



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON
COUNCIL HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AT 10.30 AM ON
THURSDAY 22 JULY 2021**

PRESENT

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Mrs K Allen | South/South West |
| Mrs A Benoist | North East |
| Mr J Farr | Wales |
| Miss F Godfrey | South East/East Anglia |
| Mrs D Lavender | North East |
| Mrs J Le Fevre | South East/East Anglia |
| Mr B Luckock | Midlands |
| 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 |
| Ms N Thomas | Wales |
| Mr R Wakelin | North West |

IN ATTENDANCE

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Miss D Deuchar | Head of Canine Activities |
| Miss C McHardy | Manager - Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team |
| Miss A Morley | Officer – Working Dog Activities Team |
| Mrs A Mitchell | Senior Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team |

IN THE CHAIR

MR M MCCARTNEY

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. Mr McCartney was welcomed by the Council in his new role as Chairman. He expressed his thanks for the Council's support in electing him to the role.
2. Miss Morley was introduced as the member of staff who was now responsible for Council matters. Miss Morley had been with The Kennel Club for some time but had recently moved into her new role.



ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. All members of the Council were present.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 were approved as being an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

5. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 13 April 2021, approved the following amendment to the claim form for an Obedience Excellent qualification:

CLAIM FOR AN OBEDIENCE EXCELLENT QUALIFICATION

The required points to achieve each qualification are as follows:

...40 **20** points required for Pre-Beginners
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Stay exercises

6. The Activities Committee, at its meeting on 18 March 2021, having considered the Council's recommendation that all stays should be removed from the list of exercises, concluded that the views of the Council should be supported, but that it would be a positive step to replace the stay exercise with a control element of some kind. It had noted that a proposal was being formulated for submission to the Council, and accordingly it had directed that any further consideration of the Council's recommendations should be deferred until such time as the Council had considered the proposal. The proposal was discussed by the Council later in the meeting (paragraphs 38-49 refer).
7. The Activities Committee approved the Council's recommendation that in order to assist show organisers in running Covid-19 safe shows, stay exercises for all obedience shows held during 2021 should be suspended. The suspension would remain in effect until 31 December 2021.

Run offs

8. The Committee had approved the Council's recommendation 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. In the case of two or more dogs obtaining equal marks, the judge would decide on placings without requiring a run off, or that equal places may be awarded. However, show organisers may elect to carry out run offs if they wished to do so, although where this was the case, it must be clearly stated on the schedule. The suspension would remain in place until 31 December 2021 with the proviso that it would not apply to Championship Class C, in which run offs would still be required to determine 1st-3rd placings.

Training for commentators

9. At its previous meeting, the Council noted that a business case had been submitted to the Finance Committee for consideration, and funding had been approved by the Board. It noted that it would be necessary for such training to take place on a face-to-face basis, rather than via remote means. Until such time as this was possible, the training had been deferred and was unlikely to take place before early 2022.



25-day rule

10. The Council had agreed with the principle of the introduction of a 25-day rule, whereby all wins up to and including 25 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.
11. A proposal formulated by Mrs Le Fevre, Mr McCartney and Mrs Patrick was discussed later in the meeting (paragraphs 50-56 refer).

Height classified classes

12. At its meeting in February 2021, the Council expressed its full support for the introduction of height classified classes. A proposal submitted by Mrs Patrick, Mrs Le Fevre, and Mr McCartney was discussed later in the meeting (paragraphs 57-62 refer).

Progression on points

13. At its meeting on 21 January 2021, the Council expressed its full support for the introduction of progression on points. It considered a proposal which had been submitted by Mr Moxon, based on the details agreed at the January meeting, for the necessary amendments to G Regulations. It was hoped that, if approved, the proposal would help competitors to progress through the classes, thereby addressing concerns regarding bottlenecks in Novice. The proposal was seconded by Miss Godfrey.
14. In response to a query, it was clarified that progression on points would be optional, although progression on wins would continue to be mandatory, as was currently the case.
15. The proposal included a requirement for competitors to hold an Obedience Record Book for each of their dogs. This would be completed by the competitor to include details of the dog's placings and points gained. It would then be signed by the show secretary or the chief steward at the first show entered in the higher class. It was clarified that the show secretary or chief steward was not signing the book to validate the number of points claimed, but to confirm that the dog would from now on be competing in the higher class. This would ensure that the dog could not return to competing in a lower class in subsequent shows. It was not anticipated that any undue burden would be placed on show secretaries or chief stewards.
16. A discussion took place as to the necessity for the record book, and whether it would be preferable for it to be signed by the judge of each class at which the dog had been placed, in order to ensure all results were correctly validated, and to remove any opportunity for competitors to progress unfairly. However there were some concerns that such a requirement would involve judges in extra work at the end of a class, which was not desirable. It was acknowledged that a similar system used in agility was based on trust, and worked well, and that there was no reason to assume that obedience competitors would abuse the system. On balance, the Council accepted that the introduction of an Obedience Record Book was a positive step which would probably be helpful to competitors.
17. A vote took place, and the following amendments to G Regulations were unanimously **recommended** for approval:

