



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL  
HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2020 AT 10.00AM IN THE  
BOARDROOM, THE KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

**PRESENT:**

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 Hawskwell	Scotland
Mrs E Laing-Kay	North East
Mr I MacDonald	South East & East Anglia
Miss L Olden	South & South West
Miss R Sargent	North West
Mr K Smith	North East
Mr M Tait	South & South West

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Miss D Deuchar – Head of Canine Activities  
Miss R Mansfield – Senior Officer - Working Dog Activities Team  
Mrs A Mitchell – Senior Committee Secretary  
Mr K Stanbridge – Senior Social Media Officer (film viewing only)

**IN THE CHAIR: MR M CAVILL**

**NOTE: any recommendations made by the Agility Liaison Council are subject to review by the Activities Committee and the Kennel Club Board, and will not come into effect unless and until Board approval has been confirmed.**

1. Mr K Stanbridge joined the meeting for the purpose of showing a short film, produced by the Kennel Club's Marketing Department, on the topic of 'Getting Involved in Agility', prior to the film's launch at Crufts in March 2020. Noting that the film was targeted towards new competitors, the Council was in agreement that it provided an excellent overview of agility.
2. Mr Stanbridge was thanked for his attendance, and left the meeting.

**ITEM1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All members of the Council were present.

**ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2019 were approved as being an accurate record.

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



Amendments to Regulations H(1)(B)1.a.(iii), H(1)(B)3. and H(1)(B)5.

4. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 8 October 2019 approved the following amendments:

Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(iii):

**TO:**

The Final Agility round (Large, Intermediate, Medium and Small) ~~may contain the Table obstacle and~~ must contain all the obstacles described in (i) of this Regulation, together with any other obstacles as described in these Regulations, at the discretion of the judge. (Deletion struck through)  
(Effective 1 January 2020)

Regulation H(1)(B)3.

**TO:**

3. Obstacles.—The following obstacles meet with the approval of the Board of the Kennel Club. Any changes to current obstacles (such as materials used, structure or style) or any other new obstacles must be submitted for approval by the Kennel Club before being made available for use at its licensed events.

~~e. Table—914mm square minimum. Height: Large Dogs—600mm, Medium Dogs—400mm, Small Dogs—300mm. To be of stable construction with a non-slip surface.~~

~~k. Pause Box—Defined area 1.219m x 1.219m.~~

(Deletions struck through. Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2020)

H(1)(B)5.

Marking.

**TO:**

a. Standard marking. All course faults in multiples of 5. For time faults see paragraph b below.

~~(1) Table/Pause Box—faulted at judges discretion.~~

(Deletions struck through. Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2020)

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

5. The Council noted that the Activities Committee, at its meeting on 11 September 2019, had considered the Council's recommendation for amendments to Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3). It supported the Council's proposal that the minimum number of obstacles be increased to 15 but raised some concerns regarding the proposed increase in the maximum number to 22. It acknowledged that obstacles may be used more than once in a course, but there was a possibility that some judges may wish to include 22 separate obstacles which would require additional equipment. It also considered that longer courses would prove to be time-consuming and would result in longer days for show organisers, judges, and ring parties, which was not desirable.

6. Accordingly it agreed that the minimum number of obstacles should increase to 15, but that the maximum number would remain at 20, and the following amendment was approved by the Board at its meeting on 8 October 2019:

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

**TO:**

(3) Design—The course should require a dog to traverse at least ~~40~~ **15** obstacles but not more than 20 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.  
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)  
(Effective 1 January 2020)

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

7. The Activities Committee had discussed the proposed 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 Licensed agility shows, with no exceptions.

8. Whilst the Committee acknowledged the Council's strong views on the matter and the rationale supporting its recommendation, it raised concerns that other activities were subject to similar regulations whereby a judge may not judge his or her spouse, and that a press release had recently been issued in respect of breed shows and the necessity for judging to be perceived as fair and impartial. It was also of the view that most other activities were judged by way of a scoring system and may be considered to be objective, and that agility could not be viewed as being different in that respect. For these reasons, the Committee did not support the proposal and accordingly did not recommend it for approval.

Guidelines for clubs applying to hold Championship Agility Shows

9. At its previous meeting, the Council proposed criteria for use when considering applications from clubs wishing to hold Championship Agility shows. It was pleased to note that the proposed criteria had been approved by the Activities Committee at its meeting on 5 December 2019.

10. It also noted that, at its meeting on 7 January 2020, the Board had approved the implementation of a limit of 25 championship shows at each height. This would be achieved over a period of time by natural wastage, and championship status would not be removed from any clubs unless the club concerned wished to relinquish it, or where a serious issue with the running of a show had been identified. It was anticipated that this would ensure that a championship show was perceived as being special rather than a commonplace event.

