



**MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
THURSDAY 4 JULY 2024 AT 10.30AM IN THE BOARDROOM, CLARGES
STREET**

A G E N D A

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 18 January 2024 and 22 February 2024. (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The Council is invited to note that the Board will be considering recommendations from the Activities Committee at its meeting on 8 May 2024. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Code of Best Practice for Agility Judges and Stewards and Guide to Agility Equipment

- b. At its last meeting the Council was advised that the document had been published on The Kennel Club website, but it had been necessary to remove it due to several issues being identified.

The Council is invited to note that the document had been completed, with the help of agility members of the Activities Judges Sub-Group and is now available on The Kennel Club website: <https://kc-media-production.azureedge.net/media/mvvotg44/wt94-code-of-best-practice-for-agility-judges-and-stewards-2024-1.pdf>

The finalised document is attached as an annex to note.

(Annex A refers)

Competition Manager's role

- c. At its meeting on 21 March 2024, the Activities Committee recommended proposed regulations for the role of competition manager which will be submitted to the Board at its meeting on 8 May 2024.

Collapsible Poles

- d. At its last meeting the Council had noted that the Equipment Panel had recommended the collapsible poles available from Performance Agility and Galican for approval.

The Council had recommended a trial period for the new equipment to ensure there were no unforeseen issues and had put the suggestion forward to the Activities Committee for its views.

The Activities Committee, at its meeting on 21 March 2024 had discussed the matter and had agreed that a trial period was appropriate and had recommended that the collapsible poles only be used on the back jump of the rising spread obstacle. The Committee's recommendation will be submitted to the Board at its meeting on 8 May 2024.

Special Events

- e. At its last meeting the Council discussed special events and the lack of clarity around when permission to hold a special event should be applied for. It was agreed that there was some confusion over the regulation and had agreed to put the matter to the Activities Committee for review.

The Council is invited to note that the Activities Committee discussed the matter at its meeting held on 21 March 2024 which agreed that wording to clarify the regulation was required. It would discuss proposed amendments at its next meeting.

ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

The Council is invited to note a written report from Mr Tait following the Sub-Group's meeting on 25 April 2024.

(Annex B refers – to follow)

ITEM 5. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL

- a. The Council is invited to consider a report from the Equipment Panel and to discuss any issues arising from it.
(Annex C refers)

Membership of the Panel

- b. Mrs Bale would like to request additional members to be added to the Panel in order to cover the UK more effectively.
The current members of the Equipment Panel are:

Mr M Hallam
Mrs Bale
Ms Sargent
Mr Tait

Long Jump Proposal

- c. At its last meeting, the Council discussed additional wording for the long jump regulation to ensure the obstacle was as safe as possible for dogs. The Council agreed that the regulation should be amended in line with the recently amended wording for the wall obstacle.

The Council is requested to consider the proposed wording submitted by the Equipment Panel:

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

TO:

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 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.)

The Equipment Panel would like the Activities Judge's Sub-Group to consider some guidance for judges regarding when the long jump sections are nudged together but do not fail to ensure consistency and clarity.

Removal of Wishing Well & Water Jump from List of Approved Obstacles

- d. The Equipment Panel wishes the Council to consider removing the wishing well and water jump obstacles from the list of approved obstacles at Kennel Club licensed shows.

Rationale

The obstacles have fallen into disuse and the majority of dogs that are currently competing have not had the opportunity to train over them. Should a dog meet one of these obstacles in the ring there is now an increased chance of injury due to a lack of familiarity for the obstacles.

