



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 11 JULY 2019 AT 10.30AM 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 E Laing-Kay	North East
Mr I MacDonald	South East & East Anglia
Miss L Olden	South & South West
Mr K Smith	North East
Mr M Tait	South & South West

IN ATTENDANCE:

Miss D Deuchar – Senior Manager - Governance & Education
Miss R Mansfield – Senior Officer - Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell – Senior Committee Secretary - Working Dog Activities Team

IN THE CHAIR: MR M CAVILL

ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Mrs S Hawkswell and Miss R Sargent.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019 were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Membership of Activities Judges Sub-Group

3. The Council noted that at its meeting on 9 April 2019 the Board had approved the appointment of Mrs Gardner to the Activities Judges SubGroup. Mrs Gardner had already attended her first meeting of the SubGroup and a report was provided later in the meeting under item 8 (paragraphs 63-65 refer).



Introduction of Intermediate height

4. The Council noted that a press release was issued on 12 April 2019 regarding the new arrangements relating to Intermediate height. The press release may be viewed at: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/press-releases/2019/april/agilityarrangements-announced-for-crufts-and-olympia-2020/
5. A correction had been made to the FAQs to clarify that only wins at Full Height may be counted towards qualification for Championship classes, as had previously been the case, and there is no change to the existing Regulations. FAQs may be viewed at: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1159962/regulation-change FAQs.pdf
6. It was also highlighted that any owners wishing to have their dogs measured for Intermediate had until 31 December 2019 to do so. A statement to this effect was included in the FAQs document and also in guidance for measurers.
7. A further press release regarding qualifiers for Intermediate height would be issued following the Board meeting due to be held on 16 July 2019. [Afternote: A press release was issued on 17 July 2019 regarding the new arrangements relating to Intermediate Height qualifiers. The press release may be viewed at: <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/press-releases/2019/july/intermediateagility-qualifiers-confirmed/>]
8. The Council was pleased to note that plans for the introduction of Intermediate height had been well-received by the agility community.

Restrictions on shows held on the same date

9. The Agility Governance Panel had been requested to consider ways in which the issue of clashes of shows held on the same date may be addressed, and to make recommendations for features to be included within the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database, subject to practicality and the availability of resources.
10. The Panel's views were considered as part of its report later in the meeting under item 7 (paragraphs 46-49 refer).

Issues faced by agility judges

11. The Judging Panel's views on this issue were considered as part of its report later in the meeting under item 8 (paragraphs 71-75 refer).

Colour of Equipment

12. At its January meeting, the Council had briefly discussed the subject of equipment colour, noting that the issue of a dog's vision and the impact on the colours used for Agility equipment had been examined by the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group some time ago.
13. It noted with interest a report which summarised some of the research carried out, and which included images which compared canine colour vision and human colour vision. These images had been obtained using a tool which allowed a standard image to be processed and displayed as a dog



may see them. It was acknowledged that the accuracy of the software used to produce the images was unknown, and that it did not take into account greyscale contrasts in textures or different surfaces.

14. The Council noted that there were two issues involved relating to the colour of equipment i.e. the way in which it impacted on the judge's ability to clearly assess the dog's performance, and its effect on the dog's ability to see the obstacles.

15. The Judging Panel was requested to consider the issue from the perspective of judges, in particular whether certain colour combinations such as light blue/dark blue, pink/purple, light green/dark green were difficult to see, and whether it was preferable for highly contrasting colours to be used, particular in relation to contact areas.

16. The Equipment Panel would also assess the use of colour and colour contrast, and whether striping or banding in contrasting colours on obstacles would be beneficial.

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

17. A report from Mrs Gardner following the Sub-Group's meeting on 11 April 2019 was considered under item 8 (paragraphs 63-65 refer). Reports from the Activities Judges Sub-Group would in future be considered in conjunction with reports from the Judging Panel rather than as a separate item.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB GROUP

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

ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL

19. The Council noted a report from the Equipment Panel which was presented by Mr Smith, the Panel Chair, and discussed the issues arising from it.

