



## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AT 10.30 AM ON THURSDAY 20 JANUARY 2022**

**Note:** the meeting had originally been scheduled to take place at Clarges St., London, but in view of Government advice relating to Covid-19, it was held remotely.

### **PRESENT**

Ms D Cox	Midlands
Mr J Farr	Wales
Miss F Godfrey	South East/East Anglia
Mrs S Hyde	Midlands
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mrs J Le Fevre	South East/East Anglia
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr D Moxon	South/South West
Mrs C Patrick	Scotland
Mrs K Russell	North West
Ms A Shaw	South East/East Anglia
Mr N Slater	Midlands
Ms N Thomas	Wales
Mrs L Turner	South/South West
Mr R Wakelin	North West
Mr N Walton	North East

### **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

**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. A one-minute silence was held in memory of Mr S Rutter, a former Chairman of the Council, who had passed away in December 2021. Mr Rutter's contribution to the work of the Council, and to the wider obedience community, had been greatly valued and he would be much missed.



## **THE KENNEL CLUB**

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

2. The Council received a presentation from the office giving details of The Kennel Club and Liaison Council structure and procedures, and the role of Council representatives. In response to a request, the office undertook to circulate a copy of the presentation to all Council members.

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

3. Following an election process carried out by email prior to the meeting, in the absence of any other proposed and seconded nominations, Mr McCartney was re-elected as Chair.

**IN THE CHAIR      MR M MCCARTNEY**

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

4. Following an election process carried out by email, two candidates, Mrs Lavender and Mrs Patrick, were proposed and seconded for the role of Vice Chair. A ballot was conducted, and Mrs Patrick was elected to the role.

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

5. Mrs Russell was proposed and seconded for the role of representative onto the Activities Committee, and there being no other nominations, was duly elected.

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

6. Mrs Le Fevre was proposed and seconded for the role of representative onto the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group, and there being no other nominations, was duly elected.

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

7. It was noted that the Council's representative must be an Accredited Trainer. Mr McCartney offered to undertake the role and, there being no other nominations, was duly elected.

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

8. All members of the Council were present.



9. Mr McCartney welcomed all members to the meeting, especially those new to the Council, and was optimistic that it would be possible for considerable progress to be made in moving obedience forward into the future. All members then introduced themselves, giving a brief summary of their experience and involvement in obedience.

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

10. The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 were approved as being an accurate record.

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

### Stay exercises

11. The Council noted that the Activities Committee, at its meeting on 2 September 2021, considered the issue of stay exercises. It had accepted the Council's strong view that there was no necessity to replace the stay exercise with a control element of some kind, as there were already a number of control elements implicit in existing exercises, such as recall, send away, drop and recall, and distant control. Accordingly, it recommended the removal of all stays from the list of exercises for obedience.
12. At its meeting on 12 October 2021, the Board approved the regulation amendments necessary to facilitate the removal of the stay exercise. A full list is attached at **Annex A to the minutes**.
13. At its meeting on 12 October 2021, the Board also approved the following amendments to regulations:

New Regulation G(A)4

**TO:**

***Progression on wins. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

New Regulation G(A)5

**TO:**

***Progression on points. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

New Regulation G(A)6

**TO:**

**Progression may be on wins or on points and the handler may select their preferred means of progression on a class by class basis.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

New Regulation G(A)7

**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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(A)6

**TO:**

**10. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(A)7

**TO:**

**11. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(A)8.

**TO:**

**12. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)



Regulation G(A)9.

**TO:**

**13. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(A)10.

**TO:**

**14. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(A)11.

**TO:**

**15. 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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

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 ~~44~~**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.**

~~(5)~~ **(7) The title 'OW' may be used after the name of the dog on show entries and in catalogues.**

**(8) All wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2019 can be included when calculating points.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

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)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

14. A query was raised in relation to progression on points, as there had been some confusion within the obedience community. It was clarified that progression on points was optional at each level. For example, a competitor may progress from a class via wins, but may elect to progress into a subsequent class on points if they wished to do so.
15. A further query was also raised regarding the inclusion of the following wording within the regulation relating to the criteria for claiming an Obedience Warrant: 'All wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2019 can be included when calculating points.' There was a concern that the inclusion of this wording, which had been added and recommended for approval by the Activities Committee, effectively precluded many dogs which would otherwise have been able to claim points from places won prior to 2019, from being able to achieve the award.
16. The Council was reminded that should this wording not be included, it would not be possible for any points to be claimed which had been gained prior to the effective date of the regulation, i.e.



