



**MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD AT 10.30 AM
ON TUESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2024 IN THE BOARDROOM, THE KENNEL CLUB,
CLARGES STREET**

A G E N D A

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2023 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. KENNEL CLUB RESEARCH PROJECT

The Council is invited to receive a presentation from Mr M Bermingham (Interim Strategy & Implementation Executive) which will provide an update on the research project into 'Organisers and Participants of Dog Activities'.

ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The Council is invited to note the Board, at its meeting held on 22 November 2023, approved the following amendments to regulations:

Regulation G35.d

TO:

Nothing may be carried, worn or displayed by a handler or a dog during judging which is capable of indicating the identity of the dog or owner nor must anything be said, or any action taken which identifies the dog. ~~other than by exhibit number.~~ If requested by the judge or ring steward a handler may (at their choice) disclose their first name and dog's pet name for possible show report use.

(Deletion struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation G35.k.

TO:

~~Every handler shall ensure that whilst the dog is competing, its correct ring number is displayed.~~

(Deletion struck through. Subsequent regulations to be renumbered)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation G(D)2.b.(2)

TO:

2. Duties

b. During judging:

(1) To ensure that all commands are given in the same place and in the same manner for each dog and competitor.

(2) To ensure each competitor ~~has~~ **gives** the correct ring number for their dog when entering the ring. ~~and that the number is prominently displayed whilst working.~~

(Insertions in bold. Deletion struck through)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation G(A)9

TO:

G(A) CLASSES

9. Introductory.

a. This class is to introduce and support newcomers to obedience competition. In this class only incentives in the form of a toy or rewards are allowed to be carried by the handler in the competitive ring and may be given to the dog at the end of an exercise or in between exercises.

Rewards include food which must be carried in a small closed container during the exercises. The judge will designate an area in the competitive ring where food may be given to the dog by the handler.

b. To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have gained a 1st place in any obedience class, and have not elected to progress on points from Introductory.

c. Handlers will not be penalised for encouragement or extra commands in all exercises.

d. In any exercise attempted the competing team cannot lose all the allocated points for that exercise but must be awarded a minimum of ~~two~~ **one** points for each exercise they have attempted.

e. The detailed test will be:

(1) ~~Play with dog for 15-30 seconds on or off lead at the handler's choice.~~
~~Handlers may use a silent toy~~ 40 points

Engagement – this will be marked throughout the test – the use of motivators and rewards before and between exercises which may include food, silent toys, tricks, and verbal and physical praise within the reward area of the ring. Toys and food in a sealed container, must either be left on the reward table, or be concealed in the handler's pocket during tests, where only verbal motivation may be used to keep the dog engaged. 10 points

(2) ~~Heel on lead~~ 40 points

Heelwork to be set and marked as 2 distinct exercises:- 2a.

‘Heelwork set up on lead’ and 2b. ‘Heelwork on lead’

(a) Heelwork Set up – on lead, handler to set the dog up in heelwork position, in a designated spot, facing the judge, on steward’s command. Handler to be asked if they are ready, when this is acknowledged, steward will say ‘end of test’ 2 points

(b) Heel on lead, from a moving start and detailed in Annex G(C)4 c and d – Tests 8 points

(3) Recall with a finish on lead, off lead or long line, at the handler’s choice 10 points

Recall, to be set and marked as 3 distinct exercises:-

(a) ‘Recall Present’ – On lead dog sitting in front of the handler, handler takes one step back on steward’s command, then calls the dog into the present again on steward’s command, the steward will say ‘end of test’

2 points

(b) ‘Recall Finish’ – on lead. Dog sitting in front of the handler, on steward’s command, handler directs the dog to heel, whilst keeping feet still, the steward will say ‘end of test’

2 points

(c) ‘Recall – on/off a long line – handler’s choice’. On command, the handler shall leave the dog in a sit or a down in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When instructed, the handler will recall the dog which must return briskly – no present is required, but will not be penalised – once the dog has returned, the steward will say ‘end of test’

6 points

(4) TOTAL 30 points

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)
(Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation G(C)4

