

**MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
THURSDAY 11 JULY 2019 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

A G E N D A

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

(Pages 13 - 16)

a. Membership of Activities Judges Sub-Group

The Council is invited to note that its meeting on 9 April 2019 the Board had approved the appointment of Mrs Gardner to the Activities Judges Sub-Group.

b. Introduction of Intermediate height

At its January meeting, the Council had discussed the implications of the new dog heights on qualifying events and it had requested that information regarding the relevant timescales be issued as soon as possible. It is invited to note that a press release was issued on 12 April 2019 regarding the new arrangements.

The press release may be viewed at:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/press-releases/2019/april/agility-arrangements-announced-for-crufts-and-olympia-2020/>

FAQs may be viewed at:

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1159962/regulation-change-faqs.pdf>

c. Restrictions on shows held on the same date

At its previous meeting, the Council noted that until such time as the new Customer Relationship Management 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. It was hoped that it may be possible for the new system to incorporate, in due course, measures regarding show dates.

The Agility Governance Panel had been requested to consider ways in which the issue may be addressed, and to make recommendations for features to be included within the CRM database, subject to practicality and the availability of resources. The Council is invited to consider the views of the Panel, with a view to making recommendations for consideration by the Activities Committee, which are included in the Panel's report under Item 7.a.

d. Issues faced by agility judges

At its January meeting, the Council had discussed concerns regarding the number of agility judges who were retiring from judging, and the Judging Panel had been requested to consider each of the main issues relating to judges, and to suggest possible solutions to them.

The Council is invited to consider the views of the Judging Panel as detailed in item 8.

e. Colour of Equipment

The subject of equipment colour was discussed by the Council at its January meeting. It had noted the issue of a dog's vision and the impact on the colours used for Agility equipment had been examined by the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group some time ago.

It is invited to note the relevant report and to discuss whether any further action is necessary.

(Annex A refers)

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

The Council is invited to note a report from Mrs Gardner following the Sub-Group's meeting on 11 April 2019, as follows:

The only items that were relevant to agility were:

The Assessment of Accredited Trainers

It was noted that several disciplines had Accredited Trainers who needed to be reassessed, including Agility. The Judges Sub-Group Members will be looking at getting these assessments completed as soon as possible.

The Kennel Club Academy

The Sub-Group discussed the progress of scripts for the Academy for all disciplines.

Agility seems to be ahead on this, with the plan that our scripts are completed in May and filming of the videos to take place in August. These will be simple 5 minute videos showing how to judge individual pieces of equipment.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

The Sub-Group's meeting due to be held on 14 January 2019 was cancelled due to lack of business but matters requiring attention in the intervening period would be addressed via email. The Sub-Group's next meeting will be on 19 September 2019.

ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL (Pages 17 - 18)

- a. The Council is invited to note a report from the Equipment Panel, and to discuss any issues arising from it.

(Annex B refers)

- b. Height of pivot point on the see-saw

At its January meeting, the Council considered a proposal from the Equipment Panel for an amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.m., under the terms of which the height of the central bracket measured from the ground to the top of the plank would be 610mm.

It had deferred further consideration pending submission of a revised proposal to be made by the Equipment Panel, which would be made in light of the views of equipment manufacturers. The Council is invited to note that the Panel was in the process of gathering additional data, but in the meantime it wished to recommend that schedules should state details of the supplier of the equipment.

Further details are provided in the Panel's written report.

- c. Removal of the Table from the list of obstacles

At its previous meeting the Council had considered whether the Table should be removed from the list of obstacles as specified in Regulation H(1)(B)3.e.

It had concluded that neither the Table nor the Pause Box should be removed from the list of obstacles without adequate consideration being given as to whether they may be used in a more productive way and the Equipment Panel was requested to review their use.

The Council is invited to note that the Panel has been unable to recommend a robust method for use of the Table, and would the thoughts of the agility community. If no practical solution is forthcoming further consideration would be given to removal of the Table as part of the upcoming review.

ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL (Pages 19 - 22)

- a. The Council is invited to note a report from the Agility Governance Panel, and to discuss any issues arising from it.
(Annex C refers)
- b. Championship Status
At its January meeting, the Council had noted that applications for Championship Agility status were considered by the Activities Committee on a case by case basis and that there was no set list of criteria available for publication.

The Council had agreed that a specific set of criteria for applications for championship status should be formulated by the Agility Governance Panel and submitted to the Activities Committee for its consideration.

The Council is invited to note the update on the matter provided within the Panel's report.

- c. Issues relating to show management
At its previous meeting, the Council noted that no review of shows where the management of the show had been outsourced would be carried out unless a specific concern was identified and reported to the office.

The Agility Governance Panel was requested to formulate a method of ensuring that, where an issue relating to show management was identified, it was automatically flagged up and reported to the office for the appropriate steps to be taken.

The Council is invited to discuss the matter.

ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL (Pages 23 - 24)

- a. The Council is invited to note the revised remit of the Judging Panel, as follows:
- The Judging Panel's remit is to look at ways of helping and supporting judges in all aspects of the role of being a judge
 - To regularly assess and update all literature pertaining to judges
 - To review any incidents sent to the Kennel Club/Scottish Kennel Club regarding judges and judging
 - To support and pass on ideas on how to improve judges' training and mentoring.
 - To give feedback to the Activities Judges Sub-Group
- b. It is invited to note a report from the Panel, and to consider any issues arising from it.
(Annex D refers)

c. Increase of Minimum and Maximum Number of Obstacles

At its previous meeting, the Council discussed a number of suggested changes to the current Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3) regarding the minimum and maximum number of obstacles that may be used in an agility or jumping course.

The Council did not raise any major objection to increasing either the minimum or maximum number of obstacles in a course, and it was agreed that the Judging Panel would prepare a formal proposal, in consultation with Miss Grantham.

It is invited to note a proposal as follows:

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

TO:

(3) Design—The course should require a dog to traverse at least 40 ~~obstacles but not more than 20~~ **15 obstacles but not more than 22** and all jump obstacles in any class should be the same height. All obstacles should have a minimum of 5m and up to a maximum of 10m between centres of consecutive obstacles using the straight line centre-to-centre method.

Rationale

Safe, grade appropriate course design is an essential skill for all agility judges. Judges must ensure that they meet all KC requirements regarding which obstacles must be included in standard progression agility and jumping classes, and also ensure that they are providing safe, challenging and value for money courses for competitors.

The current minimum of 10 obstacles for a standard progression class where mandatory weaves (one obstacle) in jumping classes and contacts (four obstacles) in agility must be included, quite clearly is no longer an up to date minimum. In a standard agility class, setting a course of 10 obstacles of which four are mandatory will not provide value for money or a challenge for competitors. When enquiring with current judges the amount of obstacles on average they use, it was clear that this was around 18-20. Therefore it is proposed that the minimum be raised to 15, to ensure judges are designing grade appropriate challenges in all standard progression classes, and this should support the recent grading structure that was implemented on 1 January 2019.

However, if the minimum is increased to 15, then this would only give judges five obstacles different between the minimum and current maximum number of obstacles that they are allowed to include in their courses, when currently there is a ten obstacle difference. Therefore to provide judges with more scope to produce challenging courses, it is proposed that the maximum be increased to 22, giving judges a seven-obstacle difference between minimum and maximum number of obstacles in a standard class.

Upon discussion with judges, there was support to increase both the minimum and maximum number of obstacles, as many have designed courses and have had to remove certain tests within courses to ensure they stayed within the maximum 20 obstacles required. This would also help championship level judges as mandatory equipment is increase in Championship classes to include the long jump and tyre, mandatory obstacles in Championship jumping is increase to three, Championship agility is increased to six. Therefore this would give judges more opportunity to include extra obstacles and tests within their courses if required, however it is not mandatory and they could continue to use less as long as it is above the minimum.

The only implication to this change is that it could affect the course time matrix, however this is to be reviewed due to the introduction of the min and max metres between obstacles and the new intermediate height. Therefore, it is proposed that this be implemented on 1 January 2020 alongside the new intermediate height.

d. Regulation H 28.a.(9) (Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards)

At its January meeting, the Council considered an amendment to the above Regulation under the terms of which judges would be permitted to judge a spouse, immediate family member or a dog resident at the same address in all classes at Kennel Club Licenced shows, with no exceptions.

The Council was unanimous in its support of amending the Regulations to allow a judge to judge his or her spouse and the Judging Panel was requested to formulate a formal proposal.

The Council is invited to consider the proposal, as follows:

Regulation H 28.a.(9) Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards

TO:

a. A dog may be disqualified by the Board from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not, if proved amongst other things to have been;

~~(9) Handled by the scheduled judge's spouse, immediate family or is resident at the same address as the scheduled judge. This shall not apply to a judge appointed in an emergency.~~

(Deletions struck through. Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered).

Rationale

Full details of the rationale for the proposal are included within the Judging Panel's report.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALSMs R Kinloch
Agility WarrantMrs Y Croxford

Ms Kinloch, an individual, wishes the Council to consider a proposal to extend the Agility Warrant System from its current ceiling of 1600 points to provide for an additional Warrant to be awarded at a level of 2000 points. An amendment to Regulation K3.c. would be necessary, as follows:

Regulation K3.c.