1 January 2022. However the Council was of the view that this part of the regulation required review and it requested that its concerns be referred to the Activities Committee for further consideration, with a view to removing the relevant wording.

17. It was confirmed by the office that work was ongoing in relation to the development of the Obedience Record Book, and that these would be available in the near future via the shop on The Kennel Club's website. In answer to a query, it was confirmed that those wishing to progress on points must use an Obedience Record Book. However use of the book was not mandatory for those wishing to claim an Obedience Warrant.
18. The Council noted that anyone wishing to raise a specific query should email the office at [obedience@thekennelclub.org.uk](mailto:obedience@thekennelclub.org.uk). Where appropriate, the FAQs section on The Kennel Club's website would be updated with additional information to assist competitors and show organisers.

#### Training for commentators

19. The Council had previously noted that it would be necessary for training for commentators to take place on a face-to-face basis, rather than via remote means, and that for this reason it was unlikely that it would take place before early 2022.
20. It was now advised that in view of the resources required to organise suitable training, it had been deferred, but arrangements would be made as soon as it was possible to do so. It was hoped that this would be during the course of 2022. The Council would be kept updated of progress.
21. It was confirmed that commentary would be provided at Crufts, and was being organised by Mr Kebble.

#### Obedience Festival

22. At its previous meeting, the Council 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.
23. The Council noted a written report from the working group, which was actively pursuing the project. Miss Lawrence, from The Kennel Club, had attended the group's Zoom meeting held on 21 October 2021 and had provided valuable assistance regarding approximate costs, venues, and equipment.
24. Although the proposed Festival would be held under the auspices of The Kennel Club, it would be organised and run by members of the obedience community, and it was intended that it should be self-financing. Considerable support by way of practical assistance, and possibly as a source of initial funding, would be required from the obedience community. The views of clubs and societies would be sought in the near future as to how such support may be provided.
25. Sponsorship would also be sought both for individual classes and to support the event overall.
26. The group's objective was to run the first Festival in 2023, with the initial event being relatively small in nature, with a view to building it up in future years. It would include a range of classes, including special classes, in order to attract interest from a wide range of competitors. The intention was that the Festival would be international in nature, and efforts would be made to encourage competitors from overseas.
27. It was highlighted that there may be difficulties in attracting overseas competitors as many countries were governed by FCI regulations which were different from Kennel Club regulations.



However it was hoped that this could be overcome in the same way as for the Obedience World Cup which used to take place at Crufts, and that any necessary adaptations could be made.

28. It was proposed by the group that heats for individual classes – for example, Novice – would be held at open shows throughout the year with the final to be held at the Obedience Festival. It was hoped that in due course it may be possible for winning competitors at the Festival to qualify for competition at Crufts.
29. Further suggestions from the Council included the following:
  - Kennel Club Good Citizen Dog Scheme Special Pre-Beginner heat (this had already been agreed with Miss Lawrence)
  - YKC classes
  - ABC heat
  - Have a go class
  - Inter-regional competition
30. The group had expressed a wish to request championship status for one day if it was possible to set a date which did not clash with any other championship shows. The intention was to attract competitors at all levels, and having Obedience Certificates on offer would help to achieve this. However, the group had been advised that this would not initially be possible, and it would be necessary for the normal application process for Obedience Certificates to be followed whereby a society was required to run open shows for a minimum of three years before it could apply for championship status.
31. The event would be open to the public in order to stimulate interest in obedience to the wider dog owning community. The working group was considering a number of venues, and was aware of the importance of securing a location which would provide maximum accessibility.
32. Noting that venue hire would constitute a significant proportion of costs, a suggestion was made that the Festival be held in conjunction with another event such as a rally or obedience competition so that costs may be shared and therefore minimised. Alternatively, a venue may be shared with a breed show or a companion dog show. This may also help in attracting cross-discipline sponsorship and trade stand interest. It may also be possible to offer special 'pay on the day' classes for those competing in one discipline in order to attract them to try the other one.
33. The working group was congratulated on its plans and the Council looked forward to further updates. There was great enthusiasm for the proposed Festival which would offer a number of benefits to the discipline, and the Council confirmed its full support for progression of the project.

