



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON
COUNCIL HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AT 10.30 AM ON
THURSDAY 21 JANUARY 2021**

PRESENT

Mrs K Allen	South/South West
Mrs A Benoist	North East
Mr J Farr	Wales
Miss F Godfrey	South East/East Anglia
Mr R Harlow	South East/East Anglia
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mrs J Le Fevre	South East/East Anglia
Mr B Luckock	Midlands (items 1-6, part of 7, and 8)
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr D Moxon	South/South West
Mrs C Patrick	Scotland
Mrs K Russell	North West
Mrs B Smith	Midlands
Mr N Slater	Midlands (items 1-6 and item 8)
Ms N Thomas	Wales
Mr R Wakelin	North West

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr M Beazley	Chief Executive Officer (items 1-6 and item 8)
Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss C McHardy	Manager - Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team
Miss A Groves	Administrator – Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team

IN THE CHAIR

MR R HARLOW

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

1. The Chairman welcomed Ms Thomas to her first Council meeting as a representative, and also welcomed Mr Beazley and Miss McHardy.

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. All members of the Council were present.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2020 were discussed. A query was raised in relation to paragraph 105, which stated:



'Having considered the matter carefully, and in view of serious concerns regarding safety and welfare and the legal implications, the Council wished to recommend that out of sight stays be discontinued as soon as possible, and removed from the list of exercises.'

4. Some representatives were of the view that this was inaccurate, and that the minutes should state that the Council had recommended that the matter be referred to the Obedience Working Party for further detailed consideration.
5. After some discussion, Mrs Le Fevre proposed that the minutes be approved. Mr Moxon seconded the proposal. A vote took place, and by a majority, the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 7 April 2020 and 6 October 2020, approved the following amendments to G Regulations:

Regulation G31.

TO:

- b.** On **application for** a person's first appointment to judge Championship Class C the minimum conditions which apply are:

A person must:-

- (1)** ~~judges must~~ have at least eight years judging experience which must include 30 championship and/or premier and/or open show appointments of which at least 15 must be Open Class C and two each of Beginners, Novice, Class A and Class B-,
and
- (2)** ~~At the time of judging a first Championship appointment the Judge must have attended a Kennel Club Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar and passed the Regulations and Judging Procedure examination.~~ **have completed and passed an Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination on the Kennel Club Academy prior to attending a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar.**
- c.** ~~Qualifications for judges at premier and open shows and for the non-certificate classes at Championship Shows-~~
On first appointment judges must satisfy the show committee that they:
 - (1) have judged a minimum of four appointments within at least two years at a lower level including limited/companion obedience shows and matches/club or fun competitions.
 - (2) have won out of Beginners at a licensed championship, premier or open obedience show as a handler, and have acted as a caller, scribe or marker steward on six occasions at licensed shows; and
 - (3) ~~have attended a Kennel Club Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar and passed the Regulations and Judging Procedure examination.~~ **completed and passed an Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination on the Kennel Club Academy prior to attending a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar.**
 - (4) ~~have attended an Obedience Test Design and the Practice of Judging Seminar.~~ **a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar and passed the assessment.**

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)

(Subsequent sub-paragraphs to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2021)



Note: the wording for Regulation G31 as shown above was slightly different to that recommended by the Council as it also incorporated changes recommended for approval by the Activities Committee in order to clarify that judges must have fulfilled all criteria prior to applying for approval to judge at championship level.

Regulation G29.f(3)

TO:

Where a draw for the complete running order of classes other than Championship Class C is not made, show managements must conduct a ballot to determine a running order for at least the first 40 ~~6~~ competitors/dogs in these classes: ~~this may be reduced to 6 at shows with less than 200 dogs entered or where there are less than 25 dogs entered in a specific class.~~

Sub paragraph (3) does not apply to limited shows.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2021)

Regulation G(C)4.h. – Stays in ALL classes

TO:

The judge or steward will direct handlers to positions in the ring. The command 'last command' will be given and handlers should then instantly give their final command to their dogs. Any further commands or signals to the dogs after this 'last command' will be penalised. Handlers will then be instructed to leave their dogs and walk to positions indicated until ordered to return to them. These are group tests and all dogs must compete together, but where this is impracticable at an ~~indoor~~ **any** show, the class may be equally divided but the judging for the groups must be consecutive. **The stay ring shall be large enough to cater for the largest expected attendance for each class.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2021)