New Regulation G(A)4

TO:

Progression. Progression from each class will be determined by the eligibility for the class as referenced in Regulations G(A). To count for progression wins must be gained in standard classes at Kennel Club licensed Open, Premier or Championship Obedience shows. A first place will count towards progression.

(Insertion in bold)



New Regulation G(A)5

TO:

Obedience Record Book. Any handler wishing to progress on points must have an Obedience Record Book as evidence of points gained at eligible shows and which must be available for inspection by the show management and/or the judge on the date of any competition entered by the owner/handler. This must include details of any wins, and any points, that allow for progression. Details will include show date, name and type of show (Open, Premier, or Championship), judge, class, placing and points.

(Insertion in bold)

New Regulation G(A)6

TO:

Points progression. At the handler's discretion a dog may progress up to the next class, up to and including into Open Class C by gaining points at each level, using the Obedience Excellent scale of points scheme as follows:

- Ten points for first prize
- Four points for second prize
- Two points for third prize
- One point for fourth prize

If this method of progression is selected, the handler must ensure the show secretary/chief steward signs the dog's Obedience Record Book at the first show entered in the higher class. There is no time limit on this progression, however, once a dog or handler has progressed, they cannot return to the class that they had progressed from. All wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2019 can be included when calculating points. Points are specific to a particular class and cannot be used against a lower or higher class.

Points required for progression on points are as follows:

1. 20 points required for progression from Pre-Beginners.
2. 20 points required for progression from Beginners.
3. 20 points required for progression from Novice.
4. 30 points required for progression from Class A.
5. 30 points required for progression from Class B.

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

Regulation G(A)6

TO:

~~6.~~ **8.** Pre-Beginners.

- a. To compete in Pre-Beginners a handler or dog must not have won two first places in either Pre-Beginners or Beginners nor gained a third place or above in any other Obedience class (Introductory class excepted) **and have not elected to progress on points from Pre-Beginners.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Regulation G(A)7

TO:

~~7.~~ **9.** Beginners.

- a. To compete in Beginners a handler or dog must not have won a total of two or more first places in Beginners class or one first place in any other Obedience class (Introductory class and Pre-Beginners excepted) **and have not elected to progress on points from Beginners.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)



Regulation G(A)8.

TO:

~~8.~~ **10.** Novice.

a. For dogs which have not won 2 first places in Obedience classes (Introductory class, Pre-Beginners and Beginners excepted) **and where the handler has not elected to progress on points from Novice.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Regulation G(A)9.

TO:

~~9.~~**11.** Class A.

a. For dogs which have not won 3 first prizes in Class A, B and Open Class C in total **and where the handler has not elected to progress on points from Class A.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Regulation G(A)10.

TO:

~~10.~~ **12.** Class B.

a. For dogs which have not won 3 first prizes in Class B and Open Class C in total **and where the handler has not elected to progress on points from Class B.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Regulation G(A)11.

TO:

~~11.~~ **13.** Class C.

a. For Championship Class C at Championship Shows, dogs must have won out of Novice, Class A and Class B, **or have progressed on points from those classes**, and have won Open Class C on one occasion and have been placed not lower than third on three further occasions; all Open Class C places and wins must have been won under different judges at Kennel Club licensed shows.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

Obedience Warrant

18. The Council had agreed at its meeting in January 2021 that the Obedience Warrant scheme may be reviewed, and further to this, a proposal had been submitted by Mr Moxon for amendments to K Regulations in relation to the scheme. The proposal was seconded by Mr Luckock.
19. The Council accepted Mr Moxon's view that it was desirable to make the Obedience Warrant more attractive to competitors, but that it was also important to retain the principle that a dog must work through the classes to obtain the award, and that it must achieve at least one first place in Open Class C.
20. It was in full agreement that the proposal, which brought Obedience Warrant points into line with points which would be required for progression (as discussed earlier in the meeting) was a positive step, and accordingly **recommended** it for approval, as follows:

