

**MINUTES OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
THURSDAY 12 JULY 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
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 - Governance & Education
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. All members of the Council were present.
2. The Chairman wished to record his thanks to all those who had carried out a great deal of work since the previous meeting in order to prepare detailed proposals, in consultation with the Agility community, for the Council's consideration.

**ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 were approved.

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

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

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)  
(Effective 1 January 2019)

**Note:** the Activities Committee had challenged the Council's view that the issue was one of health and safety, and accordingly the Board had approved the above Regulation amendment to come into effect on 1 January 2019 and not 1 July 2018 as recommended by the Council.

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)  
(Effective 1 July 2018)

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)  
(Effective 1 July 2018)

#### Height of dog walk

5. It was agreed that discussion of the issue should be deferred until later in the meeting when it would be considered alongside other related issues (paragraphs 103-110 refer).

#### Restrictions on shows held on the same date

6. Following a discussion at its previous meeting regarding 'clashes' of dates, the Council noted that a new Customer Relationship Management database was currently under development by the Kennel Club, however this would not be in place until 2020. Until such time as the new system

came into operation, it would not be possible to implement measures relating to clashing shows, such as the restriction of licences for shows within a specified distance of each other. A further discussion on the issue would take place at the Council's meeting in January 2019 with a view to considering whether any changes to the current procedures were necessary, and if so, what changes would be required.

#### **ITEM 4. JUDGES SUB-GROUP (ACTIVITIES)**

7. The Council noted a written report from Mr Huckle on the progress of the Judges Sub-Group following its meeting on 2 May 2018. It was agreed that the report would be considered together with issues arising from the Judging Panel's report (item 10 on the agenda).

##### Kennel Club Academy

8. The Council noted that additional films on specific agility-related issues would be added to the Academy in due course, when resources allowed.

##### Numbers of judges withdrawing from judging

9. It was noted that the Sub-Group was of the view that there was an issue in agility, which was not widely reflected in other disciplines. It appeared that there were a number of reasons as to why agility judges did not wish to continue judging, including having to judge high numbers of dogs, resulting in very long and onerous days; the necessity to keep up with changes to H Regulations; and fear of negative feedback via social media.
10. The Council acknowledged the Sub-Group's concerns, and suggested that, in order to understand the extent of the problem, all existing agility judges be contacted by the Kennel Club to ask if they were still undertaking appointments. However, it was noted that at present there was no definitive list available of agility judges as the only list held by the Kennel Club related to those who had undertaken and passed the Agility Judges examination, or had attended an Agility Judges Seminar and passed the accompanying assessment. Further, it was unlikely that such a measure would achieve a significant response rate and would not therefore provide helpful information.
11. A concern was also expressed that some judges may be lost to the discipline due to the cost of joining the Kennel Club Academy, however it was hoped that such losses would be minimal.
12. The Council discussed the role of social media in relation to the loss of judges. It accepted that adverse comments were sometimes posted on social media but it was hoped that the judges training process would ensure that judges had sufficient knowledge and confidence to not be unduly affected by them. It was acknowledged that the Kennel Club did not have jurisdiction on postings made on social media, and could only act in the case of a very serious issue being reported. The Council was

reminded of the Kennel Club's policy regarding the use of social media, which may be found at:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/press-releases/2014/september/kennel-club-issues-advice-on-social-media-use/>

13. The use of the Incident Book was briefly discussed due to a concern that many judges and competitors were unaware of its existence or how it should be used. It was highlighted by the office that a comprehensive guide to its use was available on the Kennel Club website at: <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/incidents-at-events/>
14. It was also noted that judges may face challenges from handlers during the course of a judging appointment. Although ways of handling such situations were included during the judges' training process, it was suggested that it may be helpful to provide assertiveness training to assist judges in dealing calmly and effectively with difficult situations.
15. Judging for excessively long hours during the course of a day was highlighted as being a key issue for many judges. Although when accepting an appointment, judges who had concerns about a long day's judging were able to state a limit on the number of classes they were prepared to judge, some were reluctant to do so as they felt there was a stigma attached to such a request.

#### Mentoring of new judges

16. The issue of mentoring was considered, and it was suggested that it be made mandatory. The Council was of the view that such a step would be well received, although it was acknowledged that there were sometimes difficulties in appointing mentors.
17. It was suggested that some Accredited Trainers did not wish to mentor as they were not permitted to run in the class for which they were mentoring, however it was emphasised that this was in the interests of fairness to all, as mentors had sight of relevant course plans beforehand. It was emphasised that mentors were free to run dogs in other classes at the same show.
18. It was agreed that the issue of compulsory mentoring should be discussed at the Accredited Trainers Annual Seminar due to take place on 9 October 2018 at Clarges Street.

