

**MINUTES OF THE KENNEL CLUB OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING**  
**HELD ON 16 MAY 2013**

**PRESENT:**

|                  |                            |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| Mrs A Benoist    | North East                 |
| Mrs S Garner     | South and South West       |
| Mr D Garrett     | Wales                      |
| Mr R Harlow      | South East & East Anglia   |
| Mrs S Henstridge | South and South West       |
| Mrs J Jessop     | Wales                      |
| Mr A Kousourou   | Scotland                   |
| Mrs D Lavender   | North East                 |
| Mr M McCartney   | Northern Ireland           |
| Mr J McIntosh    | Scotland                   |
| Mr R Page        | Midlands                   |
| Mrs M Ray        | Midlands                   |
| Mr S Rutter      | North West                 |
| Mr R Wakelin     | North West                 |
| Mr H Wynne       | South East and East Anglia |

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Miss D Deuchar | Manager – Working Dog Activities Team    |
| Mrs C Maguire  | Specialist – Working Dog Activities Team |

**ITEM 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL**

1. In the absence of any other nominations Mrs Garner was elected as Chairman. Mrs Garner thanked the Council for its support.

**IN THE CHAIR:** Mrs Garner

**ITEM 2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL**

2. Following a ballot, Mr Rutter was elected as vice chairman for the new term of Council.

**ITEM 3. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE FROM JUNE 2013 TO MAY 2016**

3. In the absence of any other nominations Mrs Henstridge was elected as the representative onto the Activities Sub-Committee for the above term.

**ITEM 4. PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL ON KENNEL CLUB STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES**

4. The Council noted the presentation which explained Kennel Club and Liaison Council structures and procedures.

**ITEM 5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

5. Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Lubbi and Mrs Smith.

**ITEM 6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

6. The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2012 were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

**ITEM 7. TO NOTE THE TABLED REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE DURING 2012**

7. The Council noted the report on the work of the Activities Sub-Committee during 2012.

**ITEM 8. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Regulation Changes

8. Mrs Garner advised the Council that the General Committee meeting on 9 October 2012 approved all the proposed Regulation amendments for the introduction of the Multi-Choice and Introductory Classes and the Obedience Code of Conduct, with effect from January 2013.
9. The Council noted that the Introductory Class had created a number of queries and that guidance notes to assist judges had been issued. It was highlighted that this was guidance only and that it was expected that all entrants in the class be examined under the same conditions. As the class was new a settling in period was to be expected and Council requested that any major concerns regarding the tests in the class be raised with the area Representatives.
10. Concern regarding the Obedience Code of Conduct was raised and it was outlined that Code of Conduct Regulations had been inserted into all disciplines by the Kennel Club for 2013 onwards. The specific item inserted for the Obedience Code of Conduct was noted to ensure competitors were aware of the impact of their actions on competitors and other dogs around them.

Regulation G.3 - Code of Conduct

**TO**

3. Those taking part in Kennel Club licensed/approved events are expected to maintain and abide by the highest standards in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and appropriate Codes of Conduct as published from time to time.

(Insertion underlined)

#### Guide for New Obedience Competitors

11. Mrs Garner introduced a revised draft of the Guide for Newcomers document to the Council. The document was recommended and it was agreed that it would be published online and made available to societies.

#### Good Citizen Dog Scheme(GCDS)

12. Mr McCartney introduced the minutes from the meeting held with the Good Citizen Dog Scheme to the Council. It was highlighted that the meeting had been very useful and productive. Re-branding Obedience to assist with attracting new competitors was considered to be very important and that work would be done to create an information pack which would be distributed to all GCDS assessors to pass on to their trainees. It was stated that it was important to push this forward during this term of Council.
13. The Council was advised that at the meeting a book called 'Your First Agility Show' by Sally Rowe had been discussed and it had been agreed that this would be used as inspiration to create a similar document for Obedience, building on the previously agreed Guide for New Obedience Competitors. A working copy of this document would be presented at the next Council meeting by the working party with the aim of issuing it to all societies.