Stay exercises

7. At its February meeting, the Council had recommended that out of sight stays be discontinued as soon as possible, and removed from the list of exercises. With regard to other stay exercises where the dog remained in sight of the handler, it recommended that with immediate effect all handlers should be required to stand sideways on to their dogs, not with their backs to them, so that they would be in view of the handler at all times.
8. The Activities Committee, at its meeting on 19 March 2020, had noted that the Council was in the process of formulating the necessary Regulation amendments to support its recommendations, and that these would be considered at the Council's meeting in July (although this meeting was subsequently cancelled due to Covid-19). The urgency of the issue was lessened in view of the current situation in which no shows were taking place due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and it was agreed that no further action was required until the Council's further recommendations were available.
9. Proposals relating to the stay exercise were discussed later in the meeting (paragraphs 47-63 refer).

Training for commentators

10. At its previous meeting, the Council was advised that subsequent to its request, the Board had approved the principle of practical training for commentators but with the stipulation that such training should be available company-wide, as appropriate.
11. The Council noted an update from the office. A business case had been submitted to the Finance Committee for consideration, and funding had been approved by the Board, although as yet no further details were available. A further update would be provided to the Council at its next meeting.



12. It was highlighted by Mrs Patrick that the commentary provided for Rally competitions at Crufts in 2020 by Ms J Prince had been excellent.

Height classified classes

13. This issue was discussed later in the meeting (paragraphs 32-34 refer).

Capping on number of wins

14. At its last meeting, the Council discussed a suggestion that a cap be placed on the number of wins in each class, except Open Class 'C' and Championship Class 'C', in order to allow more competitors to progress through the classes. Under the terms of the suggestion, handlers having reached the cap could compete in the class until such time as the relevant closing dates had passed, but may not accept a win.
15. An alternative suggestion had been made that a '21 day rule' be introduced whereby all wins up to and including 21 days before the start of the competition would be counted when entering for any class. Should a dog become eligible for the next class at a particular show, after the entry for that show had been submitted, it would be the competitor's responsibility to notify the show secretary so that the dog may be moved into the appropriate class. A similar system was in operation in agility, and worked well.
16. The Council had noted that a similar issue had been discussed by a social media group for UK obedience show secretaries and it had been agreed that the views of the social media group should be sought in order to inform further consideration of the suggestion, however this information was not available.
17. A suggestion was made that the matter of capping of wins should be considered alongside proposals relating to progression on points, as both related to the issue of competitors moving through the classes. However it was highlighted that there were differences, in that the objective of capping of wins was to prevent dogs with a number of wins from 'blocking' those within the class, whereas progression on points was aimed at helping dogs to move up through the classes where they had demonstrated a high standard by achieving consistent placings, but had not achieved the requisite wins.
18. The Council was in support of the principle of the '21 day rule', however there were some concerns regarding the potential for an additional logistical burden being placed on show secretaries in dealing with last-minute requests for changes of class, and the associated necessity for amendments to catalogues and running orders. However it was not anticipated that the numbers involved would be sufficiently high to cause any major difficulties for show secretaries, although it was acknowledged that there would be higher numbers in some geographical areas where overall entry numbers tended to be higher.
19. It was also highlighted that in some cases moving competitors into a higher class may result in the necessity to divide the class, in which case it would become necessary to appoint an additional judge. It was agreed that should the Council approve such a measure, it would be important to ensure that any amended regulations took this concern into account and should specify that it would not be a requirement to divide a class due to dogs being moved into it, or for parts of a divided class to be equally divided (to within one dog).
20. It was also suggested that wins up to and including 25 days (rather than 21 days) before the start of the competition should be counted when entering for any class, so that the deadline would fall mid-week rather than on a weekend.
21. The Council agreed that the introduction of a 25-day rule would be a positive step and that it should be progressed, taking into account the points raised in the discussion. Mrs Le Fevre, in conjunction with the Obedience Working Party, undertook to formulate a suitable proposal for consideration at the Council's next meeting.