11. The new criteria would be applied as and when a vacancy became available, although it was acknowledged that this may not be in the near future.

**ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP**

12. The Council noted a written report from Mr MacDonald following the SubGroup's meeting held on 23 September 2019, together with a verbal update following its meeting on 13 January 2020.

13. The main issues highlighted were as follows:

Potential research projects

14. An announcement had been made regarding the partnership between the Kennel Club and Hartpury College and Hartpury University, which would open up opportunities for research projects. Hartpury were able to offer a range of facilities for small animal research and were keen to work in partnership with the Kennel Club.

15. Suggested topics had included:

- Behavioural issues related to general arousal in agility dogs with particular reference to:
  - Behaviour in queues
  - Dogs lunging from parked cars
  - Stress in crated dogs



- Use of body language in dogs

16. Fitness/heart rate recovery had also been suggested as a potential research project. It was understood that some research had previously been carried out by Anja Westland at Myerscough College. Mr MacDonald agreed to pass the details to Dr Boyd.

17. Further research into the absorption forces on the see-saw may also be a possibility in the future.

18. A query was raised as to whether it would be possible to carry out research on the kinetic forces of dogs at a range of speeds as they negotiated contact obstacles such as the A frame. It was acknowledged that ethical concerns may prevent practical research, but it may be possible to produce a mathematical analysis of the forces concerned. However it was accepted that such an analysis may have limited application in practical terms due the wide variation of the shape, size, weight etc. of competing dogs.

19. Another topic suggested by the Council was the effects of acceleration and deceleration on dogs. It was agreed that this would be referred to the SubGroup at its next meeting.

20. It was agreed that Mr MacDonald would liaise with Dr Boyd to check what issues were currently being researched by Hartpury, with a view to suggestions being made as to other topics which may be suitable. Mr MacDonald undertook to provide an update to the Council at its next meeting.

#### Methods of measuring dogs competing in agility

21. A study had been carried out by Dr Gomez Alvarez which compared results obtained using a traditional measuring stick and a digital measure. A copy of the report was circulated to Council members.

22. The study had concluded that both the wooden stick and the digital device were reliable ways to measure the height of dogs, with low variation with the same handler. However, results may vary slightly between handlers.

23. Both devices may be particularly useful to accurately identify the correct height measure in dogs which were up to height and had been measured using hoops. It was suggested that two measurements be carried out which could then be averaged.

24. Additional research by Dr Doyle had indicated that there was a slight variation of 1-2mm in results obtained by using hoops, which in the majority of cases would not be significant, but where a dog was up to height, it may have an impact on the height category into which a dog was measured.

25. In such cases it would be helpful to have an alternative system (either the wooden measuring stick or a digital measure) available for use to ensure that an accurate measurement could be obtained to ascertain the correct height category for the dog.

26. The Council also noted a report provided by the office which indicated the number of dogs which had changed heights between their first and second measures. It accepted that it was quite normal for dogs to move into a higher height category between measurements. In response to a request for statistics relating solely to those dogs which had moved into a lower height category, it was noted that such a report would have to be compiled manually and would require a significant input of office resources.



27. A discussion took place as to whether it was necessary to introduce an additional process whereby dogs which were up to height in a particular category could be remeasured using a measuring stick or a digital measure. It concluded that the use of measuring hoops remained a practical and effective method of measuring, and that the use of other methods would not provide any significant advantage.

28. Further, the Council noted the practical and logistical implications of introducing an additional optional measure, including the difficulties of providing trained measurers, particularly in more remote areas, and the potential cost of new equipment.

29. For the above reasons, and in view of the evidence supporting the continued use of measuring hoops, the Council did not recommend any change to the existing system of measuring at present, although if necessary it may be reconsidered in the future.

30. Dr Gomez Alvarez and Dr Doyle were thanked for their work which had been very helpful.

#### Colour Recognition in Dogs

31. The Sub-Group had agreed that the matter of colour recognition was an interesting one.

32. The Sub-Group was of the view that it would be a positive step if more dogs underwent screening via the BVA/KC/ISDS Eye Scheme, particularly where a dog was perceived to have issues with colour recognition as in some cases, the dog may have clinical eye disease. At present a relatively low proportion of dogs were screened for such disease, other than those being used as part of a breeding programme, which were routinely tested.

33. However, it remained unclear as to whether colour recognition was a significant issue within agility and whether there was any evidence that incidents had occurred as a result of a dog being unable to see an obstacle clearly, due to the colour of the equipment. Although software was available which claimed to show colours as a dog may see them, there was no evidence to show whether it was an accurate representation.

