

MINUTES OF THE KENNEL CLUB OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:

Mrs A Benoist	North East
Mrs S Garner	South and South West
Mr D Garrett	Wales
Mrs S Henstridge	South and South West
Mrs J Jessop	Wales
Mr A Kousourou	Scotland
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mr P Lubbi	South East and East Anglia
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr R Page	Midlands
Mrs M Ray	Midlands
Mr S Rutter	North West
Mr R Wakelin	North West

IN ATTENDANCE:

Mrs C Maguire	Specialist – Working Dog Activities Team
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ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Harlow, Mr Wynne and Mrs Smith.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2013 were signed by the Chairman as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. ASSURED BREEDER SCHEME

3. The Council noted the presentation on the changes to the Assured Breeder Scheme (ABS) given by Mr B Lambert, Health & Breeder Services Manager.
4. Mr Kousourou queried the input from Breed clubs in the standards that the ABS used as they often had higher expectations than the scheme. Mr Lambert acknowledged that some clubs did have higher standards but that it did not apply across all Breeds. It was stated that Breed clubs were encouraged to submit their input into the scheme and there was a desire to work closer with them, in particular on health tests.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Beginners Guide to Obedience

5. Mrs Garner reminded the meeting of the agreement last year to produce a Beginners Guide to Obedience to support new competitors entering into the discipline. The meeting considered the tabled document and agreed that it was on the right lines however, it needed to be further simplified and provide less 'opinion' information such as which exercises were difficult. Mrs Garner requested the Representatives provide any further feedback on the document or offers of support in compiling it directly to her and the revised document would be brought back to the next meeting.

Crufts 2014

Obedience Information Stand

6. Mr Rutter advised the Council that photos for the Obedience Information stand had been received from most of the teams as well as some generic Obedience photos for display. Societies were requested to submit any documents to be distributed from the stand, such as schedules, to Mr Rutter as soon as possible. Representatives were reminded that volunteers to man the stand were always required and were asked to nominate people they thought would have appropriate knowledge and experience of Obedience to assist with this. It was confirmed that volunteers who did at least half a day on the stand would receive a complimentary Crufts entry ticket.
7. Mr Page highlighted that there had been delays with building the stand during the set-up for the event in 2013 and the office advised that they would liaise with Mr Rutter to ensure it ran more smoothly this year.
8. The Council expressed its gratitude to Mrs Turner who originally established the Obedience Information stand and regret that she felt she could no longer be involved.

Improved Promotion of Obedience at Crufts

9. Mrs Garner informed the meeting that following concerns that Obedience was not mentioned in the 2013 Show Guide, Mr Keble had written an article on the Crufts Obedience competitions which is hoped would be included in the 2014 edition. The Council was asked to suggest any further ways to promote the Obedience competitions at the event and it was highlighted that they should be mentioned in the commentary for the Good Citizen Dog Scheme (GCDS) events. It was also suggested that signage could be put up in Hall 3 to direct people to watch the competitive Obedience competitions. Mrs Garner agreed to speak to the GCDS and Crufts teams about these suggestions.
10. The issue of the lack of television coverage for Obedience was discussed and it was agreed that it would be too late to tackle this for the 2014 event. The meeting accepted that there was little editorial control from the Kennel Club in regards to the coverage; however, it was felt that the Council should continue to lobby for increased coverage.

Obreedience

11. The meeting noted the creation of the new Obreedience event at Crufts. The event was aimed at encouraging different breeds to take part in Obedience and will be a display in 2014 and 2015 with the aim of having qualifying heats during 2015 for competition at Crufts in 2016. For 2014 there are nine breed teams made up of four dogs taking part in exercises aimed at Novice level. The exercises include one team Heel on Lead exercise and four exercises each to be undertaken by one individual from the team. The event will take place in the Obedience Ring in Hall 5 on Saturday 8 March following the end of the main competition. The Council stated that they supported the event however regret was expressed at their lack of involvement in the creation of the competition.

Annex A refers

12. Mr Page queried whether the reserved seating available for the Obedience competitions would still be valid during the Obreedience competition. The office advised that the tickets covered the whole day of the event and therefore this would include Obreedience.