#### Appointment of Accredited Trainers

19. The Council was pleased to note that a press release inviting potential applicants to apply to join the existing team of Accredited Trainers had received a good response, and a number of applicants were being assessed.

#### Refresher Training

20. The Sub-Group had supported the Council's view that agility judges, at all levels, should be required to pass the Agility Judges Regulations and Judging Procedure examination every five years.
21. The Council requested that both the Judging Panel and the Activities Judges Sub-Group give further consideration to issues facing agility judges, in light of the Council's views on the matter. The issue would be placed on the agenda for further discussion at the Council's next meeting.

#### **ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP**

22. The Council noted a written report from Mr Chandler on the progress of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group following its meeting on 16 January 2018. The main issues relating to agility were as follows:

##### Warming up film

23. The Sub-Group was in the process of developing content for a film to be placed on the Kennel Club Academy regarding warming up of dogs prior to competing, subject to budget approval. It was acknowledged that there were different ways of warming up dogs within the various disciplines and this would be reflected in the film.

##### Veterinary assessments

24. The issue of veterinary assessments at Prestige Agility Events was discussed. The matter remained under review, and further details would be issued in due course.

##### Measuring methods

25. A further report on the use of a digital measure and a measuring stick would be considered at the next Sub-Group meeting. However, for the foreseeable future, the measuring hoop would remain in use as the main method of measuring.

#### **ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL**

26. The Council noted a written report from the Equipment Panel, and considered the issues raised.

##### Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.i.

27. The Council was requested to consider an amendment to the above Regulation which was submitted by the Equipment Panel. The amendment was proposed by Mrs Gardner and seconded by Miss Hudson.
28. The proposal was considered alongside a proposal submitted by Mr S Daniell (agenda item 11.a. referred). Mr Huckle proposed the amendment submitted by Mr Daniell, however, it was not seconded and accordingly was not discussed further.

29. The Council noted that pipe tunnels were manufactured and sold in metric sizes, and the proposed amendment submitted by the Equipment Panel reflected this. It also sought to clarify the configuration of tunnels that may be used by specifying that a single curve was permissible. The Council was in agreement with the views of the Panel, and accordingly **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.i.

**TO:**

Pipe Tunnel—This obstacle should have a diameter of a minimum of ~~609mm (2ft)~~ **600mm (1ft 11.6ins)** and should be a minimum of ~~3.048m (10ft)~~ **3000mm (9ft 10.1ins)** in length. **The tunnel may only curve in a single direction.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

Guidance for use of the pipe tunnel

30. The Council noted that the Panel had provided guidance for use of the pipe tunnel in relation to the depth of the curve and the number of fixings that should be used. A number of minor amendments were agreed, and a revised document would be produced and circulated to all Council members for approval. Subject to approval by the Activities Judges Sub-Group, the guidance would in due course be incorporated into the Judges' Guide to Agility Equipment.

Incident Book

31. The office was requested to ensure that any incidents reported to the Kennel Club relating to issues with equipment were referred to the Equipment Panel. However, it was noted that very few such incidents were being reported. Mrs Hawkswell would ensure that such reports from shows in Scotland would also be submitted to the Panel.

Approval of Equipment

32. The Panel had attempted to arrange a meeting with equipment suppliers but it had not proved possible to do so. The Council requested that the office contact equipment suppliers to remind them that new equipment must be approved prior to its use. It was highlighted that a letter had previously been sent to all suppliers, but the office agreed to issue a further letter to remind them of the procedure.
33. A concern was raised as to the basis on which approval was issued by the Equipment Panel for any changes in design. It was confirmed that the role of the Panel was to ensure that all equipment was compliant with the specifications set out in the H Regulations, but that it was the responsibility of suppliers to ensure that the design of any equipment was safe. Judges at a show were required to check that equipment used in their ring was in a safe condition.

Tyre for Large dogs competing at Lower Height Option

34. The Panel wished to suggest that in the event of no change being made to jump heights, the height of the tyre for Large Lower Height dogs

should be reconsidered. It was agreed this issue would be considered later in the meeting if necessary.

#### Dog Walk

35. The Panel had received reports of dog walks with excessive bounce over a period of time, and requested that any further reports relating to this issue be referred to it.

#### Breakaway Tyre

36. In response to a query, it was clarified that the breakaway tyre may be considered to be displaced should it break open, and the dog would therefore incur faults.

