



**MINUTES OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2019 AT 10.30 AM 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 Hawkswell	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

**GUEST**

Mrs S Garner	Chair - Activities Committee
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**IN ATTENDANCE**

Miss R Mansfield	Senior Officer - Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary - Working Dog Activities Team

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

1. One nomination was received for the role of Chairman for the new term of the Council, and Mr Cavill was duly elected to the role.

**IN THE CHAIR MR M CAVILL**

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

2. One nomination was received for the role of Vice Chairman for the term of the Council, and Mr Hallam was duly elected.

**ITEM 3. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE FROM JUNE 2019 TO MAY 2022**

3. Nominations were received for Mrs Croxford and Mrs Gardner for the role of the Council's representative onto the Activities Committee for the above term of office. Following a ballot, Mrs Croxford was elected to the role.



#### **ITEM 4. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL**

4. One nomination was received for the role of the Council's representative on the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group for the above period of office, and Mr MacDonald was duly elected to the role.

#### **ITEM 5. PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL ON KENNEL CLUB STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES**

5. The Council noted the presentation which explained the Kennel Club Liaison Council's structure and procedures. New representatives were welcomed to the meeting, and the role of Council representatives was clarified.

#### **ITEM 6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

6. All representatives were present.

#### **ITEM 7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

7. The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 were approved as an accurate record.

8. A request was made that a list of action points be included in future minutes to reflect the actions agreed at the meeting, and to ensure that these were followed up as appropriate.

##### Amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)11.f

9. At its meeting on 12 July 2018 the Council recommended for approval an amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)9 which included the following: 'Progression from Grade 5 will require the dog to have won four first places, two of which must be in agility classes.'

10. It noted that, in the interests of clarity and brevity, this Regulation was reworded prior to consideration by the Activities Committee to state that 'Progression from each Grade will be determined by the eligibility for the class as referenced in Regulation H(1)(A)11.' which stated: 'Grade 6: Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of five first places at Grade 5 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, 3 first places must be gained in Agility (not jumping) classes'. However due to an oversight, Regulation H(1)(A)11.f. was not amended in line with the Council's wishes.

11. The Council noted that Regulation H(1)(A)11.f had now been amended by the office to reflect the Council's wish that Grade 6 should be open to dogs which had gained **four** first places at Grade 5, **two** of which must be in agility classes.

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

12. The Council noted that at its meeting on 2 October 2018, the Board approved a number of amendments to H Regulations, relating to the following issues:

- Progression structure The Board approved the imposition of a 5-year moratorium on any further changes to the progression structure, with the exception of minor amendments or corrections if necessary, any changes relating to Championship classes, and any issues relating to health and welfare. This would allow for the impact of the current changes to grading and progression to be fully realised before making any further amendments.



- Jump heights and height limits for dogs The Board noted the Activities Committee's concerns regarding the Council's recommendation that the revised Regulations should come into effect on 1 January 2019. In view of these concerns which related to the practicalities of early implementation, the Board approved the Committee's recommendation that the new implementation date for the revised Regulations H(1)(B)2 Height Limit for Dogs and Regulation H(1)(B)3 should be 1 January 2020.
- Consequential Regulation amendments relating to equipment
- Removal of imperial measures in H Regulations

13. A query was raised as to when the new Regulations would be available on the Kennel Club website. After checking, the office confirmed that an up-to-date copy of the H Regulations was now available for download.

14. The Council went on to discuss the implications of the new dog heights on qualifying events. There was some concern that owners were unsure as to whether they should have their dogs measured for the Intermediate height until such time as the position was clarified by the Kennel Club.

15. It was noted that an announcement had been made that qualifiers would stay the same for 2019, and that further information about qualifiers in 2020 would be announced in due course. Any further issues regarding qualifiers would be subject to consideration by the Prestige Events Working Party. It was clarified that the Working Party largely consisted of highly experienced representatives from Agility.

16. The importance of providing timely guidance for competitors was highlighted, in order for them to make informed decisions. Accordingly the Council wished to request that information regarding the relevant timescales be issued as soon as possible, and no later than the end of 2019.

