



**MINUTES OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 27 JUNE 2018 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

PRESENT

Mrs N Ackerley-Kemp	Setter & Pointer Club
Mrs M Asbury	Irish Setter Association, England
Mr P Askew	Dukeries (Notts.) Gundog Club
	English Setter Club
	Norfolk Gundog Club
	East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club
	Utility Gundog Society
	Eastern Counties Retriever Society
Mr K Barraclough	Kent Working Spaniel Club
	Kintbury Gundog Club
Ms H Bradley	Labrador Retriever Club
	Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks and Hants
	Retriever Society
Ms C Bridgwater	Essex Field Trial Society
	Meon Valley Working Spaniel Club
Mr J Briggs	Spaniel Club
	Shropshire Gundog Society
Mr K Byron	Suffolk Gundog Club
	Cambridge Field Trials Society
Miss C Calvert	Strabane & District Setter & Pointer Club
	Northern Ireland Pointer Club
	Ulster Irish Red Setter Club
Mr J Castle	Golden Retriever Club of Scotland
	Highland Gundog Club
	Scottish Field Trial Association
	Moray Firth Spaniel and Retriever Club
Mrs C Clarke	Lancashire & Merseyside Field Trial
	Society
	North West Labrador Retriever Club
Mrs M Cox	Cornwall Field Trial Society
	West of England Labrador Club
Mr S Crookes	South Western Golden Retriever Club
	Northern Golden Retriever Association
	Eastern Counties Golden Retriever Club
Mr S Cullis	Bristol & West Working Gundog Society
	Arun & Downland Gundog Society
	Southern & Western Counties Field Trial
	Society
Mr N Doran	Craigavon Gundog Club
	Northern Ireland Field and Show Society
Ms A Faulds	Scottish Gundog Association
	Lothian and Borders Gundog Association
Mrs D Harrison	South Eastern Gundog Society
	Guildford Working Gundog Club
Mrs J Hay	Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria
	Yorkshire Golden Retriever Club
Mr P Highfield	East Midland Gundog Club; Dove Valley Gundog
	Working Club
Mr A Hopkins-Young	Midland Counties Field Trial Society; Cocker
	Spaniel Club
Mrs S Jenkins	West Dartmoor Working Gundog Club; Westward



Mrs A Johnson	Gundog Society Italian Spinone Club of Great Britain
Mrs F Kirk	Norfolk and Suffolk Field Trial Club Southern Pointer Club International Gundog League Pointer and Setter Society
Mrs W Knight	Mid-Sussex Working Spaniel Club Eastern Counties Spaniel Society London Cocker Spaniel Society
Mrs S Kuban	German Longhaired Pointer Club German Shorthaired Pointer Club
Mr H Lane	Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire Retriever and Spaniel Society
Mr A Lord	West Midland Field Trial Society Three Ridings Labrador Club
Mr R Major	Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society German Wirehaired Pointer Club
Mr V McDevitt	Large Munsterlander Club Fermanagh Gundog Club North West Ulster Spaniel Club English Springer Spaniel Club of Northern Ireland
Mr W Megaughin	Labrador Retriever Club of Northern Ireland Ulster Gundog League Ulster Retriever Club
Mr R Proctor	English Springer Spaniel Club Midland English Springer Spaniel Society
Mrs H Smith	Pointer Club Mid Herts Gundog Club
Mr P Smith	Antrim & Down Springer Spaniel Club Ulster Golden Retriever Club Mid-Ulster Gundog Association
Ms V Stanley	Clwyd Retriever Club Welsh Kennel Club Arfon Working Gundog Club
Mr J M Taylor	Yorkshire Gundog Club Tyne, Tees and Tweed Field Trials Association
Mrs J Venturi-Rose	Isle of Wight Gundog Club Kent, Surrey & Sussex Labrador Retriever Club
Ms S Whyte	Hampshire Gundog Society Lincolnshire Gundog Society Northumberland and Durham Labrador Retriever Club
Mr F Wright	United Retriever Club Labrador Retriever Club of Wales Usk Valley Working Gundog Club

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss K Broers	Team Leader - Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary - Working Dog Activities Team
Miss C Welch	Administrator - Working Dog Activities Team



IN THE CHAIR

MR J M TAYLOR

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Mr J Bailey, Mr D Capel, Mr S Chant, Miss J Hurley, Mr S Jones, Mr J Kean, Mrs B Kuen, Mr J O'Connor, Mr A Rees, Mr S Smith, and Mr M Stanbury.