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

37. The Council noted a written report from the Grading Panel regarding its activities since the Council's previous meeting.
38. The report consolidated the discussions which took place at the Council's meeting on 18 January 2018 in respect of the grading structure, and provided firm proposals for amendments to H Regulations which, if approved, would be implemented on 1 January 2019.
39. The objective of the proposals was to address issues arising from dogs progressing through the grades too quickly, for a number of reasons including:
- Very small numbers in some classes
  - A high number of graded classes
  - Shows offering a large number of wins to a relatively small number of dogs – primarily by grading small classes rather than combining them
  - Variability in course times
  - High volume of long weekend and week shows
  - Variability in numbers of dogs in each height category – dogs in Small and Medium tend to move up grades more quickly than Large, simply on the basis of numbers competing
  - Number of classes available to enter per day
  - Grade 1-7 graded classes not offering enough challenges for all the grades, or setting a course time which was too lenient
40. The Panel had considered the use of a weighted progression system which would resolve some of these problems by balancing out the variability in class size. However to be effective it would require a central database which would not be available for at least a further two years. Such a system may also be considered divisive by competitors because of the variability in the numbers between height categories.

41. The Panel therefore proposed a number of amendments to H Regulations with the object of addressing the issues identified above. However, it noted that the changes would not resolve the disparity between different heights, which was caused by the current variation in numbers of dogs competing in the Small, Medium and Large height categories.
42. It was noted that the Panel had suggested a reduction in the number of grades from seven to six. However, the Council accepted that feedback from the agility community did not indicate any wish to do so, and accordingly the Council agreed that the number of grades should remain at seven. Other than this, the feedback indicated broad support for the Panel's suggestions.
43. The Council went on to discuss individual elements of the Panel's recommendations.

Proposed New Regulation H(1)(A)6

44. The proposal was made by Mrs Hawkswell and was seconded by Mr MacDonald. Under the terms of the proposal, shows would be restricted to offering no more than four standard (progression) classes per dog per day.
45. The Council was of the view that this was a positive step, and unanimously **recommended** the following new regulation:

New Regulation H(1)(A)6

**TO:**

**A maximum of four standard classes may be scheduled for any dog on an individual day of competition. Any number of special classes may be scheduled.**

(Insertions in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)6 Class Structure

46. The amendment was proposed by Mrs Hawkswell and seconded by Ms Hudson. The objective of the proposed amendment was to prevent graded classes from covering more than three grades. It was anticipated that doing so would assist judges in setting courses for graded classes which were appropriate for those competing in them. Any classes covering four or more grades would be combined.
47. The Council accepted the Panel's views, and unanimously **recommended** the proposal for approval:

Regulation H(1)(A)6

**TO:**

6. Class Structure. A Class may either be held as a Graded Class or a Combined Class. a Graded Class may be scheduled for ~~one or more~~ **a maximum of three** consecutive Grades with separate results and

awards issued for each grade. The eligibility for a Graded Class is detailed below. A Combined Class may be scheduled for more than one consecutive grade with one overall set of results. A Combined Class is open to any combination of dog and handler that qualifies for any of the Grades in that class.

(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)9

48. Under the terms of the proposal, wins in agility classes would be required at all levels, and wins at all levels would be required to progress through the grades. It was anticipated that this would result in progression being slowed.
49. Noting the Council's earlier agreement that seven grades should be retained, a revised proposal was made by Mrs Croxford to take this into account. Mr MacDonald seconded the revised proposal, in which all new dogs with experienced handlers would enter at Grade 2, rather than Grade 3 as was previously the case. It was accepted that due to low numbers of competitors in Grades 1 and 2, there was no necessity to continue to offer two protected grades, and that one would be sufficient.
50. Following a vote, the Council **recommended** for approval, by a majority, the following amendments:

Regulation H(1)(A)9

**TO:**

~~Progression. Progression from each Grade will require one Agility win or three Jumping wins in standard classes at that grade, at either Full Height or the Lower Height Option, except that progression from Grade 5 will require 3 wins at Grade 5, one of which must be an agility class. Progression from Grade 6 will require 4 wins at Grade 6, two of which must be agility classes. Results from Combined Classes will only count towards progression from the dog's current grade.~~

**Progression from Grade 1 will require the owner, dog or handler to have won two first places, one of which must be in an agility class. Progression from Grade 2 will require the dog to have won two first places, one of which must be in an agility class. Progression from Grade 3 will require the dog to have won three first places, two of which must be in an agility class. Progression from Grade 4 will require the dog to have won four first places, two of which must be in agility classes. Progression from Grade 5 will require the dog to have won four first places, two of which must be in agility classes. Progression from Grade 6 will require the dog to have won five first places, three of which must be in agility classes. Results from Combined Classes will only count towards progression from the dog's current grade. To count for progression wins must be gained in standard classes at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows.**

**Only a first place with a clear round completed within the course time set by the judge will count towards grade progression.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold/italics.)

