



# THE KENNEL CLUB

## **MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY 27 JANUARY 2022 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET – AGENDA**

### **ITEM 1. PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL ON KENNEL CLUB STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES**

The office will give a presentation to Council representatives giving details of The Kennel Club and Liaison Council structure and procedures and the role of Council representatives.

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

### **ITEM 3. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL**

### **ITEM 4. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE FROM JUNE 2022 TO MAY 2025**

### **ITEM 5. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL**

### **ITEM 6. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL**

Note: the representative must be an Accredited Trainer.

### **ITEM 7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **ITEM 8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021 (copies previously distributed).

### **ITEM 9. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a. The Council is invited to note that the Board, at its meeting on 12 October 2021, approved the following amendments to H Regulations:

Regulation H(1)9.a.

**TO:**

- a. Test area shall have a suitable surface and measure a minimum of 32m x 32m for outdoor venues **rings**. ~~Indoor venues may be smaller but must be appropriate to the size of the test.~~ **Indoor rings are recommended to be 600 square meters but must be a minimum of 450 square metres with no one side measuring less than 15m. For outdoor all weather arenas of one or more rings that are enclosed by structure, fence or permanent barrier each ring is recommended to be 800 square meters but must be a minimum of 600 square metres with no**



**one side measuring less than 20m. All indoor and outdoor all weather permanently enclosed rings for Prestige Events and/or Championship classes must be a minimum of 800 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. The ring area includes space for officials, including the scime and ring party, but where possible the ring tent should be outside the ring area.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation H(1)(B)3.f.

**TO:**

Long Jump—Each unit a minimum length of 1.2m.

Large Dogs - to comprise ~~3 to 5~~ units, the overall length to be between ~~1.2m~~ **1.3m** and 1.5m. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be 381mm. Intermediate Dogs – to comprise ~~3 to 5~~ **4** units, the overall length to be between 1m and ~~1.3m~~ **1.2m**. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be ~~381mm~~ **305mm**. Medium Dogs - to comprise ~~3 to 4~~ **3** units, the overall length to be between 700mm and 900mm. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be ~~305mm~~ **229mm**. Small Dogs - To comprise ~~2 to 3~~ **2** units, the overall length to be between 400mm and ~~500mm~~ **600mm**. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be ~~229mm~~ **170mm**.

Marker poles with a minimum height of 1.2m shall be used, these should not be attached to any part of the obstacle.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

- b. Minimum standards for Competition Managers/Chief Stewards At its previous meeting, the Council had discussed a recommendation from the Activities Judges Sub-Group that as there were currently no regulations specifying a minimum standard for Competition Managers for agility, such standards should be introduced for the discipline.

Although in agreement with the principle of setting clear and specific criteria for the role, the Council had concluded that there should be a clearer definition as the precise role and responsibilities of the competition manager, and that until this was in place, it would not be helpful to introduce a regulation which set specific criteria for the role. It was anticipated that the revised Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards, would include such a definition, and that once this had been completed, the Council would reconsider the issue with a view to making a firm recommendation to the Activities Judges Sub-Group.

It is invited to consider the matter further in the light of the revised Guide.  
**(Annex A – to follow)**

## **ITEM 10. ACCREDITED TRAINERS ANNUAL SEMINAR**

The Council is invited to note a written report following the above seminar which took place on 26 October 2021.

**(Annex B refers)**

## **ITEM 11. REVIEW OF PANELS**



The Council is invited to review the membership, roles, and remits of the following Panels, and to assess the processes used by them over the previous three years, with a view to determining the best approach to be taken by the Council over its forthcoming term of office.

#### Equipment Panel

Remit (last updated 8 July 2021)

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

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

Membership:

Mr K Smith (Chair)

Mr S Chandler (no longer on Council)

Mr M Hallam

Mrs L Olden (no longer on Council)

Miss R Sargent

#### Agility Governance Panel

Remit (last updated 11 July 2019):

- Review existing regulations and guidelines to identify areas where improved clarity, review or consolidation is needed and bring these to the Council for consultation
- Improve communications with show management, clubs, judges and competitors and assist the Kennel Club in providing a one-stop source of information on Kennel Club Agility
- Consider ways in which the Council could be more effective, specifically with regard to liaison with the agility community, coordination with Kennel Club office staff and its relationship within the Kennel Club decision making structure.