Proposed amendments:

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

TO:

~~Water Jump—The overall spread should be: Large Dogs—between 1.2m and 1.5m. Intermediate Dogs—between 1m and 1.3m. Medium Dogs—between 700mm and 900mm. Small Dogs—between 400mm and 500mm. A low hurdle or brush, with a maximum height of: Large Dogs—550mm, Intermediate Dogs—450mm, Medium Dogs—350mm, Small Dogs—250mm may be placed in front of the water. Marker poles with a minimum height of 1.2m, should be placed at all 4 corners, these should not be attached to any part of the water jump. (Deletion struck through.)~~

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

TO:

~~Wishing Well—This obstacle will be of stable construction and will be able to be fixed to the ground. To ensure the safety of the dog, it will have no sharp edges. Should a design be utilised which involves a removable centre section then the resultant corners must be rounded or padded. It will have a roof of which the bottom will be no less than Large and Intermediate Dogs—1500mm, Medium Dogs—1220mm, Small Dogs—950mm from the ground. The roof must not project beyond the width or depth of the base. It will have a displaceable top bar the height of which will be: Large Dogs—600mm, Intermediate Dogs—500mm, Medium Dogs—400mm, Small Dogs—300mm. The minimum space from the top of the bar to the top of the base will be Large Dogs—160mm, Intermediate Dogs—155mm, Medium Dogs—150mm, Small Dogs—105mm. The overall width of the base will be between 900mm & 1400mm. The depth of the base which the dog jumps will be a maximum of Large Dogs—550mm, Intermediate Dogs—475mm, Medium Dogs—400mm, Small Dogs—300mm. (Deletion struck through.)~~

Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(2)

TO:

~~Wishing Well—a dog should be faulted if it touches the base or dislodges the pole. (Deletion struck through.)~~

Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(4)

TO:

~~Water Jump—must be cleared without contact with the water. (Deletion struck through.)~~

Start and Finish Gates

- e. At its last meeting, the Council discussed increasing the distance at which the timing gates may be placed from the tyre, when it was used as the last obstacle, to 40cm. It was agreed that the Equipment Panel would discuss the issue and bring potential solutions to the next meeting.

The Council is requested to consider a proposal to include a list of obstacles allowed at the finish of a course.

Regulation H(1)(B)1.a.(7)

TO:

Electronic timing gates – The only obstacles allowed at the start ~~and finish~~ of a Standard Agility or Jumping Course are; Hurdle, Wall, Spread Jump, Brush Jump, Long Jump, Tyre, ~~Wishing Well~~, Pipe Tunnel.

The only obstacles allowed at the finish of a Standard Agility or Jumping Course are; Hurdle, Wall, Spread Jump, Brush Jump, Long Jump, Pipe Tunnel.

The electronic timing gates should be positioned within 30cm in front of the first obstacle and within 30cm after the last obstacle. The distance between the electronic timing gates should be no less than the width of the hurdle wings, or in the case of the Wall, within the pillars. For the Long Jump, Tyre, ~~Wishing Well~~ and Pipe Tunnel, the timing gates should be placed as close as possible to the outside edge of the obstacle without impeding the dog's natural path. N.B. This regulation should also apply if manual timing is used in conjunction with start/finish poles.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

Rationale

New wording to clarify which obstacles may be used at the finish of a course, thereby preventing the tyre from being used as a finish obstacle. This was widely supported by the regional areas and whilst it does give less flexibility over the use of the tyre it removes the potential for damage to timing systems, as well as removing the chance of a dog misreading the timing gates as the obstacle.

Brush Jumps and Fillers

- f. The Council is invited to note that the Equipment Panel is currently reviewing if there is a way to create a safe alternative to the brush element on the Brush Fence and is also looking into the use of wooden fillers on standard jumps.

Given the move towards the softer, impact absorbing wall and long jump it seems logical to review the use of wood/brush for fillers without losing yet another obstacle. Mrs Bale has concerns over the use of wood fillers following a reported dog injury in 2023 on a wooden filler. This review is continuing with the intent for it to form a part of a review of the standard hurdle as a whole at the next meeting.

ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL

- a. The Council is invited to consider a report from the Agility Governance Panel and to discuss any issues arising.
(Annex D refers)

Micro Height

- b. The Council is requested to consider a tabled report from the Panel on initial data gathering to investigate the need for a micro height.
(Annex E refers – to be tabled)

Grading Review

- c. The Council is invited to consider a verbal report on the progress of the grading review from the Panel.