**Note:** following the meeting, it was subsequently agreed that in the interests of clarity and brevity, the above Regulation would be replaced by the following:

Regulation H(1)(A)9

**TO:**

**Progression from each Grade will be determined by the eligibility for the class as referenced in H(1)(A)11. Results from Combined Classes will only count towards progression from the dog's current grade.**

**To count for progression wins must be gained in standard classes at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows.**

**Only a first place with a clear round completed within the course time set by the judge will count towards grade progression.**

(Insertion in bold)

Regulation H(1)(A)2

**TO:**

2. In the following definitions of classes First prize or other prize wins are those gained in standard classes at any Kennel Club licensed Championship agility, Premier agility, Open agility or Limited agility Shows (i.e. special classes and invitational events are excepted). ~~Only a first place with a clear round completed within the course time set by the judge will count towards grade progression.~~

(Deletion struck through)

Regulation H(1)(A)10 Points Progression

51. Mrs Hawkswell, on behalf of the Panel, wished to propose that progression would be permitted using Agility Warrant points up to the proposed new Grade 3, subject to a minimum of 50 points being obtained from agility classes. The proposal was seconded by Mr Chandler. (**Note:** the reference to new Grade 3 was made within the context of the proposal to reduce the number of grades to six, which was not supported by the Council – paragraph 43 refers.)
52. The Council supported the principle of the proposal but was of the view that in order to support those competing in lower grades, progression on points should be permitted up to Grade 4, as was currently the case. A revised proposal to this effect was made by Mrs Hawkswell and seconded by Mrs Baltes. A vote took place and, by a majority, the Council **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

Regulation H(1)(A)10

**TO:**

10. Points Progression. At the handler's discretion a dog may progress up to Grade 4 by winning 100 points at each grade, using the agility

Warrant points scheme, regulation K3.c refers, ~~except that there is no requirement for a minimum number of agility points.~~ **A minimum of 50 points must be gained in agility (not jumping) classes in the relevant grade.** If this method of progression is selected, the handler must ensure the Show Secretary signs the dog's agility record Book at the first show entered at the higher grade. There is no time limit on this progression, however, once a dog has progressed, it cannot return to a previous grade.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Regulation H(1)(A)11 Standard Classes

53. The Council recommended for approval amendments to the above Regulation in accordance with amendments to other Regulations as detailed above.
54. It was agreed that references to the dog's owner should remain in place for Grade 1.

Regulation H(1)(A)11

**TO:**

11. Standard Classes

Only first prizes and points gained in standard classes at Kennel Club licensed agility Shows may be used for progression through the classes. (A dog is only eligible for one grade). In defining the eligibility of the owner or handler for Grade 1, the ~~three~~ **two** jumping wins and points progression referred to in the definition apply only to one dog and not an accumulation of dogs.

a. Grade 1 (Elementary)

~~For owners, handlers or dogs which have not gained a first place in an agility class or three first places in Jumping Classes at Kennel Club licensed agility shows. N.B. Owners, handlers or dogs previously qualified out of Grade 1, (Elementary) are not eligible for this class.~~

**Open to owners, handlers or dogs which have not gained a minimum of two first places at Grade 1 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, at least one of which must be gained in an agility (not jumping) class. N.B Owners, handlers or dogs previously qualified out of Grade 1 are not eligible for this class.**

b. Grade 2 (Starters)

- ~~Open to dogs which are not eligible for Grades 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and have not~~
- ~~gained a first place in an agility Class or three first places in Jumping Classes at Grade 2 at Kennel Club licensed agility Shows, or elected to progress on points from Grade 1. N.B. Owners, handlers or dogs previously qualified out of Grade 2. (Starters) are not eligible for this class.~~ **Open to dogs which are not eligible for Grade 1 or have elected to progress on points from Grade 1 and are not eligible for Grade 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7.**

c. Grade 3 (Graduate)

