

**MEETING OF THE KENNEL CLUB AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
13 JULY 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 22 January 2015 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Kennel Club Code of Practice for Owners and Handlers with Dogs Taking Part in Canine Activities
The Activities Sub-Committee noted the Council's views on the document.
- b. Review of hurdle heights
The Sub-Committee noted that the Council had accepted the principle of a review of current hurdle heights but had agreed to defer any decision until the current research, which was investigating all hurdle heights, was complete, and the results available. It was acknowledged that this was an issue of great importance to the agility community.
- c. Regulation H(1)(A)3.b Reduction of the height of the dog walk in special classes
The Council's proposed amendment to the above Regulation had been approved by the General Committee at its meeting on 14 April 2015.
- d. Recognition of Agility as a sport
The Council is requested to give further consideration to formulation of a proposal which would allow for the recognition of handlers rather than dogs, so that a suitable approach could be made to the Sports Council.
- e. Proposed Amendment of Regulation H 28.a.(9) (Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards)
At its meeting on 19 March 2015, the Activities Sub-Committee had considered the Council's recommendation for an amendment to the above Regulation at its meeting which would allow for a judge to judge dogs handled by his or her spouse, immediate family or resident at the same address as the scheduled judge other than in Championship Classes and Kennel Club sponsored events. The Sub-Committee had accepted that agility had special challenges in view of the high number of judges required but had expressed a concern the proposed amendment would result in different criteria being applied to agility to those in other disciplines and that it would also imply that more trust was placed in

judges at open shows than those at Championship shows. In the interests of consistency, it did not recommend the amendment for approval.

ITEM 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACTIVITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

At its meeting on 19 March 2015, the Activities Sub-Committee considered the structure of the Agility Liaison Council and ways in which it could become more effective.

- That a number of subject specific panels be formed, on a similar basis to the recently formed Equipment Panel. Each panel would be encouraged to regularly liaise with a nominated Agility member of the Activities Sub-Committee and apprise them of progress of matters under discussion. It was anticipated that, as a result, matters being referred to the Sub-Committee from the Council would be better understood and supported from the outset. All Panel discussions would take place externally to the Kennel Club.
- That from January 2016, an embargo should be placed on any Regulation changes within a three-year period, with the exception of any urgent matters, those currently under discussion prior to this date, or any matter relating to health and welfare of the dog or handler. Frequent changes to Regulations made it quite difficult for competitors and judges to keep up to date, and the imposition of a three-year embargo would also allow for the impact of previous amendments to be assessed before the introduction of further amendments.

The Council is requested to note that the General Committee, at its meeting on 14 April 2015, approved the above proposals for a trial period covering the next term of office of the Agility Liaison Council.

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL

To receive a written report from the Equipment Panel regarding any issues which had been referred to it. The Council is asked to note that planned research had had to be postponed and therefore the report would be tabled.

(Annex A refers – to be tabled)

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

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 30 March 2015.

(Annex B refers)

ITEM 7. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

a. Number of entries in a Championship Class

At its last meeting the Council agreed the principle that should the number of entries for a Championship class exceed a set figure, show organisers may

appoint a separate judge for the jumping round. The office agreed to prepare a formal proposal for consideration.

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)9.e

The maximum number of individual runs a person shall judge on one day is 450, excluding unforeseen eventualities such as re-runs. **Where Championship Class entries exceed 200 an additional previously approved Championship Judge must be appointed for the Jumping round.** Reserve judges may enter dogs...
(Insertion in bold)

Rationale: This proposed amendment would help allow all entries in the Championship class to still compete, without having to utilise a similar system to Obedience Championship classes who use a draw based on merit points.

b. Grade Changes

Mrs Y Croxford

At its previous meeting the Council requested that proposals would be prepared by Mrs Croxford and Mr Chandler. These would propose criteria for qualification for Grade 7 handlers to enter Championship classes and review the progression criteria for progression from Grade 6 into Grade 7.

These proposals have been submitted to address the issue of dogs moving up the grades too quickly and ending up in G6 or G7 unprepared. The issues behind the rapid progression through the grades is thought to be due to; the 25 day rule which could potentially allow a dog to go from G1 to G7 in 9 months; the number of Graded classes; the issue of G1-7 classes not offering enough challenges for all the grades and setting lenient course times; the increase in long weekend and week-long shows; the amount of classes there are to enter per day and the small number of entries in classes.

(i) Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)8.
Standard Classes

Only first prizes and points gained in standard classes at Kennel Club licensed Agility Shows may be used for progression through the classes.
The first win at a show will count towards progression and no further wins will count towards progression for a further 5 days. All wins will be counted towards Points Progression. (A dog is only eligible
(Insertion in bold)

Rationale: As shows are over many more days and have many more classes per day, often graded classes, dogs can win multiple classes and move up a grade at just one show. This proposal will lengthen the progression time table so dogs gain more experience before moving up a grade.

(ii) Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)2.

