

**MINUTES OF THE KENNEL CLUB AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
6 JUNE 2013**

PRESENT:

Mrs Y Croxford	Midlands
Miss J Lewis	North East
Mr I Mallabar	North East
Mrs P Baltes	North West
Mr M Hallam	North West
Mr R McAleese	Northern Ireland
Mrs O McShane	Scotland
Mr J Gilbert	South East and East Anglia
Miss L Olden	South and South West
Mr M Cavill	Wales

IN ATTENDANCE:

Miss D Deuchar	Manager – Working Dog Activities Team
Miss J Nosalik	Specialist – WTOA

IN THE CHAIR: Miss L Olden

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies had been received from Mr Chandler, representing the South East and East Anglia, Mrs Gardner representing the Midlands and Mr Huckle, representing the South and South West.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3. Amendment of Regulation H(1)4.b. (Marked Running Orders Championship Class)
The Council noted that at its meeting of 4 June 2013, the General Committee approved the above amendment.
4. Amendment of Regulation H18.a. (Approval of Judges)
The Sub-Committee suggested that the Council create a proposal, to state that individuals should be able to apply for approval to award Championship Certificates, prior to further General Committee consideration.

5. Measuring Queries – Review of the number of measurers for each area of the UK
It was noted that following a request to increase the number of available measurers in the Worcestershire/Gloucestershire area, the Sub-Committee requested the office to conduct a full review of all the measurers in the UK. Measurers would be contacted to confirm whether they were still actively holding measuring sessions and whether they were willing to continue in their role before the Sub-Committee would consider increasing numbers in any area.
6. Agility Liaison Council – South East & East Anglia Region – Additional Representative
It was noted that the General Committee considered the above matter, but it was accepted that, although the region was numerically larger compared to some other areas, competitors were likely to nominate individuals who they wanted to sit on the Council, regardless of geographic location. It was of the view that representatives were usually willing to travel to meetings throughout their region if there was demand. Therefore, General Committee did not support the matter.
7. Calculating Accurate Course Times
The Council considered the proposed new Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(4) regarding the above matter and discussed whether it should apply to all classes. It was agreed that it should apply to standard classes only, the Championship Class was clarified as part of this category, and apart from one minor amendment, the following regulation was **recommended**:

INSERT

Standard Class Course Time—An appropriate set time for each course shall be calculated by the judge, who shall take into account the course length, the height category of the dogs competing, and the grade or grades of the dogs competing in the relevant class, together with any other relevant factors. The course length must be measured by the judge using a commercially available measuring wheel, using the straight line distance between obstacle centres method. The set time shall be stated by the judge before judging commences.

(Insertion underlined)

8. The Council was reminded that the Course Time Matrix in the guidance would continue to be updated when appropriate and that the information would be available to download from the Kennel Club website. The Council also recommended the grammatical amendments to Regulation H(1)(B)5.b (Marking) as follows:

TO

Cumulative Marking/Time Faults—Faults incurred for failure to negotiate obstacles will be added to the faults incurred for failure to complete the course in the set time. A single fault or part thereof will be added for each second or part thereof over the set time. Actual time will be recorded and rounding up or rounding down is not permitted.

(Amendments underlined)

9. Dog Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group
The Council noted a report on the progress of the Dog Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group. It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 18 June 2013 and that discussion would be centred on clarifying how the research regarding the

physical impact of hurdle heights on dogs would be conducted. It was noted that a report of the Sub-Group's ongoing progress would be provided for the Council's next meeting.

10. Preventing Dog Conflicts in Agility

The representatives noted a report outlining the number and type of incidents that had been reported. The Council was pleased to note that the number of incidents had decreased over the last few years which suggested that there was better awareness at shows, that competitors knew that incidents would be reported and consequences of incidents would be published. Furthermore, the report suggested that competitors had better control of their dog(s) despite the growing numbers in the sport. The Council concluded that since the situation was improving, there was no need to address the matter further at this time.