#### Obedience Information Stand at Crufts 2013

14. Mr Rutter presented the Council with a report on the Obedience Information stand at Crufts 2013. It was noted that the stand had been very popular during the event and was becoming a focal point for the Obedience community. The information provided on societies, GCDS and the Obedience activities at Crufts had been well received but further information was required such as schedules, charity information, dog 'relationship' photographs and information on the World Cup teams. The highlight for those involved on the stand had been a visit by Clare Balding who expressed great interest in the activities taking place.
15. Concern was expressed at the delays with the Crufts contractors in delivering and setting up the stand on the Wednesday. The Council was advised that this had been an issue across all areas and that the Crufts team was aware of the problem. The office confirmed that a small budget was available to cover any expenses incurred in the creation of the display material for the stand.
16. Thanks were expressed to the volunteers who assisted on each day, Mr Rutter, Mrs Rutter, Mrs Turner, Mr McIntosh and Mr Lubbi. It was highlighted that further support in manning the stand was required for next year and it was agreed that Council members would approach experienced Obedience competitors who would receive tickets for Crufts for a few hours assistance.

## **ITEM 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### Training Advice during Judging

17. Mrs Garner introduced a discussion item regarding the trend for judges to offer training advice to competitors after or during their observation of them in the ring which increased the length of time to complete the class. The Council was concerned that this activity was on the increase and it was important that all competitors were given an equal amount of time in the ring. Delaying another competitors run was not acceptable as it could be detrimental to the performance of the dog.
18. The Council agreed to remind Judges that dogs have an allocated time in the ring and that it is the responsibility of the Chief Steward to ensure that classes progress in an appropriate manner. It was further agreed that this issue would be given more emphasis in judges training.

### Stays

19. The Council was advised of a request that the issue of stays be discussed to address the concern by a number of competitors that this test creates an overly stressful environment for dogs. It was stated that the stress resulted in numerous incidents and that consultation on changing the test should be carried out. The Council was advised by the office that the incident database had been reviewed and that in the last five years only 26 dog on dog incidents had been reported at Obedience shows of which only nine involved the Stay ring.
20. The Council acknowledged that this was a divisive issue among the Obedience community with support being expressed to both keep and amend the test. It was highlighted that many stay ring incidents were addressed at the show and not reported to the Kennel Club making it difficult to monitor the concern. The office reminded the meeting that all incidents at a show should be entered into the Incident Book and submitted to the Kennel Club, even those that required no further action. It was discussed that many shows only provided small stay rings which increased the potential distress to the dogs and the likelihood of incidents. It was stated that many incidents could be prevented through early intervention by both judges and handlers and that judges training should be used to assist with this issue.
21. The Council agreed that as there was no substantive evidence available to corroborate this as a widespread issue it would not review the requirements of the stay test at this time, however this would be monitored through the number of incidents reported and reviewed in the future if necessary.

### Complaints Procedure

22. Mr Rutter introduced an item for discussion requesting clarification of the Kennel Club complaints procedure with specific concern as to complaints lodged against Judges. The Council was advised of the Kennel Club complaints procedure which was available on the website: <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/item/1073>. It was highlighted to the Council

that competitors were encouraged to resolve incidents on the day and for this to be then noted in the Incident Book. However, if it was felt that a formal complaint is required then this must be submitted to the Kennel Club within 7 days of the incident with an objection fee of £35. The objection fee was refunded if the complaint was upheld, however dog bite incidents did not require a fee. The process of investigation into a complaint takes a varied amount of time depending on the type of complaint, the speed of response from those involved and the date of the Activities Sub-Committee meeting. All decisions are made based on the evidence provided and Judges are supported if the evidence is in their favour.

23. All Sub-Committees work to a penalties tariff agreed by the General Committee which provides consistency across all disciplines. The tariff outlines the level and type of penalty that can be imposed, including financial which can range from £50 - £300. For all suspected dog bite human incidents an automatic temporary ban is imposed on dogs during the investigations which can be overturned or upheld by the Sub-Committee dependant on the evidence presented.