Progression on points

22. The issue of progression on points was discussed later in the meeting (paragraphs 36-45 refer).

Obedience Excellent award

23. At its February meeting, the Council noted that it was necessary to make an amendment to the number of points required to claim the Obedience Excellent award in Pre-Beginners in light of an amendment to Regulation G(A)6.a. which stated that to compete in Pre-Beginners a handler or dog must not have won two (previously one) first places in either Pre-Beginners or Beginners nor gained a third place or above in any other Obedience class (Introductory Class excepted). Currently, 10 points were awarded for a first place.
24. It agreed that an amendment to the claim form was necessary, and accordingly, it **recommended** for approval the following amendment:

CLAIM FOR AN OBEDIENCE EXCELLENT QUALIFICATION

The required points to achieve each qualification are as follows:

...~~4~~ **20** points required for Pre-Beginners
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

25. The Sub-Group's meeting due to take place on 22 April 2020 was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, however the Council noted a written report from Mr Rutter following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 18 November 2020.
26. The main issues relating to obedience were as follows:
- The Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination was now available online.
 - Prospective judges must pass the examination prior to attending the two-day Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, and passing the assessment. This seminar was originally a one-day seminar with candidates receiving a certificate of attendance, however in future candidates would be assessed on a pass/not ready basis.
 - Plans were in hand for CPD assessments to be carried out on judges. Any such assessments would be undertaken in a positive way.
 - The Accredited Trainers Annual Seminar due to take place on 29 October 2020 had been cancelled due to Covid-19, but all Accredited Trainers in all disciplines were encouraged to hold their own virtual meetings where possible. The Accredited Trainers for obedience had discussed the format for the new two-day practical seminar, together with the need for a run-through day to ensure consistency.
 - A suggestion for a new online seminar for Chief Stewards was noted.
 - The Sub-Group also noted that there may be a necessity to consider the recruitment of additional Accredited Trainers for obedience at some point.



ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

27. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Patrick following the Sub-Group's meeting which took place on 14 September 2020. Mrs Patrick had not been able to attend the meeting but had compiled the report from the minutes of the meeting.
28. The main topics relating to obedience were as follows
- An issue regarding the use of harnesses (not during competition) had been raised at a previous meeting of the Sub-Group. On further discussion, the Sub-Group agreed that it was not currently possible to carry out a research project on the use of harnesses, but it would remain on the list of opportunities for investigation and would be reviewed regularly.
 - It was agreed that a statement should be published in order to draw the attention of the dog owning public to the work carried out by the Sub-Group and to invite suggestions for topics of interest via the various Kennel Club Liaison Councils and Working Parties.

ITEM 6. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

29. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Lavender relating to YKC Obedience. The main points were as follows:
- Activities had been limited due to Covid-19. All planned YKC training days had been cancelled, as were the YKC Summer Camp and the YKC Autumn weekend which had been due to be held in 2020.
 - Good feedback had been received regarding the YKC Obedience Competitions at Crufts 2020, very kindly judged by Mrs S Page.
 - The YKC was remaining in contact with its members via social media and web updates. The autumn 'Fetch' magazine was distributed in October. Online activities had taken place, and the YKC 'Young Person of the Year' and 'YKC Artist of the Year' competitions had been launched in October 2020.
 - No information had been released as yet regarding any YKC obedience competitions or training days in 2021.
30. All Council representatives were requested to contact Mrs Lavender should they be interested in running a training day in their own areas.
31. The Council was in agreement that it was vital to encourage young competitors, and that the YKC should be supported in its efforts to do so.

ITEM 7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OBEDIENCE WORKING PARTY

Note: this item was discussed after item 8 to allow Mr Slater and Mr Luckock, who were unable to attend for the full duration of the meeting, the opportunity to take part in the discussion.

Height Classified Classes

32. The Council considered the Working Party's recommendations relating to height classified classes, noting that the objective was to make obedience attractive to new competitors, and to provide a new option for show organisers. It was emphasised that the scheduling of height classified classes would not be mandatory.



33. It was noted that a number of clubs had already indicated their willingness to schedule height classified classes. It was also highlighted that small and medium sized dogs were becoming increasingly popular amongst the dog owning community, and it was hoped that height classified classes would prove attractive to owners of such dogs, which would be competing against similar dogs. It was also anticipated that the measure would encourage a wide range of breed types and sizes to take part, by providing an opportunity for a dog of any type to be successful.
34. The Council was in full support of progressing the introduction of height classified classes. Mrs Patrick, Mrs Le Fevre, and Mr McCartney undertook to prepare a formal proposal for consideration at the Council's next meeting, based on the recommendations made by the Obedience Working Party at its meeting on 11 February 2020.
35. Mr Luckock left the meeting at this point, with apologies.