11. Show Management – Agility Equipment

Further to its meeting in January, the Council was requested to consider the possibility of introducing a regulation to ensure equipment suppliers consulted the Kennel Club over any fundamental design changes to agility equipment. Although the Council stated it was the responsibility of the show societies to ensure their show equipment was of the correct specification, it was of the view that the proposal did not reflect the intentions from the previous minutes. It was stressed that it could be difficult for show societies to ensure the equipment met the correct specifications particularly when equipment would be delivered just before a show was due to be held. It was suggested that show societies could protect themselves by requesting a declaration to be signed by the chosen equipment suppliers to confirm that the equipment met Kennel Club specifications. It was stressed that the show society was the customer therefore suppliers should be held accountable if they did not deliver the correct "product". It was agreed that show societies should not be liable for incorrect equipment and consequently the proposal was not supported. However, it was agreed that a regulation was still required to ensure equipment suppliers consulted the Kennel Club over any fundamental design changes to agility equipment. Mrs Croxford agreed to prepare a proposal for consideration at the Council's next meeting in January 2014.

12. Proposed Amendments of Regulation H(1)(B)3.n. (See-Saw) and Regulation H(1)(B)3.o. (Dog Walk)

The Council discussed the proposed amendments to standardise the dimensions for all the contact equipment, as agreed at its last meeting. It was queried whether the specifications for the See-Saw and Dog Walk planks should be a set dimension with an allowance for a manufacturer's tolerance of 10%. It was explained that such a stipulation would require a complete review of all the contact equipment. The Council was not in favour of a review at this time and following a minor amendment, **recommended** the changes to the See-Saw and Dog Walk as follows:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.n. (See-Saw)

TO

See-Saw—This obstacle will consist of a plank firmly mounted on a central bracket. The length of the plank ~~should be a minimum of~~ must be 3.66m (12ft) ~~and a maximum of 4.267m (14ft).~~ The width should be 254mm (10ins) minimum and

305mm (12ins) maximum, ~~with~~ The height of the central bracket ~~being a maximum of 685mm (2ft 3ins) from the ground~~ measured from the ground to the top of the plank should be 610mm (2ft) minimum and 685mm (2ft 3ins) maximum. The last 914mm (3ft) from each end should be a different colour to indicate the area with which the dog should make contact. The plank should have a non-slip surface with no slats. (Amendments underlined)

Regulation H(1)(B)3.o. (Dog Walk)

TO

Dog Walk—A walk plank of approximately 1.372m (4ft 6ins) measured from the ground to the top of the plank, ~~high~~ with firmly fixed ramps at either end. The planks ~~should be a minimum~~ must be 3.66m (12ft) ~~and a maximum 4.267m (14ft)~~ in length and a minimum of 254mm (10ins) and a maximum of 305mm (12ins) in width. The last 914mm (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 152mm (6ins) of the start of a contact area. (Amendments underlined)

13. Addition to Regulation H(1)(B)3.n. (See-Saw)

The Council discussed the amendment to the above regulation to stipulate the time in which the See-Saw must tip and touch the ground. An amendment was proposed by Mr Mallabar to stipulate that the amount of time should be in optimum conditions. However, the majority were of the view that the See-Saw would have been tested in optimum conditions during the manufacturing process and that in situations that were not optimum, judges could use their discretion as to its use in competition. The majority of the Council supported the original proposed amendment and, therefore, the following was **recommended**:

Addition to Regulation H(1)(B)3.n. (See-Saw)

TO

... The plank should have a non-slip surface with no slats. The See-Saw must start to tip and then touch the ground between 2–3 seconds after a weight of 1 kilogram has been placed in the middle of the down contact area. (Addition underlined)

14. Cancelled Show Refunds

At its last meeting the Council requested the office investigate the cost of a central cancellation insurance policy to cover all shows. The Council noted that there was a lack of insurance companies willing to undertake such a policy due to the associated risks. The office reported that only one company had provided a potential quote, but it would only cover a maximum of 10 events at any one time. Consequently, the Council acknowledged that the cost of a central cancellation insurance policy was not financially viable.