17. Further, it agreed that the Agility Governance Panel should formulate a document for submission to the Prestige Events Working Party, in order to ensure that it was fully aware of the views of the Agility community.

#### Use of whistles - proposed new Regulation H(1)10.h

18. The Council noted that the Activities Committee had considered the proposed new Regulation to prevent the use of whistles in standard classes, however the Committee was of the view that there were other ways in which the issue may be addressed by show organisers wishing to exclude the use of whistles, such as the inclusion of a statement in schedules indicating that they may not be used, or via judges' contract documentation. Accordingly, it did not recommend approval of the proposed amendment.

#### Restrictions on shows held on the same date

19. At its meeting on 18 January 2018, the Council noted that a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database was currently under development by the Kennel Club, however this would not be in place until 2020. Until such time as the new system came into operation, it would not be possible to implement measures relating to clashing shows, such as the restriction of licences for shows within a specified distance of each other.

20. The Council was advised that the time frame for implementation of the new CRM database had been amended and it was now hoped that the new system would go live in 2019. One implication of the revised time scale was that it may not be possible to include any measures regarding show dates into the initial version, but if not it may be possible to add such a feature at a later stage.

21. It was noted that there was no existing facility to allow for a club to object to another show being held on the same date, even if it was within a specified radius. Noting that the matter had previously been discussed by the Council, it was agreed that the discussion should be re-opened, initially via the



Agility Governance Panel, in order to consider ways in which the issue may be addressed, and to make recommendations for features to be included within the CRM database, subject to practicality and the availability of resources.

22. The matter would be considered further by the Council at its July meeting with a view to making recommendations for consideration by the Activities Committee.

#### Issues faced by agility judges

23. The Council had requested that both the Judging Panel and the Activities Judges Sub-Group give further consideration to issues facing agility judges, in light of the Council's views on the matter with a view for further discussion.

24. The Sub-Group had noted the Council's concerns regarding the number of agility judges who were retiring from judging, for a variety of reasons, including health, age, and possible issues relating to social media. It accepted that the overloading of judges was also an issue.

25. The Sub-Group acknowledged that efforts must be made to ensure that enough new judges were being trained to support the growing number of participants in the discipline. and requested that the matter be referred back to the Agility Liaison Council for a further discussion on ways in which existing judges could be supported to prevent them retiring from judging, and ways in which new judges may be encouraged.

26. The Council acknowledged that the issue was a very important one requiring careful and detailed consideration. Accordingly the Judging Panel was requested to consider each of the main issues relating to judges, and to suggest possible solutions to them, which may be discussed by the Council at its July meeting.

### **ITEM 9. AGILITY STRATEGY REVIEW WORKING PARTY**

27. The Council noted that, in view of the Sports Governance review which was currently in progress, the Board, at its meeting on 17 July 2018, agreed that the Agility Strategy Review Working Party be disbanded.

### **ITEM 10. ACCREDITED TRAINERS ANNUAL SEMINAR AND ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP**

28. The Council noted a written report from Mr Huckle following the Accredited Trainers Annual Seminar and the Activities Judges Sub-Group meetings held on 9 October 2018 and 1 November 2018 respectively. (Note: Mr Huckle was no longer a Council representative so was not present at the meeting).

29. The Accredited Trainers had discussed content relating to Agility for the Kennel Club Academy (KCA), and had made some excellent suggestions regarding items for inclusion. It was hoped that more videos would be added during the course of 2019.

30. The mandatory mentoring of new judges was fully supported by the Accredited Trainers. The Council noted that at present mentoring was not mandatory and the service was only provided for those judges who requested it. There were still some difficulties in appointing mentors, mainly due to the stipulation that the mentor may not compete in the class being judged by the person being mentored. However it was agreed that this should remain the case in order to prevent any perception of unfairness that a mentor may have an unfair advantage, having seen the course plan beforehand.



31. In response to a concern regarding the bank of questions included within the examination, the Judging Panel was requested to undertake a review to ensure that questions were adequately testing of the candidate's knowledge. [Afternote: It was subsequently clarified by the office that the detailed content of examinations did not fall within the Council's remit, but was subject to regular review by the Activities Judges Sub-Group. However any suggestions for amendments to existing questions may be referred to the Sub-Group.]

