



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL
HELD AT 10.30 AM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2025**

PRESENT

Mr B Gilbert	ASPADS Working Trials Society
Ms F McKenzie	Association of Bloodhound Breeders
Mr C Taylor	British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Mrs D Ling	East Anglian Working Trials Society
Ms J McOuat	East Riding Working Trials Society
Mrs P Bann	Essex Working Trials Society
Mrs J Howells	Hampshire Working Trials Society
Mrs S Wright	Iceni Working Trials Club
Mr J Wykes	Leamington Dog Training Club
Mr N Hines	Lincolnshire German Shepherd Dog and All Breeds Training Society (until paragraph 35)
Mrs L Newbold	Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association (until paragraph 49)
Miss J Carruthers	North East Counties Working Trials Society
Mrs C Davis	North West Working Trials Society
Mrs L Cottier	Scottish Working Trials Society
Mrs L Marlow	Southern Alsatian Training Society (from paragraph 13)
Mrs J Wood	Surrey Dog Training Society (until paragraph 49)
Mrs S Haim	Wessex Working Trials Club
Mr D Marchant	Yorkshire Working Trials Society

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Senior Manager Canine Activities
Miss A Morley	Activities Liaison Manager
Mrs E Osborne	Agility, Working Trials and Heelwork to Music Liaison Advisor
Mrs S Garner	Activities Committee Chair (until paragraph 22)
Mr G Martin	Activities Committee Vice Chair (until paragraph 22)

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

IN THE CHAIR:

MR C TAYLOR

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Mr N Sutcliffe was not in attendance.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

3. Following the resignation of Mrs J Holt, the Council noted the following replacement:
4. Mrs C Davis – North West Working Trials Society
5. Mrs Davis was welcomed to her first meeting.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting held on 18 November 2024, approved the following amendments to regulations:

Regulation I(B)2

TO:

Heel work – The judge should test the ability of the dog to keep its shoulder reasonably close to the left knee of the handler who should walk smartly in a natural manner of normal, fast and slow paces through turns and among and around persons and obstacles. The halt, with the dog sitting to heel and a “figure of eight” may be included at any stage. Extra commands shall be permitted in the introductory and CD stakes.

Any act, signal or command by jerking of the lead which in the opinion of the Judge has given the dog unfair assistance shall be penalised.

Where required the lead must be attached to a close fitting smooth collar.

Retractable leads or head collars are not to be used. In TD And PD stakes, at some time during the test, while working at a normal pace, the dog shall be required to be left in the down position when directed by the judge. The handler shall continue forward alone, without hesitation, and proceed as directed by the judge until upon reaching the dog, **when the dog is on the handler’s left hand side and both handler and dog are facing in the same direction**, both shall continue forward together in accordance with the instruction given.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation I(B)8

TO:

‘Speak on command’ – In TD and PD, the number of barks is at the judge’s discretion and after the cease “speaking” the handler may be instructed to make the dog speak again. “Speaking” should be sustained by the dog with the minimum of commands and/or signals. Continuous and/or excessive incitements to “speak” must be heavily penalised. This test must not be incorporated with any other test.

The judge will control the position of the handler in relation to the dog. In UD Stake and WD Stake, this position should be near and in sight of the dog. **The handler may place the dog** The dog may be in the stand, sit or down.

In TD and PD, the handler may be required to work the dog walking at heel. If the dog is not required to walk at heel, the handler may place the dog in the stand, sit or down.

In UD the number of barks should be 5, in WD the number of barks should be 10.

(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through.)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation I26.c

TO: A person approved to judge a Championship Working Trial Certificate stake may not judge the same stake within a period of six **four** calendar months. The relevant date being the last day of each trial.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

7. A query was raised regarding dogs placed into positions for the ‘speak on command’ and whether it was needed to confirm the dogs should stay in position. The office confirmed that the only change was regarding the clarification that the handler would choose the position the dog, not the judge, but if further changes to wording was sought it could be brought forward as a proposal at the next meeting.
8. The Council noted the amendment to regulation I1.c regarding the minimum age of dogs entered Not For Competition. This had been recommended by the Obedience Liaison Council. The Activities Committee agreed that the regulation amendment should be recommended for approval across all activity disciplines.