ITEM 2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2017

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2017 were approved.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE

3. The Council noted the results of recommendations considered by the Field Trials Committee following the Council's meeting held on 27 June 2017.

ITEM 4. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

4. Proposed amendments to Regulations J4.a, J7.i.(1), J(B).2.(b) and K2.(c).(2)
The proposal was presented by Mrs Harrison, representing Guildford Working Gundog Club, which wished the Council to consider an amendment to the above Regulations. The proposal, which was made in light of the challenges of getting runs in Open Retriever Stakes as discussed at the Council's meeting in June 2017, was seconded by Mrs Venturi Rose.
5. Under the terms of the proposal, the maximum number of permitted competitors in a One-day Open Retriever stake would be increased to 16. This would be an optional maximum and would not be mandatory, and clubs may make the decision as to the number of competitors based on the likely availability of game, noting that it was important to ensure that there was sufficient game to provide adequate opportunities to retrieve.
6. The Council was in agreement that this would be a positive step, and by a majority, **recommended** the following amendments for approval:

Regulation J4.a(2):

TO:

(2) One-day Open Stakes - maximum ~~42~~ **16**, minimum 10.
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

Regulation J7.i.(1):

TO:

(1) Retrievers

A First, Second, Third or Fourth in a 24-Dog Open Stake. First, Second or Third in a ~~42-Dog~~ **One-day** Open Stake.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

Regulation J(B).2.(b):

TO:

(b) One-day Open Stakes: maximum ~~42~~**16**, minimum 10.

Regulation K2.(c).(2):

TO:

(2) Retrievers

- (a) A dog placed first in the Retriever Championship.
- (b) A dog which gains two first awards in 24-dog Open Stakes under three different Panel A Judges.
- (c) A dog which gains a first award in one 24-dog and one ~~12-dog~~ **One-day** Open Stake under three different Panel A Judges.
- (d) A dog which gains a first award in three ~~12-dog~~ **One-day** Open Stakes under three different Panel A Judges.

In a 24-dog Stake there must be no fewer than 20 runners and in a ~~12-dog~~ **One-day** Stake no fewer than 10 runners. For a dog to be entitled to the title of Field Trial Champion one of its wins must be in a Stake open to all breeds of Retriever. (Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

- 7. The Council also **recommended** that any other necessary consequential amendments to other Regulations not included above should also be made.

Proposed amendment to Regulation K2.(2) d.

- 8. Mrs Bradley, on behalf of the Labrador Retriever Club, wished to propose an amendment to Regulation K2.(2) Championship Qualifications. The proposal was seconded by Mr Askew.
- 9. The proposal was made in view of the high number of entries for Open Labrador Retriever breed stakes, which made it difficult even to get a run, and the highly competitive nature of the stakes themselves. The Club was of the view that given the difficulty of winning a 2-day Open Labrador Retriever breed stake, it should be permissible for a Labrador Retriever having won two such stakes to be awarded its Field Trial Champion (FT Ch) status.
- 10. The Council agreed that it was important to ensure that only dogs of the highest quality were able to attain Field Trial Champion status. It was accepted that the existing Regulation was in place to prevent dogs in numerically smaller breeds achieving a Field Trial Champion title in circumstances where there may be a relatively low number of competitors, and where the overall quality of the dogs' work may not be high as that in an AV trial.
- 11. It was acknowledged by the Council that the majority of dogs participating in Retriever trials were Labrador Retrievers. However, there was a concern that a high number of entries was not necessarily indicative of high quality, and that the standard achieved at an Open Breed Stake for any of the Retriever breeds may be equally as high as that achieved at a Labrador Retriever Open Stake. For that reason it was suggested that there was no justification for permitting special status for the Labrador Retriever.
- 12. A brief discussion took place as to whether, in the interests of fairness, the Regulation should be amended to allow all Retriever breeds to gain Field Trial Champion status by winning two 2-day Open Breed Specific Stakes, or whether the existing Regulation should remain in its present form.
- 13. A vote took place and, by a majority, the Council did not support any amendment to the existing Regulation, and the proposal was therefore not carried.