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

- a. The Council is invited to consider a report from the Judging Panel and to discuss any issues arising.
(Annex F refers – to follow)
- b. The Council is invited to note a report from Mrs J Gardner on the Activities Judges Sub-Group meeting held on 9 April 2024.
(Annex G refers)

ITEM 8. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

- a. The following two proposals are related to the same regulation and as such will be considered together:

Lune Valley Dog Training Club

Mr M Hallam

Proposed amendment to Regulations H(1)9.a and H(1)(B)1.a.(1)

- (i) Mr T Joint, on behalf of Lune Valley Dog Training Club would like the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulations relating to outdoor ring size to allow for flexibility to manage issues when rings are needed to be moved.

Regulation H(1)10.a

TO:

Test area shall have a suitable surface and ~~measure a minimum of 32m x 32m for outdoor rings.~~ **must be a minimum of 1024 square metres. Each side of the ring being a minimum of 30m for outdoor rings.** Indoor rings are recommended to be 600 square meters but must be a minimum of 450 square metres with no one side measuring less than 15m. For outdoor all weather arenas of one or more rings that are enclosed by structure, fence or permanent barrier each ring is recommended to be 800 square meters but must be a minimum of 600 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. All indoor and outdoor all weather permanently enclosed rings for Prestige Events and/or Championship classes must be a minimum of 800 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. The ring area includes space for officials, including the scime and ring party, but where possible the ring tent should be outside the ring area.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

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

TO:

Test area shall have a suitable surface and ~~measure a minimum of 32m x 32m for outdoor rings.~~ **must be a minimum of 1024 square metres. Each side of the ring being a minimum of 30m for outdoor rings.** Indoor rings are recommended to be 600 square meters but must be a minimum of 450 square metres with no one side measuring less than 15m. For outdoor all weather arenas of one or more rings that are enclosed by structure, fence or permanent barrier each ring is recommended to be 800 square meters but must be a minimum of 600 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. All indoor and outdoor all weather permanently enclosed rings for Prestige Events and/or Championship classes must be a minimum of 800 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. The ring area includes space for officials, including the scime and ring party, but where possible the ring tent should be outside the ring area.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

To allow flexibility to manage issues with ground conditions caused by adverse weather or when landowners have carried out hard landscaping without notification which impacts the planned location of rings e.g. installation of fencing, land drainage etc.

Miss J and Mrs L Slade

Mr M Tait

Proposed amendment to Regulations H(1)9.a and H(1)(B)1.a.(1)

- (ii). Miss J and Mrs L Slade would like the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulations relating to outdoor ring size to allow more flexibility for show organisers.

Regulation H(1)10.a

TO:

Test area shall have a suitable surface and measure a minimum of ~~32m x 32m for outdoor rings.~~ **1000 square metres where one side should be a minimum of 25 metres for outdoor rings.** Indoor rings are recommended to be 600 square meters but must be a minimum of 450 square metres with no one side measuring less than 15m. For outdoor all weather arenas of one or more rings that are enclosed by structure, fence or permanent barrier each ring is recommended to be 800 square meters but must be a minimum of 600 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. All indoor and outdoor all weather permanently enclosed rings for Prestige Events and/or Championship classes must be a minimum of 800 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. The ring area includes space for officials, including the scime and ring party, but where possible the ring tent should be outside the ring area.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

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

TO:

Test area shall have a suitable surface and measure a minimum of ~~32m x 32m~~ **1000 square metres where one side should be a minimum of 25 metres for outdoor rings.** Indoor rings are recommended to be 600 square meters but must be a minimum of 450 square metres with no one side measuring less than 15m. For outdoor all weather arenas of one or more rings that are enclosed by structure, fence or permanent barrier each ring is recommended to be 800 square meters but must be a minimum of 600 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. All indoor and outdoor all weather permanently enclosed rings for Prestige Events and/or Championship classes must be a minimum of 800 square metres with no one side measuring less than 20m. The ring area includes space for officials, including the scime and ring party, but where possible the ring tent should be outside the ring area.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

The change would allow for more flexibility for show organisers to relocate rings due to extreme weather conditions. It could also allow more venues to be available for use.