Regulation I1.c

TO:

c. Dogs under 18 calendar months of age on the closing date are ineligible for competition at Kennel Club licensed working trials, except that dogs of 6 calendar months of age on the closing date of the trial may be entered for Special Stakes, which do not include the long jump, clear jump and scale. Bloodhounds may be entered for Bloodhound Trials at 12 calendar months on the first day of the trial. However, societies may accept Not for Competition entries at their discretion. Dogs four months and over are eligible to enter Not For Competition. **Dogs 12 weeks and over are eligible to enter Not for Competition.**

(Effective 1 January 2025)

9. The following regulations, suggested by the office, were noted by the Council and related to when an appeal would be permitted, and to provide further clarity when handler information may be required.

Regulation I20

TO:

Penalties

The Board shall have power to impose any of the following penalties upon any person for any breach of Royal Kennel Club Regulations subject to a right of appeal, notice of intention of which must be lodged within 14 days from the date on which the decision is given and subject to the prescribed appeals process as shall be determined by the Board from time to time.

- a. Warn
- b. Censure/Reprimand
- c. Apology directive (Conduct Regulation or the Control of Dog Regulation)
- d. Fine
- e. Award disqualified

In addition, the Board may make the following directives;

- f. A dog's registration record may be marked 'incident recorded'
- g. A dog's registration record may be endorsed 'not eligible for entry in any event held under Royal Kennel Club Rules and Regulations, nor any unlicensed event recognised by the Royal Kennel Club.'

The right of appeal against directives f) and g) listed above extends to an appeal on the finding of fact of a deliberate dog bite only, but does not extend to an appeal against those directives f) and g) in terms of cancellation or modification of such directives if there is a finding of fact of an intentional dog bite.

In the event of any fine not being paid, or non compliance with any apology directive issued within the time stipulated by the Board, then that person may, at the discretion of the Board, be dealt with as if a complaint under Royal Kennel Club Rule A11 had been lodged and proved to the satisfaction of the Board.

For complaints of conduct whether at a licensed event or on social media, in addition to a warning issued - a short term fixed period of refusal of entry/attendance at Royal Kennel Club licensed events may also be imposed in accordance with procedures to be published from time to time to implement this regulation.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation I29

TO:

The owner, exhibitor, handler or other person in charge of a dog at Royal Kennel Club licensed events must at all times ensure that the dog is kept

under proper control whilst at the licensed venue, including its environs, car and caravan parks and approaches. This Regulation applies before (at any time during the set up period at the venue), during the event and afterwards (at any time during the breakdown of the event). The mating of bitches within the precincts of the competition, as stipulated above, is forbidden

An exhibitor or competitor should ensure that contact details for any handler are available and must be provided upon request in any investigation of a breach of this regulation by such handler.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation I30.c

TO:

No person shall carry out punitive correction or harsh handling of a dog at any time within the precincts of the show **whilst at the licensed venue, including its environs, car and caravan parks and approaches.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

10. The Council noted that the proposal to have the outcome of votes recorded in the minutes to show how representatives had voted was not supported by the Committee.
11. The Committee felt that each representative was nominated by a Championship Working Trials Society, however that person was also there to represent a number of Open trial societies and take on their views for each proposal. Discussions at Council may also provide evidence to formulate the final decision.
12. The Council noted that the amendment to regulation I(C)1. Bloodhound Working Trial Certificates to revert the regulation to previous wording, removing the 200-yard rule and allowing handlers to choose whether to hunt their hounds free or leashed, unless instructed by the farmer to leash in fields with livestock was not supported by the Committee.
13. Clarification was sought from the Council on the regulation added for penalties and the right of appeal. The office confirmed that this related to dogs that had been banned from competition following serious dog bite incidents and that competitors could not appeal if there was conclusive evidence of a dog bite.

Mrs Marlow joined the meeting.

ITEM 5. WORKING TRIAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

14. The Council received a presentation from Mr Martin and Mrs Garner regarding an update on the status of the Working Trial Championships.