Membership:

Mrs S Hawkswell (Chair)

Mr S Chandler (no longer on Council)

Mrs Y Croxford (no longer on Council)

Mrs J Gardner (no longer on Council)

Miss R Sargent

#### Judging Panel

Remit (last updated 11 July 2019)

- To look at ways of helping and supporting judges in all aspects of the role of being a judge
- To regularly assess and update all literature pertaining to judges



- To review any incidents sent to the Kennel Club/Scottish Kennel Club regarding judges and judging
- To support and pass on ideas on how to improve judges' training and mentoring.
- To give feedback to the Activities Judges Sub-Group

Membership:

Mrs J Gardner (Chair) (no longer on Council)

Mr M Cavill (no longer on Council)

Mr S Chandler (no longer on Council)

Mrs S Hawkswell

Mrs E Laing-Kay

Mr M Tait

## **ITEM 12. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP**

- a. The Council is invited to note a written report from Mr Tait following the Sub-Group's meeting on 16 September 2021.  
**(Annex C refers)**
- b. Opportunities for investigation  
As agreed at the Council's meeting on 8 July 2021, members of the Council are requested to suggest any topics which may be suitable for potential research via the Sub-Group.
- c. Funding for research  
The Sub-Group considered a suggestion whereby a small levy could be placed on entries for Kennel Club licensed agility shows. This levy would be used for specific purposes, such as to provide funding for additional research that would benefit all disciplines, for specific agility research (for example into research into absorption of forces on the see-saw, or impact forces on the A ramp), and for other specific agility issues. The Council is requested to consider the principle of such a levy, the specific uses of which would be subject to full consultation with the Council in relation to agility matters, and whether it would be perceived by the agility community as a positive step. It is invited to note that similar consultations will be held with representatives of other activities disciplines as to the possibility on the placing of levies on entries for licensed shows and competitions in order to provide funding for research. Such research may be of benefit to their own disciplines, or may be more generalised in nature, and potentially of benefit to all disciplines.

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

The Council is requested to consider the following report from the Equipment Panel and to discuss any issues arising:

- a. Review of Equipment  
The Panel will be holding a review of the obstacles. The initial discussion will commence at the Council's meeting in July 2022. The Panel plans to conduct the review in the following way:



- July 2022: general discussion on items raised to see what should be taken forward. Any items for consideration are invited from the agility community and should be submitted to the Panel by the end of March 2022.
  - January 2023: Discussion on specific changes to be taken forward from the July meeting.
  - July 2023: Proposal on changes agreed.
- b. Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.j.  
At its meeting held on 11 February 2021 the Council agreed to change the number of weaves to be 6 or 12 with a maximum of 12 in a standard class.

At this meeting it was also suggested that if the proposal on tolerances was approved a single diameter of 35mm should be recommended.

At its meeting in July 2021, the Council was advised that the Activities Committee, at its meeting on 18 March 2021, had noted the above proposal which specified the number of poles which may be used in a standard class. It had accepted the principle of the recommendation, however, it had noted that the Council would be considering separately whether there was any necessity to amend the dimension size of weave poles. As the regulation also contained dimensions relating to the size of weave poles, it was agreed that it would be preferable to make a single amendment to cover both issues rather than two separate amendments. Accordingly, consideration of the proposal was deferred by the Committee until the Council had discussed the matter further.

As Regulation H(1)(B)3 has been amended to allow 5mm tolerance (with effect from 1 January 2022) the Equipment Panel wishes to recommend a diameter of 35mm for weave poles, and requests the Council to consider the following amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.j.

Regulation H(1)(B)3.j.

**TO:**

Weaving Poles—The ~~minimum~~ number of poles should be ~~five either~~ six or twelve ~~and the maximum number 12~~. **The maximum number of weaves in a standard class is 12.** They should be in a continuous line, as straight as possible and should be 600mm apart (between the poles). The poles must be of rigid construction and with a minimum height of 762mm and a diameter ~~between 32mm and 38mm~~ **of 35mm**. The base must have support bars at the bottom of each pole and they must be positioned away from the side a dog would normally negotiate each pole. (Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

#### **ITEM 14. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL**

The Council is requested to consider a report from the Agility Governance Panel and to discuss any issues arising.

**(Annex D refers)**



## **ITEM 15. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL AND OTHER JUDGING ISSUES**

- a. The Council is requested to consider a report from the Judging Panel and to discuss any issues arising from it. The report includes an update following the meeting of the Activities Judges Sub-Group which took place on 18 November 2021.  
**(Annex E refers)**
- b. Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards/Judges Guide to Agility Equipment  
At its previous meeting, the Council noted that the Activities Judges SubGroup was in the process of reviewing the full content of Guides for Judges and Codes of Practice for all activities disciplines.