Strategic Plan
34. At its July 2021 meeting, the Council had agreed that a review of the structure of obedience classes was necessary. This matter was discussed later in the meeting (paragraphs 74-87 refer).
35. Obedience Information Stand at Crufts

It was noted that Mrs Lavender had indicated her willingness to organise the stand once again, with assistance from others. Mrs Lavender was thanked for undertaking the task.



## **ITEM 10. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP**

36. The Council noted a written report which had been provided by Mr Rutter following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 18 November 2021.
37. The following points were highlighted:
38. **Regulations and Judging Procedure examination:** the Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination was now available on the Kennel Club Academy. A candidate must pass the examination before attending an Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, at which they must pass the assessment.
39. **Seminar run-through day:** it was hoped that a seminar run-through day would take place in the near future, giving the Obedience Accredited Trainers the opportunity to go through the new two-day Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, in order to ensure that all Accredited Trainers delivered the seminar in a consistent manner.
40. **Accredited Trainers Annual Seminar:** the seminar had taken place on 26 October 2021 at The Kennel Club Building, Stoneleigh. It was likely that new Accredited Trainers for obedience would be sought in due course.
41. **Criticism and intimidation of agility judges:** the Sub-Group had considered concerns arising from increasing levels of intimidation and criticism of agility judges both in person and via social media, as a result of which some judges were becoming reluctant to accept judging appointments. The views of the Council were sought as to whether there was a similar issue facing obedience judges.
42. It was noted that there had been instances of obedience judges being subject to undue criticism or intimidation via social media, and the Council wished to emphasise the need for all those involved in the discipline to be cautious before posting adverse comments online.
43. A concern was expressed regarding some judges who had not judged for five years being requested to re-take the Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination. It was emphasised that whilst it was necessary to treat judges in a diplomatic manner, it was also essential to ensure that all judges were trained to an adequate standard, and that they had a good understanding of current regulations.

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

44. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Patrick following the Sub-Group's meeting which took place on 16 September 2021.
45. It was acknowledged that although few issues discussed by the Sub-Group were specific to obedience, health and welfare was a topic of great importance to The Kennel Club, and to the wider dog-owning community.
46. Issues highlighted were as follows:
47. **Heart rate recovery:** the Sub-Group was currently in the process of discussing issues relating to the heart rates of dogs taking part in competitions, although no objectives or methodology for relevant research had as yet been defined.
48. **Obesity and fitness:** the Sub-Group had also noted concerns previously expressed by the Council that some dogs competing in obedience could be considered to be overweight. It had



confirmed that obesity issues were already on the list of opportunities for investigation. Fitness in dogs was an important topic, and the Sub-Group had suggested that the 'Fit for Function' campaign should be reviewed and re-issued.

49. **Health Symposium:** the Health Symposium planned for September 2021 had been postponed due to the ongoing challenges posed by Covid-19, and a clash of date with Birmingham Dog Show Society's championship show, which had been rescheduled. It was hoped that the Symposium would take place later in 2022, and that it may be held with facilities for online attendance for those who wished to do so.

Issues for consideration by the Sub-Group

50. The Council noted that some veterinary practices were experiencing delays in providing vaccinations due to shortage of phials, and it was suggested that this matter be referred to the Sub-Group. This was noted by Mrs Le Fevre.