34. Unless and until such evidence was available, the Sub-Group would not consider further research to be a priority. In view of the current lack of evidence, the Council agreed that no further action would be taken at present, although it was in agreement with the Sub-Group's recommendation that it would be a positive step to promote awareness and use of the Eye Scheme. Doing so may be beneficial in identifying dogs suffering from undiagnosed eye conditions, which could then be managed appropriately by owners. It was stressed that any dog, including crossbreeds and unregistered dogs, may be tested under the provisions of the Eye Scheme. It was hoped that a facility for eye testing would be available at the International Agility Festival in August 2020.

**Note:** details of the Eye Scheme may be found at: [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-for-breeders/complex-inheriteddisorders/bvakc-health-schemes/bvakcisds-eye-scheme/](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-for-breeders/complex-inheriteddisorders/bvakc-health-schemes/bvakcisds-eye-scheme/)

#### Veterinary Checks

35. It was confirmed that veterinary checks at Olympia were proving to be effective. However there were logistical issues in carrying out checks at other events due to the numbers of participants, although competitors in the agility Championship Final to be held at Crufts would be subject to checking.

36. The Council expressed some concern that not all dogs competing at Crufts would be checked. It was of the view that even random spot checks would be a positive step. It was agreed that Mr Cavill



would raise this issue at the forthcoming meeting of the Prestige Events Working Party. [Afternote: it was subsequently confirmed that a veterinary surgeon was in attendance in the Arena at Crufts at all times and could carry out a check on any competing dog if necessary.]

37. It was emphasised that, where a judge had concerns regarding the fitness or health of a dog, he/she had the ability to prevent the dog from running in their class. In such cases, a report must be made in the Incident Book by the judge.

38. Further, it was noted that Regulation H13 stated that following discussion between the show management and/or a veterinary surgeon, 'a dog shall be prevented from competing and/or removed from an agility show if...it was likely to cause suffering to the dog if it continues competing.' The circumstances of such a removal must be recorded in the competition/show Incident Book and submitted to the Kennel Club.

39. The Council was advised that an educational film was under development which would provide guidance to judges on identifying visible health and welfare issues. The film would also contain details of the process by which a dog may be excluded from competition. It would in due course be available on the Kennel Club Academy.

#### Health Symposium 2020

40. Plans for the above event were progressing, with a provisional date of 26-27 September 2020. Issues relevant to activities disciplines would be covered on the first day. The venue would be confirmed in due course.

41. Likely topics for inclusion on the second day were:

- Behavioural matters
- Body language in dogs
- Ophthalmic issues
- Nutrition for performance

#### 'Pre-competition preparation' film

42. Development of the above film remained in progress and would be published on the Kennel Club Academy in due course.

#### Other issues

43. The Sub-Group would consider carrying out research on any issues which were brought to its attention, should there be sufficient evidence of a health and welfare implication.

44. There had been some amendments to H Regulations as a result of some of the Sub-Group's previous research, and its work was therefore considered to have had a positive impact which it hoped to continue in the future.

### **ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL**

45. The Council noted a report from the Equipment Panel. The report was presented by Mr Smith.

#### See-Saw

46. At its previous meeting, the Council discussed issues regarding the see-saw in relation to the angle or height at the end of the see-saw, the tipping point, and tipping speed. It had noted the Panel's conclusion that it would not be possible to produce a specification which would result in all see-saws performing consistently at all times, however it was hoped that it may be possible to minimise variations by providing a set specification for dimensions with no range of values, subject to





suitable tolerances.

47. Following the previous meeting, the Equipment Panel had contacted all five equipment suppliers and had received responses from three of them, who had all stated that they could not guarantee that the see-saw would tip exactly as defined within the H Regulations under all weather conditions. This was accepted as it was not considered possible for an item of equipment to perform consistently in a wide range of temperatures, humidity etc.

48. This led to a discussion regarding tolerances and whether these should be clearly specified within the Regulations. However, as this issue was not included on the agenda, it would not be possible to make any immediate recommendations.

49. A further discussion took place as to whether the width of the plank should be specified as 300mm, or whether a range of values should be specified to allow for minor variations. The Council concluded that the amended Regulation should state a range for the width of the plank 295mm minimum – 305mm maximum.

50. It was in full agreement with the proposal that the height measured from the ground to the top of the plank at the mid point must be 610mm. However, the wording 'If this is not the case adjustments should be made.' was to be removed from the proposal.

51. Accordingly, the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

H(1)(B)3.m. See-Saw

**TO:**

This obstacle will consist of a plank firmly mounted on a central bracket. The length of the plank must be 3.66m. The width ~~should be 254mm~~ **must be 295mm minimum** and 305mm maximum. The height measured from the ground to the top of the plank at the central bracket ~~should be 610mm minimum and 685mm maximum~~ **must be 610mm. The maximum distance from the pivot point to the top of the plank should not be more than 100mm.** The last 914mm 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. 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.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

#### Reporting of problems with equipment

52. The Council discussed concerns that some judges may be reluctant to report issues with equipment which did not comply with H Regulations. In some cases this may be due to judges being unaware of the correct procedure. It was clarified that any issues should be reported via the show's Incident Book, or via a report made directly to the office. In either case the matter would be noted by the office, unless it was reported as having been resolved on the day.