Proposed amendment to Regulation J7.f.

- 14. The proposal was presented by Mrs Asbury, on behalf of Dukeries (Notts) Gundog Club, which wished to propose additional wording to the above Regulation whereby any person who entered a Draw/Nomination for a field trial, and was drawn as a Reserve, would be liable for the loss of the full entry fee if they did not decline the potential offer of a run within seven days of the trial. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Smith.



15. The objective of the proposal was to assist Field Trial secretaries by encouraging competitors drawn on the reserve list to notify them if they were not able to accept a run within seven days of the trial. It was anticipated that this would reduce the number of last minute telephone calls to those on the reserve list, on order to fill a stake.
16. There were mixed views regarding the proposal. It was acknowledged that in some cases considerable time and effort was required on the part of secretaries in order to fill a card.
17. A concern was expressed that requiring all those on the reserve list to contact the secretary may result in secretaries becoming overburdened, as he or she would receive a large volume of calls from those wishing to withdraw from the reserve list. It was hoped that competitors would apply common sense, and that those who were towards the top of the reserve list would notify the secretary should they become unavailable. However, it was not considered necessary for those further down the list to do so.
18. After discussion, a vote took place and by a substantial majority, the proposal was not supported.

ITEM 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Declining quality of dogs running in Retriever field trials
19. Mr Cullis presented the discussion item on behalf of himself and Mrs Bradley, who wished the Council to discuss possible steps to address the declining quality of dogs running in Retriever field trials.
 20. There was a perception that there had been a decline in the quality of dogs running in trials, particularly at Novice level, and that this was having a detrimental impact on the discipline. It appeared that the main reason for the apparent decline was that many newcomers into field trialling were entering trials without they or their dogs having gained the necessary experience and knowledge to be able to compete effectively in the stakes.
 21. Accordingly, Mrs Bradley and Mr Cullis wished to suggest that a new qualification or 'licence to trial' be introduced for new handlers and dogs, which should be gained before entering any Retriever field trial. The formulation and implementation of such a qualification would be carried out by a small working party which would undertake a consultation exercise with those clubs and societies which ran Retriever trials.
 22. A discussion took place as to how such a system would be implemented. One suggestion was that an assessment panel of 'A' and 'B' Panel judges could be appointed to carry out assessments of handlers and dogs, possibly at Working Tests. The assessment would consist of basic elements such as steadiness, walking to heel, retrieving to hand, and steadiness to shot.
 23. A further suggestion was that dogs having achieved the Working Gundog Certificate (WGC) may be provided with such a 'licence', however, it was noted that the WGC may be awarded by a variety of assessors such as gamekeepers, who may not be sufficiently qualified to accurately assess the suitability of a dog and handler to enter a trial.
 24. It was also suggested that a handler/dog should be required to have won an Open Working Test before entering a trial. It was accepted that such a win would indicate that the dog had a reasonable level of training, although there was a concern that such a measure would be overly restrictive, as there were high levels of entries into Working



Tests and only one winner. It was also considered that it would be necessary for a dog to be tested on game rather than on dummies as was the case at some Working Tests.

25. The Council acknowledged that a handler at a trial who had clearly not reached the standard required may be asked to withdraw due to lack of merit. However, it was accepted that this would not address the issue as such handlers remained free to enter other trials, and would have already taken a run which may have been allocated to a more suitable competitor. There was also a risk of bad feeling being created which was not desirable.
26. The Council concluded that the suggestion submitted by Mrs Bradley and Mr Cullis had merit and warranted further consideration. Accordingly, it agreed that a detailed proposal should be prepared in consultation with those clubs hosting Retriever stakes, and submitted to the Council for consideration at its next meeting.

