



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT  
10.30 AM ON THURSDAY 25 JULY 2024 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**PRESENT**

Ms D Cox	Midlands
Miss F Godfrey	South East/East Anglia
Mrs S Hyde	Midlands
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr D Moxon	South/South West
Mrs C Patrick	Scotland
Mrs K Russell	North West
Ms A Shaw	South East/East Anglia
Mrs B Smith	Midlands
Ms N Thomas	Wales
Mrs L Turner	South/South West
Mr N Walton	North East

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Ms R Mansfield	Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team
Miss T Collins	Administrator – Working Dog Activities Team

**NOTE: any recommendations made by the Obedience 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.**

**IN THE CHAIR      MR M MCCARTNEY**

**ITEM 1.      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies had been received from Ms Le Fevre.

**ITEM 2.      APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2. Mr Moxon requested that paragraph 17 and paragraph 25 of the minutes be amended. The previous minutes stated that the Council had not agreed the

wording put forward regarding eligibility for beginners due to concerns about whether it succeeded in protecting beginner handlers. It was confirmed that this was part of the reason, however concern was also raised about the position of the item on the agenda. This had created confusion regarding whether representatives had discussed the item with their area prior to the meeting.

3. Mr Moxon also raised an error regarding the regulation text referenced in paragraph 29 of the minutes. This should have read:

**Handlers that have progressed or won out of Beginners, prior to 31 January December 2024, will continue to enter Novice as their lowest available class from January 2025.**

The part of the regulation referenced was then superseded by what was agreed within point 31 to make it retrospective. The office agreed to amend the wording accordingly.

4. The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record, subject to the above changes.
5. Clarification was requested regarding the recent regulation change for the eligibility for Beginners. It was confirmed that a competitor could win out of Beginners with one dog and continue to return to Beginners with other dogs until they have won a first in Novice or have elected to progress out of Novice on points.
6. Ms Cox queried whether competitors who had not won a first in Novice but had won out of Beginners, by the time that the regulation change took effect in January 2025, must treat Beginners as their lowest class. Mr Moxon confirmed that competitors in that position had the choice when they entered a show after 1 January 2025. It was stated that the competitor may continue as before with Novice as the lowest available class for all existing and future dogs. For any dog that had won or progressed out of Beginners on points, Novice would still be that dog's lowest available class. However, if the handler had other dogs eligible for Beginners, they would be able to choose Beginners as their lowest available class with subsequent dogs until they had won a first in Novice or elected to progress from Novice based on points.
7. Due to continued confusion over the matter, Mr Moxon offered to send in some guidance regarding eligibility for Beginners to the office, which would then be announced for clarity to the wider obedience community.
8. The Council requested to discuss paragraph 11 of the previous minutes. This was to seek clarification on how or where handlers were able to carry food in Pre-Beginners classes, as it was not addressed in the proposal and there seemed to be some confusion amongst competitors and judges about whether or not food or toys could be carried in the hand for Pre-Beginners. The wording was included in the Introductory class and the Council agreed

that the same applied for Pre-Beginners. Ms Cox agreed to put guidance together regarding this for the office to announce.

**ITEM 3.      MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

9. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting held on 16 July 2024, had approved the following amendments to regulations:

Regulation G(A)11

**TO:**

To Compete in Beginners a ~~handler or~~ dog must not have won a total of two or more first places in Beginners class or one first place in any other Obedience class (Introductory class and Pre-Beginners excepted) and have not elected to progress on points from Beginners; **plus, the handler must not have won a first place in any other Obedience class (Introductory class, Pre-Beginners and Beginners excepted) and have not elected to progress on points from Novice.**

**Handlers that have previously entered Novice as their lowest available class before 31 December 2024 may elect to continue to treat Novice as their lowest available class. Once they have elected to do so they will not be eligible for Beginners thereafter.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation G32.c.(1)

**TO:**

On first appointment judges must satisfy the show committee that they:

- (1) have ~~won~~ **progressed** out of Beginners at a licensed championship, premier or open obedience show as a handler.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation G.30.g

**TO:**

Judges should, whenever possible, provide their own caller stewards, but the show management shall provide any caller stewards if necessary. Caller and scribe stewards used by judges at the show must not work a dog on the same day, with the exception that ~~with 6 scheduled classes or less,~~ a caller and scribe stewards may compete in one class, other than the class in which they are officiating, provided that the class **in which they are officiating** has ~~20~~ **25** entries or less. Caller and scribe stewards taking up this option will be exempt from any running order and may compete at a convenient time agreed by the judges concerned.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

10. Mr McCartney provided an update regarding the change of roles within the Activities Committee. Mrs S Garner (Obedience) was announced as the Chair of the Committee, with Mr G Martin (Working Trials) as the Vice Chair. Mr

McCartney confirmed that himself, Mrs Patrick and Mrs Russell were still the Committee's Obedience representatives together with Mrs Garner, along with the addition of Mr S Kimblin in place of Mr R Keble due to his retirement. The Council welcomed Mr Kimblin as a fresh perspective for Obedience.

#### Kennel Club Obedience Festival

11. Mr McCartney provided a verbal update on the Obedience Festival proposal. It was noted that no proposal had been submitted to the Activities Committee to date. It was felt that there was not enough detail or structure for a proposal to be put forward and that there was more interest from other competitors rather than those within the OLC.
12. The Council agreed that it may not be the best time to pursue the project. A lot of work regarding the classes, structures, venues and cost had been completed, however with the implementation of new regulations and the strategy review within The Kennel Club, it was suggested that the proposal for the Obedience Festival be put on hold for 12 months.
13. A suggestion was made to do an end of year festival based on points, similar to the previous 'Class Championships'. The Council felt this had been very popular and used to be held at The Kennel Club building at Stoneleigh.
14. There was an agreement that the festival was to start small and escalate from there. Concern was raised about the funding and putting forward a business case for a smaller event might provide a good starting point. From the suggestions put forward the Council appeared to prefer an indoor winter competition. The sub-group would continue to discuss ideas, however the Council agreed to put the idea on hold officially for 12 months.

#### Suspension of Regulation G30.e

15. The Council noted that the suspension of regulation G30.e was approved and was announced via the Kennel Club Obedience Facebook page. It was reiterated to the Council that they could review this at any time if they felt it necessary.
16. Miss Godfrey raised a query as to paragraph 63 in the previous minutes. This was regarding concerns around the world where people were trying to ban dog sports. The office confirmed that the Public Affairs and Press teams were aware of the situation.

#### **ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP**

17. The Council noted a report from Mr McCartney following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 9 April 2024.
18. The Obedience Accredited Trainers agreed to offer seminars online as well as face to face for Championship Judges. Mrs Patrick explained that they were in

the process of arranging the Zoom licence and, once that had been obtained, there were two Championship judges wishing to attend an online seminar.

**ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP**

19. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Le Fevre which noted details of the Sub-Group's meeting held on 25 April 2024. The Council expressed their appreciation to Mrs Le Fevre for her work with the Sub-Group.
20. In regards to research into how obedience dogs distribute their weight whilst competing, Mrs Godfrey advised that she had participated in a study into that subject at the beginning of the year with Writtle University. They used pressure pads in heelwork positions with the dogs and trotted with their heads forward, for example.
21. The office agreed to follow up with the chair of the Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group, who would be able to check the progress of the research and feedback to the Council.

**ITEM 6. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB**

22. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Lavender which noted details of future YKC events.
23. Mrs Lavender explained that there were lots of changes happening within YKC at present and she could only provide a brief outline of them at the current time.
24. A query was raised as to whether YKC members would be able to gain points in normal Obedience classes due to not enough classes being provided for YKC members. Mrs Lavender was aware of the situation and continued to push for YKC members interested in Obedience.
25. The office confirmed that the restructure within The Kennel Club would see an extra member of staff joining the team. It was hoped that this would help to move projects such as these forward in the foreseeable future.