53. Guidance had previously been issued regarding use of the Incident Book and may be found at: [www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/incidents-at-events/](http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/activities/incidents-at-events/)

54. There was some concern that some shows did not submit Incident Books to the Kennel Club. Clubs were reminded that, unless no incidents had occurred, they must submit a copy of the Incident Book, containing details of all incidents occurring at the show, to the Kennel Club within 14 days. Failure to do so would constitute a breach of H Regulations and in such cases, the office would refer the club concerned to the Activities Committee for consideration, and the club may be subject to a



penalty.

55. It was suggested that, where an individual had lodged a report via a show's Incident Report, they should retain a record of the report and then follow up directly with the Kennel Club if they had not been contacted within a reasonable period.

56. A slightly different process applied to shows in Scotland, where incidents at open shows were addressed via the Scottish Kennel Club (SKC). However, a recent meeting had taken place in which SKC had been requested to supply details of incidents to the office so that they may be logged.

Ring Equipment

57. At the Council's July 2019 meeting, consideration was given to the provision of a standard list of equipment that should be supplied to a ring. Further to this, it discussed the Panel's suggested guidance as to the equipment that should be supplied as a minimum for each ring.

58. A query was raised as to whether the tyre and the long jump should also be included in the lists for agility and jumping. It was confirmed that these had not been included due to the logistics of transporting them when there was a possibility that they may not be used. It was also noted that some suppliers may make a charge for transporting an item even if was not used. However there was a concern that excluding these items from the list may result in judges not including these obstacles in their courses, although it was acknowledged that judges may request them if wished.

59. The Council agreed that the list should be made available for guidance only. Shows may, if they wished to do so, provide a copy to judges with their judging contracts to let them know what equipment would be available to them.

60. After discussion, it was agreed that the list for Championship and Agility should be the same. The tyre and the long jump were to be added to the list for Jumping. The list, as follows, would be included in the Judges' Guide to Agility Equipment, as a recommendation:

<b>Championship</b>	<b>Agility</b>	<b>Jumping</b>
15 Hurdles	15 Hurdles	15 Hurdles
1 Dog Walk	1 Dog Walk	1 Set of 12 weaves
1 A Frame	1 A Frame	2 Pipe tunnels
1 See-Saw	1 See-Saw	1 Long jump
1 Set of 12 weaves	1 Set of 12 weaves	1 Tyre
2 Pipe tunnels	2 Pipe tunnels	
1 Long jump	1 Long jump	
1 Tyre	1 Tyre	

61. Other obstacles required by a judge may be specified by the judge in liaison with show organisers.

Tolerances

62. The Panel wished to introduce set tolerances for measurement of equipment as most of the dimensions for equipment were now specified at a set value. It drew the attention of the Council to the practical difficulties of manufacturing to precise sizes, and that the materials used may expand and contract in different weather conditions. Further, there were difficulties in accurate measuring due to the environment in which agility competitions were held.





63. The Council accepted the above points, and agreed in principle to the introduction of a Regulation to state 'All measurements under 1000mm have a set tolerance of plus or minus 5mm and measurements of 1000mm have plus or minus 10mm.' A firm proposal would be submitted to the Council's July meeting.

64. It was not of the view that the Panel's suggestion that 'Crucial measurements such as jump height, contact length and weave spacing have a tolerance of plus or minus 2mm with other measurements as above.' was necessary.

65. It was acknowledged that in view of the difficulties stated above in respect to the variations in measurements in differing conditions, all measurements and tolerances would apply in ideal conditions only. However this would be a matter of general policy and would not be stated separately within the relevant Regulation.

#### Securing of Equipment

66. The Panel wished the Council to discuss which equipment must be secured or weighted, and in what circumstances.

67. There was some concern that providing detailed guidance would be unduly complex, and that it was not advisable for the Council to pre-empt potential problems, or to provide a solution to every possible set of circumstances. The Council was also of the view that recommendations on the securing of equipment should be provided by equipment suppliers.

68. It was agreed that the office, in conjunction with the Equipment Panel would liaise with the equipment suppliers to request clear recommendations as to how to secure all equipment. In response to a query, it was clarified that this would specifically include the wall. Suitable guidance may then be included in the Judges' Guide to Agility Equipment.

