



**MINUTES OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2025 AT 10.30AM IN THE BOARDROOM, CLARGES
STREET**

PRESENT

Ms J Bale	South East/East Anglia
Mrs E Bostock	South East/East Anglia
Mr A Dornford-Smith	Northern Ireland (<i>until paragraph 84</i>)
Mrs J Gardner	Midlands
Mrs D Tedds	Midlands
Mr J Hallam	South/South West
Mr M Tait	South/South West*
Mr M Hallam	North West
Mrs S Hawkswell	Scotland*
Ms T Davies	North East*
Mrs E Laing-Kay	North East (<i>between paragraphs 24-92</i>)*
Mrs S Robinson	Wales

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Senior Manager Canine Activities
Miss A Morley	Activities Liaison Manager
Mrs E Osborne	Activities Liaison Advisor

* Indicates attendance via Microsoft Teams

**NOTE: ANY RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL
ARE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY THE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE AND THE
KENNEL CLUB BOARD AND WILL NOT COME INTO EFFECT UNLESS AND
UNTIL BOARD APPROVAL HAS BEEN CONFIRMED.**

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies had been received from Miss R Sargent.

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2025 were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 29 April 2025, approved the following amendments to H Regulations:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.l and H(1)(B) 3.m. See Saw and Dog Walk

TO: l. See-Saw—This obstacle will consist of a plank firmly mounted on a central bracket. ~~The length of the plank must be 3.66m. The width must be 295mm minimum and 305mm maximum.~~ **The plank must be 3.66m in length and 300mm in width.** The height of the central bracket measured from the ground to the top of the plank must be 610mm. The maximum distance from the pivot point to the top of the plank should not be more than 100mm. The last 914mm from each end should be a different colour to indicate the area with which the dog should make contact. The plank should have a non-slip surface with no slats. The See-Saw must start to tip and then touch the ground between 2–3 seconds after a weight of 1 kilogram has been placed in the middle of the down contact area.

m. Dog Walk—A walk plank of approximately 1.2m measured from the ground to the top of the plank, with firmly fixed ramps at either end. The planks must be 3.66m in length and **300mm a minimum of 254mm and a maximum of 305mm** in width. The last 914mm from the bottom of each ramp should be a different colour to indicate the area with which the dog should make contact. Each ramp should have a non-slip surface, and anti-slip slats at intervals but not within 152mm of the start of a contact area.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)9.b Championship Running Orders

TO:

The winner of each round will be invited to the final, in addition to the top 50% of the entry, up to a maximum of 20 dogs from the combined results of the two qualifying rounds, making the final a maximum of 22 dogs. The winner of the jumping round will run first in the final, the winner of the agility round will run second in the final, **unless it has qualified through the normal route, in which case it will be in the standard running order.** If the winner of either of the two qualifying rounds are in the top 50% of the entry, up to a maximum of 20 dogs, then the 'win on spot' will not transfer down to the 2nd placed dog. The winner of each round must have competed in both qualifying rounds.

(Insertions in bold.)

(Effective immediately)

4. The Council addressed some confusion over the moving of dogs within running orders of championship classes. It was confirmed that moving dogs up or down the order was only acceptable when clashes occurred with other championship rings and not for other classes. It was suggested that ring managers and judges should discuss prior to classes starting to confirm the plan of action for clashes that may occur, and the Council acknowledged that general good practice

would be to move dogs forward where possible to avoid adjusting the schedule of too many competitors.

5. It was confirmed that it was permissible to relax the running order by no more than 10 dogs in the event of clashes providing that it was recorded in the Show's incident book but that did not need to be notified before the class. Following the meeting, the office issued a post on social media to confirm the information and reiterate that the judge's decision was final.
6. It was also agreed that the following regulations, with additional clarification wording, should also be reinstated (they were previously removed from January 2025).

Regulation H(1)9.e.

TO:

A dog having been eliminated in either qualifying round will not be eligible for the final, except the winner of the opposing round which will be invited to compete in the final.