15. Start/Finish – Positioning of Electronic Timing Gates

At its last meeting clarification was sought on the definition of the start and finish of an Agility course as well as the positioning of electronic timing gates. The Council agreed that electronic timing gates should not be used in a way which would make them appear as part of the course for the dog and handler to negotiate. Mr Gilbert and Mr Mallabar proposed an amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3) to remove finishing poles from the course design since their use became outdated when electronic timing was introduced. Miss Lewis seconded the proposed amendment. The Council unanimously **recommended** the deletion as follows:

TO

Design – The course should require a dog to traverse at least 10 obstacles, but not more than 20 and all jump obstacles should be the same height. Obstacles which the dog is required to clear should have a minimum of 3.6m (4yds) between centres except that this may be reduced to 2.74m (3yds) when the following obstacle is placed at 90 degrees or more to the preceding one. ~~The distance between the finishing poles should be wide enough to allow a dog to pass through without impediment.~~

16. Mr Gilbert proposed a new regulation to stipulate how electronic timing gates should be used and on which obstacles. Mr Mallabar seconded the proposal. A discussion took place, it was clarified that the Wall was stipulated within the regulation for a Hurdle which explained its omission in the proposed list of permitted obstacles to be used at the start and finish of a standard class. Mr Cavill proposed an amendment to the regulation to state that the Pipe Tunnel should be included in the list since the positioning of electronic timing gates on this obstacle would not impede a dog's natural path. Mrs McShane seconded the proposed amendment. The Council discussed the inclusion of the Pipe Tunnel in the regulation and whether it should only apply to certain classes. In conclusion, the majority of the Council was in favour of the amendment and agreed to **recommend** Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(6) (Electronic Timing Gates) as follows:

INSERT

Electronic timing gates—The only obstacles allowed at the Start and Finish of a Standard Agility or Jumping Course are; Hurdle, Spread Jump, Brush Jump, Long Jump, Tyre, Wishing Well, Pipe Tunnel. The electronic timing gates should be positioned within 30cm (12ins) in front of the first obstacle and within 30cm (12ins) after the last obstacle. The distance between the electronic timing gates should be no less than the width of the part of the obstacle the dog must negotiate. Whenever possible the timing gates should be placed within the width of the Hurdle wings, or in the case of the Wall, within the pillars. For the Long Jump, Tyre, Wishing Well and Pipe Tunnel, the timing gates should be placed as close as possible to the outside edge of the obstacle without impeding the dog's natural path.

N.B. This regulation should also apply if manual timing is used in conjunction with start/finish poles.

(Insertion underlined)

17. Regulation H(1)10.g. (Competing)

Mr Gilbert proposed a new regulation to define when a dog and handler were deemed to be under test. Mr Mallabar seconded the proposal. The Council discussed the proposal; it agreed the concept in principle, but concern was raised regarding the difficulty in defining when a dog and handler were under test and how judges may interpret the regulation. It was queried whether a dog would be eliminated should the handler return and handle the dog to correct its starting position when a signal had already been given by the scribe or judge to start. Another possible concern was whether a dog would be eliminated because the signal had already been given, but the handler had not yet had the chance to set their dog up and remove the lead, especially for the lower grades. It was stated that a degree of common sense should apply to the regulation. In the event that judges should misinterpret the regulation in this manner, it could be noted in the incident book. The Council discussed possible alternative wording, but failed to reflect the intention of the regulation better and consequently the majority agreed to **recommend** Regulation H(1)10.g. (Competing) as follows:

INSERT

The dog and handler are deemed to be under test when instructed by the Judge or the Judge's steward, by signal or voice. The test has concluded when the dog has negotiated the last obstacle, or the handler and dog have voluntarily left the ring.
(Insertion underlined)

18. Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(13) (Marking)

Mr Gilbert proposed a new regulation to stipulate the marking procedure in the event of a dog starting prior to instruction or when a dog runs past the first obstacle. The Council supported the insertion and agreed to **recommend** Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(13) as follows:

INSERT

Start—Starting prior to instruction may result in elimination. If the dog runs by the first obstacle it should be faulted with a refusal.
(Insertion underlined)

ITEM 4. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

19. The Council noted the points that were added to the five year strategy and agreed to focus on the first objective, regarding the recognition of agility as an official sport, prior to considering the remainder of the list. The office gave an overview of the background to this item since the Kennel Club had approached the Sports Council in the past. It was explained that the Sports Council recognised human achievement only so the agility discipline would need to establish awards to recognise handler achievement foremost. It was anticipated that the discipline would require a complete review in its operations and the Sports Council would review and possibly alter the current H Regulations. The Council considered the consequences of the reality of recognising agility as an official sport and although it was acknowledged that agility would become commercialised, it could generate external funding for the activity which would bring many opportunities to develop its future.