15. Mr Martin reiterated that there was potential for changes in future years, including to the organising team, track layers and stewards due to people's personal commitments, and that any input from the council would be welcomed.
16. The Council noted that the panel of organisers was made up of Mr G Martin, Mr C Taylor, Mr B Gilbert, Mr N Hines, Mrs P Bann, Ms M Taylor, Mrs L Newbold and Mr K Bryan. It was also noted that as Mr Gilbert had qualified for the championship himself, he would be taking a lesser role in the organisation of the event for 2025.
17. The Council noted that the venue for the 2025 Working Trials Championships would be Thorseby Park, Newark, Nottingham. A query was raised about this, and it was acknowledged that the venue and cafés were open to the public and could often get busy. It was confirmed by Mr Martin that the time of year the championships were held was much quieter, there was no public access through the tracking fields and that additional catering staff would be provided. It was also acknowledged by the Council that the public nature of the venue may create additional interest in Working Trials with the potential to bring in more people to the discipline.
18. The Council discussed the tracking exercises and whether TD and PD could be done separately and across 2 days so people could watch both. It was noted that this was being looked into and that the two would be separate and slightly set apart. The issue of dogs being in both stakes was raised and it was suggested that this had previously been addressed by having TD on Thursday and PD on Friday. This was noted by the organising team and would be confirmed closer to the time.
19. A query was raised about the Saturday dinner and if there was a cutoff point in the evening or if the option to stay for a social occasion was available. It was confirmed that a bar was available with the possibility to stay longer, and that various local facilities, including a pub, were available that could be utilised afterwards. This led to a discussion on accommodation and a variety of venues were suggested which included an Air B'n'B on site, lodges and hotels. It was noted that one of the closest hotels did not currently accept dogs but that the organising team were in discussion with the hotel regarding the matter.
20. The Council noted that the venue was a livestock farm and, as such, there was no shooting on the estate, so this was unlikely to disturb the event.
21. Mr Martin asked the Council to confirm donations of £100 as soon as possible and a deadline of 28 February 2025 was suggested for societies.
22. The office confirmed that a public announcement on social media would be made regarding the event.

23. Mr Martin gave thanks to Mrs Bann for her part in producing the presentation and the Council thanked Mr Martin, Mrs Garner and everyone involved in the organisation of the event.

Mr Martin and Mrs Garner left the meeting.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

24. The Council noted the report from the Activities Judges Sub-Group's meeting
25. A brief discussion was had on the report and the aspect of judges taking into account the stakes they were judging and what they would do as a progression when judging the lower stakes. It was acknowledged that in some cases, judges were setting tests in the lower stakes without considering their options for improvement as the dogs moved up through the higher stakes.
26. It was noted that this was an educational issue and not something that could be directly addressed by the Judges Sub-Group. It was suggested that this may need to be something addressed on social media or directly with trials managers and judges.

ITEM 7. COUNCIL STRATEGY DOCUMENT

27. The Council reviewed the strategy document.
28. The Council noted that the Beginners Guide leaflet mentioned in the Strategy Document was due to be circulated at Crufts, but a question was raised as to whether this would also be available at Stoneleigh. The office confirmed that this would be addressed with the Stoneleigh team following the meeting.
29. It was queried whether there were any volunteers to take over the Council Strategy Document. The office confirmed it would need to be someone who sat on the Council but no volunteers came forward. A discussion was had on the expectations of someone as a volunteer for the role and it was noted that the majority felt they volunteered and helped with a lot of aspects of Working Trials already and would not be able to take on additional tasks at the current time.
30. After some discussion it was decided that the Council Strategy Document was to remain, as it was likely that some changes would be made to the Council moving forward which could see additional volunteers for the role.

ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE PD STAKE PANEL

31. The Council noted a written report from the panel.

Proposed amendment to regulation I.27.f

32. The Council considered an amendment to the above regulation to ensure the exercise remained that of search and escort and not of sendaways and redirections. Mr Marchant proposed, and Mrs Ling seconded the proposal.
33. It was suggested that the amendment would create a more entertaining exercise, which may be easier to judge and would encourage people to train harder for the exercise.
34. A question was raised about whether the change would apply to Open or Championship events and the office confirmed that, due to where the regulation sat, it would apply to all trials.
35. The Council acknowledged that this could have caused issues for those with more than one dog, even if one dog was withdrawn. An amendment was suggested, by Mrs Cottier, seconded by Mr Taylor that if a handler had more than one dog to work in the Patrol round then a lockout was not permitted.
36. Following a vote on the amended proposal, the majority were in agreement and the following amendment was recommended by the Council.