Limit on competing in Novice Stakes

27. Mrs Bradley, on behalf of the Labrador Retriever Club, wished the Council to consider placing a limit on the number of Retriever Novice stakes in which a dog may run without gaining an award. The objective of such a measure would be to improve the quality of dogs entering Novice stakes and to reduce the number of entries.
28. There was some concern that the implementation of such a measure may have a detrimental effect on the number of new handlers coming into, and remaining in, the discipline. It was acknowledged that it was important to encourage the participation of such handlers rather than restricting them in any way. It was suggested that it may be more appropriate to apply such a limit to the number of Open stakes in which a dog may compete, rather than to Novice stakes.
29. It was noted that the suggestion was linked to the previous item (paragraphs 19 – 26 refer) and that it should be addressed as part of the proposal to be submitted to the Council at its next meeting.

Style of handling

30. The discussion item was presented by Mr Lord, on behalf of Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society. The Society sought clarification as to whether a judge had the right to enforce his or her handling technique onto a competitor, and how the issue may be addressed by the Kennel Club.
31. The Society noted that some judges had informed competitors that they may not use a white handkerchief, hat, or white card, or that they could not use certain commands like 'Get Over' or 'Leave That'. It did not consider this to be acceptable, and it wished to discuss concerns that handlers were being unfairly penalised by judges.
32. A discussion took place, in which the majority of the Council expressed the view that such commands were legitimate and should not be penalised, unless they were considered by the judge to constitute noisy handling.
33. Guidance to this effect provided by Mr G Cox had been published previously in the Field Trials Newsletter, but the Council accepted that an issue remained, in that some judges continued to penalise handlers using such commands.
34. It was agreed that the matter should be referred to the Field Trial Judges Sub-Group for further consideration as to how it may be addressed, and appropriate guidance subsequently disseminated to all Panel and Non-Panel judges.

Judges Assessment Forms

35. Mrs Hay, on behalf of the Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria, sought the views of the Council on the possibility of non-Panel and 'B' Panel judges completing



assessment forms on their co-judges if they were dissatisfied with their experience of judging alongside them.

36. The suggestion was made in view of concerns that, in some instances, non-Panel and 'B' Panel judges had felt intimidated by their senior judges, and were concerned that this could lead to their non-progression onto either the 'B' or 'A' Panel.
37. It was noted that in such circumstances the junior judge may make a report in the trial's Incident Book should he or she feel the conduct of the senior judge was not acceptable. However it was suggested that it would be preferable for a specific form to be available for use by junior judges, which may be used to supply feedback, either positive or negative, regarding the conduct of the senior judge. This form may be attached to the report of the senior judge so that the junior judge's remarks may be noted by the Field Trial Committee when considering him or her for appointment to the 'B' or 'A' Panel. It was agreed that should such a form be made available, it would be desirable to ensure strict confidentiality in order to prevent any potential detrimental effect on the progress of the junior judge. Further, it was noted that this evaluation form should be made available in all circumstances in order to note both positive and negative experiences.
38. It was also suggested that should the office receive a set number of adverse reports concerning a particular judge, the matter should be referred to the Field Trials Committee for consideration as to whether any action was necessary.
39. It was agreed that the suggestion be referred to the Field Trial Judges Sub-Group for further detailed consideration.

Spaniel Judges

40. Mr Proctor, representing Midland English Springer Spaniel Society, requested that the Council discuss its suggestion in relation to the experience of judges and the stakes they should be permitted to judge. The Society was of the view that it appeared that some judges were seeking, or being invited to judge Field Trials of a standard they personally had not achieved. It was noted that the Society's suggestion was supported by the English Springer Spaniel Club.
41. The Society wished to suggest that Non Panel Judges who had not handled a dog to win at least a Novice Stake, may only be permitted to judge Novice stakes in a four judge system. Having handled a dog to win a Novice field trial they may judge in a two judge system. B Panel judges who had not handled a dog to win an Open stake should be confined to judging Novice stakes and not judge Open stakes.
42. However, the Council noted that the ability of a handler to win a stake was not necessarily indicative of his or her suitability to be a judge.
43. Further, it considered that the implementation of such a measure may result in a shortage of suitable judges being available. It was highlighted that anomalies may occur, for example a handler may win in a stake with a dog trained by someone else and may not have the skills or experience necessary to judge. Alternatively, a highly experienced and knowledgeable handler may not be able to achieve a win a stake due to other commitments which prevented him or her being able to enter many trials. For these reasons, it was considered that the policy proposed would not be fair on all competitors or judges.
44. A show of hands was requested to indicate the level of support for the suggestion, and by a substantial majority, it was not supported.