20. It was acknowledged that this topic had been previously placed on the five year strategy with little momentum due to a lack of suggestions to push the matter forward. The Council discussed its own role as an advisory body and stated it should establish how it envisaged the future direction of agility. It was suggested that the Council should be more proactive and drive competitors to focus on the long-term objectives of the discipline, developing concepts and generating greater discussion to create a positive yet substantial impact for the future. During the Council's discussion the following key points were made:
- a. To establish whether agility should remain a fun competition as currently stated in the regulations, or be recognised as a sporting activity.
 - b. That Kennel Club agility be at the forefront of agility in the world.
 - c. To develop Kennel Club agility as a more attractive product to newcomers, increase numbers in the sport, as well as looking after its customer base; consideration of a results database, more recognition of its competitors and more achievements rewarded.
 - d. That registered clubs be better protected; to recognise that these clubs were mainly voluntary and to seek ways to create enterprise opportunities to attract/retain membership.
 - e. To protect and encourage more support for Premier and Championship shows; to encourage existing competitors to give more back to the sport in general to protect the longevity of the discipline.
 - f. To evaluate the permitted number of licences issued per show society.
 - g. To create more channels of communication with a wider audience (the office also stated a new agility newsletter was imminent which was designed to cater for the whole community).
 - h. To acknowledge the changes in agility over the years and recognise the impact of the economy on show societies/competitors.
 - i. To improve the standard of judges; consideration of tougher requirements to become eligible to fulfil an appointment, or possible creation of a new level of judge such as "Premier Judge".
 - j. To establish how competitors envisage the future of agility and how they want to see it developed.
21. The Council recognised that undertaking a project of this size would take a considerable length of time and that thorough consultation should be sought. The Council agreed to **refer** the matter to its meeting in January 2014 with the main objective of the meeting to focus on this matter. Furthermore, the Council urged competitors to get involved in discussions, attend area meetings and relay their thoughts by all means to their representatives to ensure the matter progressed in the direction as intended by the agility community.

ITEM 5. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

22. Proposed Amendment of Regulation H(1)10.c.
Miss Olden proposed an amendment to the above regulation in Mr Huckle's absence. However, as the item was not seconded, it was not supported and no further action was taken.

ITEM 6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

23. Securing the Pipe Tunnel – Dog Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group
The Council discussed the concerns regarding the above matter. It was agreed that a regulation should be introduced to stipulate how the pipe tunnel should be secured to ensure the aperture of the tunnel did not reduce below the recommended minimum as a result of securing straps being over tightened. Mr Gilbert agreed to prepare a proposal for consideration at the Council's next meeting in January 2014.

ITEM 7. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL

24. The Council noted a written report on the arrangements for the 2013 Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 9-11 August 2013.

ITEM 8. JUDGES' WORKING PARTY (WTOA)

25. The report on the progress of the Judges' Working Party was noted and it was clarified that the purpose of the report was to highlight and summarise the Working Party's ongoing progress in agility related matters. It was explained that there were occasions when matters would be referred to the Working Party directly from the Activities Sub-Committee which the Council may not have been made aware of previously. It was noted that the possibility of an "Up-Contact" / assistant judge was under consideration for Kennel Club prestige events only and not standard shows throughout the year. The Council opposed the suggestion, but supported the work undertaken regarding competitors flouting the regulations after an elimination, emphasising that more respect should be given to judges.
(Annex A refers)

ITEM 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. Regulation H27. Judging of Spouses
Mr White requested the Council consider an amendment to the above regulation to provide further clarification. There was concern that the regulation was ambiguous in that it could be used to disqualify any "family" dog competing in any of the rings on the day that the person was judging. The Council discussed the matter, but was of the view that the regulation was not ambiguous to competitors and that it was already clear that it only referred to the particular classes the judge was judging. It was also queried whether the regulation applied to reserve judges. The office clarified that in the event of a reserve judge being required to undertake an appointment due to an emergency, that the regulation would not apply as already stated within the regulation. No further action was taken.