32. The Council went on to discuss the cost of KCA membership, which was currently £26 per annum. It was noted that provision had been made for a reduced membership fee of £10 for those breed judges who only wished to judge a single breed, and a query was raised as to whether a similar reduced fee may be made available to Agility judges who only judged at Championship level and did not wish to judge any other disciplines. It was advised that the issue was under ongoing review by the office.

33. It was suggested that it would be very helpful for a presentation regarding the KCA (with the emphasis on agility content) to be made to the Council at its next meeting. This would include details on its structure and objectives, as well as information as to the format for online examinations and the conditions under which they should be taken. It was agreed that this would be a positive step and the office was requested to make the necessary arrangements.

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

34. The Council noted a written report following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 10 September 2018. The main issues were as follows:

35. **Veterinary assessments:** dogs competing at Olympia in December 2018 had been subject to veterinary assessment prior to competing. Competitors had accepted the assessments, having been advised beforehand that they would take place, and there had been no issues.

36. A query was raised as to whether the assessment process may be stressful for some dogs, but the Council was of the view that those competing at prestige events were advised that such checks would take place and should prepare their dogs accordingly. Further, all checks were carried out by highly experienced veterinary surgeons which would minimise the risk of any stress to competing dogs.

37. **Discipline-specific survey:** the Sub-Group noted a report regarding the analysis of previously undertaken discipline-specific surveys provided by Dr Gomez Alvarez and Dr Den Uijl. The report had concluded that, across all disciplines, in broad terms, there was a correlation between injuries and the age of the dog, however it was unclear as to whether this was due to older dogs being subject to increased training, or competing at a higher level in the relevant discipline. Other factors influencing the potential for injury related to the level of competition and weather conditions. The most common injuries cited were soft tissue injuries, however it was acknowledged that in many cases injuries reported via the questionnaires were self-diagnosed by the owners of the dogs concerned and that this may have introduced a level of bias. Also in many cases it was difficult to ascertain the exact time or cause of an injury occurring as it may not have been immediately noticed by the owner.

38. **Pre-competition video:** The Sub-Group was in the process of developing a 'Pre-competition' film for inclusion on the Kennel Club Academy, which would include information on ways in which a dog may be warmed up prior to competing. The Sub-Group acknowledged that there was a widespread perception that warming up a dog would reduce the potential for injury, however it accepted that there was currently no research evidence to support this.



## **ITEM 12. REVIEW OF PANELS**

39. The Council was pleased to note that the use of the Panels, which had focussed on research and the preparation of submissions for consideration by the Council, had proved to be very productive, and it was keen to continue to make use of the Panel system.

40. However, it was necessary to review the membership, roles, and remits of each Panel, with a view to ensuring that they continued to be effective. It agreed that a Chair for each Panel be appointed to act as a main point of contact between it and the Council, to co-ordinate the work of the individual Panel, and then inform the Council Chair and Vice-Chair of progress.

41. The outgoing members of each Panel, some of whom were no longer on the Council, were thanked for their work over the past three years. This had been much appreciated.

42. The membership of each Panel was discussed, and it was agreed that a revised remit for each would be formulated by the chair of each, and included within the minutes.

### Equipment Panel

43. The Council considered that the existing remit remained appropriate but wished to add **'To monitor and review incidents reported to the Kennel Club office.'**

### Revised Remit:

The Panel acts as an advisory group on matters related to agility equipment. It will:

- Review any new equipment or modifications for Kennel Club approval prior to use.
- Review currently approved equipment to ensure specifications are still relevant in today's agility arena
- Consider concerns raised by the agility community
- Monitor equipment issues raised in incident books
- Hold discussions with equipment manufacturers
- Report to the Council at meetings

44. The office was thanked for supplying details of equipment-related incidents to the Panel, which had been helpful. It was noted that open shows in Scotland were licensed by the Scottish Kennel Club (SKC) and any incidents were reported to SKC. It was agreed that the office would request that details of relevant incidents occurring in Scotland were notified to the office and to Mr Smith.

