



**MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 18 JUNE 2025 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 meeting held on 16 January 2025 (copies previously distributed).

ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations from the January meeting will be discussed by the Board at its meeting on 29 April 2025. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

ITEM 4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PANELS

The council is invited to consider the terms of reference for panels provided by the chair.

(Annex A refers)

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 B refers)

Hurdle Data Review

- b. The Council is invited to consider the review of hurdle data gathered by the Equipment Panel and to discuss any issues arising from it.
(Annex C refers)

Weaves as a set of 6 or 12

- c. The Equipment panel wishes the Council to consider a proposed amendment to the following regulation to provide clarity over the requirements for weave poles to be available as both a set of 6 or 12.

Regulation H(1)(B)3.h

To:

Weaving Poles – The number of poles should be six or twelve. **Both options must be provided for standard classes.** The maximum number of weaves in a standard class is 12. They should be in a continuous line, as straight as possible, and should be 600mm apart (between the poles). The poles must be of a rigid construction and with a minimum height of 762mm and a diameter of 35mm. The base must have support bars at the bottom of each pole and they must be positioned away from the side a dog would normally negotiate each pole. The base must be of a rigid construction and poles must be made from a plastic pipe.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

There has been some confusion over whether a show must provide the option of both a set of 6 weaves and a set of 12 weaves for judges to use. 6 weaves are an option stated in the regulations and are often substituted at the last minute when issues with space or time limits arise. A judge may expect both options to be available to them so the additional clarification of this in the regulation would give clarity for both judges and equipment providers.

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)

Winning out timeframe

The Council is requested to discuss a proposal from the panel regarding a revision non limbo periods between grades:

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.**
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

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.**
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

Through previous consultations, it seems that many competitors desire a shorter time frame before progressing to the next grade, allowing them to move up and compete at the next grade sooner. However, there has been concerns from show organisers and processors in their ability to support any reduction and still complete the necessary paperwork to support the show.

Whilst dropping from 25 days to 18 days may add some increased pressure on shows, by making the 14 day notification period mandatory it is hoped that this pressure will be reduced and create an achievable compromise for both competitors and show organisers. Show organisers were asked for comment on the proposed changes and whilst some concerns remain, the majority agreed that the notification period of 14 days would make this logistically possible. It is suggested that competitors should be encouraged to update their accounts as soon as possible after a grade changing win.

Grading review

- b. The Council is requested to consider a proposal from the Panel regarding a revised grading system. Further details and proposed amendments to the following regulations can be found in the annex for consideration:

Regulation H(1)(A) 5.

Regulation H(1)(A) 6.

Regulation H(1)(A) 10.

Regulation H(1)(D) 2.

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

Rationale

Prior to the introduction of the graded 1-7 structure, class sizes were consistently 100+ and in 2000 the Kennel Club issued 221 agility show licences. Progression was seen as particularly difficult with many dogs finishing their careers in Novice or Starters. When the Kennel Club introduced Listed status, the number of licenced shows increased and in 2025 it is estimated over 500 agility show licences will be issued.

The rationale behind the graded structure was to split classes into manageable sections with 7 levels of increasing difficulty. However, it has been suggested recently that, in its current format, the grading system can make course design for judges difficult as courses are required to cover multiple grades. For example, a grade 1-3 course can see some dogs attending their first show and others on 5 plus wins, it is rare to see classes offered for individual grades.

It is proposed that the suggested changes to the system would give a clearer understanding of what standard to set courses in both graded and combined classes, allowing competitors to run suitable courses and dogs to progress through the grades at a timely rate based on ability. This in turn is hoped to reduce pressure on judges with smaller graded classes and larger combined classes creating greater flexibility in ring planning and reducing the pressure on judge's course designs. A change in the grading system will also provide room for the introduction of a 5th height.

(Annex E refers)

Extra small (XS) height

- c. The Council is requested to consider a proposal from the panel regarding the introduction of an extra small (XS) height category. Further rationale and proposed amendments to the following regulations can be found in the annexes for consideration:

Regulation H(1)(A) 1.

Regulation H(1)(B) 1.c

Regulation H(1)(B) 2.

Regulation H(1)(B) 3.

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

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

(Annex F refers)

Rationale

Over the past few years there has been a lot of discussion across the agility community in respect of introducing a 5th height at a reduced height than the current small classification. A significant amount of research and consultation has taken place around this, with information and data being shared to the Agility Liaison Council.

It is noted that many shows currently run special classes at a lower height than small, usually with a jump height of 200mm, so obstacles for this set up are already readily available. It is suggested that an Extra Small height category would increase welfare and create a safer competition for dogs who sit significantly below the current height limit for small dogs (350mm).

The Governance Panel has narrowed the height options for extra small dog proposals down to 2 acceptable heights of either 300mm or 280mm. There are a number of pros and cons to both heights and no consistency identified through research as to the preferred height internationally. The Agility Liaison Council wish the wider agility community to advise their representative of their opinions on which is the better option and why.

It is proposed that the 5th height be introduced as a category within its own right including its own awards, and not as a subcategory of the current small height. It is however, noted that prestige events including qualifiers and championships may take longer to implement for the additional category.

(Annex G refers)

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 H refers)
- b. The Council is invited to note a report from Mrs J Gardner on the Activities Judges Sub-Group meeting held on 03 April 2025.
(Annex I refers - to follow)

ITEM 8. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Mr A Sandercock

Mr J Hallam

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

- a. Mr Sandercock wishes the Council to consider a proposed amendment to the above regulation which would change the maximum number of obstacles within a course dependent on grade.

