



**MEETING OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
TUESDAY 31 MAY 2022 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET - AGENDA**

ITEM 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL

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

**ITEM 3. TO ELECT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FIELD TRIALS
COMMITTEE FOR THE VARIOUS SUB GROUPS EFFECTIVE
FROM JUNE 2022 TO MAY 2025**

**ITEM 4. PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL ON KENNEL CLUB
STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES**

ITEM 5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

**ITEM 6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18
AUGUST 2021**

The Council is requested to approve the minutes of the meeting.
(Annex A refers)

**ITEM 7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND
RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE FIELD
TRIALS COMMITTEE (RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS)**

- a. The Council is invited to note the Results of Recommendations document.
(Annex B refers)
- b. Handlers with more than one dog
As noted within the 'Results of Recommendations' document, after careful consideration, the Field Trials Committee acknowledged that there was a growing issue in relation to handlers with more than one dog. However, it was unclear as to the extent of the issue, as no statistical evidence had been presented.

Accordingly, it was suggested that such evidence, based on draws for Open stakes, should be gathered for further discussion by the Committee.

The matter was discussed by the Field Trials Committee at its meeting on 9 February 2022. Noting that there were still concerns within the field trial community regarding the 'one handler one dog' issue, it was agreed that alternative ways of addressing the



issue, such as ensuring that clubs had stringent membership application processes in place as suggested by the Council, would be considered further by the Committee.

An update will be provided to the Council in due course.

- c. Dogs entered at more than one trial on the same day.
The Council discussed the practice whereby an owner would enter and accept a run for two dogs on the same day at two different trials, in order to maximise their chance of getting a run. Some owners had reciprocal arrangements with others, in which one owner would run their own dog as well as a dog belonging to the other, at the same trial. It was of the view that this was not considered to be within the spirit of the discipline and wished to refer this matter to the Committee for its views on how this matter may be addressed.

As noted within the 'Results of Recommendations' document, the Committee suggested that this matter be considered together with the issue of handlers with more than one dog and agreed that it would be examined further at such time as the statistical evidence was available.

The matter was considered by the Field Trials Committee but no firm conclusion has as yet been reached. An update will be provided to the Council when it was possible to do so.

ITEM 8. USE OF FIREARMS

The Council is invited to receive a presentation from Mr S Jenkinson (Access and Countryside Advisor to the Kennel Club) on legal issues relating to the use of firearms during Kennel Club licensed events.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

- a. Midland Gundog Society Mr S Richardson
Proposed amendment to Regulation J5.c.(6)
The Society wishes to propose the following amendment:

Regulation J5.c.(6)

TO:

Before a judge can ~~be added to a Panel~~ **accept an invitation for a judging appointment** he must have attended a Kennel Club Judge's Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and have passed the examination. With effect from 2 February ~~2023~~ **2025** ~~to remain on a judging Panel~~ all judges must have attended a Kennel Club Judge's Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and must have passed the examination, unless the judge has 'Grandfather rights' (see note).

(Note: Judges deemed to have "Grandfather rights" and who are therefore exempt from Regulation J5.c.(6) are: judges who were appointed to the 'A' Panel or the 'B' Panel prior to 1 January 2010, and / or were involved in the pilot scheme for the judges training programme and / or those who are, or have been a Kennel Club Approved Presenter).

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)



Rationale

The society is of the view that all judges must have a good understanding of the J Regulations prior to accepting a judging appointment.

Field trial secretaries would have the responsibility of checking that before a person is invited to judge a trial for the first time, they have passed The Kennel Club judges' training programme J Regulations examination before accepting the invitation (as stated in the judging contract). Once that person has judged their first trial, the Kennel Club will issue their judging number. Therefore, it follows that anyone with a judging number must have passed the examination. Non-panel judges who already have judging numbers will have until 2 February 2025 to pass the examination.

The Kennel Club's field trials department already maintains a register of those who have passed the examination, therefore it should be possible for Kennel Club staff to check this register prior to issuing judging numbers.