It was advised that the Judging Panel was working on production of a single updated guidance document which would combine the existing Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards and the Judges Guide to Agility Equipment. As this was a large document and the review was proving to be time-consuming, it was agreed that it would be helpful to form a small working group, consisting of Mr Cavill, Mrs Gardner, Mrs Hawkswell and Mr Tait, to progress the project, with input from other individuals as deemed necessary. This would include input from the agility representatives serving on the Activities Judges Sub-Group (Mr Jolly and Mr Huckle). It was agreed that a draft of the revised document would be submitted to the Sub-Group for review at its meeting on 18 November 2021, and that it should therefore be with the office by the end of October 2021. This would then be circulated to all Council members with a view to a finalised document being available by the end of the Council's current term of office i.e. by the end of 2021.

An update regarding the revised document is included within the report from the Judging Panel. **Note:** the revised document is included as an annex paper under agenda item 9.b.)

## **ITEM 16. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

No proposals have been received.

## **ITEM 17. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

- a. Mr M Cavill Mr P Hinchley  
Electronic Contacts

Mr Cavill would like the Council to discuss the use of electronic contacts in Kennel Club competitions and whether there is any current regulation that prevents their use. Mr Cavill notes that the currently manufactured electronic contacts, whilst not currently widely used and of identical specification to all other contacts, provide an inaudible indicator to the judge only, that the contact has been touched.

At no time is the judge expected to rely solely on the electronic activation of the contact and must still visually confirm that the contact has been touched, and hence still complies with the current regulations.



b. Mr M Cavill

Mr N Ellis

Head Judge – Roles and Remit

The concept of a Head Judge at Agility Competitions has been discussed and debated in person and online for a number of years. The concept is not derived from the equivalent Chief Steward role for other KC disciplines, but more as a support of the appointed judges and show management team.

The ongoing review of the Minimum Standards for Competition Managers/Chief Stewards as requested by the Activities Judges SubGroup and discussed at the July 2021 Agility Liaison Council, demonstrated that there is a requirement at shows for a better understanding of the rules and regulations and there was debate as to whether there were different skill sets involved in competing in agility and in running a show. Paragraph 60 in the minutes of the July meeting state '*It was emphasised that a competition manager must be completely impartial, have a good understanding of H Regulations, and be able to identify potential issues on a course which may compromise the safety of handlers or dogs.*' Whilst a number of good show managers are also good judges, a large number of show managers are not judges, a number do not compete, and may not be in the best position to advise and adjudicate on specific judging issues and safety.

The concept of the Head Judge bridges this gap and should be a recognised judge (possibly of Championship approved/Judges trainer level) who holds relevant experience and knowledge.

Head judges should be under contract when undertaking the role of head judge. Head judges should be permitted to still compete on the day(s) they are appointed a head judge at a competition in a similar manner to reserve judges. Under the remit of the head judge role (see below) it is expected that the head judge remain impartial in situations in which course design/safety issues are identified and they are called in to assess and support.

Remit of the Head Judge:

- To assist judges in advance of the competition with confirmed ring sizes, any restrictions that may be imposed by layout, available equipment etc
- To advise judges of any specific rules, regulations or specific requirements (qualifier rules etc) that may be relevant to the classes they are judging
- To assist and advise the show management on judging issues
- To assist and advise the judge on regulation queries
- To assist if requested by the judge with the setting up of the course if issues of safety or layout prior to course walking commencing
- To be on hand to address any safety concerns raised by competitors or show management with the judge
- To assist the show manager with competitor queries on course design or judging decisions
- To provide a statement and input into the incident book any issues during the show that may arise from concern regarding judges or judging decisions.

What the Head Judge will NOT do:

- Review and assess/comment upon course plans before the show  
(unless specifically requested to do so by an individual judge)
- Impose changes to a judge's course design unless dog/handler safety is compromised and only with the show manager's agreement
- Impose judgement decisions upon a judge to influence or change a judge's decision unless it is in direct conflict of Kennel Club regulations



c. Mr M Cavill

Mr P Hinchley

Placement of leads and rewards

Mr Cavill would like the agility community and the Council to discuss solutions as to the entry and exit procedure for the ring to prevent conflict with competitors, spectators and other dogs, primarily at the exit of the ring at the end of a run.

Over the years there has been extensive discussion and debate on social media and at shows over where leads and toys and rewards could be/should be placed, where crates can be located and rewards placed/located by handler or supporters amongst others.

At events over the summer, Mr Cavill was personally asked if it was allowed or personally witnessed; dogs being released from cages placed behind the score tent to the start line, requests to allow a dog to run to its cage behind the score tent at the end of the run, leads/toys paced at the back of the score tents with dogs completing their runs running through other competitors/dogs to get their rewards, toys/leads placed in buckets/boxes containing jump feet, pegs, mallets and other items, toys/rewards being dropped outside the ring by grooms encouraging dogs to run between other competitors/dogs/spectators at the end of the run with numerous close misses, toys/leads hung on metal ring stakes.