45. Membership:  
Mr K Smith (Chair)  
Mr S Chandler  
Mr M Hallam  
Mrs L Olden  
Miss R Sargent

### Grading Panel

46. Remit: To review the grading structure.

47. The Council discussed whether the Grading Panel was still necessary or whether it had achieved its objectives. It agreed that it would be necessary in due course to review qualifications for Championship eligibility, although such a review would not be required in the immediate future. It was agreed that under the circumstances the Grading Panel should be suspended until such time as its services were required, at which point it would be reinstated.





#### Agility Governance Panel

48. Revised remit The Governance Panel will:

- 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

49. Membership:

Mrs S Hawkswell (Chair)

Mr S Chandler

Mrs J Gardner

Mr I MacDonald

Miss R Sargent

#### Height Classification Panel

50. Remit: To consider issues relating to jump heights, including health and welfare issues, and to consider ways of determining optimum jump heights for all dogs dependent upon height and conformation. Also to consider issues related to dog heights and measuring.

51. The Council agreed that the work of the Height Classification Panel had been successfully completed and that accordingly, it should be disbanded with immediate effect, with thanks to all who had contributed to its work.

52. Any outstanding issues would be referred to the Agility Governance Panel.

#### Judging Panel

53. Existing Remit: To work in conjunction with the Activities Judges Sub Group to consider any issues relating to judging, including competency and education – to include issues arising from Continuing Personal Development and Mentoring schemes. [**Afternote:** a revised remit for the Judging Panel will be confirmed in due course.]

54. Membership:

Mrs J Gardner (Chair)

Mr M Cavill

Mr S Chandler

Mrs S Hawkswell

Mrs E Laing-Kay

Mr M Tait

55. The Council accepted that at present there was a great deal of information available for judges, but that it was spread across a number of locations, making it very difficult to find. Some information was repeated in different documents. It was hoped that the Judging Panel would be able to produce a revised Guide for Judges, similar to the existing one but in a more robust form, in order to provide simple but comprehensive guidance for judges.

56. Noting that the office routinely advised the Equipment Panel of any incidents reported via a show's Incident Book, a request was made that incidents relating to judging were reported to the Judging Panel in a similar manner.

57. It was highlighted that as Mr Huckle was no longer a member of the Council, it was not currently represented on the Activities Judges Sub-Group. The Council was of the view that it would be highly



advantageous for a member of the Judging Panel to serve on the Sub-Group and it recommended Mrs Gardner for the role.

### **ITEM 13. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL**

58. The Council noted a written report from the Equipment Panel.

#### Incident Book

59. The Panel thanked the office for keeping it informed of incidents involving equipment, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

60. A query was raised as to whether it would be possible for the office to supply a report of the total number of incidents involving equipment, split by the type of obstacle. However it noted that doing so would involve a considerable amount of time and resource. It was agreed instead that the Equipment Panel would implement and maintain a categorised log of incidents passed to it, in order to provide an overview of the number and type of such incidents.

61. It was emphasised that when lodging a report in an Incident Book regarding a concern relating to equipment, it was important to include as much detail as possible, including details of witnesses and any photographs.

62. The Council acknowledged that many people were unclear as to how and when the Incident Book should be used. It accepted that there was guidance available on the Kennel Club website but it agreed that the Agility Governance Panel should investigate the issue further with a view to ensuring that use of the Incident Book was better understood by the Agility community.

63. It was highlighted that at a show where nothing had been reported in the Incident Book, clubs were not required to submit it to the Kennel Club.

64. The Council noted that it was likely that the design and layout of the Incident Book would be subject to review by the office.

#### Colour of Equipment

65. The subject of equipment colour had recently been raised with some Panel members and also on social media. Photographs have been published using an app which, it was claimed, showed images as a dog would see them. It was also suggested that dogs may be able to see textures better than humans which may help them to see obstacles.

66. The Council noted 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.

67. The office undertook to locate the relevant report and to place the matter on the agenda for the Council's next meeting.

#### Contact Equipment

68. Following discussions at the Council's meeting held on 12 July 2018, a proposal had been submitted to standardise the height of the see-saw. This was discussed separately (paragraphs 69-75 refer). The Council noted that the A frame would be considered as part of the Equipment Panel's review of equipment.