Additionally, it would allow for prestige event qualifiers to be run in a ring size more similar to those used in the quarter finals, semi-finals and finals of these competitions as they use rings that are not the standard 32mx32m.

Mr M Tait

Progression to the Championship Class Final – Regulation H(1)9

- b. At its last meeting the Council considered a discussion item on the above matter which received support for progression. The Council is requested to consider a proposed amendment to the above regulation so that the winner of each qualifying round automatically qualifies for the final, providing they compete in both rounds.

New Regulation H(1)9.b

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. 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' does not transfer down to the 2nd placed dog. The winner of each round must have competed in both qualifying rounds.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered.)

Mr M Tait

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)10.g

- c. Mr Tait wishes the Council to consider a proposed amendment to the above regulation which would reduce the number of individual runs a person can judge in one day.

Regulation H(1)10.g.

TO:

The maximum number of individual runs a person shall judge on one day is 450 **for up to 2 classes**, excluding unforeseen eventualities such as re-runs. **For each additional class, the number of dogs should be reduced by 25 dogs.**

Where Championship Class entries exceed 200 an additional previously approved championship judge must be appointed for the jumping round.

Reserve judges may enter dogs for competition at the show but may not compete if called upon to judge. Show committees must appoint sufficient judges for the expected entries.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold.)

Rationale

A survey of Kennel Club agility judges had an overwhelming response of over 200 judges in favour of a reduction in judge's numbers with only one vote for maintaining the current regulations.

The ability for shows to have the same judge do two heights of championships classes would be unaffected as both qualifying rounds of the championship class count as one class. Therefore, this would not have an impact on current championship judges.

This would help keep a judge's day to a reasonable and manageable timetable and allow judges to have confidence in what will be expected of them, and to be able to manage their day.

Mr M Cavill

Mrs J Bale

Proposed amendment to Regulation H28.a.(9) Disqualification and Forfeit of Awards

- d. Mr Cavill wishes the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulation to permit judges to judge a spouse, immediate family member or resident at the same address in all classes at Kennel Club licensed shows, with no exceptions. The rule regarding dogs owned by the judge remains unchanged.

Regulation H28.a.(9)

TO:

A dog may be disqualified by the Board 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 is resident at the same address as the scheduled judge. This shall not apply to a judge appointed in an emergency.~~

~~(Deletions struck through.)~~

~~(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered.)~~

Rationale

The above regulation came into effect on 1st January 2012 and has, and continues to be problematic to show organisers, judges, families, and the future generation of judges. Over the course of the last 2 years, we have lost a number of high profile and exceptionally good judges because of the regulation, and it still proves to be a major blocker to those that do judge regularly and at the highest levels. The proposal to remove the regulation was brought to the Agility Liaison Council in January 2015 and again in January 2019. On both occasions, the proposal gained support from competitors, judges, show organisers and at Agility Liaison Council it gained unanimous support to be progressed. Unfortunately, on both occasions, the proposal was turned down at higher committees – Annex H extracts the proposals and minutes of the meetings along with feedback following Activities Committee meetings.

Previously it was noted that *'a press release had recently been issued in respect of breed shows and the necessity for judging to be perceived as fair and impartial. It was also of the view that most other activities were judged by way of a scoring system and may be considered to be objective, and that agility could not be viewed as being different in that respect.'* If all activities are judged, as suggested and agreed by the Activities Committee, in line with wider Kennel Club regulations and guidance, fairly and impartially, with a sound level of objectivity as opposed to subjectivity, all dogs, handled by any person, is subject to the same level of scrutiny and by not allowing a judge to judge any dog put before them on the day in any class, is undermining and belittling the integrity of that judge.