There are many contributing factors that make any solution difficult due to possible restriction to spacing around the ring exits, poor course design with final jumps on the boundary of the ring, availability of numbers or experience of ring party to manage the placement whilst still ensuring that positive reward and enjoyment and safety of competitors and dogs is maintained at the end of every run.

d. Mr M Tait Number of runs to be judged in a day

Regulation H(1)9.e. currently states that 'The maximum number of individual runs a person shall judge on one day is 450, excluding unforeseen eventualities such as re-runs.' Mr Tait wishes to highlight that in the current climate of smaller class sizes, this can have a major impact on the length of day a judge is in the ring. Accordingly, he requests that the Council discuss the potential introduction of a sliding scale which would take the number of classes into account. An example is as follows:

1 -3 classes 400-450 dogs  
3-5 classes 350-400 dogs 5-8  
classes 300 -350 dogs 8 classes  
plus max 300 dogs.

Rationale

Assuming an average of 20 minutes for course walking and course change with 8 classes, discounting one class for which course walking would take place before the start of judging, and one class walking over lunch, there would be 6 course walks at 20 minutes each, i.e. 2 hours of time. Add to this 1 hour for lunch, this makes 3 hours, plus 300 dogs at an average of 1 minute per dog making 5 hours. The total is then an 8 hour day, even without any errors or timing failures.

e. Mr M Tait Recommended minimum course walking time

Mr Tait wishes the Council to consider the introduction of a recommended minimum time for course walking of 15 minutes, which would allow anyone in a queue elsewhere to get a message to the ring and also enough time on average to get from car parking





to rings. Having a minimum time gives a consistent approach to competitors and should reduce frustration and complaints.

f. Ms J Paige

Mr M Tait

Bitches in season competing at Kennel Club KC prestigious Invitational events

Ms Paige seeks the Council's views on a suggestion that bitches in season should be eligible to compete at Kennel Club prestigious invitation events such as at quarter and semi finals for the Agility Stakes, The Kennel Club Agility Stakes finals, and agility competitions held at Crufts and Discover Dogs.

#### Rationale

All of the events listed above all take part in a 6-month window which means the probability of a bitch being in season is relatively high during this time period. Whilst there is an argument that people could have bitches spayed, no such argument needs to be levied in relation to entire males. The Kennel Club promotes dog welfare through various events and is trying to show the best dogs that are fit for purpose. By not allowing bitches in season and inviting reserves, the best dogs are not being showcased.

Events around the world allow bitches in season to compete and there is no recorded negative impact on dogs competing. Initially only allowing this provision at invitational events means the number of bitches affected would be minimal, but allows handlers to plan their training with confidence that their achievements will result in their being able to compete in a prestigious event should they have qualified to do so.

Currently no activities disciplines within the Kennel Club allow bitches in season to compete, whilst there is no restriction on showing bitches in season in the breed ring.

### **ITEM 18. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL**

To note a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held at Rutland Showground from 11-14 August 2022.

**(Annex F refers)**

### **ITEM 19. AGILITY TEAM GB**

The Council is invited to note a report on the activities of Agility Team GB.

**(Annex G refers)**

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

Please give at least two weeks' advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Chairman.



## **ITEM 21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Council's next meeting will take place on 9 June 2022. Any items for the agenda must be submitted by 11 March 2022.

### **NOTES:**

1. The Kennel Club will reimburse standard rail fares to all representatives attending the meeting, from their addresses as recorded at The Kennel Club. Claim forms will be available at the meeting.
2. Those resident in Northern Ireland or Scotland may apply in advance for authority to substitute shuttle air travel for standard rail fare, although it is requested that tickets are booked well in advance to take advantage of any reduction in fares.
3. Please give advance notice of matters to be raised under Any Other Business. This assists the office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Council Chairman.
4. Kennel Club Liaison Council Regulations state that The Kennel Club will bear the cost of all reasonable and externally incurred costs connected with a Council, if agreed in advance. Therefore, representatives should apply to The Kennel Club for approval of any costs they may wish to claim prior to the expense being incurred.

## **THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

**'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' *This is to be achieved through:-***

- **Promoting The Kennel Club as the leading national organisation for referral and advice regarding all canine related matters.**
- **Encouraging the responsible breeding of pedigree dogs.**
- **Encourage the responsible ownership of dogs.**
- **Facilitating the breeding of healthy dogs**
- **Promoting the positive benefits of dogs in society.**
- **Promoting and regulating canine activities and competitions.**
- **Providing opportunities for education and training through Kennel Club led initiatives.**
- **Investing in canine health and welfare.**
- **Engaging with the wider dog owning audience/fraternity.**