- ~~Open to dogs which are not eligible for Grade 1 or 2 or have elected to progress on points from Grade 2 at Kennel Club licensed agility Shows and dogs which are not eligible for Grade 4, 5, 6 or 7.~~ **Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of two first places at Grade 2 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, one of which must be gained in agility (not jumping) classes, or have elected to progress on points from Grade 2 and are not eligible for Grade 2, 4, 5, 6 or 7.**
- d. Grade 4 (Novice)
- ~~Open to dogs which have gained a first place in an agility Class or three first places in Jumping Classes at Grade 3 or elected to progress on points from Grade 3 at Kennel Club licensed agility Shows and are not eligible for Grade 3, 5, 6 or 7.~~ **Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of three first places at Grade 3 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, two of which must be gained in agility (not jumping classes), or have elected to progress on points from Grade 3 and are not eligible for Grade 2, 3, 5, 6 or 7**
- e. Grade 5 (Intermediate)
- ~~Open to dogs which have gained a first place in an agility Class or three first places in Jumping Classes at Grade 4 at Kennel Club licensed agility Shows and are not eligible for Grade 3, 4, 6 or 7.~~ **Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of four first places at Grade 4 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, two of which must be gained in agility (not jumping) classes, and are not eligible for Grade 2, 3, 4, 6 or 7**
- f. Grade 6 (Senior)
- ~~Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of 3 first places at Grade 5 at Kennel Club licensed agility Shows, 1 first place must be gained in an agility (not Jumping) Class, and are not eligible for Grade 3, 4, 5 or 7.~~ **Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of five first places at Grade 5 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, three of which must be gained in agility (not jumping) classes, and are not eligible for Grade 2, 3, 4, 5 or 7.**
- g. Grade 7 (Advanced)
- ~~Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of 4 first places at Grade 6 at Kennel Club Licensed agility Shows, 2 first places must be gained in agility (not Jumping) Classes.~~ **Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of five first places at Grade 6 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, three of which must be gained in agility (not jumping) classes, and are not eligible for Grade 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6.**
- h. Championship Class.  
Open to dogs having qualified to compete in Grade 7 which have had 4 5 wins at Full Height in either Grade 6 or Grade 7, at least 2-3 of which must be gained in Agility classes. To consist of 2 qualifying rounds of Standard Kennel Club Classes, 1 Agility Class and 1 Jumping Class and a final round of Agility to be held at the same Show.  
(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)1(4) Standard Class Course Time

55. Mrs Hawkswell proposed the amendment, which was seconded by Mrs Gardner.
56. Under the terms of the proposal, use of the Kennel Club's course time matrix would become mandatory. It was noted that the matrix provided a range of times which allowed for a judge to take into account a number of factors including the complexity of the course, the range of grades competing, and ground and weather conditions.
57. The Council noted that the existing matrix was currently being reviewed by Mrs Shore, who was in the process of gathering data. Mrs Shore had indicated that it would be some time before it would be possible to issue an updated version.
58. It was noted that the matrix would be affected by potential changes to jump heights, and it was agreed that Mrs Shore should not carry out extensive work on developing an updated version until such time as this issue had been resolved and further information was available.
59. There was a concern that some judges did not measure courses accurately, as a result of which the course times indicated by the matrix may be slightly distorted, although it was accepted that the effect would be minimal. It was confirmed that measuring of courses was covered during judges' training seminars and that inaccurate measuring should not be a frequent occurrence.
60. Whilst the existing matrix was not ideal, the Council was in agreement that it offered an acceptable basis for the calculation of course times and that making its use mandatory would impose restrictions on judges who wished to review course times outside the matrix guidance due to external factors, course design, weather, ground conditions etc. However, it was agreed that course times indicated by the matrix should not be extended.
61. The Council indicated its support for the principle of the proposal but considered that a revised proposal should be submitted in due course under the terms of which the use of the matrix would be mandatory. Accordingly it agreed to **defer** further consideration of the proposal subject to a review of the matrix and the submission of a revised proposal. However, in the meantime it agreed that a note should be added to the existing matrix to state that course times indicated by the matrix may not be extended.

Championship classes

62. It was noted that none of the Panel's recommendations covered any increased eligibility for Championship classes, or addressed the numbers competing in such classes. It was suggested that the issue

should be reviewed once changes to the progression structure had taken effect. A review in two years' time was suggested.

5-year moratorium

63. The Council **recommended** that a 5-year moratorium be placed on any further changes to the progression structure, with the exception of minor amendments or corrections if necessary, and any changes relating to Championship classes, in order to allow the impact of the current changes to grading and progression to be fully assessed before making any further changes.
64. The Grading Panel was thanked for the considerable effort which had gone into preparing the proposals.

**ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL**

65. The Council noted a written report from the Agility Governance Panel.

Kennel Club Governance

66. The Council noted that the Kennel Club's review of all governance structures was still in progress but no further information was as yet available.