#### Height of pivot point on the see-saw





69. At its previous meeting, the Council agreed that the maximum height of the see-saw plank, measured at the pivot point, should be set at a single standardised height. It was of the view that standardising at 610mm which was the height of most see-saws would minimise changes needed to clubs' equipment.

70. Accordingly, it considered a proposal from the Equipment Panel to amend Regulation H(1)(B)3.m., under the terms of which the height of the central bracket measured from the ground to the top of the plank would be 610mm.

71. It noted that one equipment supplier had expressed a concern regarding the proposed change. It also accepted that there were a number of variables affecting the performance of the see-saw, and that changing only one of them would not standardise the dog's experience.

72. In particular it was highlighted that the existing Regulation allowed for the width of the see-saw to be from a minimum of 254mm to a maximum of 305mm and it was suggested that if the height of the pivot point was to be standardised, it would be logical to standardise the width at the same time.

73. It was also suggested that consideration be given by the Equipment Panel as to whether the pivot point should be on a central bracket, which was not the case for all see-saws.

74. It was agreed that further consideration of the proposal should be **deferred** until the Council's next meeting, at which point a revised proposal formulated by the Equipment Panel in the light of the above discussion may be considered.

75. In the intervening period the views of equipment manufacturers would be sought on the matter via a questionnaire to be formulated by the Equipment Panel and issued by the office.

#### **ITEM 14. NUMBER OF CHAMPIONSHIP AGILITY SHOWS**

76. The Activities Committee had requested the Council to review the number of Championship shows, and to consider setting a cap at a suitable level.

77. However, due to a change in circumstances with the introduction of the Intermediate height, a detailed discussion was not considered to be appropriate at the current time.

78. However, it was noted 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.

#### **ITEM 15. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

79. The Council noted that no proposals had been received.

#### **ITEM 16. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### Advertisement of shows

80. Mrs Gardner wished to raise the above matter, noting that there was an assumption amongst the agility community that all shows being advertised had already applied for, and been granted, their show licences. However it was highlighted that this was not the case, and that some shows being advertised may not have applied for licences.



81. It was emphasised that the status of a show may be checked via the Kennel Club's Find A Show page: <https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/services/public/findashow/>

82. The site would display all show dates which had been allocated, including those which had not yet been licensed, noting that licences only need to be applied for 6 months prior to the show. Results may be filtered by discipline, date, location, and by a further filter on a club name or licence type.

83. In response to a query, it was confirmed that should a judge be under contract to judge at a show which did not subsequently take place, the matter may be reported to the Kennel Club should the judge wish to do so, and if appropriate the matter would be investigated.

#### Running Orders in Championship Classes

84. The item was presented by Mrs Gardner, representing Ms T Stilgoe, who wished to draw the attention of the Council to the issue of running orders in Championship classes. She was of the view that handlers with more than one dog who were drawn to run consecutively were disadvantaged.

85. Further, Ms Stilgoe was concerned that being drawn consecutively in Championship classes did not allow for the first dog to be cooled down, or for the second dog to be warmed up.

86. Accordingly, the Council was requested to discuss the possibility of amending Regulation H(1)7.a., to ensure that no handlers would have a consecutive running order in a Championship class. It was acknowledged that it was normal practice to address such issues by requesting that the judge take a short break in order to allow time for the handler to prepare his or her second dog.

87. It was also pointed out that the suggested amendment to the Regulation would not fully address the problem as clashes may still occur where a handler was competing in another Championship class at a different height, where there was a change of handler, or where dogs were withdrawn from a running order as a result of which the proposed 'gap' would no longer exist.

88. Further, it was acknowledged that the existing Regulation stated that the draw for a Championship class should be random in nature and that the suggested amendment would mean that this was no longer the case.

89. This led to a concern being raised as to the way in which draws were carried out. The Council wished to emphasise that all draws must be random in nature, and that a draw should not be redrawn under any circumstances.