**ITEM 7. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

Mrs K Allen

Mrs L Turner

Proposed amendment to Regulation G1.c

26. At its last meeting the Council discussed the possibility of allowing dogs of 12 weeks to be entered not for competition at obedience shows. The Council was in agreement with the suggestion and Mrs Allen was requested to submit a proposal.
27. The Council considered the proposed amendment to the regulation:

Regulation G1.c

**TO:**

c. Only dogs of six calendar months of age and over are eligible for competition at Kennel Club licensed obedience shows. However, show organisers may accept Not for Competition entries at their discretion. ~~Dogs four months and over are eligible to enter Not For Competition.~~ **Dogs 12 weeks and over are eligible to enter Not for Competition.**

28. The proposal was seconded by Mr Moxon. It was confirmed that discussions had taken place with the Obedience community at shows and positive feedback had been received. Mrs Turner noted that the rationale had not been included in the agenda due to the proposal coming from a discussion item from the last meeting. The Activities Committee would need the rationale if the Council recommended the proposal. The office agreed that the rationale would be included for the Activities Committee.
29. After some discussion, the Council agreed that the regulation was good for socialising puppies. Handlers needed to be mindful of the needs of their puppy and aware of the effect having a puppy by the ring may have on competing dogs.
30. The Council voted unanimously for the proposal.

Mrs S Garner and Mr R Mitchell

Mr D Moxon

Proposed amendment to Regulations G15 and G33j & G33k

31. The Council considered a proposal to remove the stipulation that a dog must not have lost more than 15 points out of 230 to be awarded the Obedience Certificate.

Regulation G15

**TO:**

- a. The Kennel Club will offer an Obedience Certificate (Dog) and an Obedience Certificate (Bitch) for winners of first prizes in Class C Dog and Class C Bitch at a championship show, provided ~~that the exhibits do not lose more than 15 points out of 230, and provided also that the classes are open to all breeds~~ **eligible dogs.**
- b. **Where an Obedience Certificate has been awarded a J**judges must also award a Reserve Best of Sex (**Reserve Obedience Certificate**) **subject to Regulation G33.j.**

(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through.)

Regulation G33j & G33k

**TO:**

j. In classes with ~~40~~**20** or less entries the award of 1st place, **Obedience Certificate (OC) and Reserve Best of Sex (Reserve Obedience Certificate, ROC)** may be withheld if in the opinion of the judge the standard

of work does not merit the award. **If the Obedience Certificate is withheld, then the Reserve Obedience Certificate cannot be awarded.** (This subparagraph **also applies** ~~does not apply~~ to Championship Class C).

k. A judge of Championship Class C must record ~~each dog awarded 215 points or more~~ **the top six highest placed dogs** in the judging book. The show secretary will record these in the official marked catalogue.

(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through)

32. A brief outline of the rationale for the proposal was given, reiterating that marking was down to the judge's discretion on the day. It was mentioned that there had not been much negative feedback received about the proposal, despite some of the community having to go away and think about it before sharing their opinions.
33. A long discussion followed, and a variety of views were raised, including that the proposal allowed obedience to move with change and that it would make things easier and fairer. Conversely, those against the proposal raised that withholding placings had happened very few times in the last 20 years and there were concerns about making a regulation change for a small issue.
34. A discussion about judges marking took place, with conflicting views being considered regarding whether the regulation change would put pressure on the judge. It was suggested that removing the 15 points would possibly provide more consistent judging throughout the day. However, an alternative view was that if the 15 points were removed, the judges may not have the confidence to withhold an Obedience Certificate, as that provided a basis and an explanation for competitors as to why it was withheld.
35. The Council took a vote and the majority voted in favour of the proposal. Therefore, it **recommended** the proposal for approval.