### **ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL**

69. The Council noted a report from the Agility Governance Panel. A number of issues were highlighted: Governance of Agility within the Kennel Club

70. The Panel was working to identify ways in which the decision-making structure within the Kennel Club may be improved. It was also hoped that this issue would be considered in detail by the Kennel Club's Governance and Organisation Review Group. KC Agility Results Database

71. Noting that there was no record of results of Kennel Club Agility, the creation of a central database remained a priority for the Council. Until such time as such a database became available, handlers were required to ensure that they maintained their own records, and that they had a full understanding of the progression system when moving their dogs up through the grades.

72. Mrs Croxford confirmed that there was no progress to report at present. The office reiterated that the development of such a database was part of the backlog list for the Kennel Club's Customer Relationship Management system, but it was unlikely to proceed in the foreseeable future for financial reasons.



#### Measuring

73. Issues related to measuring were being addressed within the Governance Panel by Mrs Gardner and Miss Sargent, both of whom were Senior Measurers.

74. At the Council's meeting in July 2019 it was agreed not to create a separate Panel to address issues relating to measuring. However a suggestion was made that this decision be reviewed and that a separate Panel be created. The Council acknowledged that doing so would be a lengthy process in terms of approval by both the Activities Committee and the Board, and that measuring issues may be addressed effectively within the existing framework.

75. However it was agreed that Mrs Gardner would prepare a remit and rationale for a separate Measuring Panel, to be with the office by the end of January with a view to either submitting it direct to the Activities Committee, or for review by the Council at its July meeting.

76. A concern was raised regarding contradictory information which had been released by the Kennel Club in respect of measuring. This had generated some confusion, but it was acknowledged that this had been a genuine error. It was hoped that effective and timely communication between the office and members of the Council would prevent similar occurrences in future. The Council expressed a concern regarding the ongoing difficulties in ensuring that all members of the agility community were fully aware of requirements in respect of measuring. It was emphasised that comprehensive guidance was available via the Kennel Club website, and information was publicised via various channels. There remained some competitors who did not use social media or did not check the website, but the Council was not of the view that it was possible to ensure that competitors did so, although it was hoped that the majority would be pro-active in ensuring they kept themselves up to date.

77. All Council members were encouraged to disseminate information as widely as possible via social media.

78. A request was made that the Council be given first sight of any press releases relating to agility in order to check accuracy. It was explained that this may not be possible for practical reasons, however where it was possible, relevant press releases would be referred to the Council Chair and Vice Chair prior to issue. However, this would not be the case for every press release relating to agility.

79. The Council noted that the Panel was continuing to work on a number of priority matters, which included the following:

- Ensuring effective communication with measurers and identifying problems and issues
- Monitoring standards amongst existing measurers.
- Identifying the need for new Measurers or Senior Measurers
- Updating the existing Kennel Club Code of Best Practice in respect of measuring.

#### Restriction on licensing shows on the same day

80. The Governance Panel wished to suggest that restrictions be put into place whereby licences would not be granted for two shows within a 30 miles radius of each other on the same day, unless by prior agreement of both the Kennel Club and the clubs concerned.



81. However it was acknowledged that for legal reasons it would not be possible for such restrictions to be applied.

82. In view of this, it was suggested that licences be issued on a first come first served basis, with different timescales applying to championship, premier, open shows run by Kennel Club registered clubs, and open shows run by Kennel Club Listed Status clubs. Whilst this would not preclude two shows being held on the same day in the same area, it would allow for clubs to apply for licences with some knowledge of what other shows were being held in the area. It was suggested that under such an arrangement, a show may apply for a licence prior to the appropriate timescale, but would not receive approval until within the correct timescale.

83. However, it was unclear as to whether this would be possible within the new CRM system. The office undertook to investigate the matter with the Kennel Club's licensing team.

84. The above suggestions would be borne in mind for the future, but it was acknowledged that it was not possible to implement a system which would eliminate all issues of clashing shows, and that market forces would apply.

#### Course Times

85. The Council had previously agreed that there was a necessity to review the course time matrix, and to consider whether its use should be mandatory. It was acknowledged that no further revision was possible at present until further data collection and analysis had been carried out due to the change in jump heights and introduction of Intermediate height. It was confirmed that this was in hand.

#### Review of scope and relationship between Regulations and Guidelines

86. The Governance Panel was continuing to retain an overview of the updating of guidelines, and was currently supporting the process of reviewing and updating the following publications: Guide for Agility Judges & Stewards Judges' Guide to Agility Equipment Kennel Club Code of Best Practise for Measuring Agility Dogs

87. In due course the Panel would also review the Kennel Club Agility Competitors Code of Conduct.

88. Further, the Governance Panel would be conducting a review of the H Regulations to identify improvements needed in language, layout, duplication etc. in order to clarify any issues arising in the existing regulations.