## **ITEM 12. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB**

51. **YKC Events:** There had been a limited schedule of events due to Covid-19 but the YKC Summer Camp took place from the 31 July - 5 August 2021 at Rutland showground, and offered five days of activities and training. Ms W Birch and Ms K Lacey had provided obedience training and had both proved very popular. Any suggestions for suitable candidates who may be willing to volunteer their services as obedience trainers for the 2022 summer camp would be welcome, and should be addressed to Mrs Lavender.
52. The YKC Autumn Training Competition event was held at Newark showground from 21-23 October 2021. This event also held qualifiers for Crufts 2022. The obedience trainers for this weekend were Ms K Hood and Mr P Height, both of whom had received good feedback. Trainers and judges would be required to take part in 2022 and any individuals wishing to offer their services were requested to contact Mrs Lavender.
53. **Training Days:** it was hoped that YKC Training Days would be held in 2022. Any clubs wishing to hold training days for YKC members were encouraged to contact the office to offer their services. Some financial support would be offered.
54. A query was raised as to issues related to the provision of training services for children. It was noted that clubs offering such services should have appropriate measures in place, and that the YKC department at The Kennel Club could provide detailed advice on request.
55. **YKC Crufts 2022 Qualification:** it was noted that qualification for Crufts would normally require a competitor to gain 30 points from qualifying shows. For 2022 the YKC office was reviewing the number of applicants and if necessary the criteria would be amended to allow for additional competitors to take part at Crufts where an insufficient number had gained the requisite number of points.
56. It was confirmed that YKC members could claim points towards qualification from competing in 'standard' classes during the qualification period.
57. It was also noted that the Rebecca Pointer Trophy would be awarded to the winner of the YKC Pre-Beginner Stakes final held at Crufts.
58. In response to a query, it was confirmed that YKC membership was available to those aged from 6-24 years of age, with competitions being split into three age groups: 6-11 years, 12-17 years, and 18-24 years. It was unclear as to how many YKC competitors were currently participating in standard classes at obedience shows.



## **ITEM 13. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

### Eligibility for Introductory classes

59. Miss Godfrey, on behalf of Ms H Troth, drew the Council's attention to the fact that in 2021 in East Anglia there had been no Introductory classes, and new competitors had entered Pre-Beginner and Beginner classes. The entries in these classes had been very low; in one instance, there were only five entries in a Pre-Beginners class. Ms Troth noted that many inexperienced handlers were unaware that they could cease to compete should their round not go as well as planned. Handlers may then win an award which would prevent them from being eligible to compete in an Introductory class, despite this being the most appropriate class for their level of experience.

60. Accordingly, Ms Troth wished the Council to consider an amendment to Regulation G(A)5.b. in relation to eligibility for the Introductory class, as follows:

Regulation G(A)5.b

#### **TO:**

To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have ~~won one~~ **gained a 1<sup>st</sup> place in an** Introductory Class ~~or have achieved a 4<sup>th</sup> place or above in Pre-Beginners~~ or in any other class.

(Deletions struck through, insertion in bold)

61. Miss Godfrey proposed the amendment, which was seconded by Mrs Le Fevre.

62. The Council noted that a further proposal submitted by Ms Troth related to a similar issue, and accordingly it was agreed that the two proposals should be considered together.

63. Under the terms of the second proposal, Regulation G(A)5. would be amended as follows:

Regulation G(A)5. Introductory

#### **TO:**

a. **Note: This class, where scheduled, is optional, and eligible handlers may elect not to enter it as their lowest class.** This class is to introduce and support newcomers to obedience competition. In this class only incentives in the form of a toy or rewards are allowed to be carried by the handler in the competitive ring and may be given to the dog at the end of an exercise or in between exercises. Rewards include food which must be carried in a small closed container during the exercises. The judge will designate an area in the competitive ring where food may be given to the dog by the handler

(Insertion in bold)

64. The Council noted Ms Troth's view that existing competitors may not wish to find themselves having to compete in an Introductory class as their lowest class, and that they should be given the choice as to whether to do so.

65. Miss Godfrey proposed the amendment, which was seconded by Mrs Le Fevre.

66. There was some support for the first proposal, although a suggestion was made that it might be helpful to add an option for handlers to progress from Introductory into Pre-Beginners on points. In respect of the second proposal, there was a concern that it may set a precedent for other classes to become optional, and also that it would add unnecessary complexity.

67. The Council was in full agreement that there was a necessity to encourage handlers at the lower levels, and it was suggested that the availability of the Introductory class should be well



publicised. Videos of the class exercises on social media may also be helpful in reassuring potential competitors that the tests were not unduly difficult. A further suggestion was the exercises themselves should be reviewed, such as the requirement for the handler to play with the dog, which some handlers found daunting. Whilst noting these points, it was agreed that they were not relevant to consideration of the specific proposals currently under discussion.