J Regulation booklet

45. The discussion item was presented by Mr Wright, on behalf of the United Retriever Club. The Club wished to suggest that a copy of the current J Regulations booklet



should be sent automatically to every field trial panel judge, free of charge. The objective of the suggestion was to encourage all judges to read the J Regulations and to ensure that they had a copy with them at trials.

46. It was noted that it was currently the responsibility of the host society to ensure that a copy of the J Regulations was available for use by the judges at a trial.
47. The office wished to highlight the considerable cost of printing and posting copies of the booklet to all Panel judges, noting that there were approximately 2500 on the Panel list. It was emphasised that the J Regulations may be downloaded, free of charge, from the Kennel Club's website.
48. Noting this, the Council was not in support of the discussion item, but agreed that a reminder should be placed in the next issue of the Field Trials Newsletter to all judges that they should ensure they were familiar with the current J Regulations prior to each judging appointment, and that these were available for download at no cost.

Clarification of Regulation J7.k

49. Mrs Harrison, on behalf of Guildford Working Gundog Club, requested the Council to clarify the intent and application of the second sentence of Regulation J7.k in relation to preference in the draw for All Aged stakes.
50. The Club was of the view that the statement that 'In all cases members' dogs should take preference in the draw' gave rise to potential ambiguity, and that it was unclear whether this Regulation should be read as stating that members' dogs which did not meet any of the conditions of entry set by the Society would take preference in the draw over non-members' dogs which did meet the conditions of entry set by the Society.
51. The Council agreed that an ambiguity did exist, and a proposal was made by Mrs Harrison that the regulation be amended to provide clarity. The proposal was seconded by Mr Highfield.
52. A vote took place and the Council unanimously **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

Regulation J7.k

TO:

All Aged Stakes may be restricted by any conditions determined by the society (See J3.d(2)). In all cases members' dogs **which meet the conditions of entry** should take preference in the draw.

(Insertion in bold)

Errors in draws

53. Mr Byron, representing Cambridge Field Trial Society, requested clarification regarding the correct procedure to be followed where an error was made by a club when conducting the draw for entries into a field trial, such as competitors having been omitted from the draw, competitors having two entries in the first draw, or preferences having been incorrectly entered in the draw.
54. It was clarified by the office that the Kennel Club was not prescriptive on the issue, and that club committees had discretion as to how to proceed, based on the circumstances.
55. There were mixed views as to whether a complete re-draw should be carried out should an error be identified, with some being of the view that a re-draw was required in all such cases, whereas others considered that it was not beneficial to cause unnecessary disruption to a large number of competitors should the error be minor in nature.

56. It was reiterated that the decision to redraw or not to redraw should be made by club committees on a case by case basis, and that the Kennel Club would provide advice in all situations, and would support clubs in their decision.
57. The Council accepted that there may be cases where the decision reached by a club may not be welcomed by all competitors, but that it was not possible for the Kennel Club to issue definitive guidance which would cover all possible circumstances. However, should there be any evidence of dishonesty or inappropriate conduct by the club in respect of the draw, the matter should be referred to the Kennel Club for investigation.
58. It was agreed that suitable clarification regarding the issue should be published in the Field Trials Newsletter.

Field Trial Diary

59. Mr Bryon presented the discussion item on behalf of Cambridge Field Trial Society. It requested that the Council discuss concerns regarding the Kennel Club's online Field Trial Diary not being updated regularly enough, as a result of which some secretaries were finding that their selected date had already been booked.
60. Whilst acknowledging the concern, the Council accepted that due to lack of resources within the Field Trials department, it was not possible for the diary to be updated on a daily basis. However it would continue to be updated weekly.
61. In addition, every effort was made by the office to ensure that the Field Trial desk was available to give updated information on the availability of trial dates when requested.
62. The Council acknowledged the efforts of the office to provide a good service, but wished to note its concern regarding the lack of available resources within the department.