Regulation K3.c. Obedience Warrants

TO:

c. Obedience Warrants. An Obedience Warrant will be issued on application by the registered owner at the time of qualification in respect of a dog that has obtained ~~14~~**100 progression** points **(as defined in General Regulations G Annex A)** ~~whilst ineligible to compete in Championship Class C.~~ The points are to be gained at Championship, Premier or Open Obedience Shows, ~~as follows~~ **and must include the following:**

- ~~(1) Two points for a first prize in Novice Class on two occasions only.~~
- ~~(2) Two points for a first prize in Class A on two occasions only.~~



- ~~(3) Two points for a first prize in Class B on two occasions only.~~
~~(4) Two points for a first prize in Open Class C on one occasion only.~~
(1) 20 points in Novice Class.
(2) 30 points in Class A.
(3) 30 points in Class B.
(4) 10 points for a first prize in Open Class C on at least one occasion.
(5) 10 additional points in Open Class C.
(6) Where a dog had to progress because it had won a first prize, or first prizes, at a higher level, then additional points achieved at a higher class may be used to supplement points at a lower class to achieve the 100 points total.
~~(6) (7) The title 'OW' may be used after the name of the dog on show entries and in catalogues.~~
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

21. The Council noted a written report from Mr Rutter following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 22 April 2021.
22. The main issues relating to obedience were as follows:
23. **Conformation and Movement (C&M) film:** there had been no progress as yet on development of an adapted version of the Conformation and Movement (C&M) film for activities disciplines, due to resourcing issues, but further updates would be provided in the future.
24. **Seminar run through day:** planning was in hand for a 'run through' day whereby Accredited Trainers would run through the presentations for the planned two-day Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, at which there would be an assessment on the second day. Successful candidates would be awarded a pass certificate. A firm date had not as yet been set for the run-through day.
25. **Online seminars/webinars:** a guidance document relating to the way in which webinars should be conducted was currently being prepared by the office, and would be circulated to Accredited Trainers in due course.
26. **Guides for Judges and Codes of Practice:** a review of the full content of Guides for Judges and Codes of Practice relevant to activities disciplines was being carried out, and would in future include guidance on the use of social media.

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 15 April 2021. The following issues were highlighted:
28. **Statement regarding the Sub-Group's work:** the Dog Health Group, at its meeting on 22 October 2020, supported the Sub-Group's recommendation for publication of a statement in order to draw the attention of the dog owning community to its work. The statement was released on 14 April 2021 and may be viewed at:
www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media-centre/2021/april/statement-from-the-activities-health-and-welfare-sub-group/
29. **Heart rate recovery:** the Sub-Group was planning to undertake research into heart rate recovery times for dogs competing in various disciplines, and the views of the Council were



sought as to whether it would support such research in relation to dogs competing in obedience.

30. In response to a query, it was confirmed that funding for the research project would not be required from the obedience community.
31. It was acknowledged that such research was particularly relevant to agility which involved high levels of excitement in competing dogs, although it was suggested that before undertaking research in relation to dogs competing in obedience, it would be necessary to consider the objectives of doing so. Subject to careful framing of the objectives, methodology, and the way in which the resulting information would be used, the Council was of the view that the research would provide useful information which would be of assistance to the obedience community, and for this reason it wished to express its support for it. Mrs Patrick undertook to pass the Council's views to the Sub-Group, and would provide feedback in due course.
32. A brief discussion took place regarding the necessity for dogs competing in any discipline to be in fit condition. A concern was expressed that some dogs competing in obedience were overweight, which was highly undesirable and would have an adverse effect on the dog's overall fitness.
33. **Health Symposium:** it was noted that The Kennel Club Health and Welfare Conference would take place 25-26 September 2021. Details may be viewed at:
<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/Healthandwelfareconference>
34. **Colour recognition in dogs:** this issue remained on the Sub-Group's list of opportunities for research. The Council was of the view that relevant research may provide assistance to judges in obedience when considering the colour of retrieve items and sendaway markers. Such information may be used as part of judges' education and would also be useful to those providing dog training services.
35. The Sub-Group's next meeting would take place on 16 September 2021 and a report would be provided to the Council at its next meeting.