(Insertions in bold. Effective date - immediate effect.)

Regulation H(1)(A)11.c

TO:

c. Elimination in either of the qualifying rounds will exclude the dog from competition in the final round, except the winner of the opposing round which will be invited to compete in the final.

(Insertions in bold. Effective date - immediate effect.)

Amendment to Regulation H8.f. Incident Books.

7. The Council noted that the Activities Committee was in agreement to support the new process to submit incident returns even when no incident was recorded at the show.
8. The office confirmed that work in the background was ongoing to ensure that the process could be introduced effectively for all disciplines.

Mandatory documentation of dogs' microchip numbers

9. The Council noted that the proposal to include mandatory documentation of dogs' microchip numbers during measuring sessions, with details submitted to the Kennel Club on the measuring return form was also **approved** by the Board. The office confirmed that work was ongoing to ensure that it could be implemented and recorded effectively.

Optional measuring for dogs which had not been through the measuring process

10. The proposal to allow unmeasured dogs that had competed in the large height category to partake in the measuring process retrospectively, was **approved** by the Board to take immediate effect up until the end of 2025. It was clarified that this was only for large dogs which had not been through the measuring

process. If a dog had already been through the measuring process, then the change would not apply. If previously large dogs were measured into intermediate, the dog would drop to the lower height category immediately but still be subject to a second measure as per usual measuring procedure.

Amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)4.(2) and Regulation H(1)(A)9.

11. The Council noted that the Activities Committee at its March meeting did not approve the amendment to the above regulations in relation to overseas dogs competing at KC shows. It was considered that if the policy document was published then the amendments suggested in the proposal would not be needed. The Activities Committee agreed that the policy document would be published and hoped this could be done later in the year when other Governance related changes had been implemented.

ITEM 4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PANELS

12. The Council considered the terms of reference for panels provided by the chair.
13. The subject of the new Council structure was raised. The office confirmed that the new process would be application based and that applications would be open to all. Applications for the Council would be reviewed by the Canine Activities team and that interviews would be conducted as necessary.
14. Concerns were raised about the panels and their place on the Council and the office confirmed that the structure of the panels was open to the Council to decide so these could remain in place as needed if the elected Council was in agreement. Concerns around regional representation were also addressed and it was confirmed that while the Council would not remain in the same regional format, location would be considered when applications were reviewed.
15. It was confirmed that the first term of office for the Council was to be 2 years to bring the election process back in line with those of the Committees and the term of office would then return to 3 years.
16. The Council wished to reiterate the importance of the level of work involved in being on the Agility Liaison Council, particularly that demonstrated by the panels, and the office confirmed that this would be made clear to potential applicants. The Council raised whether there would be potential to consider references from agility clubs for applicants, the office agreed to raise this for consideration.
17. The Chair wished to thank the Council for their service and noted the many previous achievements of the Council and the positive impact this had on the discipline.

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL

18. The Council noted the report from the Equipment Panel.

19. Ms Bale confirmed that there had been an increase in submissions of equipment incident reports since the form had been moved online. It was thought that was because the form was more accessible rather than an increase in incident occurrences.
20. A query was raised regarding the CARIS international research project. The office confirmed that the form links had been distributed and were being used, and that some reminders had been issued to those whose submitted equipment incident reports on the Kennel Club online form.
21. The subject of equipment approval was raised, and it was confirmed that it was being looked at by the panel. It was suggested that some shows were already struggling with low numbers of equipment supplies available for hire and that any further restrictions to those numbers could have an impact on the number of shows that were able to run.
22. A discussion was had around recent reports of issues with Anti-Slip tunnels. It was noted that the issue had been raised with the equipment supplier involved and had been taken onboard and was being looked into further to resolve the issues. It was suggested that weather conditions, arena surface and dog's lines were all contributing to recorded incidents involving those tunnels.
23. The Council wished to emphasise the importance of removing equipment when needed and logging equipment incidents when issues had occurred.
24. There was some discussion in respect of timers. The Council noted that some new timers were being trialled and that the few issues noted were primarily down to human error which was hard to avoid. It was raised that any changes or updates to equipment, including timers, would need to be clearly publicised to ensure judges were aware.