See-Saw

20. The particular issues which had been identified regarding the See-Saw related to the angle or height at the end of the See-Saw, the tipping point, and tipping speed.

21. Information had been sought from equipment suppliers but the Council noted with some disappointment that only one response had been received.

22. The Panel had carried out a number of tests on a See-Saw, but was of the view that consistent results could not be expected from the same piece of equipment over the course of a day due to variations in circumstances such as weather and ground conditions.

23. The Panel had concluded 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. It was suggested that the specification should state a plank



length of 3.66m and width of 305mm. Height of the central bracket measured from the ground to the top of the plank should be 610mm at the centre point. The tipping time would remain as 2-3 seconds after a weight of 1 kilogram had been placed in the middle of the down contact area.

24. It was agreed that the Equipment Panel would consider the matter further and would formulate a proposal for consideration by the Council at its meeting in January 2020. The Panel would continue its efforts to consult fully with equipment suppliers to ensure that their views may be taken into account when considering any amendments.

25. There was some concern as to whether any changes to the specification would have an undue impact on equipment suppliers, and on clubs which may need to replace equipment at short notice. It agreed that no changes, if approved, should come into effect prior to 1 January 2021, in order to provide adequate lead time.

26. It was highlighted that where equipment did not comply with H Regulations, it should be removed from the ring and a report made in the show's Incident Book.

Table

27. At the Council's January meeting, the Panel was requested to consider ways in which the Table could be judged. Feedback had been sought from the agility community which indicated support for removal of the Table from the list of obstacles as there was no clear understanding of how it could be judged, or in what way it should be marked. Feedback had also indicated that the Pause Box should be removed from the list of obstacles, for the same reasons.

28. Accordingly the Council recommended for approval the following amendments to Regulations:

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

TO:

The Final Agility round (Large, 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)

[**Afternote:** A press release was issued on 17 July 2019 regarding the new arrangements relating to Intermediate Height qualifiers including Championship classes.]

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)

Incident Books

29. Two reports, relating to the see-saw and the dog walk, had been received via Incident Books by the Panel during 2019, and were being investigated.

30. There had been no apparent issues with the amended height of the Dog Walk, which had been reduced to 1.2m with effect from 1 January 2019. However, an issue was raised in respect of whether, where the down section of the Dog Walk was supported with a fold down leg, it should be pegged. It was hoped that the relevant equipment supplier would specify any method/requirement of pegging to the show organisers.

Changes to Equipment

31. The Panel wished to raise concerns that, where amendments to H Regulations were made in respect of specifications for obstacles, clubs may find themselves in the position of having bought new equipment, only to have to replace it shortly afterwards.

32. In order to avoid placing clubs in this position, the Panel wished to suggest that changes to equipment should only be made as part of a planned equipment review. Clubs or individuals would be free to submit proposals and discussion items at any point, but relevant amendments to Regulations would only be recommended by the Council on a threeyearly basis, unless a health and welfare issue had been identified. A clear implementation date for any such amendments would be set to ensure that all dogs were competing on equipment which conformed to a single set of criteria.

33. It was agreed that the review timetable which had been agreed by the Council at its meeting on 12 July 2018 should be re-circulated with the minutes. The timetable, which may be reviewed and adjusted as necessary, provided for a three-year cycle of recommendations to be submitted by each of the Panels and would therefore address the concerns raised by the Equipment Panel.

34. Mr Cavill agreed to provide an updated version of the review timetable and Council members were requested to let him have any comments as soon as possible. An updated version is attached as Annex A to the minutes.

Ring Equipment

35. The Panel had been requested to consider the provision of a standard list of equipment that should be supplied to a ring.

36. It was noted that some suppliers already provided a standard list of equipment which included a set number of jumps, tunnels etc. It was agreed that the practice was a helpful one, and assisted show organisers in ensuring that all necessary equipment was available. Should a judge wish to use items of equipment which were not included in the standard list, it would be necessary for him or her to make a specific request for them, giving adequate notice to the show organisers.

