would be raised by the Equipment Panel for further discussion at the Council's next meeting.
68. The Equipment Panel was thanked for its report.

ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE GRADING PANEL

69. Note: discussion of the Grading Panel's report took place after item 10 on the agenda as the Council was of the view decisions made in respect of height classification may have implications on issues relating to grading.
70. The Council noted the report submitted by the Grading Panel and considered its suggested options for changes to the existing grading systems.
71. The changes were suggested in view of concerns that some dogs were progressing through the grades too quickly, and found themselves in Grade 6 or Grade 7 without being ready to compete at the required standard.
72. A number of factors were involved, such as low numbers in some classes, the number of opportunities for a dog to compete, and a high

number of graded classes. It was noted that dogs were potentially able to progress from Grade 1 to Grade 7 within six months.

73. In order to address the issue, the Grading Panel proposed two options, both of which would reduce the number of grades from 7 to 6, effectively removing the current grade 2. On implementation, all dogs would move down a grade apart from grade 1 dogs which would remain in grade 1. Grade 2 would effectively cease to exist and all dogs new to competing, with an experience handler, would start in grade 2. Dogs run by a beginner handler would be eligible for grade 1.
74. Under the terms of the first option, progression would be via a non-weighted system whereby wins in all classes would be of equal value, irrespective of class size.
75. The second option proposed the use of a weighted system where wins would be allocated a number of points based on the class size. It was acknowledged that use of such a system would be dependent on the use of a results database which was not as yet available.
76. The Council noted that feedback received from the agility community indicated a majority of support for the use of a non-weighted system where all wins would be of equal value. Accordingly it was agreed that this option should be supported.
77. There was some discussion as to whether any changes to the designation of grades were necessary, such as the use of names or an alphabetic system, but it was agreed that the numbering system worked well and should be retained.
78. A summary of the proposed system, which was supported by the Council, was noted as follows:

Grade	Eligibility
1	Open to dogs and handlers which have NOT gained a minimum of two first places in standard classes at Grade 1, of which at least one first place must be gained in Agility
2	Open to dogs which are not eligible for Grade 1 and are not eligible for Grade 3, 4, 5 or 6
3	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of two first places in standard classes at Grade 2, one first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes).
4	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of three first places in standard classes at Grade 3 two first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes)
5	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of four first places in standard classes at Grade 4, two first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes)

6	Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of five first places in standard classes at Grade 5, three first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping classes)
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79. It was agreed that prior to a formal proposal being submitted to the Council in July, it would be advisable for a meeting to take place between members of the Grading Panel and representatives of show processors to ensure that the proposals were feasible and to consider any logistical implications.
80. Noting that a number of amendments to H Regulations would be necessary to support changes to the grading structure, the Council considered a number of suggestions submitted by the Grading Panel.

Course time matrix

81. It was agreed that the course time matrix should be reviewed, and that its use should become mandatory, noting that this would prevent dogs winning classes based on unrealistic course times.

Number of progression classes

82. The Council supported the Panel's suggestion that shows should be limited to offering a maximum number of progression classes for any dog on any one day of a show. The number suggested by the Panel was three, but after a brief discussion it was agreed that the limit should be set at four.

Number of grades in graded classes

83. The Council agreed that a restriction on the number of grades in graded classes should be introduced, whereby graded classes may not include more than three grades.

Maximum number of dogs in a class

84. The Panel suggested that the maximum number of dogs permitted in a class should be set at 300, and should the entry exceed this level the class must be split. However, following discussions regarding height categories (paragraph nos. 104-118 refer), it was agreed that it was less likely that class size would continue to be an issue and accordingly no action was necessary at the current time. However the issue would remain under review.

Time between wins and progression through the grades

85. The Panel suggested that the time period between wins and progressing to the next grade should be increased. However the Council was not of the view that this was a major issue and did not consider it necessary for any change to be made.

Agility Warrant points

86. The Panel suggested that progression on Agility Warrant points should be retained, but restricted to dogs moving up into grades 2 and 3. However a restriction would be bought in that at least 50 points must be from agility

classes and 50 from jumping. Thus a dog could progress to Grade 3 by winning 100 points at each grade, using the Agility Warrant points scheme. Progression would remain at the handler's discretion.