Promotion of Competitive Obedience in the regions

Agenda items 4.c and 6.a were taken together

13. Consideration was given to methods of promoting Competitive Obedience within the regions through linking with GCDS clubs. It was highlighted that whilst these organisations could be targeted with information the issue would be getting them to pass it on to their members. Mr McIntosh advised that he had spoken with the GCDS team to obtain details of clubs to send the Knightswood Dog Training Club Obedience schedule to directly.
14. The Council discussed the item from Miss Newman which suggested that Obedience societies should be encouraged to run a special class aimed at those who have achieved their Gold Good Citizen award. It was highlighted that it could be opened out to other levels of award however it was felt that after the recent creation of two new Obedience classes there was no requirement at this time for the Council to promote this. Societies were advised that they could hold this class as a 'pay on the day' class if they wished and send schedules and information out to local GCDS clubs. Contact details of GCDS clubs can be found on the Kennel Club website here: <http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/training/good-citizen-dog-training-scheme/information-for-dog-owners/good-citizen-dog-scheme-training-clubs/>

Listed Status

15. The proposed introduction of Listed Status for Obedience was considered by the meeting. It was believed that whilst the principal of allowing more shows to be held and therefore more opportunities for people to attend events was sound, restrictions on the level of shows the new clubs were being offered was required. It was highlighted that Listed Status clubs did not have limits on their areas of operation however the established mileage policy for show objections would still apply between fully registered and listed status clubs. The meeting believed that the charge for registering in this method should be higher than proposed as should the cost of licences. The accountability of Listed Status clubs to their

entrants was felt to be a potential issue as was the monitoring of their shows by the Kennel Club.

16. Following further discussion the Council recommended that Listed Status clubs be offered Limited shows only and that the fees for application be reviewed. In light of this agreement the proposed Regulation amendments would be reconsidered and brought back to the next meeting.

Review of nominations process for Council Representatives
Agenda items 4.e and 6.b were taken together

17. The Council was reminded of the current process for nominations of Representatives. It was raised that clubs who no longer did Competitive Obedience had received Council voting papers in the last elections. The office stated that a letter advising of the elections for all of the Councils was sent out to all Registered clubs. The clubs were then required to submit nominations for the Councils for which they were eligible and their submissions were checked based on the information held by the Kennel Club on their current activities. It was stated that clubs were often contacted to update their details however many did not reply or understand the significance of having current details lodged with the Kennel Club. It was agreed that to assist with this process the Representatives would review the clubs in their area registered with the Kennel Club as doing Competitive Obedience and feedback to the office. The Agility Liaison Council requirement that clubs have to have held a licensed event in the previous 12 months to be able to vote was discussed, however it was agreed that this would eliminate some clubs unnecessarily. **Annex B refers**

[**Afternote:** Regulation P(F)2. has been amended to remove the requirement for Agility clubs to have held a licenced event in the previous 12 months to be able to vote which will be reflected in the Kennel Club Year Book 2014/2015]

18. It was discussed that a large part of the concerns regarding the nominations process often stemmed from clubs not fully consulting with their membership when proposing representatives, therefore the club responses were often not fully considered or representative of the views of their membership. The Council felt that whilst there was little the Kennel Club could do to encourage clubs to increase the involvement of their membership it was felt that more could be done to increase awareness that the nomination process and any subsequent ballots were taking place.

[**Afternote:** The information was made available through a press release and the Kennel Club website.]

19. The item from the Lisburn Dog Training Club was considered and it was felt that it would be beneficial to an individual's involvement on a Liaison Council if they were actively involved in the relevant discipline. The office advised that this had been stated in the letter sent to the clubs as guidance however more emphasis could be given to it in the future. The Council agreed that a regulation amendment was not required at this time.

ITEM 5. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

20. Proposed amendment to Regulation G30.g.(3) - Ballot for Running Orders
Mr Rutter advised the Council that Mrs Owen was concerned at the number of instances where competitors were drawn to run twice within the first 10 in a class at the same show making it extremely difficult for them competing on the day. The proposal was seconded by Mr Wakelin. The Council discussed the suggested Regulation amendment and highlighted that draws for Championship Class C would need to take precedent over other classes. However, it was acknowledged that there were only a small number of instances where there was an issue as described and that these would normally be resolved on the day by the Chief Steward. Mr Kousourou proposed that the Regulation be amended to state that they may not be drawn again within the first 10 dogs. Mr McCartney seconded the amendment. By a majority the Council did not recommend approval of the amended proposal. The Council considered the original proposal and by a majority did not recommend approval of the proposal.