90. The Council was not of the view that a major issue existed in most regions, although it was highlighted that there was some issue at shows held in Northern Ireland. Whilst appreciative of Ms Stilgoe's intent, the Council was not of the view that the suggestion would offer an effective solution to the issue and accordingly, did not consider that any amendment to the existing Regulation was warranted.

#### Removal of the Table from the list of obstacles

91. Mr A Stafford, represented by Mr Smith, requested that the Council consider removal of the Table from the list of obstacles as specified in Regulation H(1)(B)3.e.

92. The Council was in agreement with Mr Stafford's stated view that the Table was rarely used and that there was no clearly defined way of judging it. However it suggested that it might be preferable to consider whether there was a better way in which the obstacle may be used, prior to making any decision to discontinue its use completely.



93. It was noted that use of the Table would add to the length of the day for judges, stewards, and members of ring parties. Further, there was some concern that its use may represent a health and welfare issue for dogs required to decelerate or accelerate sharply whilst jumping onto, or off, the Table. It noted that the Pause Box offered the same opportunity to test the dog's control without any such issue arising.

94. It was acknowledged that competitive Agility was a test of both the dog's speed and control, and that the Table and the Pause Box did provide a means of testing control. Accordingly the Council was of the view that neither should be removed from the list of obstacles without adequate consideration being given as to whether they may be used in a more productive way. It was agreed that the Equipment Panel would review the use of the Table and the Pause Box and would provide a report for consideration by the Council at its July meeting.

#### Geographical Spread of Championship Agility Shows

95. The discussion item was presented by Mr Tait on behalf of Cornwall Agility Club, which wished the Council to discuss the geographical location of Kennel Club Championship Agility Shows throughout the UK, and to make recommendations to improve the geographical spread.

96. The Club wished to draw the attention of the Council to the position of the agility community in the South West which considered itself to be disadvantaged by the lack of shows in its vicinity.

97. It was noted that there was a high concentration of shows in the Midlands area but it was accepted that there were also a great many competitors in the area. However the Council was in agreement that it was important to ensure that all regions were well served by shows, as far as was possible.

98. Cornwall Agility Club also wished the Council to discuss the criteria used by the Kennel Club when considering applications for Championship status, and to consider whether these should be published with the objective of assisting clubs in formulating successful applications.

99. It was clarified by the office that all applications were considered by the Activities Committee on a case by case basis and that there was no set list of criteria available for publication. Instead, applicants were requested to submit evidence which demonstrated their ability to run a successful show. Unsuccessful applicants were advised of the reasons for their application being refused, and were free to re-apply should they wish to do so.

100. The Council agreed that a specific set of criteria for applications for championship status be formulated and submitted to the Activities Committee for its consideration. The Agility Governance Panel was requested to provide such a document to the office for submission to the Committee.

101. A query was raised as to what steps were taken by the office where a club made the decision to outsource the management of an agility show, rather than it being managed by members of its own committee. It was clarified that guidance on how to do so was available on the Kennel Club website, and that no review of such shows would be carried out unless a specific concern was identified and reported to the office, in which case an investigation would be carried out. Should it be considered necessary, a suitable observer may be appointed to visit a show.

102. The Agility Governance Panel was requested to formulate a method of ensuring that, where an issue relating to show management was identified, it was automatically flagged up and reported to the office for the appropriate steps to be taken.

#### Increase of Minimum and Maximum Number of Obstacles



103. The discussion item was presented by Mr Hallam on behalf of Ms H Grantham. Ms Grantham wished the Council to discuss suggested changes to the current Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(3) regarding the minimum and maximum number of obstacles that can be used in an agility or jumping course. It was suggested that the maximum number of obstacles should be increased to 22, whilst the minimum would be increased to 15. The suggestion was made with the objective of allowing judges to set courses which were sufficiently testing for competitors, and which also provided value for money.

104. There was widespread support for the increase of the minimum number of obstacles from 10 to 15, many being of the view that a course consisting of 10 obstacles did not provide an adequate test, and may be disappointing for competitors who wished to be challenged by a course.