37. Mr Smith undertook to draft a list which would be circulated to Council members for review. Once finalised, the list of standard equipment would be issued with a recommendation for its use.



ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL

38. The Council noted a report from the Agility Governance Panel. Unfortunately Mrs Hawkswell, who had produced the report, was unable to attend the meeting.

39. Whilst accepting that the report was very useful, and acknowledging the degree of work involved in producing it, there was some concern that other members of the Panel had not been involved in compiling it. It was hoped that in future they may take a more pro-active role.

40. A suggestion was made that Mrs Croxford should join the Panel. It was agreed that Mrs Croxford's experience would be highly useful, and accordingly the Council recommended her appointment as a member, with immediate effect.

Role and remit

41. The Council noted a revised remit for the Panel, as follows:

- Review existing regulations and guidelines to identify areas where improved clarity, review or consolidation is needed and bring these to the Council for consultation
- Improve communications with show management, clubs, judges and competitors and assist the Kennel Club in providing a one-stop source of information on Kennel Club Agility
- Consider ways in which the Council could be more effective, specifically with regard to liaison with the agility community, coordination with Kennel Club office staff and its relationship within the Kennel Club decision making structure.

42. It also noted a list of major issues which required the Panel's attention, together with associated priorities and timescales.

Measuring

43. A suggestion was made that a Measuring Panel be formed, which would consider any issues relating to measuring. However the Council agreed that it would be preferable for such issues to be addressed via the Governance Panel, with specialist input from Mrs Gardner and Miss Sargent.

44. Mrs Gardner undertook to provide a remit for the way in which measuring issues would be addressed, together with suggestions for a process under which any concerns regarding the performance of measurers may be dealt with, in conjunction with the office.

45. In response to a query, the Council noted that at present no active recruiting for additional measurers was being carried out due to budgetary restrictions.

Licensing of shows

46. The Governance Panel had been requested to consider the need for some controls over the way in which licences were issued to clubs for Open, Premier and Championship shows in order to avoid clashes of dates.

47. It was suggested that the Council should reconsider the suggestion made by the Grading Panel at the Council's meeting in January 2018, under the terms of which a restriction on open shows being held on the same date within a given radius would be introduced.

48. The office advised the Council that it was unlikely that the new CRM system would provide facilities for the automatic checking of dates and distances, and the later development of such a facility would be dependent on the availability of resources. However, it was agreed that it would be



helpful for the Council to provide a list of parameters which may be considered as and when Phase 2 of the development of the CRM system began.

49. Noting the suggestions already made by the Governance Panel, it was agreed that the Panel should formulate a definitive list of parameters. It was hoped that the eventual inclusion of such parameters in the next phase of CRM development would result in a system whereby shows within a certain distance of each other would not be permitted to take place unless with the agreement of both organising societies. Championship shows would take priority over other shows.

50. This led to a discussion regarding the creation of a results database. The Council was advised that the development of such a database was part of the backlog list but it was unlikely to proceed in the foreseeable future for financial reasons.

51. The Council confirmed its wish for the Kennel Club to develop its own results database. Should this not be possible, it wished to suggest that the development of such a database be outsourced to an external supplier. Mr Cavill and Mrs Croxford undertook to revisit the previous paper produced in September 2014

52. Mrs Croxford also undertook to raise the matter with the Kennel Club's Chief Financial Officer.

Guidelines for clubs applying to hold Championship Agility Shows.

53. At its January meeting, the Council had noted that applications for Championship Agility status were considered by the Activities Committee on a case by case basis and that there was no set list of criteria available for publication.