## **ITEM 8.      DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Mrs L Turner

Renaming to 'Competitive Obedience'

36. Mrs Turner requested the Council discuss the name of the discipline to be changed to 'competitive obedience'.
37. It was explained to the Council that there seemed to be a misconception of the distinction between what was classified as obedience in comparison to basic dog training.
38. The Council was unanimously in agreement regarding the suggestion. The office confirmed that the request could be submitted to the Activities Committee as it stood as it could be agreed in principle and the Activities Committee could confirm how it wished it to be actioned.

**ITEM 9.      STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

- 39. In regard to the YKC section, the Council expressed opinions on the removal of the Rebecca Pointer trophy and raised that there was a need to be able to offer a reward to enable YKC members to gain points in ordinary classes. It was important to provide incentives to maintain interest in obedience, especially with young people.
- 40. A suggestion was made to compile a list of judges who would be willing to run YKC classes at their local shows to encourage more people to get involved and provide more support for young people.
- 41. Mrs Lavender confirmed that YKC members obtaining points from open obedience classes had been raised to the YKC department and had been rejected for the time being. The office agreed to investigate to find out the reason and suggested that once there was more staffing in the YKC department it could be something that could be addressed again.
- 42. The last item on the strategy document regarding a non-championship judges list was queried. Due to GDPR, the office was not able to provide such a list at the current time. However, a Judges Education Programme for breed show judges was in development and due to be launched by the end of the year. The intention would be for that to expand to activity judges. That would be for every judge as soon as they were qualified and would show the level of the judges. The Council was in support of the initiative.

**ITEM 10.     ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Number of dogs judged per hour

- 43. Prior to the meeting, Mr Moxon had circulated a regulation amendment relating to how many dogs a judge could judge per hour, relating to Regulation G(C)1.f.(6) and (7). It was noted that with the introduction of rewards between exercises in Introductory and Pre-Beginners classes, the timing seemed to be taking longer. The Council wished to update the regulations in line with the current timing.
- 44. The current regulation stated that:
  - (6) Pre- Beginners .....18 dogs per hour
  - (7) Introductory .....18 dogs per hour
- 45. The Council suggested this be amended to the following:
  - (6) Pre- Beginners .....12 dogs per hour
  - (7) Introductory .....10 dogs per hour
- 46. The Council did not wish to make any amendments to any additional classes.



47. The Council was in agreement with the proposal and **recommended** it for approval.
48. The office reiterated that usually regulation changes could not be made under Any Other Business as the areas had not had a chance to discuss the items beforehand, however as it did not appear to be a controversial change it would be submitted to the Activities Committee for discussion.

Handler with more than one dog in a class.

49. Mrs Russell raised concerns regarding handlers having two dogs being put in the same part of a class by the secretary/printer when they had specifically asked for the dogs to be in different parts. That meant that the handlers two dogs would be competing against each other.
50. It was noted that most secretaries would split the dogs into different parts whether they gave a preference or not on their entry. It was explained to the Council that there had been a case of the show secretary changing the classes to split the dogs when requested on the day too. It was hoped to gather some opinions on the matter.
51. The Council was of the view that it was normal practice to split people in the same class even if they had not specified to do so, although there was no regulation in place for that.
52. It was also agreed that if the classes needed to be amended, it should be done so prior to the show and not on the day.

Capped Classes at Championship Shows

53. Mrs Hyde informed the Council that a show secretary had encountered problems engaging sufficient Open Class C judges on the same day on which championship classes were held and wished to put forward a proposal to allow Championship Shows to cap classes.
54. It was queried as to why shows were struggling to get judges and suggested that capped classes would restrict entries, which would result in less funding for the club/society. There was a discussion regarding the reasons why some societies may struggle to book judges for their shows on the days that held championship classes. However, the Council was in agreement that this should be discussed in full at the next meeting if the show secretary wished to submit a proposal.

**ITEM 11.     DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

55. The Council noted that the date of the next meeting would be announced in September 2024.

56. It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held in person at The Kennel Club.

57. The meeting closed at 12:35pm.

**MR M MCCARTNEY**

**Chair**

**THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT**

**'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'**