Progression on points

36. At its meeting on 6 February 2020, the Council expressed its support of a discussion item relating to progression on points, noting that it would support progression through the classes and would therefore be of benefit to competitors. The matter was referred to the Obedience Working Party for further discussion, but as a proposal had not been submitted by the Working Party, the Council reconsidered a proposal submitted by Mr Moxon at its meeting in February 2020, with the proviso that should the principle be agreed, Mr Moxon would formulate a formal proposal for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.
37. The objective of the proposal was to allow competitors to progress through the classes, without gaining a win. However, the criteria for qualification into Championship Class 'C' would not be amended.
38. Progression on points would be available as an option, but would not be mandatory, and competitors would be free to do so if they wished, on a class by class basis. Progression on wins would remain mandatory.
39. Under the terms of the proposal, points would be available as follows:
 - 1st place - 10 points
 - 2nd place - 4 points
 - 3rd place - 2 points
 - 4th place - 1 point.
40. The required points currently required to achieve an excellent qualification were as follows, and it was proposed that the same scale would be used for progression into the next class, as follows:
 - 10 points required to progress into Pre-Beginners
 - 10 points required to progress into Beginners
 - 20 points required to progress into Novice
 - 20 points required to progress into Class A
 - 30 points required to progress into Class B
 - 30 points required to progress into Class C
41. It was suggested that in order to enable competitors to take advantage of the measure as soon as possible, it should be permissible for points to be claimed retrospectively. The Council agreed that it would be acceptable for points to be claimed for places gained on or after 1 January 2019, as this was a reasonable timeframe, and would take into account the fact that dogs had had very few opportunities to compete in 2020.



42. In response to a query, it was suggested that the scheme would apply to dogs rather than to handlers.
43. It was also suggested that Obedience Record Books, similar to those available for agility competitors, should be available so that details of placings may be recorded, and signed by show organisers as evidence that the dog had gained the necessary points.
44. It was highlighted that competitors wishing to gain an Obedience Warrant would need to ensure that they did not progress on points where they had not gained the necessary wins at each level to entitle them to claim for a Warrant.
45. The Council expressed its full support for the introduction of progression on points, on the basis of the details above, and accordingly Mr Moxon agreed to submit a detailed proposal, including the necessary amendments to G Regulations, for consideration at its July meeting.

Obedience Warrant

46. The above discussion led to a query being raised as to whether it was necessary to review the Obedience Warrant scheme. It was noted that the numbers of dogs claiming a Warrant in recent years had been: 2017 – 11; 2018 – 21; 2019 – 18. In view of the relatively low numbers, it was not considered a priority to review the Obedience Warrant at present, although it was agreed this may be undertaken if the Council wished to do so. Mr Moxon undertook to submit an item relating to this matter for the Council's next meeting.

ITEM 8. REVIEW OF STAY EXERCISES

Note: this item was discussed prior to item 7 to allow Mr Slater and Mr Luckock, who were unable to attend for the full duration of the meeting, the opportunity to take part in the discussion.

47. The Council noted specialist advice relating to out of sight stays, which had been received from Mr Trevor Cooper, and had been supplied to Council representatives.
48. Four proposals had been received in respect of stays, and the Council was in agreement that they should be considered together as they presented different approaches to addressing the issue. Council members were requested to indicate their support for one or more proposal so that the discussion could focus on those which were supported. It was agreed that this was a sensible approach.
49. All Council members having had an opportunity to state their support for one or more proposal, it was agreed that the following proposals, which were not supported, should not be discussed further:
 - Review of all stay exercises and amendments to G Regulations submitted by Mrs Allen, Mrs Patrick and Mr Wakelin.
 - Proposal for amendments to G Regulations submitted by Mr Harlow
50. It was agreed that the proposals submitted by Mr Wakelin and Mr Rutter should be considered further, and more detailed discussion took place, as follows:

Removal of all stay exercises

51. Mr Wakelin wished to propose that all stay exercises be removed from obedience classes. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Le Fevre and Miss Godfrey.