54. The Panel wished to suggest the following parameters: In applying to run Championship Agility shows, Clubs must demonstrate that:

- The club committee and membership has considerable experience in running KC Open and Premier Shows, including satisfactory field officer reports.
- The club committee has experience of managing and/or judging Championship Agility classes.
- The proposed show venue is proven to be suitable to run large agility shows, is accessible and has appropriate facilities to host a Championship Show including excellent ring surfaces. Indoor venues should be able to provide full size (32m x 32m) rings (or very close to this size).
- When applying for Championship Status the Club should include in its presentation:
 - Club's structure and any relevant background
 - Details of the club's experience in running Kennel Club agility shows
 - Information relating to the relevant experience of the committee and Show Manager/Secretary.
 - Full details of the proposed venues and facilities available
 - Proposed Show dates (which must not clash with existing Championship shows for the same height categories)

55. It was highlighted that most of the above criteria were already taken into account by the Activities Committee as part of the approval process, and were included in press releases, but the Council supported the views of the Panel and agreed that in the interests of making the process clear and



transparent to all, the proposed criteria should be submitted to the Activities Committee for its consideration.

56. A query was raised as to whether there should be any limit placed on the number of Championship shows. It was noted that the matter had been considered by the Activities Committee and subsequently referred to the Council at its meeting in January 2019. However, due to a change in circumstances with the introduction of the Intermediate height, a detailed discussion had not been considered to be appropriate at that time.
57. In response to a query, as stated at the January meeting it was reiterated that once a club had been awarded Championship status it was not normal practice for it to be removed until such time as the club wished to relinquish it, or where a serious issue with the running of a show had been identified.

Development of a revised 5 year strategy

58. The Panel had been requested to begin the process of developing a new 5 year strategy for the Council, however, this document was not available at the meeting.
59. After further discussion, the Council concluded that the review timetable, as discussed earlier in the meeting, provided a three-year rolling programme of reviews and proposal timeframes from each of the Panels, and that a separate 5 year strategy was no longer required.

Issues relating to show management

60. At its previous meeting, the Council noted that no review of shows where the management of the show had been outsourced would be carried out unless a specific concern was identified and reported to the office.
61. It was emphasised that where an issue relating to show management was identified, it should be reported to the office for the appropriate steps to be taken.

Press releases

62. It was noted that where press releases relating to agility were to be issued, assistance from Council members would be sought by the office, or from the relevant Panel. However, for practical reasons it was not possible to do so on every occasion.

ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL

Activities Judges Sub-Group

63. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Gardner following the meeting of the Activities Judges Sub-Group meeting held on 11 April 2019.

64. Items relevant to agility were as follows:

- Assessment of Accredited Trainers: a number of Accredited Trainers, in a number of disciplines including agility, were awaiting reassessment. It was emphasised that the purpose of such reassessments was to ensure that seminars were being delivered to a high standard, and were not intended to check the Accredited Trainers knowledge of their discipline.
- Kennel Club Academy: scripts for films for all disciplines were being developed on an ongoing basis. The film relating to H Regulations was already available on the Academy, but additional short films which demonstrated how individual items of equipment should



be judged were under development, with filming due to take place at the end of August 2019.

65. It was also highlighted that the Kennel Club Academy would be transferred onto a new platform in the future. It was hoped that this would minimise the technical issues currently experienced by some users.

66. The Council went on to consider a report from the Panel, which consisted of Mr Cavill, Mr Chandler, Mrs Gardner, Mrs Hawkswell, Mrs Laing-Kay and Mr Tait.

67. It noted the revised remit of the Judging Panel, as follows:

- To look at ways of helping and supporting judges in all aspects of the role of being a judge
- To regularly assess and update all literature pertaining to judges
- To review any incidents sent to the Kennel Club/Scottish Kennel Club regarding judges and judging
- To support and pass on ideas on how to improve judges' training and mentoring.
- To give feedback to the Activities Judges Sub-Group

68. A query was raised as to whether it was possible for details of any issues related to judges to be passed to the Panel by the office. The Council was advised that it would be possible for the Panel to receive a summary of such issues, but that matters relating to individual judges would be addressed by either the Activities Committee or the Disciplinary Committee and could not be referred to the Panel.