#### Results database

89. The results database was discussed earlier in the meeting (paragraphs 72-73 refer refer).

### **ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL AND OTHER JUDGING ISSUES**

90. The Council considered a report from the Judging Panel. This included an update following the Accredited Trainers Annual Seminar held on 22 October 2019.

#### *Review of guidance documentation*

91. The Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards was in the process of being reviewed by the Panel, together with a number of other documents including the Judges' Guide to Agility Equipment, the Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards, and the course times matrix, with the objective of incorporating them all into a single document which would be readily accessible to all. It was hoped that the revised version would consist of a combination of text, images and graphics to aid clarity.



92. Mr Tait and Mrs Gardner agreed to assist in the review process in their roles as Accredited Trainers, to ensure that the updated document was accurate and comprehensive. The Council was also in agreement that Mr Huckle and Mr Jolly, as Accredited Trainers and members of the Activities Judges Sub-Group, should be invited to participate in the review process.

#### Incident reports

93. No incidents had been reported to the Panel.

94. The office was requested to provide information to the Panel regarding the number of incidents regarding agility judges which were reported directly to the office. Any such information would not include details of specific incidents, individuals or dogs. It was noted that it would not be possible for a full summary of such incidents to be provided as this could not be generated automatically and would require a significant input of office resources.

#### Judges Assessment Forms

95. The Panel was in the process of updating CPD Judges Assessment forms with a view to ensuring that feedback was provided to judges in a constructive and positive manner. As was currently the case, the completed forms would be submitted to the Kennel Club. It was reiterated that assessors may not compete in a class being judged by the judge being assessed.

96. A query was raised as to why championship judges were not permitted to act as assessors. It was clarified that in rare circumstances, a championship judge may be requested to assess a judge. However, most assessments were carried out by Accredited Trainers who had all undergone training in order to fulfil their roles, and could provide a consistent approach to assessments which would not be possible in the case of championship judges.

97. It was acknowledged that very few assessments were currently being carried out, and that it would be highly desirable for more assessments to be undertaken. It was agreed that the matter of championship judges would be referred to the Activities Judges Sub-Group for consideration.

#### Role of Accredited Trainers

98. At present, where a course was considered unsafe, a Show Manager may raise concerns with the judge. A suggestion was made that Accredited Trainers be given authority to address safety concerns raised at shows. However, it was acknowledged that Accredited Trainers were not present at all shows, and may not wish to undertake such a role.

99. It was acknowledged that some Accredited Trainers were inactive and did not undertake many, if any, seminars. It was noted that the performance of all Accredited Trainers was monitored by the office.

#### Championship Judges assessment form

100. It was noted that some amendments to the Championship Judges assessment form were necessary. A revised version of the document would be referred to the Activities Judges Sub-Group and, if approved, to the Activities Committee.

#### Mentoring Scheme

101. The Panel would be considering ways in which the scheme may be improved, and would report back in due course. It was noted that first-time judges wishing to be mentored should contact the office to make the necessary arrangements. Mentoring was not compulsory.



102. There was some concern that there were not enough mentors available to fulfil current requirements. This issue was under consideration by the Panel.

#### Reaccreditation of Accredited Trainers

103. The Council noted that plans were in progress for a number of Accredited Trainers to be reaccredited in a single session, rather than separately. All Accredited Trainers were required to undergo regular reaccreditation in order to ensure that the quality of training remained high. It was also anticipated that a 'run through' day may be offered for Accredited Trainers to ensure that they were fully confident with details of recently amended Regulations.

104. It also noted that the office was in the process of arranging an assessment day for those who had already applied for the role of Accredited Trainer. This may be opened to other applicants depending on logistical restrictions.

#### Activities Judges Sub-Group

105. The Council noted a report following the Activities Judges Sub-Group meeting held on 14 November 2019.

106. Agility equipment films were in the process of being edited and would be completed shortly. These would add to the current resources available to agility judges on the Kennel Club Academy.

107. The Course Measuring matrix had been updated to include the new Intermediate height, using the Large times for the time being. As discussed earlier, data would be collected from January 2020 onwards to be used to produce an updated matrix that would incorporate the Intermediate height and the new jump heights. It was anticipated this would be available from 2021.

108. Assessments of judges as part of Continuing Personal Development and how to improve the uptake and acceptance of this scheme had been discussed by the Sub-Group. It was agreed that the process for reporting sub-standard judging would be included on the Kennel Club Academy.

### **ITEM 8. EO2020**

109. The Council noted a report on the European Open 2020 to be held 30 July–2 August 2020 at Rutland Showground in Rutland. The event would be hosted by the Kennel Club, and all members for the Council were invited to attend by Mrs Croxford, on behalf of the European Open 2020 Working Party.