52. Mr Wakelin, drawing on his own experience in carrying out the role of Chief Stay Steward on numerous occasions, expressed his view that there were a number of issues with the stay exercise. These included concerns regarding the conduct of some handlers; difficulties for one stay steward accurately watching 6-8 dogs and the risk of marks being allocated to the wrong dog; adverse weather conditions which may be problematic for some dogs; the potential for incidents to occur in the stay ring; the risk of interference by visiting dogs where the venue was a public place.
 53. Whilst it was acknowledged that these concerns may be valid, it was also highlighted that such issues were not new, and were not sufficiently serious in nature to warrant the removal of all stays.
 54. There were mixed views on the suggestion that all stays should be removed. Competitors in some areas were keen to do so, whereas others wished to retain them, albeit in a simplified or amended format if necessary.
 55. It was acknowledged that some new handlers were discouraged from participating in competitive obedience as they found stays to be unduly daunting and as a result chose not to enter the discipline, and instead chose to take part in a wide range of other activities which were now available for them and their dogs. The Council was in agreement that this was a cause for concern, as it was vital to encourage new competitors into obedience. It was acknowledged that numbers competing at obedience events run by BCOS (British Competitive Obedience Society), which did not include any stay exercises, were increasing.
 56. However there was also a view that stays were an important part of obedience tests, with clear relevance to the practical training of dogs in real-life situations.
 57. A query was raised as to whether incidents in the stay ring were occurring on a frequent basis. The office was unable to provide immediate information on the number of incidents reported, but it was not estimated to be a high number, although it was acknowledged that not all incidents were reported.
 58. A suggestion was made that stays could be removed on the understanding that they may be reviewed after a two year period, and subsequently re-instated if appropriate. This would provide an opportunity to assess whether stays were a necessary component of competitive obedience, and if so, to consider any necessary reforms.
 59. It was acknowledged that should stays be removed, the points for each class would need to be adjusted to remove the stay marks. Consequential changes would also be necessary in respect of withholding marks, awarding of Obedience Certificates, and possibly, Awards of Excellence.
 60. It was suggested that the removal of stays would also assist show organisers in the short term in running Covid-19 safe shows, but it was stressed that issues relating to Covid-19 should be addressed separately, and that the focus of the Council should be on longer term matters.
- All stays in sight
61. The Council also noted Mr Rutter's proposal, which specified that all stay exercises would remain as currently specified within G Regulations but out of sight stays would be amended to become in sight. In all classes handlers would be required to observe their dogs for the duration of the test. However a concern was noted, in that it may be difficult for handlers to remain motionless for the full duration of a five-minute down stay in Class C.
 62. The matter having been considered carefully, a vote took place, and by a small majority, the Council **recommended** the removal of all stays from the list of exercises. It was in agreement that the matter may be reviewed in the future when it would be possible to assess whether the measure, if approved, had had any impact on the number of new competitors entering the discipline.



63. It was emphasised at this point that any recommendations made by the Council were subject to consideration by the Activities Committee and The Kennel Club Board. No changes would come into effect unless and until they had been approved by the Board.
64. It was also clarified that two representatives sat on the Activities Committee on behalf of the Council, currently Mr Harlow, in his role as Council Chairman, and Mrs Lavender, as elected by the Council. Mrs Smith also sat on the Activities Committee in her role as Activities Associate member for obedience. **Note:** a flowchart illustrating the committee structure of the Canine Activities department is attached at **Annex A to the Minutes**.
65. Further, in view of the Council's wish to assist show organisers in running Covid-19 safe shows, it was agreed that the Activities Committee would be requested to consider the suspension of stay exercises for all obedience shows held during 2021.
66. Mr Slater, with apologies, left the meeting at this point.
67. In view of the outcome of the vote, the Council was not of the view that it was necessary to further discuss Mr Rutter's proposal, under the terms of which all stays would be carried out within the handler's sight.

Voting

68. In response to a query, it was confirmed that Council members were not obliged to vote as mandated by their areas, but that they were free to vote as they saw fit, having taken into account the content of any discussions which had taken place.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

69. No further proposals had been received.

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

70. No discussion items had been received.

ITEM 11. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

71. Representatives noted the items listed on the Council's Five Year Strategic Plan.
72. It was suggested that in view of concerns regarding the future of competitive obedience, a complete review of the discipline should be undertaken in order to modernise it and ensure that it would appeal to potential competitors.
73. It was noted that such a review was already listed within the strategy document, as follows:

'Reviewing the structure of obedience classes

To consider ways in which the discipline could progress and develop in the future, in light of concerns over low entry numbers.

All members of the Council were requested to submit to the Chairman of the Council, a list of positive suggestions in light of concerns raised over the number of entries received at



obedience shows. All such suggestions would be used as a basis for further discussion with a view to developing a plan for ongoing strategic development of the discipline.'