#### **ITEM 9. INTER-REGIONAL OBEDIENCE COMPETITION**

24. Mr Page provided the Council with an update on the changes to the Inter-Regional Competition for Crufts 2014. It was stated that the competition itself was important in ensuring that there was Obedience in the ring on the Thursday at Crufts. Mr Page confirmed that the appointment of team managers was the responsibility of the Crufts Committee and that they would be asked to fulfil the role for a three year term. The amendments to the explanatory document were highlighted and it was agreed that the document would be issued on the Kennel Club website.

#### **ITEM 10. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY**

##### Rally

25. Mrs Garner advised the Council that Rally had now been fully launched and that a working party had been created to deal with the issues of the discipline. Currently there were 23 Registered and 2 Listed Status societies that had applied to undertake Rally activities but interest had been high at both Crufts and Kennel Club roadshow events. It was stated that licences for shows in 2013 were free of charge however those for 2014 onwards would fall into line with the other disciplines.

##### Progress Review

26. The Council noted that all of the items were either in review or resolved and were requested to propose further items for inclusion in the five year strategic plan.

##### **ANNEX A refers**

27. Mr Harlow raised the issue of the increased decline in interest in Competitive Obedience and consequential decline in participation at shows. It was highlighted that there was not enough new, younger competitors coming into the discipline, as both competitors and volunteers, to ensure that shows could be run. Concern was raised that many shows would no longer be financially viable and therefore cease to exist which would contribute to the demise of the discipline. It was felt that methods of addressing the issue needed serious consideration and quick implementation in a proactive manner by the Council.
28. The Council discussed the increase in dog related activities available which has increased competition for the interest of dog handlers. As less clubs offer Competitive Obedience now there were fewer opportunities to raise awareness and interest in the discipline to those coming through from pet obedience training. Mrs Garner drew the Council's attention to a discussion which had taken place during the meeting with GCDS suggesting that information sessions should be held at clubs, including demonstrations of moves and how to train to achieve them, as this had proved beneficial to the GCDS scheme. It was agreed that the promotion of Obedience within the regions would be added to the five year strategy and proposals for methods of implementation would be discussed at the next meeting.
29. Falling attendance figures at shows and the demise of a number of shows, particularly in the South, was considered by the Council and it was agreed that there were a number of contributing factors which needed to be addressed. The costs of running a show were discussed and it was felt that two day shows with camping were currently the most successful. This was mainly due to the financial constraints of competitors who were less willing to travel to one day shows. It was recognised that changing all shows to this format wasn't an option available to all societies. It was highlighted that many shows relied heavily on a small number of people to run the show with no contingency if they decided they no longer wished to continue with it. The Council agreed that if more people were to be attracted to the sport there needed to be ample opportunities for them to compete across the country and as the traditional style shows were in decline Listed Status for Obedience should be explored. It was **recommended** that this would be proposed to the Activities Sub-Committee and that the item would be updated on the five year strategy.
30. The lack of promotion of Obedience in regards to Crufts was discussed. It was agreed that this was a great opportunity for the discipline to promote itself to a large audience which was not being fully utilised. It was agreed that this would be added to the five year strategy and proposals for methods of implementation would be discussed at the next meeting.
31. Concern was raised that the nomination process for Council Representatives was often not being carried out in an appropriate manner by societies and that nominations were generally coming from the Committee rather than it's membership. This resulted in many competitors feeling disenfranchised from the

process and that they did not have a relationship with the Council. A review of the process of nomination was discussed and the office advised that any changes would have to be made to other disciplines as well. It was agreed that this would be added to the five year strategy and proposals for methods of implementation would be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **ITEM 11. ACTIVITIES HEALTH & WELFARE SUB-GROUP**

32. The Council noted the report from the Activities Health & Welfare Sub-Group and was advised that since the report was issued the Sub-Group had held a further meeting. It was highlighted that the majority of issues that were currently being considered related to Agility and that a survey was recently issued to those competitors concerning health issues of their competition dogs.
33. The Health & Welfare Sub-Group had requested that the Council consider if there was a requirement to issue formal guidelines on the length of the Stay test during excessively hot weather. The Council discussed the request and agreed that there was no requirement at this time to issue guidelines as this was covered by Regulation G(E)2.b.