Mrs E Laing-Kay joined the meeting.

Hurdle Data Review

25. The Council noted the review of hurdle data gathered by the Equipment Panel.
26. It was emphasised by the Equipment Panel that the review was ongoing. A recent incident involving wooden jumps was raised and it was confirmed that it would be dealt with as part of the overall review process.
27. It was noted that, while there was some disappointment amongst grassroots competitors that the matter wasn't being progressed in the short term, this would need to be part of a longer-term plan to avoid penalising equipment suppliers and potentially making it harder for show organisers to hire sufficient equipment. It was suggested that a period of adequate notice would be needed for equipment suppliers to make viable changes and that could be decided by the Council once further work had been done on the review.

28. The Council noted that the majority of fillers had now moved to a safer foam construction and so the ongoing equipment review was already having a positive impact and the Council wished to emphasise that safety and welfare were the main concerns moving forwards with the review. This was referred back to the Equipment panel to progress.

Weaves as a set of 6 or 12

29. The Council considered a proposal from the panel, seconded by Mrs Bostock, to provide clarity over the requirements for weave poles to be available as both a set of 6 or 12.
30. A discussion took place as to whether judges expected the option of both 6 and 12 weaves to be available to them as they were responsible for course design. It was suggested that show organisers and societies should be able to provide information to judges regarding what equipment would be available and notify them of any restrictions prior to course design.
31. Concerns were raised over whether agility suppliers would be able to make the change and whether that would in turn add pressure to already stretched suppliers of hire equipment.
32. The Council voted on the proposal, and following a majority vote, did **not recommend** the amendment to the regulations.
33. It was agreed to refer the item back to the Equipment panel for consideration as part of a 5-year plan and it was noted that if any issues did occur with regards to this, the incident book should be used to report it.

ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL

34. The Council considered the report from the Agility Governance Panel.

Winning out timeframe

35. The Council considered a proposal from the panel, seconded by Mrs Bostock, regarding a revision of limbo periods between grades and the reduction of the timeframe from 25 days to 18 days.
36. A brief discussion was held and, following a majority vote, the Council agreed to **recommend** the following proposals.

Regulation H.9.(14)

To:

A statement that in estimating the number of awards won, all wins up to and including ~~25~~ **18** days before the start of the competition shall be counted when entering for any class. For these purposes a competition shall be defined as all classes covered within the same schedule. In the event that a dog becomes eligible for the next grade at a particular show,

after the entry for that show has been sent, it is the competitor's responsibility to notify the show secretary or the show processor at least 14 days before the date of the show. The dog should then be moved into the appropriate class(es) for the next grade. The dog must be moved into the corresponding number of classes as were entered at the lower grade. If there are fewer or no classes available for the next grade the competitor should be offered a refund of the relevant entry fees. **Failure to notify the show secretary or processor at least 14 days before the date of the show will result in the dog being ineligible to compete at that show.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H.10.h

To:

In estimating the number of awards won, all wins up to and including 25 **18** days before the start of the competition shall be counted when entering for any class. For these purposes a competition shall be defined as all classes covered within the same schedule. In the event that a dog becomes eligible for the next grade at a particular show, after the entry for that show has been sent, it is the competitor's responsibility to notify the show secretary or the show processor at least 14 days before the date of the show. The dog should then be moved into the appropriate class(es) for the next grade. The dog must be moved into the corresponding number of classes as were entered at the lower grade. If there are fewer or no classes available for the next grade the competitor should be offered a refund of the relevant entry fees. **Failure to notify the show secretary or processor at least 14 days before the date of the show will result in the dog being ineligible to compete at that show.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Grading review