21. Proposed amendment to Regulation G35.h - Competing
Mr Lubbi advised the Council that Ms Driscoll had requested an amendment to Regulation G35.h to disallow the use of check-chains in the competition ring. Ms Driscoll considered that using these items to physically correct a dog was an outdated method and gave Obedience a poor image. The proposal was not seconded and therefore the item could not be discussed further.

22. Proposed amendment to Regulation G33.b – Judges and Judging
Mr Lubbi requested that the Council consider moving Regulation G30.f from Management to become Regulation G33.b Judges and Judging, as many judges were missing the Regulation and concerns were being raised that all dogs were not being observed when in the ring. It was considered that as well as a potential safety issue it was discourteous to the competitor for them not to be observed when they had paid for their entry and expected the judge's opinion, even when undertaking a practice round. The proposal was seconded by Mr Rutter. The Council discussed the proposal and Mr Kousourou proposed amending the Regulation to state that the judge must be present in the ring when observing the dog. The amendment was seconded by Mr McCartney. Following a majority vote the Council recommended the amendment to the Regulation. By a unanimous vote the Council agreed to move the Regulation from Management to Judges and Judging and that all subsequent Regulations to be re-numbered accordingly.

To:

Regulation G33.b Judges and Judging

- b. One judge only may officiate for each Class (or each part of a divided Class) and must be present in the ring and observe the dog at all times.
(Amendment underlined. Existing regulations to be renumbered accordingly)

ITEM 6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Use of food under test

23. Mrs Garner advised the meeting that Mrs Hill had requested further clarification from the Council on the use of food and/or toys when a dog was under test. The Council reiterated that Regulation G35.g, which states that food/toys cannot be given to a dog under test, applies to all classes, including special classes, except the Introductory Class.
24. The Council considered whether the use of food/toys would be permissible if it was part of the rules of a special class as stated in a schedule. Following discussion it was agreed that under regulated conditions set out in the rules of a special class in the schedule, it would be acceptable. The meeting confirmed that this would be added to the guidelines and Regulation G35.g would be amended to clarify this at the next meeting.

Number of turns in a class

25. Mr Rutter advised the Council that Miss Wilkinson was concerned about the number of turns, and as a consequence the length of the test, that judges were requiring competitors to complete during a class. On occasions some of the lower level classes were being asked to carry out more turns than in the higher level classes which could be off putting for inexperienced dogs and competitors. Miss Wilkinson considered that amending the Regulations would ensure that competitors were required to only carry out the number of turns appropriate for their level of competition. The item was seconded by Mr Wakelin. The meeting discussed the amendments and the reasoning behind them and determined that the issue of ensuring a sensible length of test was more a matter for highlighting during judges training seminars. Following a majority vote the Council agreed not to recommend the amendments.

Kennel Club International Obedience Festival

26. Mr McCartney requested that the Council consider the creation of an International Obedience Festival following on from the success of the Kennel Club International Agility Festival (IAF). It was suggested that the event could be held on the site of the IAF once it had finished which would therefore save on costs by using the set up that was already on the site. International teams would be invited to attend and the proposed classes for the event would include Championship Class C, GCDS, Special Pre-Beginners and heats for the new Obedience competition. It was acknowledged that a large amount of practical support from both the Council and the Obedience community would be required to establish the event.
27. Mrs Garner reminded the Council that in 2010 this issue had been raised and after a great deal of preparatory work had not received support. It was highlighted that there would be concerns over the practicalities of having the event on the back of the IAF such as the movement of large numbers of caravans around the site, the potential effects of bad weather on the rings, particularly following the use of agility equipment in them, and the desire to have the event on a weekend which would mean the marquees and other equipment

would remain unattended at the ground for a week. There were also reservations over the attraction of the event to an international audience as Obedience competitions held under FCI rules were very different to Obedience competitions in the UK.