In the following definitions of classes First Prize or other prize wins are those gained in standard cases at any Kennel Club licensed Championship Agility, Premier Agility, Open Agility or Limited Agility Shows (i.e special classes and invitational events are excepted). Only a first place with a clear

round completed within the course time set by the judge will count towards grade progression. **In classes with less than 20 entries, a win will only count as a half win towards progression.**

(Insertion in bold)

Rationale: This is to address very small classes, some times where there are only 2 or 3 dogs present in a class, or grade, and the objective ends up being 'just to get a clear round' in order to win. It is understood that people would want to know in advance whether their wins will count as 'whole' or 'half' wins, however often these specific shows are targeted by handlers who know the entries are likely to be low.

(iii) Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)8.g

Grade 7 (Advanced)

Open to dogs which have gained a minimum of 4 first places at Grade 6 at Kennel Club Licensed Agility Shows, 2 first places must be gained in Agility (not Jumping) classes **and one must be a combined class including Grades 6 and 7.**

(Insertion in bold)

(iv) Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A)5.

Class Structure

A Class may either be held as a Graded Class or a Combined Class. A Graded class may be scheduled for one ~~or more~~ **to three** consecutive Grades with separate results and awards issued for each grade. A Combined Class may be scheduled for more than one consecutive grade with one overall set of results. **If a class has more than 3 Grades then the class has to be combined.** A Combined Class is open to any combination of dog and handler that qualifies for any of the Grades in that class.

(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)

Rationale: Combined classes would remain permissible for any number of grades, but would become compulsory when more than 3 grades in the class. Judges could then set the appropriate course challenges and course times for the respective grades.

Mrs O McShane

c. Proposed amendment to Regulation K3.c. Agility Warrants

TO:

Bronze 200 points (minimum of 50 points in agility)

Silver 400 points (minimum of 100 points in agility)

Gold 800 points (minimum of 200 points in agility)

Platinum 1200 points (minimum 300 points in agility)

The following titles may be used after the name of the dog on Show entries and in catalogues.

Bronze AW(B)

Silver AW(S)

Gold AW(G)
Platinum AW(P)
(Insertions in bold)

It is anticipated that the introduction of the additional award will encourage participation in the sport and provide competitors with additional goals, such as to seek to improve the ability of their dog and build on the team work between the dog and handler.

Ms C Harding

Mrs Y Croxford

- d. Proposal to amend Regulation H(1)(B)1.a(4) Standard Class Course Time
Ms Harding wishes to propose an amendment to the above Regulation as follows:

Regulation H(1)(B)1.a(4) Standard Class Course Time

TO:

An appropriate set time for each course **for grade 4 and above** shall be calculated by the judge, **using the matrix provided by the Kennel Club**, who shall take into account the course length, the height category of the dogs competing, and the grade or grades of the dogs competing in the relevant class, together with any other relevant factors. The course length must be measured by the judge using a commercially available measuring wheel, using the straight line distance between obstacle centres method. The set time shall be stated by the judge before judging commences.

This is to enable those just starting out (beginner dogs/beginner handlers in grade 1) and those with beginner dogs (grade 3) to not have the pressure of a measured course time, but to bring in consistency with course times as dogs progress through the grades.

Currently, with a course time of 50 seconds, the winning dog may complete a course in 35 seconds, with other dogs negotiating the course 'clear' in 47 seconds. The dog that completes the course in 47 seconds would then be placed higher than a dog that had knocked a bar (5f) in 34 seconds. Both speed and accuracy should be important.

It also means that if there are only a few dogs in a class, and the other dogs get faulted, one dog may be able to go round clear, carefully and slowly, but within a very generous course time, and still be awarded the win to count towards the next grade.

ITEM 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Defibrillators at shows - Ms K Maynard Mr S Chandler
Ms Maynard, an individual, wishes the Council to discuss a suggestion that it should be compulsory for a defibrillator to be present and accessible at a show at all times. The location of the defibrillator should be communicated to the competitors.

Ms Maynard also requests that the Council discuss the requirement for a first aider to be present at shows, depending on the time taken for an ambulance to attend the scene. These figures should be available from the local ambulance service.

It is clear that many clubs are fundraising for defibrillators and that there is a 'sharing' system already in place, but Ms Maynard is concerned that at present this is purely on a voluntary basis rather than something that is enforced. Ms Maynard is also concerned that the emphasis is being placed on the defibrillator rather than the knowledge of CPR and suggests that those taking part in agility should be encouraged to learn CPR. CPR demonstrations and training sessions could take place at shows for those interested.

b. Provision and maintenance of an Automated External Defibrillator - Mr I Mcghee Mr S Chandler

Mr Mcghee, an individual, wishes to suggest that clubs agree to funding for an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which could be taken from show to show. A maintenance rota could be agreed to ensure yearly certification was carried out.