TO:

...The requirements for the ~~five~~ **six** levels of warrant, Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, ~~and~~ **Diamond and (name to be agreed)** are:

Bronze	200 points (minimum of 50 points in agility)
Silver	400 points (minimum of 100 points in agility)
Gold	800 points (minimum of 200 points in agility)
Platinum	1200 points (minimum of 300 points in agility)
Diamond	1600 points (minimum of 400 points in agility)
[Name to be agreed]	2000 points (minimum of 500 points in agility)

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

Rationale

The provision of an additional Warrant level would offer a motivational challenge to those handlers who enjoy accumulating and striving for points, especially those who wish to retain a positive focus despite having progressed through all of the grades. It would also continue to promote loyalty to competing at Kennel Club licensed shows. Administration of an additional level should not be problematic.

The table below shows the number of Agility Warrants awarded in the last five years up until January 2019:

	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum	Diamond
2013	380	244	126	-	-
2014	438	298	120	-	-
2015	380	292	140	1	-
2016	444	284	168	48	6
2017	431	256	152	81	36
2018	301	253	108	52	37

These figures may increase as more competitors wish to progress beyond the existing Diamond Warrant. The revised Grade progression structure is also likely to encourage people to make more use of the Warrant system.

Suggested names for the new Agility Warrant are Topaz, Emerald, or Moonstone.

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Otley Dog Training Society Mr K Smith
Kennel Club Qualifiers

The Society requests the Council to discuss whether it would be possible for the Kennel Club to:

- Publish the criteria used when selecting shows to hold Kennel Club qualifiers
- Provide feedback to clubs on the reasons why they were not chosen
- Consider a redistribution of qualifiers so that there is a more even spread across clubs wishing to host them.

The Council is invited to note that the Kennel Club's policy is to support registered societies by giving preference to those clubs which did not already host a qualifier, provided there was not another club within close proximity which already hosted a qualifier for the same competition.

- b. Miss E Clark Mr I MacDonald
Bells on a dog's collar for visually impaired handlers

Miss Clark wishes the Council to consider to whether the Regulation H(1)10c should be amended to allow for visually impaired handlers to attach bells to their dog's collar if they wish to do so. The Regulation currently states that: 'Dogs must not wear any type of slip, half-slip collar or lead when under test. A single flat, close fitting 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.'

Rationale

Allowing bells on a dog's collar would have a positive effect on the perception of the inclusivity of agility by encouraging the participation of a diverse handler demographic.

It would assist handlers with visual impairments to keep track of their dog whilst in the ring, and would also allow such handlers more opportunity and time to see the equipment in the ring thus contributing to safety.

Bells would be attached by a safe method, with the welfare of the dog in mind, but would be able to sound without muffle. Miss Clark suggests the use of a breakaway collar with bells securely attached to it, or a collar with a single magnet clasp, either of which would easily break apart if caught.

It is suggested that handlers should also make themselves known to the ring party, ring manager, and judge to avoid confusion over the use of the bells and elimination due to dangling items on the collar.

In order to avoid any negative impact on other dogs, it is suggested that bells would only be permitted on the dog when in the ring itself, and not elsewhere on the showground. It is also suggested that an obligatory tannoy announcement should be made shortly before a dog with bells is due to run, to give adequate warning to other competitors.

The Council's views on the matter are sought.

ITEM 11. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

At its previous meeting the Council had expressed its concern that the objectives listed on its five year strategic plan were not SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timebound) in nature.

It is invited to discuss a revised five year strategy document formulated by the Agility Governance Panel.

(Annex E refers – to be tabled)

ITEM 12. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL (Pages 25 - 26)

To note a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 8-11 August 2019.

(Annex F refers)

ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Please give at least two weeks advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Chairman.

ITEM 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be confirmed in September 2019.

NOTES:

1. The Kennel Club will reimburse standard rail fares to all representatives attending the meeting, from their addresses as recorded at the Kennel Club. Claim forms will be available at the meeting.
2. Those resident in Northern Ireland or Scotland may apply in advance for authority to substitute shuttle air travel for standard rail fare, although it is requested that tickets are booked well in advance to take advantage of any reduction in fares.
3. Please give advance notice of matters to be raised under Any Other Business. This assists the Office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Council Chairman.
4. Kennel Club Liaison Council Regulations state that the Kennel Club will bear the cost of all reasonable and externally incurred costs connected with a Council, if agreed in

advance. Therefore, representatives should apply to the Kennel Club for approval of any costs they may wish to claim prior to the expense being incurred.

THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

'The Kennel Club is the national body which exists to promote the general improvement, health and well-being of all dogs through responsible breeding and ownership' *This is to be achieved through:-*

- **Promoting the Kennel Club as the leading national organisation for referral and advice regarding all canine related matters.**
- **Encouraging the responsible breeding of pedigree dogs.**
- **Encourage the responsible ownership of dogs.**
- **Facilitating the breeding of healthy dogs**
- **Promoting the positive benefits of dogs in society.**
- **Promoting and regulating canine activities and competitions.**
- **Providing opportunities for education and training through Kennel Club led initiatives.**
- **Investing in canine health and welfare.**
- **Engaging with the wider dog owning audience/fraternity.**