Note: a discussion item on a related issue appears on the agenda under item 10.b and it is suggested that the two items be considered together.

- b. Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society Ms S Whyte
Minimum number of retrieves at a Retriever stake

The Society would like the Council to discuss setting a minimum number of retrieves at Retriever stakes, which would be required before a winner is declared.

New Regulation J(B)7.d.(8)

TO:

**At a one day trial there should be a minimum of 6 retrieves, and for a two day trial, a minimum of 7 retrieves. Only in exceptional circumstances should a dog be allowed to win on fewer retrieves.
(Insertion in bold)**

Note: the Society is happy for the proposed new regulation to be placed elsewhere within the J regulations if considered appropriate, for example as a new regulation J(B)3.

Rationale

Years ago it was standard practice to have eight or nine retrieves at a Retriever trial to find a winner. In more recent times, five retrieves has become the custom and practice. However, the Society knows of at least one open stake that has been won on four retrieves, and a number of novice trials on four retrieves.

Rather than advising judges on the number of retrieves that should be given, the Society would like to suggest that a regulation be introduced which states a minimum number.

Should the minimum number of retrieves not be achieved, the field trial secretary would have to notify The Kennel Club, when confirming the result, and the judges would have to also submit a report with the reasons as to why the minimum number had not been achieved.

With concerns over the standard of dogs running in trials and the number of entries in Opens, a definite minimum number of retrieves would ensure that the dog winning the trial had been tested and observed, and that the standard was sufficiently high.



ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Mr P Smith

Award of an eye wipe at Retriever trials

Note: this item originally appeared on the agenda for the Council's meeting on 18 August 2021, but as Mr P Smith was unable to attend the meeting, he requested that his discussion item be withdrawn from the agenda, and included on the agenda for the Council's next meeting.

Mr Smith notes that there is considerable confusion about what constitutes an 'eye wipe', and seeks clarification from the Council. He is of the view that, given that the award of an eye wipe to a competing dog can significantly affect the final placings in a Trial, absolute clarity is necessary.

Mr Smith also points out that there is only one reference to the subject, as it applies to the retrieve of a runner, in the current J Regulations – Regulation J(A)4.(h). This states:

'If a dog is performing indifferently on a runner, it must be called up promptly. If more dogs are tried on the runner, the work of all these dogs must be assessed in relation to the order in which they are tried. The handlers of the second and subsequent dogs down may be allowed to take their dogs towards the fall, as may the handler of the first dog if it has not had a chance to mark the game. Game picked by the second or a subsequent dog constitutes an 'eye wipe'. Dogs which have had their eyes wiped during the body of the stake, however it may have occurred, will be discarded. All eye wipes should be treated on their merits.'

Further information is also contained in the seminar script for Retriever field trial judges, as follows:

'Dogs should be called up promptly wherever they are performing indifferently, be it on a runner or on game thought to be dead.'

There are different types of eye wipes, for example, game-finding eye wipes where a dog goes to an area previously worked by another dog and either finds the game or takes a line and picks a runner, and that where a dog picks game which other dogs have tried and failed to reach. While there are distinctions to be drawn between the game-finding eye wipe and those that are more dependent on handling, it is not correct to diminish the eye wipe on the basis that the dog picked game because it could be handled easily to hunt an area in which it found the game when others could not. This must be distinguished from over handling. There is also the technical eye wipe which is achieved behind a dog of no merit and is graded simply on the retrieve itself.

Except in a run-off, where a dog has its eye wiped by another dog sent by the judges, or by the judges themselves, it should be eliminated from the Trial. '

Whilst the example used is for Retrievers, the same confusion exists across all breeds that retrieve.

Mr Smith is of the view that there should be absolute clarity across all guidance.

b. Labrador Retriever Club

Mrs F Joint

Experience required for judges

With the intention of improving an aspiring judge's experience of how field trials are organised and judged, the Labrador Retriever Club requests the Council to consider the following:



- (i) Before accepting a judging appointment of a Retriever Stake as a non-panel judge, a person must have attended a Kennel Club Judges' Training Programme Seminar on The Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and have passed the examination. When signing the letter of acceptance of the appointment, the non-panel judge could be asked to provide evidence to the Field Trial Secretary, for example, a copy of The Kennel Club's letter informing them that they had passed.