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~~ **with the maximum number of obstacles dependent on the highest grade of dog included within the class.**

Grades 1-3: 18 obstacles

Grades 4-5: 20 obstacles

Grades 6-7: 22 obstacles

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.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

An increase of obstacles in the higher grades could allow for a better course flow and additional variety leading to an improved competition experience. This would bring the higher grades in line with international standards, allowing UK competitors to be better prepared for international shows. It would also give judges a greater flexibility in designing courses that challenge handler skill without compromising on safety for the dog.

The maximum of 18 obstacles in the lower grades could help create an easier entry into competing for young and inexperienced dogs who may have a lower level of stamina and concentration.

When the subject of obstacles was raised previously, the Activities Committee expressed concerns that an increase to 22 obstacles for all classes could in turn increase the time taken for classes to run. It is viewed that by differing the maximum number across grades, the average would be kept at 20 across classes, removing the impact of this. Course time adjustments in this respect would be minor and in line with the international normal. Judges would of course still have the discretion to use fewer obstacles if appropriate.

The need for extra equipment was also raised as a concern at previous meetings but it is noted that equipment suppliers usually provide 14-16 hurdles and at international shows that currently allow 22 obstacles only around 12 – 13 of these are generally used in course design so this is not expected to be an issue.

Mr M Tait

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

- b. Mr Tait wishes the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulations, allowing bitches in season to compete at Open, Premier and Championship shows.

Regulation H13.a

To:

A bitch which is in season is allowed to **compete at Kennel Club licenced Open, Premier and Championship Shows.** ~~attend a show providing it is kept away from the competition areas. (Except those dogs that are attending the show to compete in quarter finals, semi-finals and finals of the Royal Kennel Club Prestige Events, other than events held under YKC rules), who are allowed to compete in these classes only. Qualified handlers are asked to remove their dog from the competition area as soon as they have competed in the Prestige Event.~~

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Regulation H9.(15)

To:

A statement that ~~no bitch~~ **bitches** in season ~~is~~ **are** allowed to compete at Limited, Open, Premier or **and** Championship Agility Shows. ~~However, bitches in season can compete at quarter finals, semi-finals and finals of Royal Kennel Club Prestige Events except in events held under YKC rules.~~
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

In current regulations, bitches in season are allowed to attend Kennel Club agility shows and are able to compete in certain classes, many of which are held at Kennel Club Premier and Championship shows.

The introduction of International Qualifier competitions will allow bitches in season to compete in rings which could be used for standard Kennel Club classes either the same day or next day and, with more competitions allowing bitches in season, it is suggested it may be unfair to penalise some handlers at competitions whilst others are able to compete.

Miss K Holness

Mr J Hallam

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

- c. Miss Holness wishes the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulation, to include specifications for the material of poles used in hurdles.

Regulation H(1)(B)3.a

TO:

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. Width: 1.2m minimum. All bars, planks and fillers must be easily displaced by the dog. **Poles must be made from a plastic pipe.** The inner upright of the wings must be a minimum of 900mm with no unnecessary protrusions. The height of the hurdles in special classes may be lower than those listed above, but the height(s) must be included in the schedule.
(Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

It has been noted that, in some regions in particular, wooden poles are still on occasions being used. Hurdle poles are frequently hit by dogs in competition and the majority of suppliers have moved away from wooden poles already. It is suggested that by moving to a lighter, less solid material and structure, it could help to reduce injuries, improving welfare in competing dogs.

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Martin Tait

Re-runs

- a. Mr Tait would like the Council to discuss whether a regulation change on re-runs is needed to ensure any faults accrued in the first run are carried forward to the re-run, avoiding any unfair advantage.

Rationale

Currently all re-runs are taken independently of the first run, ensuring that a combination start from scratch with no faults. It is suggested that this gives an unfair advantage, as the initial run could then be seen as a type of practice with a second attempt being given in the form of a re-run. If a dog has faults in the first run and is then given a re-run and goes clear it could be detrimental to others in the class who did not have this benefit.

There is also the question of a dog that goes clear in the first round but requires a re-run due to timer error. It is suggested that the clear round should stand and only the time to complete the full course to be accounted for with the re-run to avoid penalising the combination for an error that is not within their control.

Miss S Smith

Ms T Davies

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

- b. Miss Smith would like the Council to 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.
(Annex J refers)

Rationale

Currently show managers and the Kennel Club are limited on what steps they can take to prevent incidents and deal with them as they arise with some dogs involved in repeat offences. Even in cases where a competitor is penalised with a warning or fine, this does not always work as a preventative measure to reduce the number of incidents that competitors see at shows.

It is suggested that a number of shows across the country have been prioritising dog welfare around the ring, utilising staggered entrances (not on same side), fenced rings, visual barriers and removing walkways between rings. Some competitors feel that measures of this nature are beneficial in preventing accidents, helping dogs and handlers to feel more secure.

It seems that some competitors are unaware of what to do when involved in or witness to an incident and this can cause frustration. A clear outline of procedure, with potential outcomes and timelines for everyone involved in the incident could be beneficial.

ITEM 10. 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 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next meeting of the council will be announced in September 2025.

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*

Prior to the introduction of the graded 1-7 structure, class sizes were consistently larger than in recent years and the Kennel Club was issuing significantly fewer licences. Progression was seen as particularly difficult with many dogs finishing their careers in Novice or Starters. When the Kennel Club introduced Listed status, the number of licenced shows increased and in 2025 it is estimated more agility show licences will be issued than ever before.