Mr Mcghee's view is that an AED should be available at every Kennel Club licenced agility show. It was hoped that clubs would be responsive to requests for funding and that also equipment suppliers would help by sponsoring the yearly cost of certification and possible training.

It would be necessary to arrange suitable training in use of the AED and it was hoped that free training may be available.

c. Dogs with infectious diseases - Ms K Whillans Mrs O McShane

Ms Whillans, an individual, requests that the Council discuss a suggestion whereby anyone whose dog is certified by a veterinary surgeon as showing signs of a contagious canine disease, would be refunded their entries and camping for all dogs entered for that handler/owner.

Ms Whillans' own veterinary surgeon advises that although there is no specific veterinary certificate for this at the moment, one could easily be created.

As far as the duration such a certificate would cover, again the advice given is 'with Kennel Cough they can be contagious even once clinical signs have gone' therefore the suggested duration would be three weeks, which meets Kennel Club Regulations. If further dogs under the ownership show signs which take them outwith the period covered, then further certification would be required.

The outcome would be that the handler/owner is not penalised by losing entry fees whilst their dogs are unable to compete - something which cannot be planned for at the closing date for entries.

- d. Input from members of Listed and Registered clubs – Mrs J Gardner
Golden Valley Dog Training Club

Golden Valley Dog Training Club requests that the Council discuss the following:

- (i) That Listed and Registered Clubs should have more say in the future shaping of dog agility. Golden Valley Dog Training Club proposes that a structure be created for feedback from the clubs to enable them to have more input into Liaison Council meetings and influence decision making.

At present, regional representatives hold local meetings for people to attend and give their views and sometimes vote on the items that are going to be discussed at the next Liaison Council meeting. As seen recently this can prove difficult in respect of the size and location of the meeting venue) when some items create a lot of interest Therefore Golden Valley Dog Training Club suggests that instead of the regional representatives holding a meeting to which everybody in the region is invited to attend, that club representatives collect views from their membership and then either attend the regional meeting so that the feedback from their club membership can be passed on and discussed, or if they could not attend the club representatives could send the information to their regional representative on behalf of their members. This would mean that the regional representatives would know who and how many people to cater for when hiring premises for the regional meeting.

- (ii) Those who attend Kennel Club agility competitions should be encouraged to join a local Kennel Club Registered Club so that they can have a say in how their sport is shaped in the future, although it would not be practical to compel people to join a club.

Increasing club membership would help with the following:

- The future survival of Kennel Club Registered Clubs. If such clubs had a greater part in Kennel Club decision making it might encourage more people to join a Listed or Registered club. The extra money injected into the clubs through increased membership would help to ensure their survival.
- Preservation of shows run by Registered clubs. Halting the decline in the number of clubs holding Agility shows because their membership has sunk to a level that they are no longer able to hold a show.
- Ensuring that competitors are fully aware of rules, regulations and codes of practice governing our sport and any changes.
- It appears that at present there is total confusion at the grass-roots level about the process that governs changes in equipment and rules that govern the sport. If there was a better structure for feedback via clubs the confusion should be removed and competitors should be happier as well. This in turn would help ensure that dog agility had a great foundation to build on and move forward.

- e. Training in the ring at shows - Mrs J Gardner
Mrs Gardner requests the Council to discuss the issue of whether trainers should be permitted to hold training sessions in competition rings before, during or after a show, and whether it is necessary to introduce a rule to state that this is not permissible.
- f. Qualification for Championship - Ms C Harding Mrs Y Croxford
Ms Harding, an individual, wishes to suggest that in order to qualify for Championship, a dog must achieve three top 3 places in classes which include grade 7 (e.g. 6-7 agility), at least two of which must be agility, at Premier or Championship Shows.

The benefit of introducing such a rule in respect of the Premier/Championship show clause is that it would prevent people doing week long shows of small graded classes, where up to 5 or 6 graded classes a day are common. Ms Harding is concerned as to the ease of winning classes and the small numbers of dogs. The suggestion is designed to ensure that dogs must prove they can beat other grade 7 dogs at that level before they can enter championship, but the Premier/Championship rule is necessary as it is currently too easy for handlers to get wins if they target the small shows.

Ms Harding wishes the Council to consider the following:

- Whether three top three places is sufficient. Ms Harding's view is that it should be more than one placing to avoid qualifying by one isolated win, but that four may be too many.
- Whether a qualifying place should be considered as being in the top three or top five.
- Whether at least two qualifying places should be in agility, given that handlers will have won a minimum of two grade six classes to get into grade seven.
- The geographical location of shows must be taken into account as there are more shows in some areas than in others, and whether this could cause issues for handlers in those areas which are not well served by shows.

ITEM 9. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

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

ITEM 10. JUDGES WORKING PARTY (ACTIVITIES)

To note a written report on the progress of the Judges Working Party following its meetings on 28 April 2015.
(Annex D refers)

ITEM 11. 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 E refers)

ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ITEM 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting will be in January 2016 and will be confirmed in September 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.'