105. There was some support for the suggested increase in the maximum number of obstacles from 20 to 22, however some concerns were raised. Whilst it was acknowledged that it would not necessarily increase the amount of equipment required as some obstacles may be used more than once and that 22 obstacles was a MAXIMUM number, there could be an implication on the length of the judge's day. There was also a concern that some indoor venues may have logistical issues in fitting 22 obstacles into a ring, however this may be addressed by clubs advising judges beforehand as to what equipment would be available for their use.

106. However on balance the Council did not raise any major objection to increasing either the minimum or maximum number of obstacles in a course, and it was agreed that the Judging Panel would prepare a formal proposal, in consultation with Miss Grantham, for consideration at the Council's next meeting.

#### Regulation H 28.a.(9) (Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards)

107. Miss Olden presented the discussion item which had been submitted by Ms N Cuddy who wished the Council to discuss a suggested amendment to the above Regulation as follows:

Regulation H28.a.(9)

**TO:**

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.~~

(Deletion struck through.)

108. Under the terms of the suggested amendment, 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. Ms Cuddy wished to highlight her view that the introduction of the above Regulation in January 2012 had caused difficulties for show organisers and for competitors.

109. A proposal to address these issues was discussed by the Council at its meeting in January 2015 but its recommendations were not recommended for approval by the Activities Committee due to concerns regarding different criteria being applied for agility to those in other disciplines. However, the Council was of the view that due to differences between disciplines it was not necessary for the same criteria to be applied to them all.

110. The Council noted that in other disciplines, including breed showing, there was no regulation preventing a spouse from competing under that judge, although it accepted that integrity, and the perception of fairness, was very important. However, it was of the view that judging of agility was not subjective in nature and that it was not possible for a judge to show any favour to any individual competitor.



111. After discussion, the Council concluded that the existing Regulation called into question the integrity of judges, which was not desirable, and that judges should be trusted to conduct themselves with honesty.

112. The Council was unanimous in its support of amending the Regulations to allow for a judge to judge his or her spouse. It agreed that the Judging Panel would formulate a formal proposal for consideration at the Council's July meeting.

### **ITEM 17. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL**

113. The Council noted a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 8 - 11 August 2019, the main points of which were as follows:

- The International Agility Festival in 2019 would be held again at Rockingham Castle, Leicestershire
- New sponsors were currently being sought for the event
- All of the Olympia Quarter-Finals and Semi-Finals would be held once again at the International Agility Festival
- Judges had been invited, and the schedule would be available before Crufts
- 'First Contact' would be the equipment supplier for all rings
- Judges would be asked if they wished to supply their own Ring Manager and Ring Party
- Camping will be limited to 750 units with spare spaces for use if necessary
- Two International judges had been confirmed: Toshiyuke Oba who was the FCI World Championship judge in 2019, and Seppo Savikko from Finland

114. It was noted that there had been some discussion by the office with the venue owners in respect of the condition of the ground and suitable assurances had been provided.

### **ITEM 18. AGILITY TEAM GB**

115. The Council noted a report on Agility Team GB's attendance at the 2018 European Open Championships and World Championships.

116. It was pleased to note that the team had been highly successful and wished to note its congratulations to all involved.

### **ITEM 19. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY**

117. The Council noted the items on its five year strategic plan. There was some concern that the objectives listed were not SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timebound) in nature, as a result of which it was very difficult to assess what level of success had been achieved, and how best to proceed. However, many of the items listed had been addressed, at least in part, by the work of the various Panels.

118. It was agreed that the strategic plan should be reviewed by the Agility Governance Panel which would produce a new five year strategy document for discussion at the Council's next meeting.

### **ITEM 20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Premier Status shows in Northern Ireland**

119. The Council noted that all applications for Premier status from clubs in Northern Ireland had been rejected, and Mr Dornford-Smith wished to register his disappointment. The clubs concerned



had been advised that decisions on the allocation of Premier shows had been made on a regional basis, but it was unclear as to why Premier status had not been granted to any clubs in the region.

120. Mrs Garner was thanked for attending the meeting, and for her valuable contribution.

**ITEM 21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

122. The Council noted that the next meeting would take place on 11 July 2019. Any items for the agenda must be submitted by 12 April 2019.

**The meeting closed at 3.10 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'**