74. It was agreed that the document should be updated to state that the review would be given further consideration by the Council at its meeting in July 2021. It was hoped that informal discussions between Council members would take place prior to the next meeting so that a productive discussion could take place.
75. One suggestion was for the creation of an Obedience Festival in the UK, similar to the International Agility Festival which took place on an annual basis. It was hoped such an event would be instrumental in drawing positive and valuable attention to the discipline. This was noted. **[Afternote:** the creation of an International Obedience Festival had been discussed twice previously, in 2010 and 2014, but due to practical considerations and a lack of support from the Council, it had not been progressed.]

ITEM 12. CRUFTS 2021

76. The Council noted a verbal update in respect of plans for obedience competitions at Crufts 2021, which was planned to take place 15-18 July 2021.
77. As there had been no qualifiers, the Obedience Championships would not take place, however the winners from Crufts 2020 would be invited to compete at Crufts in 2022.
78. However, the Inter Regional Obedience Competition was expected to go ahead on Friday 16 July, with the Inter Regional Rally Competition taking place on Thursday 15 July. **[Afternote:** it was subsequently confirmed that following extensive discussions with the competition co-ordinator and the team managers, in view of the difficulties of organising teams under current Covid-19 restrictions, it would not be possible for the Inter Regional Obedience Competition to go ahead.]
79. As there had only been one qualifier, the Obreedience finals would not take place at Crufts 2021. Those teams who competed at an Obreedience heat in 2020 and gained points would have their points carried over for Crufts 2022.

ITEM 13. OBEDIENCE INFORMATION STAND

80. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Benoist on the Obedience Information Stand at Crufts 2020.
81. The stand had been planned by Mrs Lavender and Mrs Benoist following an idea by Mrs Turner, a former Council member, and was run this year by Mrs Benoist.
82. The Council wished to acknowledge assistance from the following individuals:

Kate McCartney, Hazel Dalglish, Elaine New, Karen Lacey, Jan Mathews, Sue Shardlow, and Karen Otto

Dave Reynolds from Dog Training Weekly and Michelle Newman were also thanked for providing photographs used in displays.
83. No plans were as yet in place for Crufts 2021.



ITEM 14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Covid-19

84. It was noted that current guidance from The Kennel Club was that no shows should take place prior to the end of February. However many shows due to take place later in the year were already being cancelled.
85. It was confirmed that further guidance would be issued by The Kennel Club as necessary, and that such guidance would be formulated on the basis of Governmental advice and rules in place at the time.
86. In response to a query, it was confirmed that should a 'tier' system be reintroduced by the Government, it would be acceptable for show organisers to refuse entries from competitors in higher tiers. However it was clarified that it was not advisable to refuse entries from specific counties or geographical areas.
87. Where entries were refused, societies were free to decide whether to issue refunds to any affected competitors.
88. A query was raised as to whether, in order to assist show organisers, it was permissible for two championship shows to take place on the same day. It was confirmed that the following guidance was already available on The Kennel Club's website as part of the list of obedience regulations temporarily suspended/amended:

'Should a society need to change its championship show date it may be possible to schedule two championship obedience shows on the same date as long as they were geographically wide apart (150 miles minimum). Each application to do so would continue to be considered on a case by case basis.'
- [**Afternote:** the office was in the process of formulating an email to be sent to all show secretaries to highlight recent changes and guidance which had been put into place. This would include details on cancellation of licensed events, resumption of licensed events, and changes to regulations for individual disciplines.]
89. The Council expressed its understanding of the difficulties currently being faced by show organisers. However it was emphasised that societies were not under any pressure to run shows, but were free to decide whether or not they wished to do so.
90. It was also clarified that The Kennel Club had previously stated that it would not take action against a judge who withdrew from a judging appointment due to concerns regarding Covid-19.
91. The Council considered a suggestion that Regulation G32.i., which stated 'in the event of dogs obtaining equality of marks, 'Run Offs' to decide the winning dogs will be judged one at a time by completing one or more of the tests for that class as set out in Annex A', should be subject to temporary suspension. This would ensure that competitors were not required to remain at the show for unnecessarily long periods.
92. It was suggested that in the case of two or more dogs obtaining equal marks, the judge may decide on placings without requiring a run-off, or that equal places may be awarded. The Council agreed that this would be a positive step under current circumstances, and requested that the matter be referred to the Activities Committee for further consideration.
93. The Council noted Mr Beazley's thanks for the invitation to join the meeting, which he had found greatly interesting.



ITEM 15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

94. The next meeting of the Council would take place on 22 July 2021. Any items for the agenda must be submitted by 23 April 2021.

The meeting closed at 2.00pm.

MR R HARLOW
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'