87. The Council agreed that the above suggestion should be supported.

Restrictions on shows held on the same date

88. The Panel wished to request that the Kennel Club review the arrangements for issuing licenses, and introduce a restriction on open shows being held on the same date within a given radius. This would avoid 'clashes' of dates which may result in small entries at some shows.
89. The Council discussed the issue, noting that it was complex in nature. It was suggested that priority should be given to shows organised by Kennel Club registered clubs, before those held by listed status clubs.
90. The office advised that the Kennel Club's IT system was due to be upgraded and would in future provide a facility for applications for licences to be made online. It was hoped that this may help to address the problem of clashing shows. However it was accepted that there would still be some difficulties for show secretaries in identifying other shows that may have an effect on entries.
91. The Council was reminded that the issue had been discussed in detail in 2012, at which time it had been agreed that market forces should apply. It was agreed that it was not possible to infer that a show held by a listed status club was necessarily of higher quality than one organised by a registered club, or vice versa. It was also accepted that some listed status shows were held on a commercial basis whereas others were run by volunteers and that it was not possible to differentiate.
92. However the Council was of the view that registered clubs should be supported as much as possible, and accordingly it supported a suggestion that regulations be amended to state that registered clubs must apply for licences at least 12 months prior to their proposed show date. Listed status clubs would be permitted to apply for licences 6-12 months prior to their proposed show date. It was anticipated that this would provide preference for registered clubs to book dates before listed status clubs were able to do so.
93. It also agreed that a minimum radius should be applied whereby no two shows within 30 miles of each other (based on the venue postcode and calculated by distance as the crow flies) may take place on the same day. However, an exemption would be permissible should both show organisers be in agreement.

ITEM 9. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL

94. The Council noted a written report from the Judging Panel, and discussed the issues raised.
95. The Panel expressed its concerns regarding the loss of experienced judges from the discipline. It was of the view that this was due at least in part to concerns at the number of dogs which a judge was expected to judge in one day, which may be up to 450. It was acknowledged that this may result in a very long day, especially where the entry was spread over a number of classes. As a result some judges found the experience to be very tiring, and it became difficult to retain full concentration.
96. It was suggested that the maximum number of dogs to be judged in a single day could be set within a matrix which varied depending on the number of classes involved, and whether there was provision for LHO in each.
97. It was agreed that such a matrix may prove to be a useful tool for show organisers, and may be helpful in preventing excessive demands being placed on judges. In turn it was anticipated that this may encourage more judges to remain active in the discipline. Mr Huckle agreed to proceed with the formulation of the matrix which would be circulated to Council members for feedback.

New Judges

98. The Panel expressed its view that new and aspiring judges should be actively encouraged and supported through the Judges Training Programme. It suggested that the mentoring scheme be made compulsory, with new judges gaining a provisional status until they had completed the mentoring programme. However, the Council acknowledged the difficulties of doing so due to the lack of available mentors.

Social Media

99. The Panel emphasised that the application of the Kennel Club's policy on the use of social media could only be effective if infringements were reported. However it was acknowledged that the Kennel Club could only take action in the event of specific allegations and could not respond to situations where generalised comments had been made on social media.

Continuing Personal Development (CPD)

100. The Council noted that the CPD scheme was receiving favourable comments as regards to its concept. However, it was acknowledged that for it to be fully effective, full engagement from all Accredited Trainers would be necessary.

Appointment of a Head Judge

101. The Panel wished to suggest that a head judge be appointed at each show, to act as an arbiter and to provide advice, resolving any issues appertaining to judging that may arise. The Council was in support of the principle, but noted that there were logistical issues which would need to be addressed, such as ways in which to ensure there was no conflict between the head judge being able to fulfil the role without compromising their ability to carry out their own judging responsibilities.

Appointment of judging Field Officers

102. It was suggested that specialist Judging Field Officers be appointed to carry out inspections in a similar way to existing Field Officers, but with the emphasis on issues related to judging. It was anticipated that if implemented, such inspections could form part of the CPD scheme. The Council was of the view that the suggestion had considerable merit, and supported its progression via the Judging Panel.

103. The Judging Panel was thanked for its report.

ITEM 10. REPORT FROM THE HEIGHT CLASSIFICATION PANEL

104. The Council considered a report from the Height Classification Panel, together with feedback which had been received from the agility community.

105. The Panel had considered issues relating to jump heights, including health and welfare issues, and ways of determining optimum jump heights for all dogs dependent upon height and conformation. After giving consideration to feedback received following the Council's meeting in July 2017, it had formulated proposals which it hoped gave a clear range of options for discussion.