Rationale

The panel judge and the competitor need to be confident that non-panel judges have an understanding of the organisation and procedures during a trial and the rules that must or can be applied, as well as being confident they will be applied.

- (ii) Before accepting a first judging appointment, and to improve the aspiring judge's experience of how field trials are organised and judged, a person should have volunteered and actively helped at a minimum of six field trials over a minimum period of 2 years and not just have competed in trials.

Rationale

This would simply bring field trial judging requirements into line with other Kennel Club disciplines, for example Shows where a judge has to have had experience of stewarding before being appointed to judge - see 'Judge requirements and eligibility'

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media-centre/2020/february/judge-requirements-and-eligibility-announced/>

- c. Cornwall Field Trial Society Mrs M Cox
Issue of schedules and entry forms
The society would like the Council to discuss the way in which clubs and societies send their schedules and entry forms to their members, and how it can be made more uniform and fairer for the members.

The Kennel Club states quite clearly that schedules and entry forms must be available to all members. It appears that not all clubs are complying with this guidance. The society does not consider it acceptable for a schedule to be placed on a club's website with the expectation that competitors will have to search for it, nor is it acceptable to email members and tell them to go to the website and download it.

The society is of the view that too many members are missing out on trials due to schedules not being sent, and the society wishes to remind clubs that not everyone has access to a computer/internet connection or knowledge of how to obtain online information.

- d. Cornwall Field Trial Society Mrs M Cox
Acceptance of entries

The society notes that there are various ways in which entries may be accepted by clubs, for example, by post, email, via FTMS or Fosse Data. It is of the view that there are drawbacks to some online methods, such as administrative issues or costs, and some competitors may not wish to enter via these means.

The society is concerned that some clubs do not accept postal entries. Others are reluctant to accept entries by post, and are making administrative charges of up to £5 for those wishing to do so, which the society considers to be a discriminatory practice.



It therefore wishes to suggest that it should be mandatory for clubs to accept entries by post.

Further, although the imposition of administrative fees does not contravene Kennel Club regulations, the society wishes to discuss whether it is acceptable for clubs to do so, effectively charging a higher entry fee to those not using online entry methods.

- e. **Note:** the two following discussion items are very similar in nature and have been grouped together for consideration together:

Flatcoated Retriever Society

Ms H Ford

Publication of regulation clarifications

The Society requests that the Council discuss its suggestion that the J Regulation clarifications published in the Field Trials Newsletter should also be reproduced as an appendix within the J Regulations booklet.

Rationale

Rule changes are published in an appendix annually in the J Regulations booklet, but rule clarifications and interpretations of the regulations which are only published in the Kennel Club's Field Trial newsletters are equally important. Not all judges receive these clarifications, and the society is of the view that publishing them as an appendix to the J Regulations would bring them to the attention of all, which would benefit judges and handlers alike.

Midland Gundog Society

Mr S Richardson

Addition of guidance to J Regulations booklet

The society wishes to suggest that guidance on the interpretation of regulations, which is already published in various Kennel Club Field Trial newsletters, should be added to the back of the J Regulations booklet as appendices.

Rationale

It is clear that many judges (including those on the panels) are not familiar with some of the guidance issued in the Newsletters, such as correct sending orders. Items to be included would be decided upon by the Field Trials Committee.

- f. Yorkshire Gundog Club

Mr S Capstick

Substitute dogs

The club wishes the Council to discuss the difference between a substitute dog and a 2nd dog. It notes that over the last few years it has started to become common practice for members to alter the entry form and replace '2nd dog' with the wording 'substitute dog'. This is confusing to secretaries and the Club seeks clarification as to whether members may alter the entry form in this way.