110. Details of the event may be found at the official website at <https://eo2020.eu/>.

### **ITEM 9. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL**

111. The Council noted a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 6 – 9 August 2020 at Rutland Showground.

### **ITEM 10. AGILITY TEAM GB**

112. The Council noted a report on Agility Team GB's attendance at the 2019 European Open Junior Agility Championships, European Open Championships and World Championships.

113. It wished to record its congratulations to all concerned for its achievements.



114. A concern was raised in respect of DBS checking and it was suggested that all members of the management team should undergo such checks. It was clarified that where a parent or legal guardian was present, DBS checks were not necessary, although it was confirmed that all Kennel Club staff involved with the team were DBS checked.

115. Whilst it was acknowledged that this issue did not fall within the remit of the Council, it was agreed that it would be raised with the Prestige Events Working Party at its meeting on 28 January 2020. [Afternote: it was subsequently confirmed that the Kennel Club had consulted the appropriate government department regarding DBS checks for the Agility Team GB Coaching team. Despite advice that these checks were not necessary as the relevant elements were already being adhered to, the Kennel Club had strongly advocated that a basic DBS check should be performed. This was now in the process of being applied for on behalf of the coaching team and all relevant members of staff.].

## **ITEM 11. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

### Proposal for amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.d.

116. Ms A Allan, an individual, wished the Council to consider an amendment to the above Regulation whereby it would include the wording 'Positioning – The hoop/tyre should be positioned so that the dog has a straight approach to the hoop/tyre and to have a straight exit or a turn of not more than 90 degrees in either direction after this obstacle.'

117. The proposal was presented by Mrs Croxford, and was seconded by Mrs Olden.

118. Ms Allan was of the view that although information regarding the positioning of the hoop (tyre) wording was included in the judges' guide, some judges did not follow it and there had been cases of obscure lines to the tyre. Although competitors may raise concerns with the judge and/or show management, Ms Allan wished to propose that suitable wording was included within the H Regulations, which would ensure that judges must comply with it.

119. The Council was sympathetic to the principle of the proposal but raised concerns that it may set a precedent which would require similar amendments to other Regulations, and that as a result, the Regulations would become unduly complex. Noting that guidance currently stated that the exit should be 'relatively straight', it was also of the view that specifying 'a straight exit or a turn of not more than 90 degrees' would not necessarily guarantee a safe exit from the obstacle.

120. A suggestion was made that, rather than making an amendment to H Regulations, it may be preferable to make guidelines more authoritative so that they could be readily enforced. It was agreed that this would be a positive step. Regulation H2 stated that '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.'

121. Further, Regulation H17.b stated that 'Societies are required to include the following wording in judges' invitation letters: 'In accepting this invitation you agree to be bound by Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and the Kennel Club Code of Best Practice for Judges, and confirm that you are qualified to judge in accordance with Agility Regulation H19.'

122. It was agreed that the various guidance documents would be retitled as Codes in order to ensure that the guidance contained within them would fall within the provisions of the above





Regulations.

123. Subject to the above, the Council did not support the proposal to amend Regulation H(1)(B)3.d.

## **ITEM 12. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### Methods of communication

124. The discussion item was presented by Mr Tait, representing Dartmoor Training Club. The Council was requested to discuss methods of communication between the Kennel Club and registered societies, and to suggest ways in which this could be made more effective.

125. In particular, the Club was concerned that information regarding Kennel Club qualifiers for prestige events was often disseminated via social media, and those clubs which did not use such media did not receive notification in a timely manner. It wished to request that information be issued to clubs via email.

126. The Council was advised that issuing mass emails was problematic due to data protection regulations. However, announcements were often issued via press release, and any club or individual wishing to receive copies of these should ensure that they had signed up to do so, and to ensure that the Kennel Club had an up-to-date email address. Judges who had not fulfilled a judging appointment for a period of three years

127. Mr Tait wished the Council to consider a suggestion that judges who had not fulfilled a judging appointment for a period of three years should be required to repeat, and pass, the Kennel Club Agility Judges Seminar (practical assessment) before they may judge again.

128. Mr Tait was of the view that with the pace at which agility was growing and changing, it was important to ensure that judges were fully up to date and competent to fulfil an appointment. For this reason it was suggested that any individual who was qualified to judge, but had not done so for a period of time should undertake a refresher course to maintain their understanding of the practical side of judging.

129. Continuing Personal Development for judges in terms of the requirement for them to pass the online Regulations and Judging Procedure examination every five years (from 2022) was already being implemented, and Mr Tait was of the view that a similar process should exist in relation to the practical aspects of judging.

130. The Council was in full agreement that all judges should have full current knowledge, but there was some concern that requiring them to attend a two-day seminar and to pass an assessment may be unduly onerous, and may result in some judges withdrawing from all judging.