106. The options suggested were:

- to leave the current system unchanged with jump heights set at Large – 650mm, Medium – 450mm and Small – 350mm, with a LHO in each category. However it was agreed that the current system with LHO was causing many issues and concerns. There were potentially six heights within this system, with some shows not scheduling LHO at all, and in other cases LHO was only offered in some classes.
- to change the current jump heights to Large – 600mm and Small – 300mm, and to retain Medium at 450mm as a midway between the two.
- to change the current jump heights to align with FCI heights, to Large – 600mm, Medium – 400mm and Small – 300mm. Under this option, it was also suggested that a LHO option of 500mm would be offered for Large dogs.

107. It was reported that introducing an additional measured height of 500mm was requested by a number of agility competitors. The Council agreed to include this as an option for consideration.

108. Feedback received from the agility community indicated minimal support for the first two options but widespread preference for the third, either with a LHO or an additional measured height. Accordingly, the Council agreed that this option should be supported and developed.
109. The Council went on to discuss, within the terms of the agreed option, whether there should be a facility for a LHO of 500mm to be available for large dogs, and if so, whether a dog having run once at that height should be required to remain at that height at all future shows. The alternative suggestion was that there would be a fourth measured jump height of 500mm.
110. There was a range of views on the issue. One concern regarding the 500mm height was that it may encourage dogs to run more quickly, which may have an impact on health and welfare. This led to a discussion on the basic requirements of agility, which was originally introduced as a test of control and speed. It was considered to be important not to place the sole focus on speed but to retain the element of control within the discipline. The Council acknowledged that course designs set by judges varied considerably, with some being beneficial to fast dogs whereas others were more suited to dogs with better control.
111. It was accepted that the introduction of a fourth measured height would benefit those dogs which for reasons of size (such as dogs which were at the smaller end of the Large height range) would benefit from a lower jump height.
112. However, the same dogs would also benefit should it be decided to offer 500mm as a LHO.
113. A suggestion was made that any dog currently competing in Large may continue to do so, and would jump at 600mm, but that a dog may be measured if the handler wished, and if found to fit the criteria for the new 500mm height, would from that point compete at that height only.
114. It was noted that if introduced, initially there would be no championship or Kennel Club qualifiers, and it was not considered that this would be a popular option. It was accepted that handlers hoping to compete at championship level, or in qualifying classes, may not wish to compete at a measured lower height.
115. The Council agreed that both options would be progressed for consideration at the next Council meeting. It then went on to consider the implementation strategy for both options.
116. A suitable transition period would be necessary in order to provide adequate notice for equipment providers, and to allow time for measuring sessions to be arranged.

117. In summary, the following was agreed:

First Proposal – LHO for Large Dogs at 500mm

- Revised jump heights would be as follows:

Category	Jump Height	Dog Height
Large	600	431mm and over (no change)
Large (LHO)	500	431mm and over (no change)
Medium	400	351mm – 430mm (no change)
Small	300	350mm or under (no change)

- No transition period would be required to implement as no dogs would need remeasuring.
- The LHO for Large would continue to work as laid out in the current regulations, except for requiring separate results for each height.

Second Proposal – New Measured Height at 500mm

- Revised jump heights would be as follows:

Category	Jump Height	Dog Height
Extra Large	600	Over 500mm
Large	500	431mm – 500mm
Medium	400	351mm – 430mm (no change)
Small	300	350mm or under (no change)

- All new dogs coming into the discipline must be measured (unless obviously extra large) and would compete at the correct height category according to their measured size.
- The new categories would come into effect on 1 January 2019, with a two year transition period during which handlers may continue to compete at 600mm (Extra Large), or may elect to have their dog measured and, if appropriate, move into the 500mm jump height category (Large). However, having moved into the new category they must remain in it.
- From 1 January 2021, any dog already competing that had not been measured would be required to compete in the highest height category.

- Qualifiers for Kennel Club finals would continue to be for small, medium and extra large height categories.
118. Mrs Croxford undertook to create formal proposals based on the above for consideration at the Council's meeting in July. [**Afternote:** following the meeting it was agreed that it would be preferable to retain the term 'Large' to identify those dogs in the highest category, and an alternative term would be sought to identify the new category between Medium and Large.]
119. It was noted that changes to height categories may have implications on regulations relating to equipment. It was agreed that these would be reviewed by Mr Smith on behalf of the Equipment Panel.

ITEM 11. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL

120. The Council noted that the Agility Governance Panel had not met since the Council's previous meeting and accordingly there was nothing to report.