Clashing dates

63. Lincolnshire Gundog Society wished to request that the Kennel Club encourage Spaniel field trial secretaries in counties in central England to ask hosts or keepers for two possible field trial dates for a Novice Cocker Stake. The discussion item was presented by Ms Whyte.
64. It was anticipated that this measure may help to address the situation where there was a potential clash of dates for Novice Stakes, to the detriment of both clubs, but particularly to the trial which was located in a less geographically accessible area. It was suggested that in such circumstances a society wishing to book a date which had already been taken by another society in the same area, would be offered only its second date option by the Kennel Club.
65. It was clarified that any club applying for a date on which a trial had already been booked would be notified by the office of a potential clash, and it would be encouraged to submit an alternative date. In such circumstances, advice would be given that the two clubs concerned should liaise to resolve the issue, and that a new date should be sought by either of the clubs involved.
66. The Council accepted that the office was unable to prevent clashes of dates, and that it was up to the clubs themselves to ensure that clashes did not occur, or where they did, to minimise their effects as far as was possible.

Number of Council meetings

67. Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club, represented by Ms Whyte, requested that the Council discuss whether, in order for the Council to truly represent



the trialling community, and to be effective at a grassroots level, it should meet twice a year instead of once. It was suggested that the Council could consider a reduction of size if necessary for cost reasons.

68. It was acknowledged that there may be some practical issues arising from the suggestion. A reduction in size would mean that each Council member would be required to represent up to 5 clubs each, which may be unduly onerous. Further, holding two meetings at 6-month intervals would mean that one meeting would take place during the trialling season, and it was accepted that representatives may not be able to attend a meeting at such a time due to other commitments.
69. The Council considered ways in which its time may be used in an effective manner. The Chairman requested that all representatives should be pro-active in ensuring that any items submitted for the agenda were practical and relevant. It was hoped that Council representatives would take a pro-active role, and that where proposals or discussion items were not appropriate for inclusion on the agenda, they would advise the submitting club or individual appropriately.
70. The office was requested to publish suitable guidance in the Field Trials Newsletter as to the remit of the Council and the criteria for submissions to the agenda, and how the Council should be used to ensure its maximum effectiveness.
71. A concern was raised that where the Council made recommendations, there was often a considerable delay before feedback was available from the Kennel Club. It was acknowledged that this was often due to internal procedures whereby all recommendations must be referred to the Field Trials Committee and subsequently to the Board, which was a lengthy process. However, the office would do its best to ensure that information was provided in a timely manner.

Incident Book

72. Ms Whyte presented the discussion item which had been submitted by Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club. The Club wished to suggest that the Kennel Club rename the Incident Book for use by the field trialling community, and that it publish an article on its purpose, giving examples on how and when it can be used.
73. The matter had been raised due to concerns that many within the field trialling community were unaware of the existence of the Incident Book, or its purpose.
74. It was clarified that an Incident Book must be available at all field trials and working tests, and should be used to record any occurrence which was considered to be out of the ordinary. Reports may be lodged in the Incident Book by the host society, or by any individual attending a trial. The Kennel Club, on receipt of the Incident Book following a trial, would investigate any serious issues which had been highlighted, or may use the information contained in it as part of its investigations should a formal complaint be received regarding any matter arising from the trial.
75. It was noted that the Kennel Club would supply blank copies of the Incident Book to clubs and societies, free of charge, on request.
76. It was agreed that an item would be placed in the Field Trials Newsletter drawing the attention of clubs, judges and competitors to the existence of the Incident Book and the way in which it should be used. However, the Council did not conclude that there was a necessity for the Incident Book to be renamed.

Judges contracts

77. Mr Wright, representing the United Retriever Club, wished to suggest that a time limit should be imposed on the returning of contract documentation from judges who had accepted verbal invitations to judge at a trial.