TO:

G(C) Descriptions and Explanatory Notes For Obedience Tests Classes

4. Tests.

- a. Judges must ensure that all manoeuvres can be satisfactorily accomplished by all breeds that may be entered in the class.
- b. In all classes the handler may use the dog’s name with a command or signal without penalty.
- c. Heelwork – in all classes at the start and end of the test the dog should be sitting straight at the handler’s side. **Except in Introductory, which will be from a moving start.**
- d. Heel on lead (applicable to ~~Introductory Class~~, Pre-Beginners, Beginners and Novice) – The dog should be sitting straight at the handler’s side. On command the handler should walk briskly forward with the dog at heel. The dog’s shoulder should be approximately level with and reasonably close to the handler’s leg at all times when the handler is walking. The lead should be slack at all times. On the command to turn, the handler should turn smartly in the direction

indicated and the dog should keep its position at the handler's side. Turning manoeuvres must not be coupled together. The handler and dog must be allowed several paces if required to turn again. On the command 'Halt' the handler should halt immediately, and the dog should sit straight at the handler's side. Throughout the test the handler may not touch the dog or make use of the lead without penalty. Heelwork may include large circles or arcs as part of the heelwork exercise.

(1) ~~Introductory Class. Heelwork to be on lead and will be a large circle or straight line. Heel on Lead will be broken down into distinct tests, as detailed above, Heelwork from a moving start, to be on lead and will be:-~~

- a) **A large 'figure of 8'** **8 points**
- b) **Or a large 'S' shape** **8 points**
- c) **Or an arc or circle in one direction, break off and reward and the pattern then repeated in the opposite direction** **4 points plus 4 points**

f. Recall-

(1) ~~Introductory~~ **Pre-Beginner Class to Novice:** At the start of the exercise the dog should be in the sit or down position (handler's choice of position) at the handler's left side. On command, the handler shall leave the dog in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When instructed, the handler will recall the dog which must return briskly to the 'present' position and sit. When instructed, the handler will command the dog to go to the heel position on the handler's left side and sit in the 'heel' position.

~~(1)~~**(2) Introductory Class – will be divided into three parts – 4.f.(1)a. Present, 4.f.(1)b. Finish and 4.f.(1)c. Recall, and will each be tested separately.**

- a) **'Present' – on lead dog sitting in front of the handler, handler takes one step back on steward's command, then calls the dog into the present on steward's command, the steward will say 'end of test'** **- 2 points**
- b) **'Finish' – on lead dog sitting in front of the handler, on steward's command, handler directs the dog to heel and finish in a sit, whilst keeping feet still. The steward will say 'end of test'** **- 2 points**
- c) **'Recall' On/off a long line – handler's choice. At the start of the exercise the dog should be in the sit or down position (handler's choice of position) at the handler's left side on or off a long line (handler's choice). On command, the handler shall leave the dog in the direction instructed. When instructed, the handler will halt and then turn to face the dog. When instructed, the handler will recall the dog, which must return briskly to the handler. A present is not required, but will not be penalised. The steward will say 'end of test'** **- 6 points**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold. Renumber subsequent regulations)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Kennel Club Obedience Festival

- b. At its last meeting the Council received an update on the ongoing plans for the Obedience Festival. Discussions were ongoing as to specifics of when and where the festival may take place.

The Council is invited to note a report on progress from Mrs Cox, Mrs Hyde and Mrs Smith.

(Annex A refers)

Eligibility for Beginners

- c. At its last meeting the Council considered a proposal from Mr Moxon regarding eligibility for Beginners Class. The Council had not agreed the wording as put forward due to concerns about whether it succeeded in protecting beginner handlers. It was agreed that further work would be done on the wording by Mr Moxon and brought back to this meeting.

Mr Moxon's proposal is on the agenda for consideration under Item 8.a.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

The Council is invited to note a report from Mrs Le Fevre following the Sub-Group's meeting which took place on 30 August 2023.

(Annex B refers – to follow)

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

The Council is invited to note a written report from Mrs Allen following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 15 November 2023.

