

**MEETING OF THE KENNEL CLUB AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
22 JANUARY 2015 AT 10.30AM IN THE BOARDROOM AT CLARGES STREET**

AGENDA

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2014 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The Council is invited to note that at its meeting on 7 October 2014, the General Committee approved the following changes to the regulations, with effect from 1 January 2015:
 - (i) Amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)4. – Standard Class Equipment
 - (ii) Amendment to Regulation H(1)10.e. (Competing) – the use of mobility aids and the carrying of food
 - (iii) Amendment to Regulation H(1)(D)9.e. – use of silent toys
 - (iv) Insertion of new Regulation H(1)(B)5.(22)(Marking) – traversing of equipment

- b. Recognition of Agility as a sport
At its meeting on 22 January 2014 the Council had requested the Kennel Club to re-approach the Sports Council to ascertain the eligibility criteria for official recognition so that the option could be considered in the future. The General Committee supported such an approach being made but the Council is requested to note that the previous application had been unsuccessful as the Sports Council would only recognise the achievements of people and not dogs. The Council is therefore requested to formulate a proposal which would allow for handlers to attain Champion status within agility so that a suitable approach could be made to the Sports Council.

- c. Development of Kennel Club Agility – Formation of Working Party
The Council is invited to note a verbal report on the progress of the proposed Working Party whose remit would be to develop a business case for a results database.

ITEM 4. CANINE ACTIVITIES IT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Council is invited to receive a presentation from the office regarding proposed IT improvements for Canine Activities with particular reference as to how the following

processes would be streamlined/adapted as the Kennel Club becomes ever more electronic:

Guarantors
Annual Returns
Online Payment Options
'E-Licence'
Online Applications for new activity types

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL

To receive a verbal report from the Equipment Panel regarding any issues which had been referred to it.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

- a. The Council is invited to note a report from Mr S Croxford on the progress of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group following a meeting on 29 October 2014.
(Annex A refers)
- b. Use of slatted surfaces
The Sub-Group had considered whether injuries were being caused by slatted surfaces. It accepted that there was no specific data available regarding injuries caused by slats but wished to request that the Council consider the feasibility of asking equipment suppliers to manufacture equipment using rounded-off slats as it was of the view that if the slats were less prominent there would be less potential for injuries to occur.
- c. Warm up and Preparation before competition
The Council is requested to consider whether shows should be required to provide a warm-up jump in the interests of the health and welfare of dogs.
- d. Kennel Club Code of Practice for Owners and Handlers with Dogs Taking Part in Canine Activities
The Council is requested to note the above document which has been approved by the General Committee. The document is aimed at everyone participating in canine activities and will be distributed as widely as possible so as to reach the maximum number of people.
(Annex B refers)

ITEM 7. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Wrexham Dog Agility Club

Mr C Huckle

a. Proposed Amendment of Regulations H(1)(B)2.a.b.c. (Height Limit for Dogs) and H(1)(B)3.a. (Hurdle)

The Regulation amendments are proposed in order to allow for the introduction of a fourth height category for 'Intermediate' dogs measuring over 430mm (1ft 5ins) and measuring 510mm (1ft 8.1ins) or under at the withers, and for the introduction of a fourth hurdle height 550mm (1ft 9.65ins) for Intermediate Dogs. The Council is reminded that ongoing research is being undertaken into jump heights, with an anticipated completion date of December 2015. Please refer to Annex C which provides the rationale for the proposal and details of other relevant amendments to Regulations which would become necessary should the proposal be successful.

(Annex C refers)

Regulation H(1)(B)2.a.b.c. (Height Limit for Dogs)

TO:

- a. Large Dogs - For dogs measuring over ~~430mm (1ft 5 ins)~~ **510mm (1ft 8.1 ins)** at the withers.
- b. *Intermediate Dogs – For dogs measuring over 430mm (1ft 5ins) and measuring 510mm (1ft 8.1ins) or under at the withers**
- ~~b.c.~~ Medium Dogs - For dogs measuring over 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) and measuring 430mm (1ft 5ins) or under at the withers.
- ~~e.d.~~ Small Dogs - For dogs measuring 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) or under at the withers.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions scored through.)