69. This led to a concern being raised that many incidents occurring at shows were not reported or logged in the Incident Book, as many people were reluctant to use it, or did not consider that there was any point in doing so.

70. The Council wished to stress the necessity for all incidents or concerns to be recorded within the Incident Book so that appropriate action may be taken by the show organisers or by the Kennel Club, where necessary.

Issues faced by judges

71. The Judging Panel had identified a number of issues which were faced by judges, including:

- Judging contracts for appointments several years in advance
- Lack of help in setting up courses / lack of ring party
- Dealing with competitors/social media
- Dealing with equipment failures

72. The Council's attention was particularly drawn to the matter of judges being bullied or intimidated. It noted that one club had provided a statement that it would not tolerate the impugning of judges' decisions, or verbal or physical intimidation of judges, committee members, or ring parties. The statement had gone on to outline an escalation procedure for use where there was a perceived issue with a course and/or judging at its show.

73. It was of the view that where a competitor wished to raise a concern regarding a course, it was acceptable to make a polite approach to the judge, however should the issue not be resolved in



this way, or where the concern would involve a course being changed, the matter should be raised with the show management.

74. It was hoped that an updated and more robust Guide for Agility Judges, together with the films due to be made available via the Kennel Club Academy, would assist judges in dealing with such concerns raised by competitors.
75. The Council also wished to highlight the availability of the Agility Equipment Incident Reporting Form which may be downloaded via the following link:
www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/718294/agility_2015_incident_report_form_for_website.pdf

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3)

76. At its previous meeting, the Council discussed a number of suggested changes to the current Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3) regarding the minimum and maximum number of obstacles that may be used in an agility or jumping course. A proposal had now been submitted by the Judging Panel in conjunction with Miss H Grantham.
77. Feedback obtained by Council representatives indicated considerable support for the increase in the minimum number of obstacles from 10 to 15. There was some concern regarding the proposed increase in the maximum number from 20 to 22, but it was highlighted that judges were not obliged to use the maximum number. Further, where judges did wish to do so, obstacles may be used more than once on a course so there was no necessity for more equipment to be provided.
78. A vote took place and the Council was unanimous in its support for the proposal. Accordingly it recommended for approval the following amendment:
Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3)
TO:
(3) Design—The course should require a dog to traverse at least ~~10 obstacles but not more than 20~~ **15 obstacles but not more than 22** and all jump obstacles in any class should be the same height. All obstacles should have a minimum of 5m and up to a maximum of 10m between centres of consecutive obstacles using the straight line centre-to-centre method. (Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)
(Effective 1 January 2020)

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

79. At its January meeting, the Council considered an amendment to the above Regulation under the terms of which judges would be permitted to judge a spouse, immediate family member or a dog resident at the same address in all classes at Kennel Club Licenced shows, with no exceptions. The Judging Panel had been requested to formulate a formal proposal.
80. The Council considered the proposal. It was of the strong view that the existing Regulation implied a lack of integrity on the part of judges, which was not justified. It did not consider that the singling out of spouses was appropriate when it remained acceptable, under the existing Regulation, for a competitor to be judged by his or her trainer or business partner. Further, it highlighted that judging of agility was not subjective in nature.
81. Accordingly, it unanimously **recommended** for approval the following amendment:
Regulation H 28.a.(9) Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards
TO:
a. A dog may be disqualified by the Board from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not, if proved amongst other things to have been;



~~(9) Handled by the scheduled judge's spouse, immediate family or is resident at the same address as the scheduled judge. This shall not apply to a judge appointed in an emergency. (Deletions struck through. Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered). (Effective 1 January 2020)~~