37. The Council considered a proposal from the Panel, seconded by Mr Tait, regarding a revised grading system.
38. A lengthy discussion took place on the proposal. It was noted that overall, the majority of regions disagreed with the proposal, although there were some aspects that they did agree with. A number of regions also suggested the potential for additional qualifications for championship classes when in grade 7 without the need for other changes.
39. It was acknowledged by the Council that the current system had not been in place for long when the break for Covid was taken into consideration.
40. The Council noted that it may be difficult to introduce a fifth height without an amendment to the current grading system, as show organisers and judges may struggle to accommodate it. The potential of bringing in the 5th height to assess

numbers of competing dogs before any confirmation on grade review was considered again.

41. It was acknowledged that it was the show organiser's decision as to which classes were held within the regulations and that they did not have to host all grades and heights. The Council also discussed the possibility of implementing changes to course walking in order to save time, with one suggestion being to allow two heights to walk the course together.
42. The possibility of reverting to a previous grading system, used prior to 2007, was discussed. Members acknowledged that the current system had originally been introduced to address unmanageable class sizes. However, it was observed that the increase in the number of licenced shows and the addition of the intermediate height category had reversed that issue, making a return to the former system potentially more effective.
43. The Council raised the subject of licencing and asked if there was potential for The Kennel Club to limit the number of licences issued in close proximity to each other on any one date, and the total given to a club each year. The office reiterated the financial implications of that but confirmed it could be raised with the Activities Committee if the Council felt that was needed. A vote was taken by the Council, and it was **recommended** by a majority.
44. It was noted that the minimum time frame before the show to submit a request for licencing was previously reduced from 6 months to 6 weeks. The office confirmed that the majority of societies did however request their licence further in advance than the 6 weeks. The Council voted to increase the time frame back to 6 months and this was **recommended** by a majority.
45. A number of votes were undertaken by the Council on aspects of the grading proposal which could be bought in without amending the current regulations for progression between grades.
46. With regards to reducing the number of graded classes allowed per height per day from 4 to 2, a majority verdict was recorded therefore the following regulation amendments were **recommended** by the Council. It was suggested that this may reduce the number of people selecting to bypass certain shows in favour of those with more graded classes.

Regulation H(1)(A) 5.

TO:

A maximum of four standard classes may be scheduled for any dog on an individual day of competition **including a maximum of two graded classes**. Any number of special classes may be scheduled.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(D) 2.

TO:

Type of show

Limited agility shows are shows at which the classes (except for standard classes) may be limited by numbers of class entries, overall numbers of entries, specific breeds, residence of competitors, membership of societies or organisations or otherwise subject to the approval of the Board of The Royal Kennel Club. A maximum of four standard classes **including a maximum of two graded classes**, and any number of special classes may be scheduled, other than qualifying heats for Royal Kennel Club sponsored or sanctioned competitions.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(D) 3.c.

A limited agility show may schedule an unlimited number of special agility classes and up to four standard classes (which may be capped)

including a maximum of two graded classes.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

47. Regarding reducing the number of grades allowed in graded classes from 3 to 2, increasing the minimum number of grades allowed in a combined class from 2 to 3 and grade 7 becoming championship level only. The majority voted against those proposals and therefore they were **not recommended** by the Council.
48. With reference to an indicator to show the expected level of course design, particularly in combined courses, it was suggested by the Council that it should be aimed at the middle of the grades involved and that this would be best included in the Judge's Guide. The discussion was referred to the Judges Panel to progress.
49. It was agreed that a future grade review may still be needed. This was to be taken back to the Governance Panel with support from volunteering Council members Ms Bale, Mrs Bostock, Mr J Hallam, Ms Davies and Mrs Tedds.