ITEM 6. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

36. The Council noted a report from Mrs Lavender relating to YKC Obedience, as follows:
 - YKC Artist of the Year had been announced.
 - Young Person of the Year deadline was now closed.
 - YKC Running Challenge had been launched.
 - Online activities for YKC members were available in May and June.
 - YKC Camp 2021 Sunday 1 August - Friday 6 August: Mrs Lavender was asked to recommend trainers for obedience and these had been confirmed. Currently 48 members were attending.
 - YKC Autumn Weekend had been rebooked at Newark for 2021. This would be discussed further in due course.



- YKC Competitions 2021: The list of shows holding YKC competitions was currently being updated, and would be available soon.
 - YKC Training Days 2021: It was hoped that dates for training days would start to be booked again when Covid-19 related restrictions started to ease.
 - YKC Crufts 2022: The YKC Obedience Judge had been confirmed.
37. Anyone wishing to offer assistance for the YKC autumn weekend or for the YKC Camp in 2022 were requested to contact Mrs Lavender.

ITEM 7. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

- Reliability and obedience exercise and removal of stays
38. Mrs W Birch, an individual, wished the Council to consider a proposal for the introduction of a test which was designed to test the reliability of the dog to be left whilst the handler collected and then returned the retrieve article. The dog would therefore be under test during this period, as a separate exercise, which was not normally the case. It was suggested that this would also be an effective way to introduce a control exercise which may comply with the Activities Committee's suggestion for such an exercise to replace the stay exercise.
39. The proposal was made by Miss Godfrey on behalf of Mrs Birch. It was seconded by Mr Moxon.
40. The Council acknowledged that there had been some confusion within the obedience community in respect of the proposal, and whether voting against it would result in stays being retained. It was clarified that the Council had made a decision at its previous meeting to recommend the removal of stays from the list of exercises, and the proposal related solely to the potential introduction of a new control exercise.
41. It also noted that a survey on the matter had been issued by Mr Harlow, and a summary of the results was circulated to Council members during the meeting by the office, on behalf of Mrs Le Fevre. However there were some concerns that the survey had only closed the evening before the meeting which had not allowed for the results to be circulated sooner, which would have given more time for them to be given proper consideration prior to the meeting. Further, completion of the survey had required the use of a Google account, and due to this, some members of the obedience community had not wished to participate.
42. The Council noted that feedback received following a number of shows held since the temporary suspension of stays due to Covid-19 had been positive, with reports indicating that shows without stays had been able to run smoothly and with less stress for organisers and competitors.
43. Considering the proposal, there was a concern raised that it would not be possible to ensure that the exercise would be the same for all competitors due to differences between rings in the distance between the handlers and the table, and the length of time taken for the exercise. As a result, the exercise would not be fair. Further, there may also be safety issues particularly in respect of young, inexperienced or reactive dogs which may react to activity in nearby rings. However it was highlighted that such dogs were already required to undertake a control exercise as part of the recall exercise.
44. Some Council members were of the view that the proposed control exercise would take an undue amount of time to carry out, especially as in some classes the dog would be expected to undergo the exercise twice (i.e. before and after the retrieve), and therefore the overall time



taken to judge a class would be unduly extended. However others considered that the exercise would have only minimal impact on judging times. It was accepted that there could be some variation depending on the way in which individual judges chose to undertake the exercise.

45. In view of these concerns, the Council was not of the view that it could support the introduction of the control exercise as outlined in the proposal. However it noted the Activities Committee's view that it would be a positive step to replace the stay exercise with a control element of some kind, and it considered how this may be achieved.
46. One suggestion was that the matter be deferred for a twelve-month period during which the impact of the removal of stays may be assessed, and to allow the development of a range of ideas for a suitable control exercise which could then be considered further.
47. However, it was highlighted that there were already a number of control elements implicit in existing exercises, such as recall, send away, drop and recall, and distant control. Whilst acknowledging the suggestion from the Activities Committee that an additional control exercise should be introduced to replace stays, the Council was of the strong view that doing so would not serve any practical purpose as the existing tests were already quite adequate.
48. A counter proposal was made by Mr Luckock that no additional control exercise should be introduced, for the reasons outlined above. The counter proposal was seconded by Mr Wakelin.
49. A vote on the counter proposal took place, and by a large majority, the Council **recommended** it for approval. Accordingly, the Committee would be advised of the Council's wish that no additional control exercise should be introduced as it agreed that there was no necessity to do so. The Council wished for its strong views on this matter to be recorded and communicated to the Activities Committee.