131. As an alternative, a suggestion was made that it may be preferable to develop and implement a one-day workshop-style seminar to address the issue. Mr Tait undertook to give consideration to the matter, in consultation with the other Accredited Trainers, with a view to further discussion by the Council in due course.

### Maximum number of dogs to be judged during one day

132. Mrs C Webster, represented by Mr Smith, wished the Council to consider whether Regulation H(1)9.e should be reviewed regarding the maximum number of dogs (450) a judge can



judge during a judging day. The Regulation stated that: 'The maximum number of individual runs a person shall judge on one day is 450, excluding unforeseen eventualities such as re-runs.'

133. Mrs Webster noted that since the maximum number of dogs was set at 450, several additional changes to Regulations had occurred which had lengthened days for show teams, judges and competitors, and as a result there had been an impact on the number of judges and voluntary ring parties found in agility.

134. Mrs Webster wished to suggest that the current regulation which stated the maximum number of dogs should be replaced by a guideline that took into consideration the number of dogs, the number of course changes and the number of classes.

135. It was acknowledged that a very long judging day was unduly onerous on judges. The Council was not of the view that an amendment to the existing Regulation would be a positive step, but suggested that as show organisers were in control of the number of classes and therefore the number of dogs, they should ensure that judges were not required to judge for an excessive length of time. Further, judges may state that they were only willing to judge a specified number of classes, or dogs. Any such stipulation should be included within contract documentation agreed between the judge and the club concerned.

136. The Council concluded that no further action was necessary at present, but the situation should be kept under review until the effects of the introduction of Intermediate height could be fully assessed.

137. However, it wished to encourage all show organisers to be aware of the issue of long judging days, and to ensure as far as possible that judges were not overloaded.

#### Ring sizes

138. Mr Tait wished the Council to discuss whether Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(1) should be amended to provide for a ring size for all venues (indoors or outdoors) to be of minimum length/width 20 metres x maximum width/length 40 metres. The objective of the suggested amendment was to provide show organisers with more flexibility in fitting more rings into what may be a limited available area. This would also open up the use of some venues to create greater choice and better facilities for agility shows, and would also ensure that all rings, whether indoor or outdoor, were suitable for purpose.

139. It was noted that both Regulations and H(1)9.a. and H(1)(B)1.a.(1) currently stated that 'Test area shall have a suitable surface and measure a minimum of 32m x 32m for outdoor venues. Indoor venues may be smaller but must be appropriate to the size of the test.'

140. The Council was generally in support of the principle, but suggested that rather than stating specific dimensions, a minimum area be set, subject to the proviso that a minimum length of 25m for one side of the ring be specified to ensure that rings were not unduly long and narrow.

141. Mr Tait undertook to develop a formal proposal, which would specifically refer to both indoor and outdoor rings, for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.

#### Championship classes

142. The discussion item, which had been submitted by Ms L Langman, was presented by Mr Tait.



143. In view of the growing number of entries in Championship classes, Ms Langman wished the Council to discuss whether it was necessary to review the format for Championship classes in order to encourage a 'win' mentality rather than a 'clear round' mentality.

144. Two possible formats were suggested by Ms Langman: Winner of each round to automatically qualify for the final OR reduction of the Championship competition to two rounds, with the first round being a knockout from which the top 50% of teams would progress to round 2. The winner of round 2 would then be awarded the Agility Certificate.

145. Whilst the Council agreed that encouraging a 'win' mentality was highly desirable, it raised a concern that the first option outlined may result in those handlers who had won one round not approaching the second round in a competitive manner. It was also of the view that it was preferable to reward consistency across both rounds rather than one good performance.

146. After discussion, the Council concluded that in view of the recent introduction of the Intermediate height, it would not be appropriate to make any changes to the format of championship classes at present. However the matter would be kept under review as part of the Council's ongoing review timetable.

147. In the intervening period, Mr Smith undertook to collate relevant information which may be used to inform any further discussion on the matter.

### **ITEM 13. REVIEW TIMETABLE**

148. The Council noted the current review timetable which provided a three-year rolling programme of reviews and proposal timeframes from each of the Panels. **(Annex A to the minutes refers)**

149. A review of the championship class would be considered as part of the Grading Panel review due to take place in July 2021.

### **ITEM 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

150. Mr Dornford-Smith wished to suggest the possibility of judges' decisions at prestige events being subject to review via video, similar to the VAR (Video Assistant Referee) system used at some football matches. However it was agreed that this would not be practical.

### **ITEM 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

151. The Council's next meeting would take place on 9 July 2020. Any items for the agenda must be submitted by 10 April 2020.

The meeting closed at 3.30 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.'**