*or another suitable name

Regulation H(1)(B)3.a. (Hurdle)

TO:

Hurdle—The height of the hurdle must be 650mm (2ft 1.6ins) for Large Dogs, **550mm (1ft 9.65ins) for *Intermediate Dogs**, 450mm (1ft 5.7ins) for Medium Dogs and 350mm (1ft 1.75ins) for Small Dogs. Width: 1.219m (4ft) minimum. The top bar or plank must be easily displaced by the dog. A wall should have displaceable units on the top. The height of hurdles in special classes may be lower than those listed above but the height must be included in the schedule

(Insertions in bold. Deletions scored through.)

*or another suitable name

Ms K Jones, Shrewsbury & District Dog Training Club

Mrs J Gardner

b. Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)3.b.

This regulation amendment is proposed to allow for the height of the dog walk to be reduced in special classes aimed at older and/or inexperienced dogs. Ms Jones notes that the regulations already allow for a lower height A-ramp and reduced length long jump in special 'any-size' classes and is of the view that a

lower height dog walk would benefit the type of dogs that enter these classes, i.e. those not suited (for a variety of reasons) to competition in a standard class.

TO:

Where special classes are classified for older and/or inexperienced dogs, the height of the hurdles, ~~and~~ the A-ramp, **and the dog walk**, and the length of the long jump, may be reduced below the dimensions specified in these regulations, in which case such dimensions must be included in the class definition in the schedule.

(insertion in bold, deletions struck through)

Mr N Robson

Mr M Hallam

c. Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.k.

Mr Robson notes that the weaving poles are one of the primary obstacles used in agility and jumping courses and wishes to propose an amendment to regulations in order to ensure that in the interest of consistency the number of weaving poles used should be the same each time the dog negotiates them. No other obstacles are allowed to vary so significantly, for example dogs are not expected to have to negotiate different sizes of Dog Walk, heights of A Ramp or See-Saw. Mr Robson is also concerned that dogs are currently able to progress without ever having to successfully complete a set of 12 weaving poles.

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

TO:

Weaving Poles – The ~~minimum~~ number of poles should be ~~five and the maximum number~~ 12. They should be in a continuous line, as straight as possible and should be 600mm

The remainder of the Weaving Poles regulation remains the same)

(Deletions struck through)

Mr M Cavill on behalf of the Welsh Agility Community

Mr M Cavill

d. Proposed Amendment of Regulation H 28.a.(9) (Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards)

The above Regulation came into effect on 1st January 2012 but has posed problems for show societies in the organisation of classes and judging appointments due to restrictions in classes that judges are able, and willing to, judge. It has also led to a large number of experienced judges withdrawing from judging.

Unlike some other disciplines where judging is subjective rather than based on time and accuracy, agility judges are not able to determine a result to the same degree. It should be noted that judges are bound by Kennel Club Regulations to maintain and abide by the highest standards in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and appropriate Codes of Best Practice, and are open to investigation by the Kennel Club should an objection be lodged.

It is understood that in the past some judges, prior to the regulation being introduced, had family members or spouses winning in their classes which allowed grade progression, qualification for Kennel Club Finals, or awarding of Championship Agility Certificates. However there is no current restriction on judges who in some cases may be professional agility trainers, judging their own students or club members.

The proposal would allow judges to judge a spouse, immediate family member or resident at the same address, in all classes at Kennel Club Licenced shows with the exception of Championship Agility Classes and in Kennel Club Qualifiers.

TO:

Regulation H 28.a.(9) (Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards)

a. A dog may be disqualified by the General Committee from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not, if proved amongst other things to have been;

(9) Handled by the scheduled judge's spouse, immediate family or resident at the same address as the scheduled judge **in Championship Classes and Kennel Club sponsored qualifiers**. This shall not apply to a judge appointed in an emergency.

(Insertion in bold)

ITEM 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Championship Agility Classes – Mr J Gilbert

Mr Gilbert requests that the Council discuss the number of entries in Championship Agility classes which in recent years has increased to such an extent that at some shows it is almost unmanageable, certainly for only one judge to officiate. Mr Gilbert wishes to suggest that Agility adopts a similar procedure to the system that works well in Obedience Championship classes, i.e. a merit points system where handlers keep their own merit scores on a rolling yearly basis, then when entering a Championship Agility class, they enter their points total gained in the box provided on the entry form.

Where the entry for Championship Agility exceeds 170, it will be reduced to 170 by a ballot, based on a system of merit, and conducted by the society/show processor. Entries in excess of 170 shall be drawn in merit order as reserves, and they must be notified of this by the society/show processor. Those reserve competitors in attendance at the show, but excluded from the class will receive a refund of their entry fee for the Championship class.