ITEM 12. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.n

121. Miss Olden wished to propose an amendment to the above Regulation which would amend the height of the dog walk, with the objective of reducing the risk of injury to competing dogs. The proposal was seconded by Mr Cavill.
122. The Council was advised that there were some concerns in respect of the speed of dogs traversing the dog walk and the potential risks of injury should a dog fall off. It was highlighted that there was growing support for lowering the height of the dog walk to 1.2m.
123. A query was raised as to whether lowering the height of the dog walk, and the subsequent change to the angle of the up and down sections, would make it appear similar to the see-saw to competing dogs, and cause confusion. However, it was not considered that this would be the case, and it was also noted that the dog walk would continue to have a slatted surface on these sections to assist the dog in differentiating.
124. It was also unclear as to whether lowering the height of the dog walk by a relatively small amount would have a significant impact on the potential for injury should a dog fall.
125. In response to a query, it was not considered that lowering the height of the dog walk would cause any difficulties for judges assessing contacts.

126. The Council noted feedback from the agility community which indicated widespread support for the proposal, and after a vote, by a majority it **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.n

TO:

Dog Walk

A walk plank of approximately 1.372m (4ft 6ins) **1.2m (4ft)** measured from the ground to the top of the plank with firmly fixed ramps at either end. The planks must be 3.66m (12ft) in length and a minimum of 25.4cm (10ins) and a maximum of 30.5cm (12ins) in width. The last 91.4cm (3ft) from the bottom of each ramp should be a different colour to indicate the area with which the dog should make contact. Each ramp should have a non-slip surface, and anti-slip slats at intervals but not within 15.2cm (6ins) of the start of the contact area.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

(Effective date: 1 January 2019)

ITEM 13. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Use of whistles

127. Mr Chandler, representing Tunbridge Wells & District Canine Society, wished the Council to discuss the introduction of a new Regulation to state that whistles must not be used for signalling that dogs and handlers were under test, nor for signalling an elimination.
128. The Club's view was that the use of whistles was unnecessary, and may cause distress to some dogs and handlers. In addition, their use may cause distraction, and may cause confusion if used in several rings.
129. The Council was sympathetic to the principle of the discussion item, but considered whether an amendment to H Regulations was necessary or whether the issue may be dealt with by means of restrictions placed on the use of whistles by show organisers, which may state within their schedule whether or not their use would be permitted.
130. However, on balance it was of the view that the introduction of a relevant regulation would be the most effective way of addressing the issue, and expressed its support for doing so. Mr Chandler undertook to submit a formal proposal, on behalf of Tunbridge Wells & District Canine Society, to the Council's next meeting.

ITEM 14. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL

131. The Council noted a report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 9-12 August 2018.
132. The venue would once again be Rockingham Castle, Leicestershire. It was intended that the layout for the Festival would be similar to that used in 2017 as this had been very successful. All Olympia Quarter-Finals and

Semi-Finals would be held once again at the International Agility Festival.

133. All competitors were requested to note that entries would be processed by First Place Processing. Schedules would be released before Crufts.
134. The Kennel Club wished to note it's thanks to the Festival's principle sponsor, CSJ Specialist Canine Feeds, for its continued support.

ITEM 15. AGILITY TEAM GB

135. The Council noted a report on Agility Team GB's attendance at the 2017 European Open Junior Championships, European Open Championships and World Championships.
136. The YKC Junior team had been very successful and the Council wished to note its congratulations to all concerned.
137. Agility Team GB had achieved mixed results. A query was raised as to what efforts were being made to improve the team's performance, and whether the current coaching team was succeeding in its efforts to maximise the potential success of competitors.
138. It was emphasised that individual members of the team were continuing to improve, however, standards in overseas competition were very high and were increasing at a rapid rate.
139. It was noted that the Agility Team GB Performance Weekend would take place on 6-8 April 2018 at Nottingham Trent University. A suggestion was made that it might be preferable for more regional selection events to be held at a range of locations rather than a single event at a centrally-based location. This was noted.

ITEM 16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

140. The Council was requested to consider whether there was merit in a suggestion to amending H Regulations to state that the size of a ring may be defined by square meterage rather than by stated length x width dimensions (currently 32m x 32m). It was agreed that at present there was no necessity to make any amendments to existing regulations in this respect as ring size could be larger if required.

ITEM 17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

141. It was noted that the Council's next meeting would take place on 12 July 2018. All items for the agenda must be submitted by 13 April 2018.
142. Council members were reminded of the importance of ensuring that all reports were lodged with the office in time for them to be circulated with

the agenda to allow adequate time for consideration by the agility community prior to Council meetings taking place.

143. It was also highlighted by the office that the current term of office would expire on 31 December 2018, and that the election process for the next three year term would commence within the next few months.

The meeting closed at 3.20 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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