Class eligibility – 25 day rule

50. The Council considered a proposal for a new Regulation G34.m. which had been submitted by Mrs J Le Fevre, Mr M McCartney & Mrs C Patrick. The proposal was seconded by Mr Moxon.
51. The concept of the 25 day rule had been discussed at the Council's previous meeting, the objective being to reduce the timescale in which a competitor could accumulate wins at a particular level before progressing to the next level, therefore reducing the progression bottle neck in some of the classes.
52. The Council noted that the wording used in the proposal was based on that used in agility, in which the 25 day rule worked very well.
53. A query was raised in respect of the specific timeframe in which competitors must notify the show secretary or show processor of any relevant wins, but it was stressed that although the proposal stated 'at least 14 days before the date of the show', it was anticipated that the majority of competitors would choose to do so as soon as they were able.
54. Feedback from show secretaries had indicated support for the proposal, and it was not anticipated that it would cause any undue stress for them.
55. The Council noted that in the sentence reading 'The dog should then be moved into the appropriate class(es) for the next grade' the words 'the next grade' had been included in error and should be removed.
56. A vote took place, and by a majority, the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

New Regulation G34.m.



TO:

In estimating the number of awards won, all wins up to and including 25 days before the start of the competition shall be counted when entering for any class. For these purposes a competition shall be defined as all classes covered within the same schedule. In the event that a dog becomes eligible for the next class at a particular show, after the entry for that show has been sent, it is the competitor's responsibility to notify the show secretary or the show processor at least 14 days before the date of the show. The dog should then be moved into the appropriate class(es). The dog must be moved into the corresponding number of classes as were entered at the lower class. If there are fewer or no classes available for the next class the competitor should be offered a refund of the relevant entry fees.

The show organiser is not required to split a class should entries exceed the maximum of 60 as a result of this notification process.

(Insertion in bold)

Introduction of height based classification scheme

57. The proposal, submitted by Mrs J Le Fevre, Mr M McCartney & Mrs C Patrick, was based upon the Obedience Working Party's final recommendations taken from the meeting dated 11 February 2020. At its meeting in February 2021, the Council expressed its full support for the introduction of height classified classes. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Patrick.
58. The objective of the proposal was to attract owners of differing breeds/sizes of dog to compete within obedience alongside/against similar sized dogs. It was anticipated that this would encourage new competitors. Under the terms of the proposal, show organisers would be able to elect to schedule height classified classes if they wished to do so.
59. Should the Council recommend the proposal for approval, specific amendments to G regulations would be formulated by the office and submitted to the Activities Committee without further reference to it, subject to the approval of the Council's Chair and Vice Chair.
60. It was emphasised that scheduling of height classified classes would be purely optional for show organisers. The objective was to provide them with the opportunity to be fully flexible and tailor their classes to gain more entries/increase newcomers into the discipline. Competitors would also be able to choose if they wished to compete within the new height classified structure or remain competing in 'non-height classified classes', in which case they would compete in 'standard' height classification.
61. There was some concern that although the principle of the proposal had previously been agreed, the timing was not ideal for the introduction of height classified classes.
62. A vote took place, and, by a majority, the introduction of height classified classes was not supported.

Obedience Excellent Award – proposed new Regulation G(D)

63. Mr Moxon proposed the introduction of a new regulation whereby details of the Obedience Excellent Award would be included as an annex within the Obedience Regulations booklet from 2022 onwards, with the objective of promoting awareness of the award among competitors. The proposal was seconded by Mr McCartney.
64. It was noted that the wording was exactly as it appeared on the claim form for the Obedience Excellent Award, and the proposal was made with the sole objective of ensuring that the relevant details would be published in the Obedience Regulations booklet.
65. The Council was of the view that this would be helpful for competitors, and by a majority, it **recommended** for approval the following new regulation:



New Regulation G(D)

TO:

On application by the registered owner(s), an 'Obedience Excellent Qualification' will be issued for a dog that has obtained the required amount of points for places gained at Open and Championship Obedience Shows. The scale of the points is as follows:

- 1. 10 points for a first prize.**
- 2. 4 points for second prize.**
- 3. 2 points for a third prize.**
- 4. 1 point for a fourth prize.**

The required points to achieve each qualification are as follows:

- 1. 10 points required for Introductory**
- 2. 20 points required for Pre-Beginners.**
- 3. 20 points required for Beginners.**
- 4. 20 points required for Novice.**
- 5. 30 points required for Class A.**
- 6. 30 points required for Class B.**
- 7. 40 points required for Class C.**

This qualification may be used on entry forms for dogs qualified and will be shown in show catalogues. Only one such qualification may be shown so that as a dog progresses to a higher qualification, the lower one may no longer be used. Points towards the required excellent qualification in any particular class will be awarded as a result of gaining places in that class and/or any higher class.