Review of H Regulations

67. It was noted that the Panel had discussed a review of H regulations and ways in which an updated and concise set of H regulations may be produced. However it was acknowledged that this could not be carried out until proposed amendments had been approved by the Board. It was hoped that a discussion paper would be available for consideration by the Council at its meeting in July 2019.

Judges Guide to Equipment

68. It was acknowledged that an update of the Guide would be needed to include any changes resulting from the proposals on jump heights. It was anticipated that a draft would be available for review at the Council's meeting in January 2019.

Review timetable

69. The Council noted a proposed timetable for the dates on which issues under consideration by the various Panels should be reviewed, recommended, and implemented. It was intended that the document would replace the existing five-year plan, and would enable all issues to be reviewed on a systematic and timely basis, taking into account the timeframes for consideration of recommendations by the Activities Committee and the Board.
70. There were mixed views as to whether the embargo on proposals which had been in effect over the Council's term of office had been effective, and it was agreed that it was necessary to take a pragmatic approach to

ensure that proposals were considered on a timely basis within an overall structure.

71. It was in agreement that the timetable offered a structured and sensible approach to reviewing major issues, and agreed its use, subject to some minor amendments.

**(Annex A to the minutes refers)**

## **ITEM 9. REPORT FROM THE HEIGHT CLASSIFICATION PANEL**

**Note:** at a later point in the meeting (paragraphs 85 - 86 refer) the Council recommended for approval the removal of imperial measurements from all parts of the H Regulations. This is reflected in all recommendations for amendments to Regulations as noted below.

### Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3

72. The Council considered two alternative proposals for amendments to Regulation H(1)(B)3. relating to jump heights.
73. It was noted that feedback from the agility community indicated widespread support for the introduction of a fourth measured height. Mrs Croxford proposed the amendment which was seconded by Mrs Baltes. By a majority, the Council **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

Regulation H(1)(B)3

**TO:**

- a. Hurdle – The height of the hurdle must be ~~650mm (2ft 1.6ins)~~ ~~(550mm (1ft 9.6ins) for Lower Height Option)~~ **600mm** for Large Dogs, **500mm for Intermediate Dogs**, ~~450mm (1ft 5.7ins)~~ ~~(350mm (1ft 1.75ins) for Lower Height Option)~~ **400mm** for Medium Dogs and ~~350mm (1ft 1.75ins)~~ ~~(250mm (9.8ins) for Lower Height Option)~~ **300mm** for Small Dogs. Width: 1.219m (4ft) minimum. ~~The top bar or plank~~ **All bars, planks and fillers** must be easily displaced by the dog. **The inner upright of the wings must be a minimum of 900mm with no unnecessary protrusions.** ~~A wall should have displaceable units on the top.~~ The height of hurdles in special classes may be lower than those listed above, but the height(s) must be included in the schedule.

### Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)2

74. The Council went on to consider a proposal made by Mr Cavill and seconded by Mrs Hawkswell. Taking into account feedback from the agility community, it was in agreement with the proposal which was accordingly **recommended** for approval as follows:

H(1)(B)2 Height Limit for Dogs

**TO:**

2. Height Limit for Dogs

- a. Large Dogs – For dogs measuring over ~~430mm (1ft 5ins)~~ **500mm** at the withers.
- b. **Intermediate Dogs – For dogs measuring over 430mm and measuring 500mm or under at the withers.**
- c. Medium Dogs – For dogs measuring over 350mm (~~1ft 1.75ins~~) and measuring 430mm (~~1ft 5ins~~) or under at the withers.
- d. Small Dogs – For dogs measuring 350mm (~~1ft 1.75ins~~) or under at the withers.

**Note:** Further details of the rationale for the above recommendation are included at **Annex B to the minutes.**

- 75. A query was raised by the office in respect of the timeframe for implementation of the revised Regulations. It was noted that the recommendations as above were subject to approval by the Activities Committee and by the Board, and that approval, if given, would not be confirmed until the end of October 2018. It would not be possible to make any announcements prior to that date. There was some concern that an effective date of 1 January 2019 for the new Regulations would not permit adequate time for clubs and equipment suppliers to fully prepare.
- 76. Further, it was acknowledged that it would be necessary to make adequate provision for dogs to be measured into the new height, if approved. This would involve the manufacture of new measuring hoops for the Intermediate size, the supply of new hoops to measurers, and the arrangement of a sufficient number of measuring sessions. It was accepted that there may be difficulties in ensuring the provision of opportunities for measuring for all new dogs, and for existing large dogs whose owners wished them to be remeasured.
- 77. It was suggested that it may be possible to arrange one or two measuring days in a central location, with a number of measurers present. This would maximise opportunities for dogs to be measured into Intermediate for those owners wishing to compete at that height as soon as shows were able to schedule suitable classes.
- 78. It was confirmed that there would be a transition period whereby dogs currently competing in large would have up to two years in which to get their dogs remeasured, should they wish to do so. However such dogs would not be permitted to compete at the Intermediate height until measured at that height.
- 79. One suggestion was that in view of the logistical difficulties, implementation may be delayed until January 2020. However it was highlighted that the agility community was very keen for a fourth height to be implemented at the earliest opportunity and any delay in doing so would not be well received.