(Annex C refers – to follow)

ITEM 7. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

The Council is invited to note a written report from Mrs Lavender.

(Annex D refers – to follow)

ITEM 8. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Mr Moxon

Eligibility for Beginners

- a. At its previous meeting the Council considered a proposed amendment to regulation G(A)11, which would change the eligibility for the Beginners Class. The Council was of the view that the wording did not sufficiently protect beginner handlers and requested further work be undertaken on the regulation.

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 class 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.**

Mr Moxon has submitted a document for consideration which includes the rationale for the suggested change while also proposing solutions to concerns raised on whether the amendment would be retrospective and a consequential amendment to the judges' criteria.

(Annex E refers)

Mrs D Cox

Declaring merit points when entering Championship Class C

- b. Mrs Cox would like the Council to discuss a proposal to make it optional to declare merit points on entries for Championship Class C if entries are less than 60.

Regulation G30.eC

TO:

Where the entry for Championship Class C exceeds 60, it will be reduced to 60 by a ballot based on a system of merit. **If entry numbers are less than 60, declaring a merit score is optional.**

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

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Open Class C	5 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
CH. Class C	20 points	12 points	8 points	4 points
Crufts Obed	30 points	18 points	12 points	6 points

Points are calculated for placing between the date on which previous wins are calculated for entry to the show (i.e. up to and including 25 days before the start of the competition) and the same date ONE year earlier.

Competitors not having given a merit score will be considered as having none.

If the entry numbers reach 60, the the merit score for all competitors in Championship Class C will be on display at the show. The onus is on competitors to be aware of likely class entry numbers, and present merit scores accordingly.

In the event that entry numbers reach 60, €competitors claiming an incorrect merit score must be reported to the Kennel Club.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)

Lisburn & District Dog Training Club

Mr M McCartney

Caller and scribe stewards competing

- c. Lisburn & District Dog Training Club would like the Council to consider a proposal which would allow caller and scribe stewards to work a dog on the same day that they are a caller/scribe.

Regulation G30.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 at a show ~~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 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)

Rationale

There are small numbers of competitors at shows and although clubs are trying to run two classes of the same level, this pushes them over the scheduled six class rule but no more in actual numbers. This means that quite a few people must give up their opportunity to compete which equates to no one offering/volunteering to steward. This makes running a show for them very difficult and are not the only ones to be suffering this fate. If the class entry is under 25 the steward can easily have time to work one round of their own.

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mrs K Allen

Mrs L Turner

Age of dogs at shows

Mrs Allen would like the Council to discuss the possibility and effect of changing regulation G1.c to allow dogs of 12 weeks to be entered not for competition at obedience shows.

Rationale

The current regulation states that dogs aged four calendar months and over are eligible to enter shows Not for Competition (NFC). This regulation was introduced in 1999.

The change to the regulation would allow twelve week old puppies to enter NFC at shows, covered by the show's insurance and able to be part of any part of the show environment. The regulations covering any dog/handler behaviour would still apply.

The Kennel Club has the following guidance on its website regarding puppies and early experiences:

“A puppy who is properly reared in their early weeks will be far more likely to grow up confident, calm, more open to learning new things, less likely to respond to new experiences fearfully or aggressively – in short, more likely to become a good family dog.

Up to the first 16 weeks of age, the puppy is also learning who is in their social group, who the people and animals are that form their family, who they are social and friendly with, who they play with and who they are building bonds with. You have to carry on this socialisation to teach your puppy about their new family and what their life with you is going to contain.”

So 24 years on with more behavioural research and better medical practice what are the reasons for puppies not to experience dog shows as soon as it is safe to do so. Afterall dog shows are going to become a very important part of their lives, probably for the rest of their lives.

ITEM 10. STRATEGY DOCUMENT

Representatives are invited to review the Strategic Plan, which has been updated in line with requests from the Council made at its previous meeting, and to discuss how the items may be progressed. It is also invited to propose further items.

(Annex F refers)

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 Chairman.

ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting of the Council will take place on 25 July 2024 via Microsoft Teams.

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