Extra small (XS) height

50. The Council considered the proposal from the panel, seconded by Mr Tait, regarding the introduction of an Extra Small (XS) height category. It was acknowledged that if a 5th height category was introduced it would not have qualifiers or championship classes in the first instance.
51. The Council noted the benefits of a 5th height on welfare grounds and supported the introduction of this additional height. It was acknowledged that enforcing the height category straight away could potentially be unfair for dogs which were already competing successfully in the Small championship class.

52. A point was raised that if all Small dogs were measured and were given the option to move to a new height, should they measure Extra Small, or stay at Small it would serve as a data gathering opportunity giving a better idea of numbers for future reference. That would also give the potential for dogs to move down a height later in time if required. It was acknowledged that this may present an issue for some people who would not be happy with paying for an additional measure when their dogs were not likely to be measured into Extra Small. The council agreed that that measuring cost was very low, and this shouldn't be considered a significant barrier.
53. It was noted that a time frame would need to be confirmed for dogs which were already competing at Small to come forward for measuring. The Council unanimously **recommended** the end of 2026 as a deadline with the option to move into Extra Small at any time following that if an Extra Small measurement was given. It was reiterated by the Council that a dog would not be able to move back to Small if the owner was selected to run at Extra Small.
54. The Council voted on the introduction of a 5th height. The majority were in agreement and subsequently the proposal was **recommended**. An introduction date of January 2026 was suggested and Mrs Gardner confirmed that she would begin discussions with the necessary parties to ensure measuring hoops could be obtained in the timeframe.
55. This led to a discussion on the suggested height limit for dogs in this category. Suggestions of 280mm and 300mm were discussed and it was noted that some European countries were discussing the option of 300mm including some which previously had introduced the height at 280mm. Following a majority vote, 300mm was **recommended** by the Council.
56. A discussion was had on the naming of the additional height, and the options of Extra Small and Micro were suggested. Following a unanimous vote, the option of Micro was **recommended** by the Council.
57. A vote was held to decide the height of obstacles for the Micro height category and the majority agreed on 200mm with the exception of the Tyre and Long Jump which would stay the same across Small and Micro, this was subsequently **recommended** by the Council.
58. Following the above discussions, the following regulation updates were **recommended** for approval.

Regulation H(1)(A) 1.

This classification should apply to competitions for large, intermediate, medium, ~~and~~ small **and micro** dogs

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(B) 1.c

No practice is allowed on the course save that competitors will be allowed to walk the course set at **Micro**, Small, Medium, Intermediate or Large height without their dog(s) before the class begins.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(B) 2.

Height limit for dogs

- a. Large Dogs - For dogs measuring over 500mm at the withers.
- b. Intermediate Dogs – For dogs measuring over 430mm and measuring 500mm or under at the withers.
- c. Medium Dogs - For dogs measuring over 350mm and measuring 430mm or under at the withers.
- d. Small Dogs - For dogs measuring 350mm or under at the withers
- e. **Micro Dogs – For dogs measuring 300mm and under at the withers.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(B) 3.

3. Obstacles.

The following obstacles meet with the approval of the Board of The Royal Kennel Club. Any changes to current obstacles (such as materials used, structure or style) or any other new obstacles must be submitted for approval by The Royal Kennel Club before being made available for use at its licensed events. All measurements of 1000mm or under may have a tolerance of plus or minus 5mm and measurements of over 1000mm may have a tolerance of plus or minus 10mm.

- a. Hurdle—The height of the hurdle must be 600mm for Large Dogs, 500mm for Intermediate Dogs, 400mm for Medium Dogs, ~~and~~ 300mm for Small Dogs **and 200mm for Micro Dogs**. Width: 1.2m minimum. All bars, planks and fillers must be easily displaced by the dog. The inner upright of the wings must be a minimum of 900mm with no unnecessary protrusions. The height of hurdles in special classes may be lower than those listed above, but the height(s) must be included in the schedule.
- b. Wall—The height of the wall must be 600mm for Large Dogs, 500mm for Intermediate Dogs, 400mm for Medium Dogs, ~~and~~ 300mm for Small Dogs **and 200mm for Micro Dogs**. Width: 1.2m minimum. All central units must be easily displaced by the dog and not interlocking with the pillars. Pillars with a minimum height of 900mm must be used. Central elements should have a uniform depth of 200mm. The wall must be constructed of an impact-absorbing material.
- c. Rising spread jump—A maximum of 2 single jumps as in item a- (Hurdle) placed together to form a double spread, there must be no more than 2 elements to this obstacle. The top bar on the first hurdle must be 400mm for Large Dogs, 300mm for Intermediate Dogs, 300mm for Medium Dogs, ~~and~~ 200mm for Small Dogs **and 100mm for Micro Dogs**. The maximum spread to be: Large Dogs - 550mm, Intermediate Dogs –