28. Whilst the Council agreed with the idea in principal it was considered that a new approach was needed and that a solid business case, including financial arrangements, needed to be created for proposal to the Kennel Club. It was agreed that additional work was required on the item and the Representatives were requested to submit further suggestions for consideration at the next meeting.

Barrier Fencing

29. Mrs Garner presented the item on Mrs Smith's behalf. Mr McGovern had raised concerns at the number of instances of dogs running out of the ring in the lower competitive classes. Mr McGovern suggested that a requirement be introduced so that clubs must provide barrier fencing around the rings for the lower classes. This would provide confidence to the handler and prevent any incidents that may be caused by a loose dog running across a show ground.
30. Concerns were raised that a requirement to have fencing would put a financial burden on societies to purchase and store this additional equipment when Obedience shows were often struggling financially. It was highlighted that some shows already provide this and that the Young Kennel Club used fencing around their rings at summer camp. However this generally did not stop a determined dog getting out of a ring but did prevent the handler from chasing after it quickly. The Council felt that there was currently no evidence base to justify insisting that shows provide fencing and therefore it would be left to the society's discretion. Societies were reminded that if they decided to use the fencing they would need to ensure its use was part of their show risk assessment.

Introductory Class

31. Mrs Garner introduced the item from Mrs Troth requesting a review of the current exercise requirements for the Introductory Class. The meeting considered the points raised by Mrs Troth but agreed that as the class was only established in 2013 it was too early to be reviewing the Regulations and test requirements. It was agreed that the class would be reviewed at the next meeting when more classes had been held and feedback would be requested from the Obedience community who had experienced the class.
32. The Council considered the issue of allowing the stays for this class to take place in the stay ring rather than the competition ring due to the potential large number of entries in the class. It was agreed that this should be allowed and a Regulation amendment would be considered at the next meeting. The Council also confirmed that the class was the lowest eligible class when scheduled and noted that some competitors did not want to enter it and felt it should be either a 'special class' or scheduled class with optional entry criteria. It was agreed that this issue and eligibility for the class would be reviewed at the next meeting.

ITEM 7. STAYS

Discussion Items

Survey for Stays

33. Mrs Garner advised the meeting that Mrs Howarth had requested the Council consider carrying out a survey of the Obedience community to ascertain if a change to the current format of the stays was required. The Council discussed the request and was concerned that there were no suggestions of proposed questions or who was to action the survey. It was considered that the issues competitors had regarding stays were already well known, having been raised with representatives during discussions at area meetings and through other forms of feedback, and that there would be little productive information that could be added to this through a survey. It was noted that the main concerns highlighted were the size of the stay ring, the management and maintenance of overall safety during the exercise, concerns that lower level dogs being less well trained than in the past and that separate rings for dogs and bitches were desired. By majority the Council agreed not to carry out a survey.
34. The Council noted that the Regulations set out the requirements for the stay exercise, including the size of the ring required, however this did not appear to be adequately managed by all societies. It was discussed that guidance on the management of stays, including information for judges, Chief stay stewards and stay stewards, could be issued to assist with this. It was agreed that a guidance document would be presented to the next meeting.

Clarification of Judging criteria

35. Mr Page advised the Council that Mrs Porter had withdrawn this item from the agenda.

Proposals

Mr H Wynne

36. Mrs Garner presented the item on Mr Wynne's behalf in his absence. It was requested that the Council consider amending the length of the Class C stay times and consequentially the allocation of points to reflect this change. The amendment would mean that dogs were placed in the stay position for less time reducing the possibility of incidents occurring. The proposed change to Class C only was seconded by Mr Kousourou and the proposed changes to both Classes B and C was seconded by Mr Rutter. Mr Page proposed an amendment to both proposals that the points should not be reallocated. Mr Lubbi seconded the amendment for the change to Class C and Mrs Henstridge seconded the amendment for the change to both Classes B and C.
37. The Council recognised that a reduction in stay times would also assist with show management as it would free up helpers to undertake other tasks at the show such as scent decoy and break down duties. It was felt this was a particularly important consideration at a time when help at shows was hard to come by. The Council also discussed how the stay exercise in Working Trials

was implemented but it was felt that this was an unfair comparison as there were fewer dogs and the exercise was not undertaken in a ring such as in Obedience. By a unanimous vote the Council agreed not to recommend the amendment to Class C only. By a unanimous vote the Council agreed to recommend the amendments to Classes B and C.