80. It was acknowledged that although there would be some challenges involved in implementing a new height structure on 1 January 2019, a relatively small number of handlers and dogs wishing to move from Large to Intermediate would be affected, and that any difficulties would not be of long duration.
81. The Council was of the view that the wishes of the agility community should be paramount and accordingly, following a vote, it **recommended** by a majority that the above amendments should come into effect on 1 January 2019.

Regulation amendments relating to equipment

82. Further to the above proposals, the Council considered a number of amendments to H Regulations which would be necessary should the introduction of a 4<sup>th</sup> height and other associated changes to jump heights and dog heights be approved.
83. A number of specific issues were discussed, as follows:
- Hurdles: it was agreed that the relevant Regulation should specify a minimum height for the inner upright of the wing.
  - Tyre: a discussion took place regarding the height of the tyre for Intermediate dogs. It was agreed that the height should be 650mm.
  - Wall: A new and separate Regulation would be included to specify dimensions for the wall.
  - Tolerances: it was agreed that it was not necessary to specify tolerances for all equipment dimensions within the H Regulations, but that a tolerance table should be included within the revised Judges Guide to Agility Equipment.
84. A number of amendments to Regulations relating to height changes were **recommended** for approval. A full list is included in **Annex C to the minutes**.

Removal of imperial measures in H Regulations

85. The Council considered a proposal made by Mrs Croxford that all imperial measurements be removed from the H Regulations. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Gardner.
86. It was of the view that the metric system was in widespread use and there was no necessity for both systems to be referred to within the Regulations. Accordingly it unanimously **recommended** for approval the removal of imperial measurements from all parts of the H Regulations. Details of relevant amendments to Regulations not covered elsewhere within the minutes are listed in **Annex D to the minutes**.

**ITEM 10. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL**

87. The Council noted a written report from the Judging Panel.
88. The issues raised had been discussed earlier in the meeting under item 4 (paragraphs 7 - 21 refer) and no further discussion was necessary.

**ITEM 11. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.i

89. The proposal submitted by Mr S Daniell was considered earlier in the meeting (paragraph 28 refers.)

Proposed new Regulation H(1)10.h

90. Tunbridge Wells and District Canine Society, represented by Mr Chandler, requested that the Council consider the introduction of a new Regulation restricting the use of whistles. The proposal was made by Mr Chandler and was seconded by Mrs Gardner.
91. The Council noted that it was possible for show organisers to state in their schedules that whistles may not be used in standard classes. However there were concerns that some judges may wish to use whistles even if requested not to do so.
92. Feedback from the agility community indicated mixed views as to whether a Regulation amendment was necessary. The Council concluded that the use of whistles within standard classes was unnecessary as existing signalling systems were quite adequate. Further, it agreed that whistles may be a cause of confusion if used in several rings, and that their use may cause anxiety in some dogs.
93. By a majority, the Council **recommended** for approval the following new Regulation:

Regulation H(1)10.h

**TO:**

**Whistles must not be used for signalling that dogs and handlers are under test nor for signalling an elimination in standard classes.**

(Insertion in bold)

**ITEM 12. DISCUSSION ITEMS**Parking around rings

94. Mr Huckle presented the item on behalf of Cornwall Agility Club.
95. The Council was requested to discuss the issue of cars being parked immediately adjacent to rings, which had led to concerns regarding emergency access and the risk of dogs being startled whilst competing which could result in accidents and injuries occurring.

96. It agreed that this was a matter for show organisers who should consider parking arrangements as part of their risk assessment, and should ensure that the risk assessment was adhered to for the duration of the show. Accordingly, it did not consider that any action was necessary.