#### **ITEM 12. JUDGES WORKING PARTY**

34. Mrs Garner provided the Council with a verbal update from the meetings of the Judges Working Party on 6 November 2012 and 22 April 2013. Three new Judges Trainers had been approved and Mr McCartney, Mrs McCartney and Mr Rutter were congratulated. The Council was advised that the Judges Examination content had been updated in light of the Regulation review and that the forms for first time Obedience Certificate Judges had been reviewed. It was highlighted that the Kennel Club Incident Book was being updated and would include information on, and the process for, action in cases of poor judging performance which should be completed with the views of the competitors at the show.

#### **ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Obedience Class Championships

  35. The Council discussed a submission for the creation of more finals for each level of class rather than just Championship Class C to be held at Crufts as an incentive to keep competitors interested in the discipline. The Council agreed with the idea in principle and requested that a formal proposal be submitted by Mr Harlow and Mrs Garner for the next meeting.
- Awards of Merit

  36. Following an inquiry submitted to the office the Council confirmed that Awards of Merit certificates would be created for the Introductory Class. The certificates

would be awarded on the same basis as those for Pre-Beginner and Beginner classes, to those who had lost 10 marks or less during the class.

#### Scent Cloth Size

37. Mr Page advised that many judges were using scent cloths which were towards the large end of the permitted scale and that concern had been raised that this was unfairly penalising smaller dogs in classes. The Council reminded judges to be mindful of the potential variety of dogs competing in a class and provide appropriate equipment.

#### Obedience at Crufts

38. The Council was made aware of the concern over the lack of inclusion of Obedience information in the Crufts Show Guide by Mr Page. Mrs Garner advised that the issue had been addressed with the Crufts department who had stated that if the Council submitted text they would include it next year. It was noted that Obedience had not been promoted very well on the Crufts website and that this would also be addressed. It was agreed that Mrs Garner and Mr Page would work with the Crufts team and look at advertising the various events in the Obedience ring in the show guide. It was raised that sponsorship could be sought for an advert which would increase the chances of its inclusion. It was agreed that the sponsor of the Inter-Regional competition would be approached.

#### Championship Class C draws

39. Mr Wakelin advised the Council that a request to consider an amendment to the way the Championship Class C draw was conducted had been submitted. The amendment would be to ensure a five dog gap in the running order to assist competitors with more than one dog in the class. The Council discussed the issue and considered that this would be hard to implement particularly in small classes however it was requested that a formal proposal to amend the Regulation be submitted for the next meeting to enable a full discussion.

#### Communication with the Obedience Community

40. Mr Page notified the Council of a request for Representatives to review their processes of communication with the Obedience Community. The Council advised that all available forms of communication, both online and off, were utilised by all Representatives to reach as broad a range of people as possible but little or no response was consistently received from the regions. It was highlighted that societies all receive a copy of the agenda for the meetings and are requested to ensure their membership is aware of its contents. This is also available on the Kennel Club and Obedience UK websites for anyone to access and competitors are encouraged to do so and provide their views on the content to their Representative. The Representatives stated that they are all contactable through numerous methods, including face-to-face at shows, and would be very happy to receive increased direct communication from the Obedience community on all issues.

Crufts Commentary

41. Mr Page advised the Council that the commentary that took place during the Inter-Regional and World Cup competitions at Crufts had been very well received and asked the Council to consider extending it to include commentary whilst dogs were competing in the ring. Mrs Ray stated that the commentary during her performance in the Arena had not been an issue as the speakers were directed towards the audience rather than into the ring. The Council agreed that the commentary would be expanded to include the dog work but would not be extended to other Obedience competitions at this time.

ABC Classes

42. Mrs Garner advised that enquires had been received regarding the use of food rewards in the ring during special ABC classes at shows. The Council was concerned that this was happening and reiterated that the Regulations do not allow for food to be used within the ring except during the Introductory Class in the specified manner.

**ITEM 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

43. The Council noted that the date of the next meeting will be confirmed in September 2013.
44. The meeting closed at 4.15 pm.

**S GARNER**  
**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.

# Kennel Club Obedience Liaison Council Representatives

1 January 2013 to 31 December 2015

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