Regulation G(A).10.b Class B

To:

(5) Down 4 minutes, handler out of sight 30 points
(Amendment underlined)

Regulation G(A).11.d Class C

To:

(6) Down 5 minutes, handler out of sight 50 points
(Amendment underlined)

Mr S Rutter

38. Mr Rutter advised the Council that this item was withdrawn from the agenda.

ITEM 8. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

39. Mrs Garner expressed thanks to all those who had provided input into the first edition of the Obedience Newsletter. It was felt it had been well received and it was agreed that the next edition would be planned for publishing at the end of March 2014.

[**Afternote:** An official Kennel Club Obedience online Newsletter is being created with the first edition due for release in April 2014.]

40. The Council noted that all items were either in review or resolved and no further additions were suggested at this time.

ITEM 9. ACTIVITIES HEALTH & WELFARE SUB-GROUP

41. Mrs Garner provided the Council with a verbal update from the meeting of the Sub-Group held on 11 December 2013. The results of the Agility survey were reported to the meeting and there had been a good response to the survey. The predominant injuries reported were in the dog's neck, shoulder and pelvis and fewer injuries were found in dogs that used play/running to warm up rather than stretching. The Council was advised of a similar dog health survey, which was due to be issued for Obedience.
42. It was also highlighted to the meeting that research studies were currently being carried out using cameras to film different breeds of dog undertaking different Agility jump heights to view how the dog moves and determine the impact and major stress points on the dogs.

43. The Council considered the request from the Sub-Group to amend Regulation G(C)1.c. to allow the working side of the handler to be both sides rather than just the left side. It was agreed that at this time there was no need to amend the Regulation.

ITEM 10. JUDGES WORKING PARTY

44. Mrs Garner provided the Council with a verbal update from the meeting of the Judges Working Party held on 26 November 2013. Following the Annual Trainers seminar in October 2013, the presentations and exam papers had been reviewed and updated. It was highlighted that from January 2015 it will be compulsory to have attended a practical seminar the trainers needed to ensure that enough of these were taking place during the year to assist new judges to achieve the criteria to judge at Open and Championship shows.

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

American Kennel Club Obedience Invitation

45. The Council was advised of an invitation from the American Kennel Club to send an Obedience team of 3-4 dogs to a two day competition in December 2014. The team would be self-funded however there may be the possibility for a small amount of practical support from the Kennel Club. Competing dogs would need to be registered with the Kennel Club and could be on the Activity register. A press release would be issued requesting interested parties to contact the Kennel Club. **Annex C refers**

British Competitive Obedience Society

46. The Council noted that the British Competitive Obedience Society (BCOS) had scheduled their first show for March 2014. Concerns had been raised with representatives in regards to competitors and judges taking part in the event. However, it was stated that there were already unaffiliated bodies in opposition to the Kennel Club in other disciplines and that people took part in those events without affecting their participation in Kennel Club events. It was highlighted that the Kennel Club does not support any of these activities and therefore could not comment on any of the safeguards for competitors that these organisations may have in place. Any awards achieved at non-licensed events did not count towards progression in Kennel Club Obedience competitions.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

47. The Council noted that the date of the next meeting would be Tuesday 1 July 2014.
48. The meeting closed at 4.25 pm.

S GARNER
Chairman

THE KENNEL CLUB'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

“To raise the relevance of the Kennel Club in the eyes of the public at large, dog owners and those who take part in canine events, so as to be better able ‘to *promote in every way the general improvement of dogs.*’ This objective to be achieved through:-

- Ensuring that the Kennel Club is the first port of call on all canine matters.
- Improving canine health and welfare.
- Popularising canine events focusing on the retention of existing participants and the attracting of new.
- Achieving a widening of the Kennel Club membership base.
- Encouraging the development of all those concerned with dogs through education and training.
- Encouraging more people to provide input in the Kennel Club’s decision making process.

Kennel Club Obedience Liaison Council Representatives

1 January 2013 to 31 December 2015

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