It is unclear as to whether a field trial secretary should put a substitute dog as a 2nd dog in the draw or leave it out of the draw altogether. The club also seeks clarification as to whether, if a dog is on the entry form as a substitute dog, the member may run a different substitute which is not on the form.

- g. Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire Gundog Society

Mr S Capstick

Wrong retrieves at Retriever trials

The society would like the Council to discuss the provision of further guidance/clarification as to the correct procedure in respect of 'wrong retrieves' in relation to Retrievers.



Rationale

The society notes that the J Regulations clearly state that for Spaniels and HPRs, picking the wrong retrieve is an eliminating fault. However, this rule also appears to be applied by some judges in relation to Retrievers, therefore clarification is sought as to how a 'wrong retrieve' is defined and under what circumstances a dog should be eliminated specifically in respect to Retrievers. In the following examples, the society is of the view that the dog has done nothing wrong and should not be penalised should it collect something that was in the same area that the dog was sent to:

- Where a dog has been sent for a hen pheasant and comes back with a partridge when it has been working out of sight of the judges
- Where a dog has been sent for a running bird in a block of maize and it returns with a cold stiff bird
- Where a dog has been sent for a rabbit and picks a pheasant in the same area

However, some judges are eliminating dogs in such cases and are therefore insinuating that if a dog picks something other than the retrieve it is sent for it should be eliminated. The society wishes for further guidance to be supplied to judges by The Kennel Club advising on the correct procedure in such circumstances.

The society acknowledges that, for example, where a dog is sent for a retrieve for two birds shot and a bird to the left is nominated but the dog pulls right and ignores the handler and picks the right-hand bird, that dog has committed a fault and could be eliminated from the trial.

- h. Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society Ms S Whyte
Exceptional Circumstances - Odds & Evens

The society would like the Council to discuss exceptional circumstances with regards to odds and evens, and the order of the dogs when the trial has multiple handlers.

Rationale

Regulation J(B)3(c) states 'Whether the trial is run in numerical order or split in *exceptional circumstances* dogs must not come into line in the second round under the same judges as in the first round.'

The Society seeks clarification as to what would constitute an exceptional circumstance when dogs are split under the odds and evens system.

Further, it seeks guidance as how dogs should be split within the odds and evens system where a trial has one or more multiple handlers, and those handlers have both an odd and an even numbered dog. It also wishes to know the reason that the odds and evens system could not be used on the second day of an open trial.

- i. Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society Mr J Bailey
Use of cold game on trial grounds and at Gundog Working Tests

The society wishes the Council to discuss the use of cold game on trial grounds and at Gundog Working Tests (GWTs).

Rationale

- Competitors have sometimes been observed using cold game to give dogs 'warm up' retrieves at trial grounds ahead of the trial.
- Competitors have also been observed occasionally taking game from the game cart (including when the dog has been eliminated) and using it for retrieves to give the dog experience, particularly on game species such as snipe, woodcock, hare etc
- The use of a significant amount of cold game at working tests, as such game may be undesirable for eating after being used for multiple retrieves



The society is of the view those participating in field trials and GWTs must be mindful of initiatives such as Countryside Alliance's 'game to eat' campaign and the British Game Assurance, which promotes game as a food source. The BASC Code of Good Shooting Practices reminds participants that game is food and must always be treated as such. The use of game (particularly a significant volume of game at GWTs) as a mere retrieving article seems to run counter to this ethos and is hard to justify.

Appropriate respect must be shown to shot game, as well as to hosts and keepers at field trials, who expect dogs at field trials to be sufficiently experienced and trained so as not to warrant practising on game either before, during or after the trial at trial grounds. Further, The Kennel Club's Code of Best Practice for Field Trial competitors – Retrievers states 'Handlers and dogs must have had plenty of experience picking warm freshly shot game'.