68. On further discussion, the principle of adding an option for progression on points from the Introductory class was supported, and it was agreed that consideration of the proposal to amend the criteria for eligibility for the Introductory class should be deferred until the Council's next meeting, where a revised amendment incorporating such an option could be considered.
69. In relation to the second proposal for an amendment to Regulation G(A)5 whereby the Introductory class would be made optional, a vote took place. The Council was unanimous in not supporting the proposal which was therefore not carried.

## **ITEM 14. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### Use of food rewards

70. Noting that food rewards were already permitted in the Introductory class, the Council was requested by Mrs Le Fevre to consider the introduction of food rewards into Pre-Beginner and Beginner classes. Mrs Le Fevre wished to highlight the situation whereby many dogs were trained at local training clubs with the handlers being able to hold food, or to have food on them. However, at shows, where the environment was much more challenging than at a club environment, handlers could only use food rewards in an Introductory class (where scheduled) but not in a second subsequent class. Mrs Le Fevre was of the view that more people would be encouraged into the discipline of competitive obedience if food rewards were permitted in the earlier classes, thus enabling a less challenging transition from training to competitions.
71. Whilst it was accepted that there were other means of motivation such as play and use of the handler's voice, it was understood that for some dogs, food rewards were highly motivating. There was some support for the use of food rewards in lower classes, although there were concerns at the risk of food being dropped in a ring. Potentially this could be addressed by the use of a food station by the ring, at which food rewards could be given, although there was also a view that allowing a handler to leave the ring in order to give a food reward was not acceptable. Careful management of food rewards would therefore be necessary, with adequate training and guidance being given to judges.
72. It was also suggested that the use of toys in Pre-Beginner and Beginner classes should also be permitted as a way of assisting inexperienced handlers. It was acknowledged that handlers would be required to work without food or toys once they reached Novice but it was hoped that by this point handlers would have adequate experience to not be unduly daunted.
73. Noting the feedback received from representatives, the Council concluded that it would be a positive step to allow food rewards, and possibly the use of toys, in Pre-Beginners but not in Beginners. Mrs Le Fevre undertook to submit a firm proposal for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.
74. On a separate note, it was highlighted that in some geographical areas, lower level classes were well supported, but this was not the case in others. It was unclear as to why this was the case.

### Pre-Beginner class – introduction of another exercise

75. Mrs Le Fevre noted that as stays had been removed from the list of exercises, the marking in the Pre-Beginner class was weighted towards heelwork, which some handlers found daunting.



The views of the Council were sought as to suggestions for ways in which this class may be made a little more varied.

76. As this issue was closely linked to the next discussion item, the two were discussed together.
- Additional exercises and modifications to existing exercises
77. Mr Moxon wished the Council to discuss suggestions for additional exercises and modifications to existing exercises, with a view to allowing for a working group to develop a proposal for the Council's meeting in June 2022. If approved, new regulations could then be brought into effect from January 2023.
78. Mr Moxon noted that some competitors had concerns regarding the necessity for them to perform two rounds of heelwork in the lower classes, and that very little, other than heelwork, was being tested.
79. In particular, the Council's attention was drawn to the following themes:
- Addressing the need for two lots of heelwork in the lower classes.
  - Providing a control on the amount of heelwork within a test, especially in the lower classes.
  - Seeking additional exercises (excluding Class C).
80. Mr Moxon provided a number of suggestions as to the way in which tests may be amended in order to address the above issues. These were noted.
81. The Council was in agreement that at present the discussion should be limited to the following classes: Introductory, Pre-Beginners, Beginners and Novice. It did not consider it necessary to consider any changes to Classes A, B or C at present.
82. There were mixed views on the matter. Whilst it was accepted that there was a need for exercises in the earlier classes to build confidence and motivation in both handlers and dogs, there was also a view that in view of a number of recent changes including the removal of the stay exercise, the introduction of the 25-day rule and of progression on points, it would be preferable to make no further changes until the impact on the discipline could be properly assessed. Further, many handlers were happy simply to enjoy opportunities to compete, having been largely unable to do so recently due to Covid-19, and would not be keen to embrace significant changes.
83. A view was also expressed that it would not be helpful to set specific restrictions on the amount of heelwork which should be included in each class as this would be unnecessarily prescriptive.
84. It was acknowledged that there may be some resistance to change from experienced handlers, and that before any decisions could be made, it would be helpful to canvas the views of those who would be affected by them, i.e. those competitors in the earlier classes, many of whom may have entered the discipline via pet training classes at their local clubs, and some of whom would be competing with their first dog. In some cases such handlers were reticent about stating their views openly and honestly as they may be uncomfortable about doing so on forums where more experienced competitors were present.
85. One area representative had set up a social media group for their own area which was specifically aimed at competitors in Introductory, Pre-Beginners and Beginners, and a number of members had already joined. It was suggested that the establishment of similar groups in other areas would be a positive step in allowing such competitors to have an opportunity to express their views freely. Assessing feedback from such groups would provide a sound basis on which to make future decisions.