(Insertions in bold)

(Subsequent Regulation annexes to be renumbered)

ITEM 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Competing internationally

66. Mrs Patrick and Mr McCartney wished the Council to consider the issue of competitors from Great Britain competing in international events, and ways in which this may be encouraged.
67. Mrs Patrick drew the attention of the Council to the activities of Agility Team GB which took part in a number of overseas competitions. She was of the view that one reason that this was possible was that the Kennel Club's H regulations for agility closely resembled those of many other countries around the world. It was also highlighted that Heelwork to Music Team GB had also taken part in a number of overseas competitions, and Mrs Patrick and Mr McCartney were keen to encourage similar activity in obedience.
68. The Council was also reminded of the Obedience World Cup competition which used to be held at Crufts, and of the support it had received from competitors in many countries. The Council expressed its disappointment that it had been dropped, especially as the reasons for doing so were unclear, in view of its popularity among the obedience community. Team Managers had also been unclear as to the reasons for the event being dropped.
69. Whilst noting this, a suggestion was made that the Crufts Committee should be encouraged to schedule some form of international competition for obedience competitors. It was anticipated that such a competition would be supported, especially as some overseas handlers from other countries also competed in the UK and had qualified their dogs to compete in the Crufts Obedience Championships.
70. Mrs Patrick and Mr McCartney were of the view that participation in international events would be beneficial for the development of obedience in the UK. However in order to do so it may be



necessary to consider making some adjustments to existing regulations to bring them more into line with FCI regulations which applied at most overseas competitions. It was acknowledged that this would need to be a gradual process. Further it would be necessary to gauge the level of interest among competitors in competing overseas.

71. A suggestion was made that an Obedience Festival be held, similar to the International Agility Festival which was organised on an annual basis by The Kennel Club. It was hoped that handlers at all levels would be able to compete in events with semi-finals or finals to be held at Crufts, in a similar way to agility, where Novice competitors could qualify to compete at Crufts.
72. The Council was reminded that the suggestion for an Obedience Festival had been discussed on previous occasions but had not been progressed. In particular there had been concerns as to whether a sufficient number of volunteers would be available to assist in running it.
73. In order for such an event to take place, it would be necessary to formulate a detailed business case for consideration by The Kennel Club. This would need to include financial considerations and details of plans as to how the event may be organised. In response to a query, it was noted that there was no space available at the International Agility Festival for an Obedience Festival to run alongside.
74. It was agreed that an informal working party should be established, with the objective of developing plans for an Obedience Festival, and, in due course formulating a business plan. Mr McCartney, Mrs Patrick, Mrs Smith, Mrs Russell and Mrs Lavender all volunteered their services, and would discuss the issue and report back to the Council at its next meeting.
75. It was also agreed that the issue of international competition should be placed on the five-year strategy document with a long-term objective of taking part in obedience on the international stage, and thus promoting obedience across the UK and the world.

ITEM 9. FIVE-YEAR STRATEGY

76. At its meeting on 21 January 2021, the Council had agreed that further consideration should be given to 'Reviewing the structure of obedience classes' as listed within the Strategic Plan.
77. It was in full agreement that such a review was necessary, particularly with the objective of considering new or revised exercises which would be beneficial in attracting new competitors into the discipline. It was hoped that the Council in its next term of office would do so.
78. It was also agreed that the Strategic Plan should be more dynamic in nature, with specific action points highlighted to ensure ongoing progress.
79. The matter would be discussed further at the Council's next meeting.

ITEM 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

80. The Council was reminded that no public statements should be issued until such time as the minutes of the meeting had been published.
81. All members of the obedience community were also reminded of the need to show respect to others at all times, including when using social media.



ITEM 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 82. The date for the next meeting of the Council would be announced in September 2021.
- 83. Once announced, the deadline for submissions would be strictly adhered to and no late submissions would be accepted.

The meeting closed at 1.40 pm.

MR M MCCARTNEY
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'