Future Items

82. The Judging Panel would be considering the following matters in the future: Update of the Guide for Agility Judges (priority) Judges Mentoring Scheme – ways in which the scheme may be improved Review of minimum requirements for eligibility to judge Review of minimum requirements to become a Championship agility judge Guidance for judges as to what should/should not be included for courses at each grade
83. In response to a query, it was noted that there were some logistical difficulties in carrying out assessments of aspiring Championship judges.
84. It was also noted that it was anticipated that a number of additional Accredited Trainers for agility would be appointed in the near future.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Agility Warrant

85. Mrs Croxford presented the proposal on behalf of Ms R Kinloch, an individual, who wished the Council to consider a proposal to extend the Agility Warrant System from its current ceiling of 1600 points to provide for an additional Warrant to be awarded at a level of 2000 points.
86. Ms Kinloch was of the view that the provision of an additional Warrant level would offer a motivational challenge to those handlers who enjoyed accumulating and striving for points, especially those who wished to retain a positive focus despite having progressed through all of the grades.
87. The proposal was seconded by Miss Olden.
88. There were mixed views on the proposal. Whilst accepting that the Warrant scheme was popular with competitors, there was some concern that it was not practical to continue to add new levels. It was also noted that only 94 competitors had so far received the Diamond award and that this number did not warrant the introduction of a new award.
89. After careful consideration, a vote took place and, by a majority, the proposal was not recommended for approval.
90. However, the Council agreed that the matter may be reviewed after a two-year period should the proposal be re-submitted at that time.

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Kennel Club Qualifiers

91. Otley Dog Training Society, represented by Mr Smith, requested the Council to discuss whether it would be possible for the Kennel Club to publish the criteria used when selecting shows to hold Kennel Club qualifiers and to provide feedback to clubs on the reasons as to why an application had not been successful. Further it wished the Kennel Club to consider a redistribution of qualifiers to ensure a more even spread across clubs wishing to host them.



92. The Council noted that the Kennel Club's policy was to support registered societies by giving preference to those clubs which did not already host a qualifier, provided there was not another club within close proximity which already hosted a qualifier for the same competition. As a result, most vacant qualifiers were allocated to clubs which did not already have them. The high volume of applications was also highlighted, noting that in some instances as many as 30 applications may be received for a single qualifier.

93. It was accepted that there were few qualifiers in some geographical areas. However, it was not possible to make significant changes to the existing geographical spread as it was not the Kennel Club's policy to withdraw qualifiers from existing host clubs unless there was a serious concern regarding the club concerned.

94. A suggestion was made that qualifiers be offered to a club on a three year basis only and then re-allocated. It was pointed out that this would not be a tenable system as clubs may be reliant on hosting a qualifier to attract a good entry, and that many competitors appreciated consistency in order to plan their attendance at shows.

95. The concerns raised by Otley Dog Training Club were noted but in view of the above, the Council did not consider that any action was necessary.

96. A query was raised regarding the number of Intermediate qualifiers which would be available. The office confirmed that a decision on this would be made by the Board at its meeting on 16 July 2019, and an announcement would be made shortly afterwards. It was likely that clubs holding qualifiers for Large would be offered the opportunity to host an Intermediate qualifier, in order to ensure that they would have the same overall number of competitors taking part in qualifiers as was currently the case. Should a club not wish to take up the offer, the vacancy would be advertised. [Afternote: a press release relating to intermediate qualifiers was issued on 17 July 2019 and may be viewed at: www.thekennelclub.org.uk/press-releases/2019/july/intermediateagility-qualifiers-confirmed/]

97. A suggestion was made that a new competition for Novice dogs should be introduced. The Council was broadly in support of such a competition, and any proposals as to what form this may take should be sent to the office with a view to consideration by the Prestige Events Working Party.

Bells on a dog's collar for visually impaired handlers

98. The discussion item was presented by Mr MacDonald on behalf of Miss E Clark, who wished the Council to consider whether Regulation H(1)10.c. should be amended to allow for visually impaired handlers to attach bells to their dog's collar if they wished to do so.