Appointment of up contact judges

97. Mr N Ellis, represented by Mr I MacDonald, requested the Council to discuss whether there should be an additional regulation to permit show committees to appoint an additional 'up contact' judge for the agility and final rounds of Championship classes, with the specific purpose of assisting the Championship judge in marking the up contact of the dog walk.
98. Mr Ellis was of the view that with the greater number of dogs entering Championship classes, there was a concern that judges may find it challenging to consistently mark both the up and down contacts, especially as some dogs were completing the dog walk very quickly.
99. However the Council was concerned that it may prove difficult to appoint an adequate number of judges at every show. It was also of the view that it would not be fair on competitors to limit the provision only to Championship classes, and if introduced, should be for all agility classes, which was not practical.
100. It did not support the discussion item and was not of the view that any action was necessary.

Height of pivot point on the seesaw

101. Mrs Olden presented the discussion item on behalf of Mr M Bacon, who wished the Council to discuss a suggestion that the maximum height of the seesaw plank, measured at the pivot point, be amended to 60cm. Mr Bacon was of the view that a health and safety issue existed, particularly for small or light dogs which had to run to the end of the seesaw plank to make it tip. Further, he wished to take an opportunity to align the Regulation with the existing regulation applicable in FCI competitions, which stated that the height should be 60cm measured from the ground to the top of the plank at the central pivot point.
102. The Council noted that Regulation H(1)(B)3.m stated that the height of the central bracket measured from the ground to the top of the plank should be 610mm minimum and 685mm maximum. It was of the view that it would be desirable for all seesaws to be of a single standardised height, and it requested that the matter be referred to the Equipment Panel for detailed consideration. A report would be provided to the Council at its January meeting.

Dog Walk

103. The issue of the Dog Walk was considered, having been deferred earlier in the meeting (paragraph 5 refers).

104. The Council noted that the Activities Committee, at its meeting on 22 March 2018, considered the Council's proposal for an amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.n which would reduce the height of the dog walk by 15.2cm (6 ins), with the objective of reducing the risk of injury to competing dogs. The Committee noted that the proposed change would bring the height of the dog walk into line with that used in competitions run under FCI rules, but was not of the view that this should be a factor in reaching a decision, noting that only a minority of UK competitors competed in overseas competitions.
105. The Committee had no inherent objection to the height of the dog walk being reduced, but noted that no evidence had been presented to indicate that it would have a positive effect on reducing the risk of injury. It therefore requested that the Council reconsider the proposal with a view to providing a stronger rationale to support it.
106. The Council highlighted that the proposal had been very well supported by the agility community.
107. A discussion took place as to whether the Equipment Panel should be requested to carry out a detailed review of all three items of contact equipment, i.e. the dog walk, A-frame, and seesaw.
108. The Council concluded that the Equipment Panel should review the A-frame alongside its review of the seesaw which had been requested earlier in the meeting.
109. However, it was agreed that the dog walk should be considered as a separate issue. The Council was of the view that it would be greatly beneficial for the specification for the dog walk to be amended to bring it into line with the specification used by other national and international organisations as this would be highly advantageous to competitors wishing to take part in overseas competitions, but also highlighted that the European Open (EO) competition would take place in the UK in 2020, and would attract up to 64 UK competitors. The event would be held under FCI regulations and it was considered that UK competitors would benefit greatly from having had the opportunity to compete at Kennel Club licensed shows with the dog walk at the same height which would be use at the EO in 2020.
110. There was also a concern that some overseas competitors may be discouraged from competing at shows licensed by the Kennel Club due to the difference in the height of the dog walk, although it was noted that the International Agility Festival attracted a high number of entries from international competitors.
111. Mr Cavill agreed to prepare a suitable proposal which would be submitted to the Activities Committee for consideration at its meeting in September.

**ITEM 13. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL**

112. The Council noted a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 9-12 August 2018.

- The venue would once again be Rockingham Castle. The venue had also been provisionally booked for 2019, 2020 and 2021.
- The Festival would continue to be a four day event with qualifiers for Crufts, Discover Dogs and the Kennel Club Nations Cup. The Festival was also again hosting Kennel Club Olympia Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals.
- Trade stand spaces were full with 55 traders having booked spaces.
- Online and postal entries had been processed by FPP/Long Hedge processing, as well as for camping. FPP would be providing real time results during the event.
- Camping spaces were fully booked with a number on the waiting list. Entries had closed on 14 June 2018.
- First Contact was the main 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 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

113. The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking all current members of the Council for their hard work during the current term of office, as a result of which a great deal of progress had been made. Special thanks were given to those who were retiring from their roles as Council members on 31 December 2018.

114. The office was also thanked for its support over the past three years.

**ITEM 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

115. The Council noted that the date of the next meeting would be confirmed in September 2018.

**The meeting closed at 3.40 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'**