ITEM 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

27. The date of the next meeting will be in early January 2014 and would be confirmed in September 2013.

28. There being no further matters to discuss the meeting closed at 14:55pm.

MISS L OLDEN
Chairman

THE KENNEL CLUB'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

“To raise the relevance of the Kennel Club in the eyes of the public at large, dog owners and those who take part in canine events, so as to be better able ‘to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs.’ This objective to be achieved through:-

- **Ensuring that the Kennel Club is the first port of call on all canine matters.**
- **Improving canine health and welfare.**
- **Popularising canine events focusing on the retention of existing participants and the attracting of new.**
- **Achieving a widening of the Kennel Club membership base.**
- **Encouraging the development of all those concerned with dogs through education and training.**
- **Encouraging more people to provide input in the Kennel Club’s decision making process.”**

Agility Liaison Council Representatives
1 January 2013 – 31 December 2015

Listed below are the Area Liaison Council Representatives that can be contacted should further information be required on any of the items included on the minutes.

SCOTLAND

Mrs Olwyn McShane, 19 Hilton Court, Saltcoats, North Ayrshire, KA21 6HX
Tel: 01294 463033 Email: olwynmcshane@btinternet.com

NORTHERN IRELAND

Mr Ronnie McAleese, 27 Dermott Walk, Comber, Newtownards, County Down, BT23 5NU
Tel: 02891 878125 Email: ronnie@patchagility.com

WALES

Mr Martin Cavill, 15 Gerbera Drive, Rogerstone, Newport, NP10 9JD
Tel: 07866 438719 Email: martin.cavill@yahoo.co.uk

NORTH WEST

Mrs Pauline Baltes, 45 Well Orchard, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancs, PR5 8HJ
Tel: 01772 494852 / 07803 261808 E-mail: pabq@blueyonder.co.uk

Mr Mike Hallam, Hollins View, Leek Road, Bosley, Macclesfield, SK11 0PP
Tel: 01260 223190 / 07711 058910 E-mail: m.hallam@btconnect.com

NORTH EAST

Mr Ian Mallabar, The Granary, Spen Lane, Rowlands Gill, NE39 2BZ
Tel: 01207 544406 E-mail: ian.mallabar@btinternet.com

Miss Jen Lewis, 22 Dick's Garth Road, Menston, Ilkley, LS29 6HF
Tel: 01943 871134 / 07946 387011 Email: freymordogs@yahoo.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Mrs Jackie Gardner, 17 Middlesmoor, Wilnecote, Tamworth, B77 4PL
Tel: 07787 686806 Email: jackiegagility@hotmail.com

Mrs Yvonne Croxford, Shade Cottage, Coventry Road, Wigston Parva, Hinckley, LE10 3AP
Tel: 01455 220245 Email: MeisterMansion@aol.com

SOUTH EAST & EAST ANGLIA

Mr Simon Chandler, 16 Hawth Hill, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 2RW
Tel: 07772 670086 E-mail: sjabbaman@aol.com

Mr John Gilbert, Keba Cottage, 100 Bedford Road, Barton-le-Clay, Beds, MK45 4LR
Tel: 01582 882366 E-mail: faldoagility@aol.com

SOUTH & SOUTH WEST

Mr Chris Huckle, Kingswold, Glenmore, Roborough, Devon, EX19 8TE
Tel: 01769 560190 Email: Chris.Huckle@kingswold.myzen.co.uk

Miss Lesley Olden, Birchwood House Cottage, Sherfield English, Nr Romsey, Hants, SO51 6FF
Tel: 01794 323037 E-mail: lesleysolden@btinternet.com