99. Miss Clark was of the view that allowing bells on a dog's collar would have a positive effect on the perception of the inclusivity of agility by encouraging the participation of a diverse handler demographic. Further, she considered that it would assist handlers with visual impairments to keep track of their dog whilst in the ring which would contribute to safety.

100. Whilst sympathetic to the objective behind the suggestion, the Council expressed some concerns that it would not be possible to restrict the use of bells on a dog's collar solely to dogs handled by visually impaired handlers, which may be problematic. In particular there were concerns that attaching bells to a collar may constitute a safety risk for dogs, and that their use may be distracting and confusing to other dogs.

101. The Council was also of the view that safety of competitors was a high priority, and that even where a competitor could hear the bells, it would not be possible to ascertain the dog's precise position which may present a hazard.



102. Having given the matter careful consideration, and having sought legal advice, the Council did not support the discussion item. It acknowledged that a visually impaired competitor may use a noise-emitting device integrated into the collar if they wished to do so, provided it conformed to Regulation H(1)10.a., but it was emphasised that handlers had a responsibility to ensure their own safety.

ITEM 11. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

103. As agreed earlier in the meeting, the Council agreed that a separate 5 year strategy was no longer necessary (paragraphs 58-59 refer) and would not appear on future agendas.

ITEM 12. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL

The Council noted a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held at Rockingham Castle on 8-11 August 2019.

104. The venue had also been provisionally booked for the International Agility Festival in 2020 and 2021.

105. As previously, the Festival would be a four day event with qualifiers for Crufts, Discover Dogs and the Kennel Club Nations Cup. The Festival would also once again host Kennel Club Olympia Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals.

106. The Kennel Club was pleased to welcome Skinner's as its new principle sponsor for the event.

ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Introduction of a micro height

107. Mr Cavill had received correspondence from Ms H Hawkins in which she suggested the introduction of a Micro height option for dogs of 12 inches and under. Ms Hawkins was of the view that there were a number of dogs which would benefit from such an option.

108. It was agreed that Ms Hawkins would be advised that following the introduction of the Intermediate height, no significant further changes relating to heights were anticipated in the foreseeable future. A review would be carried out after a three-year period to ascertain whether any further changes were necessary, once the current substantial amendments to Regulations had been implemented and allowed time to establish.

Double handling

109. Following a query raised by a competitor at a show, the Council was requested to provide clarification regarding double handling, or outside assistance.

110. It noted that Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(22) stated that any double handling or deliberate assistance given to a competitor whilst competing from either inside or outside the ring would result in elimination.

111. Examples of double handling would be where a dog was started from a crate placed close to the entrance to the ring, without going to the handler first, or where the crate was moved or placed at the finish line for the dog to be sent to as it finished the course.

112. It was suggested that the issue may be addressed by stating that the dog and the handler must enter the ring together, but it was accepted this may not be possible where the first jump was



quite close to the entrance, necessitating the dog being set up outside the ring. A further suggestion was to make a recommendation that the first obstacle should be placed a minimum of 5m inside the ring, on the trajectory of the dog.

113. Where a judge considered that double handling had occurred, it was up to him or her to act accordingly in line with the Regulation as stated above.

Contract documentation

114. Mr Hallam wished to raise a concern regarding delays in issuing contract documentation to judges who had agreed verbally to undertake a judging appointment. Whilst accepting that this may cause inconvenience to judges, the Council was of the view that this was a matter for show organisers. It was hoped that show secretaries would do their best to issue documentation to judges in a timely manner, but the Kennel Club could not intervene.

Pipe tunnels

115. Mr Smith wished to propose that a guidance document regarding pipe tunnels be published, to replace the existing guidance available on the Kennel Club website.

116. Subject to minor amendments, the document was approved for publication. (Annex B to the minutes refers)

Agility record books

117. There was a concern that some measurers had ordered new record books but had received the old version. It was confirmed that only new record books would be issued in the future.

Meeting start time

118. The next meeting would take place in January 2020. The exact date would be confirmed in September 2019.

The meeting closed at 3.00 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.'