Regulation I.27.f

TO:

Lockouts are ~~not permitted for any of the Patrol exercises~~ **permitted for the Quartering the ground and Search and Escort exercises only**. There must be a run through of the complete Patrol test **except the Quartering the ground and Search and Escort exercise (if there is a Lockout of those exercises)** in the presence of the competitors before judging of the Patrol exercises commences. **If a handler has more than one dog to work in the patrol round section of the stake, then a lockout is not permitted.**

Mr Hines apologised and left the meeting for a personal appointment.

ITEM 9. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT AND PROGRESSION PANEL

37. The Council noted a written report from the panel.
38. Mrs Cottier and Mrs Bann expressed their wish to stand down from the panel. Both felt they had exhausted all options but could revisit in future if required.
39. A discussion was had about previous negative decisions regarding some of the proposals when they came before the Council, and it was felt that some of those could have potentially progressed the discipline. It was noted that there was potential for previous proposals to come back to discussion now that there were some new members on the Council and further opportunities may arise when changes were made to the council.

ITEM 10. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

40. The Council noted that no items were received from societies/private individuals.

ITEM 11. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Scottish Working Trials Society (SWTS)

41. Mrs Cottier requested the Council discuss the difficulties faced by The Scottish Working Trials Society when organising trials, including low entry numbers, which could have an impact on the future of Working Trials in Scotland.
42. Mrs Cottier confirmed that they were trying to improve the situation by providing monthly training sessions, displays to dog clubs and a new onboarding system for those coming into the society.
43. The Council noted that some felt this was a larger problem throughout Working Trials as a whole. Travel costs, lack of available land for competitions and lack of training space were all suggested as contributing factors, and it was acknowledged that some trials had been cancelled due to a lack of entries.
44. The Council acknowledged that training on weekdays was not always possible for those in full time employment and that this may have been a contributing factor in the lack of entries at some events. Mrs Marlow confirmed that the Southern Alsatian Training Society was running a popular Saturday training session with a good uptake and those that attended had been progressing well because of it.
45. It was acknowledged that the East Anglian Working Trials Society had a nominated member who was responsible for obtaining sponsorship and creating publicity for the society and that it could be beneficial for other societies to do the same.
46. There was a suggestion that accommodation and costs had also been a contributing factor in the lack of entries at some trials and that an increase in one day stakes may improve the situation. Mrs Davis confirmed that North West Working Trials Society was due to hold its first one day trial in February and had a good uptake with 33 confirmed entries.
47. The Council noted the 'have a go' Working Trials display at Crufts would be filmed and that this would include audience participation to encourage interest in the discipline.

ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

48. Mrs Marlow apologised for missing the beginning of the meeting but queried the Committee's decision to reject the proposal for the outcome of votes to be recorded in the minutes. It was confirmed by those that sat on the Activities Committee that the votes of the Working Trials representatives had not changed since the previous Council meeting. However, it was acknowledged that the Committee was made up of representatives from other disciplines, who had concerns about the proposal, and that the proposal was rejected by the majority.
49. It was noted that the Working Trials Jump Research now fell under the remit of the Health Advisory Group and that funding was not in place for further research to be done. However, it was confirmed that private funding had been secured, dates were to be confirmed but it was predicted that the research would be launched in Spring. The Council acknowledged that volunteers would be required in the Chelmsford area and that local clubs would be contacted closer to the time.
50. Mrs Ling raised that she had previously volunteered for the now disbanded Activities Health and Welfare Subgroup. The office confirmed that this was now covered by the Health Department and meetings were not held regularly, but that Mrs Ling's name had been put forward as the contact for Working Trials when needed.

Ms Wood and Mrs Newbold left the meeting.

ITEM 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

51. The Council noted that the date of its next meeting would be 5 June 2025. Proposals for inclusion on the agenda should reach the Working Trials Liaison Council Secretary by 7 March 2025.
52. The meeting closed at 12.40pm.

THE KENNEL CLUB'S STRATEGIC AIMS

- *Champion the wellbeing of dogs*
- *Safeguard and enhance the future of pedigree dogs, addressing breed-associated health issues*
- *Protect the future of dog activities together with our grassroots network*
- *Become relevant to more dog owners to increase our impact*
- *Deliver an excellent member experience and widen our community*
- *Ensure we are financially secure and sustainable*