All judges, upon appointment, sign a contract confirming that they abide by the Code of Conduct and best practice for Agility judges. The new Judges and Stewards guide (<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/mvvtog44/wt94-code-of-best-practice-for-agility-judges-and-stewards-2024-1.pdf>), clearly defines and sets out the Ethics and Integrity of Judges (Page 5) and clearly states:

There is therefore an expectation that judges will be competent and trustworthy. Judging is not a right, but a privilege and judges should be respected by the competitor. To that end this code sets out the relevant aspects that judges should be capable of demonstrating:

- Judges at Kennel Club licensed agility shows are expected to maintain and abide by the highest standards in accordance with Kennel Club Rules and Regulations and appropriate Codes of Best Practice as published from time to time
 - Judges should act honestly and impartially when undertaking an appointment
- There are no restrictions however on judging friends, business partners, club members, people they train (whose money some readily take as a living wage),

partners not living at the same address, or breeder of the dog that have far more to benefit from a judge's decision than a family member.

There are clear pathways in place to ensure that judges abide by and maintain the integrity required, with a structured reporting process in place, should these rules and regulations be broken.

Judges give up a lot of their time to ensure that others in the activity can compete on a weekly basis at shows that are getting bigger and more numerous. Agility has become a family activity with multi generations competing with dogs at all levels from Grade 1 to Championship and Prestige Events Finals. The introduction and approval of H19.e and H27.a(7) to allow judges' dogs to compete on the days they judge came with the rationale - *There are now many families and couples in agility who may share the handling of their dogs, or close friends who share the training of their dogs.* This regulation was introduced in January 2024, which supports the above regulation approval and is a clear demonstration and recognition that agility has progressed beyond a singular member of the family competing. The restriction still in place prevents judges from judging any spouse or family member and still prevents judges from accepting appointments for classes in which family members may be competing with their own or borrowed dogs. This restriction is forcing more experienced judges with succeeding family members from accepting grade clashing classes, dog height restrictions, Championship appointments and Prestige Events Finals, leading to judges not accepting appointments, judges stepping back from judging to allow family members to still compete and producing logistical issues for show organisers.

A survey carried out recently on the FCI Judges Facebook page asked a similar question regarding the judging of dogs (own dogs, dogs from the same house, dog trained by the judge, recently competed with by the judge and bred by the judge) and judging of people (own family and coached recently by the judge). In the responses (accepting some countries had not completed all sections), 36 out of 37 countries worldwide allow the judge to judge a dog they have recently trained, 32 out of 33 countries worldwide allow judging of people the judge has recently trained and 29 of 33 countries allow judges to judge family members. (The only countries from the respondents not allowed to judge family members being Finland, Great Britain, Northern Ireland and America(AKC)). In most of the rest of the world in FCI and other organisations judges are allowed to judge spouses and family members.

(Annex H refers)

Ms M Meade

Ms E Laing-Kay

Proposed addition to Regulation H(1)10. Management

- e. Ms Meade wishes the Council to consider an addition to the above regulation to prevent smoking and vaping from occurring in or around the rings.

New Regulation H(1)10.d

TO:

No smoking or vaping in or within 10 metres of the rings or during queuing.

(Insertion in bold.)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered.)

Rationale

Smoking and vaping have negative impacts on the health of those who inhale second-hand smoke or vapour. Second-hand smoke is well documented to increase the risk of lung cancer, lead to a higher instance of respiratory infections, cause an increased risk of developing heart disease, and worsen symptoms of asthma leading to frequent respiratory distress. Additionally, there are negative health impacts associated with dogs including links to second-hand smoke and various cancers.

Additionally, there has been recent research on the impact of inhaling vape aerosol indicating that for nicotine-containing products there are associated health risks similar to smoking. Exposure to second-hand vape aerosol is linked with an increased risk of respiratory infection, asthma aggravation, negative cardiovascular impacts, and risks to foetal development.

Recently in 2023, the government have moved to ban smoking entirely from public spaces with a long-term action plan to remove tobacco products from public availability. Public events such as festivals and sporting events typically don't allow smoking in general areas, instead, they offer designated areas for smoking for the duration of the event. Most sporting events and stadiums have a blanket ban on smoking and vaping within the premises.