86. The Council was of the view that Mr Moxon's suggestions had merit, and warranted further consideration in the future, but that for the reasons noted above it was not the appropriate time to do so.
87. Mr Moxon was thanked for the considerable amount of work which had gone into his discussion item, and which had stimulated a very helpful and positive exchange of views.

#### **ITEM 15. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY**

88. At its July 2021 meeting, the Council had agreed that further consideration should be given to 'Reviewing the structure of obedience classes' as listed within the Strategic Plan, particularly with the objective of considering new or revised exercises which would be beneficial in attracting new competitors into the discipline. It was noted that consideration of this matter had been covered by discussions earlier in the meeting (paragraphs 75-87 refer).
89. A query was raised in respect of a document compiled by Mrs Turner some time ago which contained guidance for newcomers to obedience. The document had been published via The Kennel Club's website, but it appeared that it was no longer available. The office undertook to check the position.
90. The Council was in agreement that the Strategic Plan should be more dynamic in nature, with specific action points highlighted to ensure ongoing progress.

#### **ITEM 16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

91. No matters were raised under Any Other Business

#### **ITEM 17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

92. The next meeting of the Council would take place on 23 June 2022. Any items for the agenda must be submitted by 25 March 2022.
93. It was likely that some future meetings would take place on a face-to-face basis at The Kennel Club, with others being held remotely. It was hoped that the June meeting would take place in person, but any representatives who did not wish to attend in person would be able to join the meeting via a remote link.
94. Mr McCartney thanked all present for their contributions to a very positive meeting.

The meeting closed at 2pm.

**MR M MCCARTNEY**  
**Chair**



**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'**

Annex A to the Minutes

**Regulation amendments to facilitate the  
removal of stays for obedience  
Approved by the Board 12 October 2021**

Regulation G14. Obedience Certificates.

**TO:**

- a. The Kennel Club will offer an Obedience Certificate (Dog) and an Obedience Certificate (Bitch) for winners of first prizes in Class C Dog and Class C Bitch at a championship show, provided that the exhibits do not lose more than 15 points out of ~~300~~ **230**, and provided also that the classes are open to all breeds.
- b. Judges must also award a Reserve Best of Sex provided that the exhibit has not lost more than 15 points out of ~~300~~ **230**.

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

Regulation G18. Facilities.

**TO:**

- a. Judging rings shall not in any circumstances contain less than 83 sq m (900 sq ft) of clear floor space and shall not be less than 6 m (20 ft) in width except that for Championship Class C the ring must contain not less than 148 sq m (1600 sq ft). Ring sizes should, where possible, be considerably larger. ~~Stay rings must be of an adequate size to cope with the largest expected entry.~~

(Deletion struck through)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G29.c.

**TO:**

Where classes are divided, competitors entered therein shall be notified of all changes ~~and timed stay exercises must not be held earlier than advertised for the original class.~~

(Deletion struck through)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G29.f.(6)

**TO:**

All published running orders must be strictly observed. Competitors reporting late will be excluded from competition unless they have previously reported to the chief steward that they are actually working a dog in Championship Class C ~~or in the Stay test of another class.~~

(Deletion struck through)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G29.g.