475mm, Medium Dogs - 400mm, Small Dogs - 300mm, **Micro Dogs 200mm**. There must be only one pole on each hurdle. The feet of the side supports (wings) should not be interlocking but can be touching and must not be out of line by more than 75mm. The back pole must be 1.5m in length. The front pole must be 1.4m in length.

d. Brush Fence—Dimensions and details as for item a-(Hurdle). This obstacle must have an easily displaceable top unit.

e. Hoop-(Tyre)—Aperture diameter 533mm minimum. Aperture centre from the ground: Large Dogs - 800mm. Intermediate Dogs - 650mm. Medium Dogs - 550mm. Small **and Micro** Dogs - 490mm. The hoop to be of a consistent shape, constructed of an impact-absorbing material. All tyres should have bands diagonally opposite each other in contrast to its basic colour or segments in contrasting colours. The tyre/hoop must be directly mounted in a substantial frame structure which must be secured in such a way that dogs cannot knock the obstacle over from either direction; the frame shall not have a beam across the top. All tyres must have easily displaced element(s). For saloon style tyres, both opening sides must have an ability to swing open to 90-140 degrees from the closed hoop position. They must not self-return and must be manually re-set.

f. Long Jump—Each unit a minimum length of 1.2m. Large Dogs - To comprise 5 units the overall length to be between 1.3m and 1.5m. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be 381mm. Intermediate Dogs – to comprise 4 units, the overall length to be between 1m and 1.2m. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be 305mm. Medium Dogs - To comprise 3 units the overall length to be between 700mm and 900mm. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be 229mm. Small **and Micro** Dogs - To comprise 2 units the overall length to be between 400mm and 600mm. The height of the front unit to be 127mm and the height of the rear unit to be 170mm. Marker poles with a minimum height of 1.2m shall be used, these should not be attached to any part of the obstacle. The units must be constructed of an impact-absorbing material & weighted at the base for stability. Each unit should be of uniform depth and a consistent shape.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(B) 4.(8).

The Royal Kennel Club will nominate officials authorised to measure dogs for competition and to sign the Agility Record Book. The record book must be notated '**micro**', 'small', 'medium', 'intermediate' or 'large' as determined by the official measurement.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Regulation H(1)(B).4.(11).

A dog will be eligible to compete in **micro**, small, medium or intermediate height categories only after the official measurement has been carried out.

Where a dog is measured out of the height category in which it has been entered it is permissible, at the discretion of the organising club, for entries to be altered in order that the dog can compete at the correct height category.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL AND OTHER JUDGING ISSUES

59. The Council considered the report from the Judging Panel and discussed a proposal, seconded by Mrs Gardner, for the addition of wording to the Judges Code of Best Practice to include approach and exit guidelines for the Wall, Long Jump and Spread.
60. It was noted by the Council that discussions were still ongoing regarding the A frame approach.
61. A query about providing assessments as additional mentoring and guidance for judges was raised. It was suggested that some may welcome the additional support these could offer, and the Council agreed this would be referred back to the Judges Sub-Group to discuss further.
62. The Council noted the report from Mrs Gardner on the Activities Judges Sub-Group meeting held on 03 April 2025.
63. The Council wished to extend it's thanks to Showtime Online, Agility Plaza and Mr C Harley for the data provided and the work undertaken in the review of course times to create an updated matrix.
64. It was confirmed that the panel had looked at the average time of dogs within the data provided for the review and that changes made were incremental across the grades with less impact on lower grades.
65. The Council noted that the revised course time matrix had been used successfully in a trial period by Judge's Accredited Trainers and that it was considered that the course times were still achievable.
66. It was reiterated by the Council that the matrix was part of the guidance for judges and that this must be used by Judges.
67. Subsequent to the meeting, the matrix and guide for its use was published and shared via The Kennel Club website and social media.