78. It was acknowledged that some judges were unduly slow at returning written documentation. Equally, some societies did not issue documentation promptly to judges who had accepted a verbal invitation. It was emphasised that a formal contract did not exist until such time as all necessary paperwork had been completed.
79. The Council discussed the matter briefly but concluded that the prompt exchange of contract documentation was a matter of courtesy and good etiquette, and should be dealt with by means of good communications between the parties concerned. It did not conclude that any formal action was necessary.

Judges opting out of judging contracts

80. The discussion item was raised by United Retriever Club, represented by Mr Wright. The Club wished to discuss the situation in respect of judges who, having signed a contract to judge at a trial, subsequently opted out of their agreement in order to take up a run in a field trial.
81. The Club was of the view that such conduct was unacceptable, and caused issues for field trial secretaries.
82. The Council was in agreement with the Club's views, and wished to draw the attention of judges to the provisions of the Guide for Field Trial Judges, as follows:

All Judges must be aware of the penalties for failing to honour an appointment. These apply whether the appointment is oral or the subject of a contract in writing.

If such an eventuality arises, the Judge should take the following action:

- *Notify the Society immediately.*
- *Confirm the reason in writing in order that a report can be made to the Kennel Club*

The Field Trials Committee would consider any reports of judges failing to honour appointments without good reason, and may issue a fine to the judge concerned if appropriate.

83. It was suggested that where a judge withdrew from a judging appointment in order to take up a run elsewhere, the host club should write to him or her, with a copy supplied to the Kennel Club, stating its dissatisfaction with the reason for the withdrawal. It was agreed by the Council that this was a sensible and practical approach.
84. Where it was apparent that any particular individual repeatedly withdrew from judging appointments under such circumstances, the Field Trials Committee may undertake an investigation.

Amendment to Regulation J6.a.(4) Confirmation of judging appointment

85. Dukeries (Notts) Gundog Club, represented by Mrs Asbury, requested that the Council discuss a suggested amendment to the above Regulation, whereby judges would be required to confirm, when accepting a judging appointment, that they were in good health and had the physical ability to undertake the appointment.
86. It was suggested that the Regulation in its existing form, which required judges to notify the society in writing of any change in personal circumstances which would affect their ability to fulfil the appointment, was adequate. Further, it was hoped that societies would take care to invite only judges who were physically capable of fulfilling the appointment.
87. The Council concluded that no action was necessary on this matter.

Prize Money at Retriever trials



88. The United Retriever Club, represented by Mr F Wright, noted that it appeared that some clubs had not increased prize money for many years, whereas the entry fee had in some cases doubled over the last few years. It wished to suggest that the prize money at Retriever field trials should be at least the same value as the entry fee.
89. It was highlighted that this issue, over which the Kennel Club had no jurisdiction, was not appropriate for discussion by the Council. Any decisions regarding prize money were to be made by clubs themselves in the light of their own financial circumstances and preferences.
90. Individuals wishing to encourage the provision of prize money should approach the relevant clubs, or attend Annual General Meetings, to make their views known.

Owners/handlers shooting at a trial

91. Mrs Bradley, representing the Labrador Retriever Club, presented the discussion item. The Club wished the Council to discuss the ethical issues involved in an owner accepting a run in a trial, then choosing to shoot at the same trial without withdrawing, and getting an alternative handler to run the dog.
92. The Club was of the view that doing so deprived another person from running a dog and could be argued as giving the handler an unfair advantage.
93. However, the Council was not of the view that a serious issue existed, and acknowledged that in some cases a host club may be appreciative of a competitor who was able to shoot on the day rather than running his or her own dog.
94. It did not consider that any action was necessary.

ITEM 6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

95. The Council noted that the next meeting would take place in May 2019. The exact date would be confirmed in due course.
96. Mr Taylor advised the Council that he would not be standing for re-election and that a new Chairman would be elected in 2019. He thanked the Council for its support during his term of office.

ITEM 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

97. No matters were raised under Any Other Business.

The meeting closed at 1.00 pm

MR J M TAYLOR
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'