**TO:**



~~Where timed stays will take place it must be announced in the schedule that they will take priority over other tests. The times of such tests to be published at the show and in the catalogue, if available, and may also be published with running orders. Published stay times must not be changed, except in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the show management. In the case of Championship Class C, stays must not be judged before 12 noon. In all other cases, timed stays must not commence before one hour after the published time for the commencement of judging.~~  
(Deletion struck through)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G32.h.

**TO:**

The judging of Championship Class C takes priority over all other classes ~~except the timed stays of these classes provided for in Regulation G29.g.~~  
(Deletion struck through)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G 34.e. Competing

**TO:**

Any dog which is not presented for ~~stay or the~~ **scent exercises** when called for testing will be considered to have withdrawn from the class.  
(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)  
(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(A) ELIGIBILITY AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

**TO:**

CLASSES

5. Introductory.

- a. This class is to introduce and support newcomers to obedience competition. In this class only incentives in the form of a toy or rewards are allowed to be carried by the handler in the competitive ring and may be given to the dog at the end of an exercise or in between exercises. Rewards include food which must be carried in a small closed container during the exercises. The judge will designate an area in the competitive ring where food may be given to the dog by the handler.
- b. To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have won one Introductory Class or have achieved a 4th place or above in Pre-Beginners or in any other class.
- c. Handlers will not be penalised for encouragement or extra commands in all exercises ~~except stays~~.
- d. ~~The stays to be completed on lead, handler facing sideways onto the dog in the designated stay ring.~~
- e d. In any exercise attempted the competing team cannot lose all the allocated points for that exercise but must be awarded a minimum of two points for each exercise they have attempted.
- f e. The detailed test will be:
  - (1) Play with dog for 15-30 seconds on or off lead at the handler's choice. Handlers may use a silent toy 10 points
  - (2) Heel on lead 10 points
  - (3) Recall with a finish on lead, off lead or long line, at the handler's choice 10 points
  - ~~(4) 1 minute stay on lead in either the sit or down at handler's choice 10 points~~  
10 points
  - ~~(5 4) TOTAL 40~~ **30** points

6. 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).
- b. The detailed tests will be:
  - (1) Heel on lead 15 points



- (2) Heel free 20 points
- (3) Recall 10 points
- (4) Sit one minute, handler in sight 10 points
- ~~(5) Down two minutes, handler in sight 20 points~~
- ~~(6)~~ **(4) TOTAL 75 45 points**

7. 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).
- b. The detailed tests will be:
  - (1) Heel on lead 15 points
  - (2) Heel free 20 points
  - (3) Recall 10 points
  - (4) Retrieve any article 25 points
  - ~~(5) Sit one minute handler in sight 10 points~~
  - ~~(6) Down two minutes, handler in sight 20 points~~
  - ~~(7)~~ **(5) TOTAL 400 70 points**

8. Novice.

- a. For dogs which have not won 2 first places in Obedience classes (Introductory class, Pre-Beginners and Beginners excepted).
- b. The detailed tests will be:
  - (1) Heel on lead 20 points
  - (2) Heel free 25 points
  - (3) Recall 10 points
  - (4) Retrieve a dumbbell 15 points
  - ~~(5) Sit one minute, handler in sight 10 points~~
  - ~~(6) Down two minutes, handler in sight. 20 points~~
  - ~~(7)~~ **(5) TOTAL 400 70 points**

9. Class A.

- a. For dogs which have not won 3 first prizes in Class A, B and Open Class C in total.
- b. The detailed tests will be:
  - (1) Heel free 30 points
  - (2) Recall 15 points
  - (3) Retrieve a dumbbell, handlers will use their own dumbbell 25 points
  - ~~(4) Sit 2 minutes, handler in sight 20 points~~
  - ~~(5) Down 3 minutes, handler out of sight 30 points~~
  - ~~(6)~~ **(4) Scent discrimination. The handler's scent and no decoys. There must be a total of 6 scent cloths. 30 points**
  - ~~(7)~~ **(5) TOTAL 450 110 points**