ITEM 8. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

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

68. The Council considered a proposal from Mr J Hallam on behalf of Mr Sandercock, seconded by Mr Tait, to change the maximum number of obstacles within a course dependent on grade.
69. Concerns were raised on behalf of show organisers that the proposed change could create longer courses which could in turn create longer days and a longer list of equipment needed. It was also noted that the change may have an impact on shows with smaller indoor rings.
70. It was suggested that many judges did not use the maximum of 20 obstacles and that by changing the maximum number of obstacles depending on the grade, the average remained the same across classes.
71. It was suggested that an increase in the maximum number of obstacles would give judges more flexibility when designing courses and the Council confirmed that the minimum would still remain the same.
72. An amendment was proposed by Mr Dornford-Smith, seconded by Ms Bale, that the maximum number of obstacles could be amended to 22 overall with an amendment to the Guide for Judges to clarify the recommended maximums for individual grades (Grades 1-3: 18 obstacles, Grades 4-5: 20 obstacles, Grades 6-7: 22 obstacles).
73. A vote was taken, and the majority **recommended** the below amendment to the regulations.

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

To:

Design—The course should require a dog to traverse at least 15 obstacles but not more than ~~20~~ **22**.

All jump obstacles in any class should be the same height. All obstacles should have a minimum of 5m and up to a maximum of 10m between centres of consecutive obstacles using the straight line centre-to-centre method.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2026)

Proposed amendment to Regulation H13.a and H9.(15)

74. The Council considered an amendment to the regulations, proposed by Mr Tait and seconded by Mr M Hallam, which would allow bitches in season to compete at Open, Premier and Championship shows.
75. The Council sought clarification on Limited shows and why those had not been included on the proposal. It was noted that Limited shows were often held at smaller venues and so it was thought that allowing bitches in season may not have been practical. The office confirmed that Limited shows were often organised by breed specific clubs rather than limited due to venue size.

76. It was noted by the Council that the regulation change which allowed bitches in season at quarter finals, semi-finals and finals of Royal Kennel Club Prestige Events (except under YKC rules) had only been in place since January 2025 and it was considered that this may not have been enough time to see the impact it may have. It was suggested that there may be a need to gather some data regarding this in the future before any decisions were made about extending the regulation.
77. It was acknowledged that the exception of YKC rule was placed into the regulation due to concerns over novice handlers and that the same novice handlers would be found at the majority of shows which could make it difficult for grassroots participants. It was also acknowledged that there was a biological aspect to the behaviour of entire male dogs when they encountered a bitch in season and that this was not always a training issue.
78. A discussion was raised about the welfare of competing bitches in season and whether that should be used as a rest period. It was noted that research had suggested that it was actually the days following a season when a bitch was most at risk of injury but more data on this issue was needed.
79. A vote was taken on the proposal and overall, this was **not recommended** by the Council.

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.a

80. The Council considered an amendment to the regulations, proposed by Mr J Hallam on behalf of Miss Holness, which would include specifications for the material of poles used in hurdles.
81. The proposal was not seconded by a member of the Council as, while it was noted that the majority of regions supported the proposal, it was considered that this should be deferred back to the equipment panel to be reviewed as part of a wider hurdle and equipment review.