The current regulations offer no guidance on whether smoking is permitted leading to smoking or vaping at ringside or during course walking where hot ash is dropped on the ground dogs will be running on. At present, competitors, volunteers, and dogs are routinely exposed to second-hand smoke or vape aerosol at ringside when queuing and while running courses leading to increased health risks.

A list of references to studies is available in the attached annex.

(Annex I refers)

Mr M Tait

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)2.d. Reintroduction of Lower Height Option for small dogs.

- f. Mr Tait wishes the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulation which would allow for a Lower Height Option for small dogs that handlers believe will measure under 30cm. There would be combined results for all small dogs and prestige events would not have the Lower Height Option. Tyre and long jump specification will remain unchanged.

Regulation H(1)(B)2.d.

TO:

Small Dogs – For dogs measuring 350mm or under at the withers. **Where an owner believes their dog would measure 300mm or under at the withers,**

the hurdles and wall will be reduced to 20cm in height. Results for all small dog classes will be combined. Tyre and long jump specifications will remain the same. The Lower Height Option would not be available in Prestige Events.

(Insertion in bold.)

Rationale

At the last meeting of the Agility Liaison Council there was some support for introducing a micro height, however it was decided that more research was needed in order to propose an amendment. Introducing a lower height option for small dogs would allow for an interim solution and allow data collection of the number of dogs who may qualify for a micro height.

A lot of agility is taken on trust therefore we would be asking handlers to respect the regulations and only enter if they believe their dog is 300mm or under.

There would be little impact on measurers, show organisers and judges. There would also be no additional cost for rosettes and trophies, no additional course-walking. The only element that would add additional time would be dropping the jump height.

Ms J Wood

Ms E Bostock

Proposed amendment to Regulation K3.d Agility Warrants

- g. Ms Wood wishes the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulation relating to the allocation of warrant points for clear rounds.
Regulation K3.d

TO:

Points will also be awarded for clear rounds within the course time as follows:

Standard Agility Classes 2 points

Standard Jumping Classes 1 point

Where less than 10 places are awarded in any class a competitor obtaining a clear round not in the places will be awarded the points applicable **up to and including third place and thereafter** for a clear round in that class, i.e. 2 points for an agility class and 1 point for a jumping class.

(Insertion in bold.)

Rationale

With an increase in the number of available shows to enter we are seeing smaller class sizes. In turn dogs that are consistent are losing out on warrant points because of this. For example, if there are less than 10 dogs in an agility class and only first place is awarded, a dog that would have been awarded second in a larger class is only a clear round and as such awarded 2 warrant points. This would be 17 points less than had the class awarded to second. Competitors do not know when they enter a show what class sizes to expect and consistent dogs are being held back from achieving their warrants by something beyond their control.

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr J Hallam

Show Management Best Practice

- a. Mr Hallam wishes the Council to discuss the implementation of show management best practice.

There used to be a show management course for new secretaries which was to promote The Kennel Club's best practice in organising agility shows, covering all aspects of administration, planning, health and safety and venue selection. The aim of this discussion item is to open it up to the agility community to determine whether this is needed and to suggest topics to include.

Current items for inclusion would be:

- Cancelling a show
- Venue selection and management
- Health and safety i.e. distance between units for fire safety
- Cost management
- Ordering supplies and equipment (list of suppliers for equipment, rosettes etc.)
- Judge management
- Social media
- Trade stands
- Show processing

New people are running either newly set up shows or stepping into the role on a committee. This proposed document would help people run shows effectively and safely.

The document should follow industry standards and policies including the below:

- The Purple Event Guide: <https://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/>
- Diversity & Inclusion strategy and policies
- Safeguarding policy

Mr J Hallam

Distance between contact obstacles

- b. Mr Hallam would like the Council to discuss adding wording to the Code of Best Practice for Agility Judges to avoid placing two contact obstacles one after the other. This would fit in the document under the safe placement of obstacles section.

Rationale

It has been seen at shows where two contact obstacles were placed one after the other. This is a dangerous combination as depending on the distance

between the obstacles and if a dog has running contacts, the dog would only just be coming off the first contact and landing before preparing to go onto the second one.