10. Class B.

- a. For dogs which have not won 3 first prizes in Class B and Open Class C in total.
- b. The detailed tests will be:
  - (1) Heel work. The dog shall be required to walk at heel free and shall also be tested at fast and slow pace. Each change of pace shall commence from the halt position 40 points
  - (2) Send away, drop and recall. 40 points
  - (3) Retrieve any one article provided by the judge. 30 points
  - ~~(4) Sit 2 minutes, handler out of sight 20 points~~
  - ~~(5) Down 4 minutes, handler out of sight 30 points~~
  - ~~(6)~~ **(4) Scent discrimination. The handler's scent with one decoy. There must be a minimum of 6 and up to 10 scent cloths. 40 points**
  - ~~(7)~~ **(5) TOTAL 200 170 points**



11. Class C.

- a. For Championship Class C at Championship Shows, dogs must have won out of Novice, Class A and Class B 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.
- b. At open and premier shows, and in the Open C Classes held at championship shows, open to all dogs.
- c. At limited shows, open to all dogs except Obedience Certificate winners and dogs which have obtained any award that counts towards the title of Obedience Champion or the equivalent thereof under the rules of any governing body recognised by the Kennel Club.
- d. The detailed tests will be:
  - (1) Heel work. The dog shall be required to walk at heel free, and also be tested at fast and slow pace. The dog shall also be required, whilst walking to heel at normal pace, to be left at the stand, sit and down position. 60 points
  - (2) Send away, drop and recall. 40 points
  - (3) Retrieve any one article provided by the judge. 30 points
  - (4) Distant control. Dog to sit, stand and down. Six instructions to be given. 50 points
  - (5) ~~Sit 2 minutes, handler out of sight 20 points~~
  - (6) ~~Down 5 minutes, handler out of sight 50 points~~
  - (5) Scent discrimination. The judge's scent and one or more decoys. There must be a minimum of 6 and up to a maximum of 10 scent cloths. 50 points
  - (6) TOTAL ~~300~~ **230** points

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(C)1.c.

**TO:**

In all tests the left side of a handler will be regarded as the 'working side' unless:

- (1) the handler suffers from a physical disability and has the judge's permission to work the dog on the right hand side, ~~or~~
- (2) ~~the handler is working more than one dog in a stay exercise.~~

(Deletions struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(C)1.i.

**TO:**

Competitors in Championship Class C who have lost more marks than would enable them to qualify with ~~285~~ **215** marks at the conclusion of the judging may withdraw from the class with the judge's approval. The decision to withdraw is entirely at the discretion of the competitor and judges must not compel such competitors to withdraw.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(C)3.a.

**TO:**

Pre-Beginners, Beginners and Novice - ~~with the exception of the sit or down stay exercises,~~ the competitor shall be allowed to use as many commands and signals as necessary.

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2022)

Regulation G(C)4.h.

**TO:**

~~Stays in ALL classes - 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.~~



## THE KENNEL CLUB

~~These are group tests and all dogs must compete together, but where this is impracticable at 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.~~

- ~~(1) Sit stay: Dogs should remain in the sit position throughout the test. Barking, whining or minor movement such as sniffing the ground, shuffling or turning, without moving from the place where the dog was originally left, should not be considered to be a broken stay but may only be marked a nominal amount for minor movement or noise. Marks must be graduated in accordance with the Kennel Club's specimen stay chart.~~
- ~~(2) Down stay: Dogs should remain in the down position throughout the test. Barking, whining or minor movement such as sniffing the ground, shuffling, hip rolling or turning, without moving from the place where the dog was originally left, should not be considered to be a broken stay but may only be marked a nominal amount for minor movement or noise. Marks must be graduated in accordance with the Kennel Club's specimen stay chart.~~
- ~~(3) All classes: When a handler has more than one dog present in the same set of stays, the dogs may be placed together on the left hand side of the handler, or on either side of the handler; at the choice of the handler. It should be noted that the dogs must be placed apart with a reasonable space between them. At the conclusion of the stays, the handler should return to the same position they were in at the commencement of the test before the end of the test is indicated.~~
- ~~(4) The timing of the stays shall commence when the handlers have been instructed to leave their dogs.~~

~~(Deletions struck through)~~

~~(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)~~

~~(Effective 1 January 2022)~~