The society therefore requests:

- that competitors at field trials be advised within The Kennel Club's Code of Best Practice that using cold or freshly shot game to give dogs retrieves whilst on the trial ground is inappropriate
- that clubs holding GWTs on cold game be asked to consider whether this is an appropriate use of such a volume of game, particularly in the present day in light of the initiatives noted above

In discussing this matter, the Society wishes to draw the attention of the Council to the following Kennel Club points of reference:

- Field Trial J Regulations do not make any reference to participants utilising cold game during field trials (nor should it be necessary for them to do so)
- Gundog Working Test Regulation J(G)1.a states 'Cold game and dummies may be used at the discretion of the organisers' (Regulation J(G)3.g also refers)

j. South Western Golden Retriever Society Ms H Ford
Use of a judge's stick

The society would like the Council to discuss whether, during the course of a field trial (principally driven); the use of a judge's stick in the ground to show the whereabouts of a bird for retrieval and the close proximity of the judge to the bird, should be severely discouraged, except in exceptional circumstances.

Rationale

Many judges when searching for a bird on open ground or fields find the bird and then place their stick in the ground, rather than pointing out the area to their fellow sending judge and handler where it is, using natural items like hedges or trees as the reference point, and then moving well away.

The society is of the view that the use of a stick and the closeness of the judge turns the retrieve into a working test situation, and for many dogs the stick acts as an aid to finding the retrieve. Such actions have been seen at open, all aged and novice trials, leading to adverse comments by some observers, and in one instance, by a shoot owner.

The society considers that a field trial should be as close to a shooting day as possible and if game finding is of principal importance as stated in the J regulations, then the use of sticks should play no part in it.



In addition, in novice and all aged trials it is invariably the panel judge looking for the bird/s as the non-panel is sending; this creates the wrong impression on the less experienced judge.

- k. Weimaraner Association Mr N Wroe
Appointment of judges for the Hunt, Point and Retrieve Championship

The association wishes to suggest that the Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPR) open field trial status societies, which are entitled to representation on the Council, and which are expected to partially fund the HPR Championship through the levy, should be permitted a role in the choice of suitable A Panel judges to judge, or to be reserve judges for a subsequent HPR Championship.

Rationale

The continuing success of the HPR Championship, and the efficient and effective management of the day and all of the logistical preparations preceding the day, is testament to the good offices of The Kennel Club and the relevant working parties. This is undeniable and has been the case since the resumption under direct Kennel Club control of the HPR Championship. There is however, where participation of the HPR trialling community is concerned, a significant deficit in that the open HPR status clubs, whilst partially funding the event via the annual championship levy, are not offered any formal process by which they may nominate judges to officiate. Granting such clubs this opportunity is one step along the way to greater transparency of the process, and is a fair, just, and necessary step.

There is some ongoing speculation that judges might be chosen in the future by selective canvassing of an unspecified body of triallers, or even via officers of clubs with no such open status, on an informal basis. In the absence of any transparency a call is made for the Council to bring about an open and transparent nomination process, and ideally codify the process by vesting the nomination process in the open status clubs, going forward.

- l. Dukeries (Notts) Gundog Club Mrs M Asbury
Nomination of judges for The Kennel Club's Hunt, Point and Retrieve Championship

The Club wishes the Council to discuss a request from the HPR group to have a bigger input in the nomination of future judges for The Kennel Club's Hunt, Point and Retrieve Championship. The clubs holding Open Stakes would like to be invited to nominate two A Panel Judges to a short list to be considered by the Championship Working Party. The nominated Judges should have at least 3 years A Panel experience before the date of the Championship and, once an appointment is accepted, the chosen judges should decline judging an Open Stake from the time of appointment so as not to be putting dogs forward that may run under them in the Championship. This would bring HPRs into line with arrangements for the Spaniel group. The HPR Championship was reinstated eight years ago (2013) and this request resulted from recent 'grass roots' conferences and consultation with several Field Trial Clubs that hold Open Stakes who felt it was time to allow this move.

ITEM 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Council is invited to note that the next meeting will take place in June 2023. The exact date will be confirmed in due course.



ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

THIS WILL BE TAKEN AT THE CHAIRMAN'S DISCRETION

Please give at least three weeks' advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the office if research is required.

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.**