Reserve competitors must be notified if they will be required to compete before the start of judging the Championship class, in order that they can walk the first course. The draw for the 3 rounds of the Championship Agility class will be made by the society/show processor as under current regulations.

The procedure to be followed should some dogs be on equal merit points would require further discussion.

To calculate the merit score for the dog, points are allocated for places gained at previous shows on the following scale:-

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
Grade 7 & Combined 6-7 Agility	6 pts	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt
Ch. Agility Final	20 pts	12 pts	8 pts	4 pts
Crufts Ch. Final	30 pts	18 pts	12 pts	6 pts

N.B. Merit points can only be gained with a clear round.

When entering a Championship Agility class, total points are calculated up to 7 days before the closing date of the show being entered.

Competitors not having given a merit score will be considered as having none. The merit score for all competitors in the Championship Agility class must be on display at the show. Competitors claiming an incorrect merit score must be reported to the Kennel Club.

A copy of the relevant Obedience Regulation G.30 Management which applies where the entry for Championship Class C exceeds 60 is attached for comparison purposes.

(Annex D refers)

- b. Identification of vehicles at Agility Shows Ms O McShane
– Ms D Gilmour

Ms Gilmour requests that the Council discuss the suggestion that agility competitors display some form of identification in their vehicle whilst competing at a Kennel Club Agility Show, such as by the display of their Competitor Number (as shown on their running order) on the dashboard/windscreen of their vehicle. Ms Gilmour notes that it is often necessary for a Show Secretary or Show Manager to contact competitors for a variety of reasons, such as dogs in a hot vehicle, dogs in distress, dogs fighting in vehicles, an epileptic dog having a seizure, a vehicle blocking a pathway/entrance/exit, or a vehicle driving at excess speed around the show ground.

Attempting to contact a competitor using only a car registration number is often unsuccessful. If the competitor number was displayed in the vehicle it would be relatively easy for the Show secretary to identify the Competitor in order to call him or her by name which would be more likely to elicit a response.

- c. Bitches in season at agility competitions - Ms B Bay Mr S Chandler

Ms Bay requests the Council to consider whether bitches in season should be allowed to compete at agility competitions run under Kennel Club special licences. These events require dogs and handlers to qualify during the year and/or collect points over multiple events such as Olympia Semi-finals, Olympia finals, Crufts events and other major finals under the approval of the Kennel Club. (Office Note: Crufts is a licenced agility show and is not run as a special event.)

Ms Bay points out that these events are held to showcase the best of British Agility. Handlers compete all year, travelling long distances to attend Kennel

Club shows specifically to garner points or wins towards these semi-finals and finals. Handlers with bitches cannot predict when a bitch will come in season and are then unable to compete in an event for which they have qualified.

Agility is a showcase for the KC motto of happy, healthy and active dogs and should showcase breeding specimens that are fit for function. We want the healthiest, brightest, most athletic dogs used for breeding and agility is one way to showcase this. We are limiting our ability to improve our breeds by not allowing our best bitches to remain intact and compete at the high levels.

- d. Use and colour of the tyre – Mr M Hallam
Miss J Orrell from West Lakeland Dog Training Club
and Mr A Gillibrand from High Lane Pet Dog Training Club

Miss Orrell and Mr Gillibrand request the Council to consider use of the tyre which is not widely used in all rings and in most cases is used at the start or finish of a course which they did not consider to be ideal for a standard piece of equipment. There had been issues with the tyre at a recent show and a comment had been made that the tyre was green and that this may result in a visual problem for dogs. Miss Orrell and Mr Gillibrand request the Council to discuss the following points:

- Is the Tyre currently a safe obstacle
- Why is its use being reduced and usually at Starts or Finishes of a course
- What are the merits of a Breakaway Tyre and should this be considered, taking the experience of those who have competed overseas
- Colour impact on Agility Obstacles, especially the Tyre

- e. Declining entries in Grades 1 & 2 – Mr M Tait Mr C Huckle
Mr Tait requests that the Council discuss declining entries especially in Grades 1 & 2. From comments made to Mr Tait, he is of the view that the lack of uniformity to closing dates is restricting the entries. Whilst recognising that the regulations state that entries must close 14 days prior to the show, Mr Tait requests the Council to consider setting a maximum time limit of 30 days before the show. This would allow people more opportunity to enter the shows as they are more likely to be aware of work and other family commitments within the time frame suggested. Whilst this would have caused problems in the past with manual processing systems, this is not now the case as most show processing is now computerised. Early closing dates are used as a way of limiting entries but there could be other incentives to encourage early entry.