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Re-runs

82. Mr Tait had requested the Council discuss whether a regulation change on re-runs was needed to ensure any faults accrued in the first run were carried forward to the re-run, avoiding any unfair advantage.
83. A brief discussion was had and the Council acknowledged that the regulations needed to be clear. It was noted that if a handler had faults in their first round but would be placed, a rerun may give them the opportunity to run a clear round and win the class, and it could be perceived that the handler had practised on the course. However, it was agreed that it would be difficult for the solution to appear fair across the board and that by amending the system to make it fair for some it would risk making it unfair for others.

84. The Council believed that the majority of reruns were due to timing issues and therefore it was referred to the Equipment Panel to be looked at in conjunction with the review of timers.

Implementation of measures to tackle the issue of out of control and aggressive dogs at shows

85. Miss Smith had requested the Council discuss the potential requirement of additional preventative measures and clear consequences to reduce the level of aggressive or out of control dogs seen at shows to help prevent incidents.

Mr Dornford-Smith left the meeting.

86. The Council noted that the majority of regions felt that more could be done to make use of the existing measures available to show managers, including reporting incidents and refusing entries from handlers when needed. It was suggested that social media was sometimes being used to replace incident forms by competitors and that more was needed to be done to combat that and ensure competitors felt supported by show management teams to report incidents.
87. It was considered by the Council that many of the aspects suggested to combat incidents would be difficult to implement across all shows, particularly when a cost aspect was taken into account, and that show managers did have the option to implement the majority of the suggestions if they felt they would work at their own shows.
88. The subject of fencing rings was raised, and it was noted that the Activities Committee had discussed this previously and suggested that it could cause additional problems and it had, on occasions, prevented handlers from resolving issues with their dogs quickly.
89. A query was raised on the subject of penalties, as the Council considered that publication of those could act as a deterrent for bad behaviour, and a reminder of the personal responsibility of a handler for their own dog's behaviour. The office confirmed that penalties were published in The Kennel Club Journal and that there was potential for them to be published on the website in future.
90. Overall, the Council noted that there was a need to remind competitors of the incident book and its use at shows, even on occasions where it was felt incidents were resolved, to ensure data was submitted to The Kennel Club for monitoring.

ITEM 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

International Qualifiers

91. The subject of the International Qualifiers was raised, and clarification was sought from the office as to why some of the qualifiers were being held at Listed Status Clubs instead of fully registered clubs.

92. It was confirmed that The International Qualifiers for team GB was not held under Kennel Club regulations, but FCI regulations and therefore the H Regulations did not apply to the qualifiers. Therefore, the team GB manager had made recommendations to the Prestige Events Working Party regarding which clubs should hold the qualifiers and not all of those were fully registered with some being Listed status with the Kennel Club.

Mrs Laing-Kay left the meeting.

Course changes for qualifiers

93. Concerns were raised in relation to a recent show where it was reported that only minor course changes were made when moving from a graded class (grades 5-6, all heights) to a qualifier class (grades 3-5, small and medium). This had led to multiple incident reports as it was felt some competitors had the opportunity to practice in the ring with the courses being so similar.
94. It was noted by the Council that, while this was not currently against regulation, it could become a more frequent issue and so should be brought back as a proposal to a later meeting.

Responsibility for course design

95. A question was raised as to whether a show could request a judge to judge a course that was designed by somebody else. The office confirmed that this was against the H regulations which stated that the judge was responsible for designing the course.

E-Scooters

96. The subject of E-scooters was discussed by the Council. It was noted that at some shows, particularly larger shows where camping was a significant distance from the rings, E-scooters were being seen more often. The Council wished to reiterate the importance of a 5mph speed limit on site at shows and that unless there was a requirement for mobility reasons, these should not be used around the rings.
97. Following the meeting, a social media post was published to remind competitors of the event terms and conditions page and to highlight to societies that matters such as E-Scooters should be covered within their risk assessments.

ITEM 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

98. The Council noted that the date of its next meeting would be announced in September 2025.
99. The meeting closed at 16.00pm

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 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*