Ms K Parker

Mrs J Gardner

Fenced Rings

- c. Ms Parker would like the Council to consider whether all rings should be fenced at agility competitions.

Rationale

Fenced rings would make the competition area a little safer than it currently is. Recently a regulation has been brought in regarding the distance between the rings and fencing off one side if too close to another ring to help with the dogs whilst running. I do feel that if all rings were fenced in, this would help to improve this further.

There have been a few incidents where there have been loose dogs running through rings at shows. This happened to me twice whilst judging last year. This has an effect on people around the rings including those who are having to stop their dogs, sometimes mid run, so that others can try to catch the loose dog. This isn't fair on the handler or the dogs that are enjoying their time in the ring.

I fully understand that there could be people who would say that fenced rings can cause injury and that there may be some people who would bring out dogs that aren't ready to compete or reactive dogs that can't compete in a safe environment. I am also fully aware that dogs can still run through fenced areas, including the entrance and exit areas of the rings. However, if the rings are fenced in, this would reduce the number of issues that can be caused in the rings which are divided with just rope.

There could also be a cost involved for the show teams. However, a lot of people are now being charged for "facilities" along with the cost of the runs, so surely this could also accommodate the cost for the barrier fencing and stakes?

This is a activity for all, and we are trying to make it safer. We have brought in safer equipment and ring sizes to ensure the safety of the dogs, surely this would be the next step to protect those dogs in the ring.

Mrs C Webster

Ms T Davies

Distance between obstacles

- d. Mrs Webster wishes the Council to discuss whether wording should be added to the regulations regarding distances between obstacles on a course that may not be part of a single sequence. This follows an incident experienced by Ms Webster where her dog collided with the dog walk, which was an off-course obstacle, while taking a backside slice on a jump placed close to the dog walk.

From video footage, it appears that the dog may have attempted to leap the sloping dog walk plank, presumably because of the visual presented to the dog with the dog walk and the jump being approximately the same height. Another contributing factor may have been the speed the dog was travelling at the discrimination, as the tunnel was the preceding obstacle, which was placed under the A Frame. The dog sustained injuries requiring multiple veterinary/rehabilitation appointments and a rest period from agility.

Mrs Webster submitted an incident report which has been submitted to the Equipment Panel for review. Mrs Webster would like the Council to consider whether the regulations should be amended to prohibit off-course obstacles being placed in close proximity in this way, to reduce the risk of injury in the future. There is wording in the FCI regulations that could be considered as a starting point for discussions: "Off-course obstacles should not be a possible danger for the dog (examples below: a misunderstanding or not enough control over the dog, could lead to the dog crashing into off-course obstacle.)"

Ms J Bale

Online Incident Book

- e. Ms Bale would like the Council to discuss whether the Incident Book should be made available as an online form. The office is requested to provide insight on how this may be achieved.

Rationale

The current Incident Book is not being used effectively as it is a physical document that must be filled in and then scanned and sent to The Kennel Club. Additionally, it is not always possible to gather the required people to have access to and fill in the Incident Book at the secretary's tent.

By moving the document online it could:

- Reduce the workload for the office
- Speed up processing of incidents
- Improve reporting by stakeholders (judges/competitors etc)

There are potential problems to consider, such as misuse of the forms and delayed reporting of incidents which would have best been dealt with at the show on the day. However, the advantages would outweigh these, and the system could be trialled for a period. Given the desire for The Kennel Club to improve communications with stakeholders, providing a more modern, up to date method of reporting should be given serious consideration.

ITEM 10. STRATEGY DOCUMENT

At its last meeting, the Council agreed that the existing strategy document was not actionable or realistic and needed a major review. The Council agreed to work on the document outside of the meeting and bring a reviewed document at its next meeting.

The Council is requested to consider the revised strategy document.
(Annex J refers – to follow)

ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Please give at least two weeks' advance notice of matters to be raised under 'Any Other Business' as this assists the office if research is required. These items are discussed at the discretion of the Chair.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the Council's next meeting will be announced in September 2024.

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*