- f. Judging Up Contacts – Mr M Tait Mr C Huckle
Mr Tait requests that the Council discuss the variability of judging the up contact, on the A Ramp, See-Saw and Dog Walk. Mr Tait recognises that with the improved training methods increasing the speed of the dogs over the contact equipment many judges have difficulties in judging both contacts, in ensuring that they can see both the up and down contact clearly. He suggests that the dog would need to traverse over but not necessarily make contact with the up contact and that, this would not be faulted. However to ensure that safety is not compromised a dog which alights from the side would incur faults.

g. Collapsible Tunnel – Mrs Y Croxford Mrs Y Croxford

Mrs Croxford requests the Council to consider the issue of the collapsible tunnel. There have been a number of incidents over the last year where dogs exiting the collapsible tunnel have got caught up in the cloth at the exit and have come out on their side or back. Mrs Croxford considers that for the health and safety of the dog, the Regulations relating to the collapsible tunnel should be reviewed.

Regulation H(1)(B)3.i. currently states the following:

Collapsible tunnel - Diameter 609mm (2ft) minimum. 762mm (2ft 6ins) maximum. Length 3.048m (10ft) minimum. Circular or non-rigid material construction. It must have an entrance of rigid construction with a depth of at least 457mm (1ft 6ins) that can be fixed or weighted to the ground. Minimum entrance height 483mm (1ft 7ins) clear (with suitable padding). If entrance has a floor must have a non-slip surface.

Mrs Croxford wishes to suggest the following:

The collapsible tunnel should be constructed in two parts which are fixed together to form the obstacle. The first part must have an entrance of rigid construction. Any materials joining the floor and sides must be smooth and must not have any sharp edges inside. The depth is to be 610mm (2ft) and width of the bottom 610mm (2ft), with a curved entrance height of 610mm (2ft) clear (with suitable padding) which can be fixed or weighted to the ground. The entrance floor must have a non-slip surface. The second part is the cloth, which must have a circumference at the exit of 2440mm (96ins). The length of the cloth must be 1525mm (5ft). The exit must be pegged down with the pegs being no more than 610mm (2ft) apart. The overall length of the collapsible tunnel is 2135mm (7ft).

h. Ratio of jump height to dog height for small dogs – Ms K Adams Mr M Cavill

Ms Adams requests the Council to consider the situation regarding the smallest dogs taking part in agility in relation to the ratio of jump height to dog height.

Ms Adams is of the view that if there is good evidence to suggest that jumping above a dog's withers height is harmful in the long term, the same principle must apply to small dogs as well as to large dogs and she is concerned that very small dogs may be suffering from health issues as a result of jumping at the Kennel Club's height for small dogs of 13³/₄"/35cm. Although there are a great many less entries for small dogs than for large dogs, the issue is not about making it easier to win rosettes, but about the dog's health and welfare which must be paramount.

Ms Adams suggests that small and 'extra small' dogs could combine for the same rosettes, but with the smallest dogs being allowed to have the jumps at a more appropriate 8"/21cm. It is noted that there are already other shows in the UK taking place where the 8" height is offered.

ITEM 9. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

To note the items on the Council's five year strategic plan.
(Annex E refers)

ITEM 10. JUDGES WORKING PARTY (WTOA)

To note a written report on the progress of the Judges Working Party following its meetings on 3 July 2014 and 11 November 2014.
(Annex F refers)

ITEM 11. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY TEAMS

The Council is invited to note a report on Team GB's attendance at the 2014 European Open Championships and World Championships.
(Annex G refers)

ITEM 12. INTERNATIONAL AGILITY FESTIVAL

To note a written report on the arrangements for the Kennel Club International Agility Festival, due to be held on 13-16 August 2015.
(Annex H refers)

ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be 2 July 2015 and any items for the agenda must be submitted by 3 April 2015.

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.*
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 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

"To raise the relevance of the Kennel Club in the eyes of the public at large, dog owners and those who take part in canine events, so as to be better able 'to promote in every way the general improvement of dogs.'