

Extracts from the Kennel Club Obedience Council's Agenda for the next meeting due to take place on Thursday 6th February 2020 for your comments

Which region do you live in?	
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PLEASE NOTE: If you live in the South East and East Anglia area you should not use this paper questionnaire, but use the Google questionnaire by following this link:
<https://forms.gle/rn9sXEyrnw5GrGtP8>

All other areas are free to use either this paper questionnaire or the Google questionnaire

To view the items that we are seeking your views on then please download the agenda which is available by copying the link here into your browser.

<https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/media/1160700/olc-060220-agenda.pdf>.

ITEM 4

MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Distance between dogs during stays

At its previous meeting, the Council discussed suggested amendments to the G Regulations, which would stipulate that a minimum distance of 1.5 metres should be left between dogs in the stay ring, with a recommended gap of 2 metres where possible. It did not support the suggestion, however it noted that Regulation G(C)4(h) stated that stays in all classes were group tests and all dogs must compete together, but 'where this is impracticable at an indoor show, the class may be equally divided but the judging for the groups must be consecutive.'

It was suggested that it would be helpful for this Regulation to be amended to provide for stays to be split at outdoor shows as well as indoor ones, as this would provide all show organisers with the opportunity to ensure that competitors had adequate space in the stay ring.

It is invited to consider the following proposal submitted by Mrs Le Fevre:

Regulation G(C)4.h. – Stays in ALL classes

TO:

The judge or steward will direct handlers to positions in the ring. The command 'last command' will be given and handlers should then instantly give their final command to their dogs. Any further commands or signals to the dogs after this 'last command' will be penalised. Handlers will then be instructed to leave their dogs and walk to positions indicated until ordered to return to them. These are group tests and all dogs must compete together, but where this is impracticable at an indoor ~~any~~ **any** show, the class may be equally divided but the judging for the groups must be consecutive. **The stay ring shall be large enough to cater for the largest expected attendance for each class.**

What are your thoughts on this recommendation?

For

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Against

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Abstain

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Any Comments?	
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ITEM 5

ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

b. Proposed amendments to Regulation

Mr R Kebble

G.31.c. Approval of Judges

The Council is invited to consider the following proposals for amendments to G Regulations, submitted by the Accredited Trainers for obedience, following their annual seminar on 22 October 2019:

Regulation G.31.c. Approval of Judges

TO:

c. At the time of judging a first Championship appointment the Judge must have attended a ~~Kennel Club Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar and passed the Regulations and Judging Procedure examination.~~ **completed and passed an Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination on the Kennel Club Academy prior to attending a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, and have attended a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, and passed the assessment.**

d. *Qualifications for judges at Premier and Open Shows and for the non-certificate classes at Championship Shows-*

On first appointment judges must satisfy the Show Committee that they:

- (1) have judged a minimum of four appointments within at least two years at a lower level including Limited/Companion Obedience Shows and matches/club or fun competitions.
- (2) have won out of Beginners at a Licensed Championship, Premier or Open Obedience Show as a handler, and have acted as a Caller, Scribe or Marker Steward on six occasions at Licensed Shows; and
- (3) have ~~attended a Kennel Club Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure Seminar and passed the Regulations and Judging Procedure examination.~~ **completed and passed an Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination on the Kennel Club Academy prior to attending a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar.**
- (4) have ~~attended an Obedience Test Design and the Practice of Judging Seminar.~~ **Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar and passed the assessment.**

(Deletions struck through, insertions in bold)

Rationale

The proposal is made with the objective of using technology as a resource in the education of judges, which would make it more attractive to those thinking about taking up judging, by allowing them to take the Obedience Judges examination online.

What are your thoughts on this recommendation?

For

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Against

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Abstain

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Any Comments?

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ITEM 8

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OBEDIENCE WORKING PARTY

The Council is requested to consider recommendations made by the Obedience Working Party, which was appointed at the Council's July meeting with the objective of discussing ways in which obedience may be promoted.

The Working Party was keen to encourage new competitors, with a wide range of breeds and crossbreeds, into obedience, and to retain existing competitors as they progressed through the classes. With this objective in mind, it wishes to recommend the following:

Introduction of height-classified classes, in which awards would be offered based on the height classification of competing dogs. Such classes would be judged in the usual way by one judge and the same test would apply to all competitors, however, four separate sets of awards would be offered split by small, medium, standard, and giant dogs.

- Height-classified classes (with wins counting towards progression) may be scheduled up to and including Open Class 'C'. The qualification for Championship Class 'C' remains unchanged.
- Scheduling such classes would be optional, and clubs not wishing to do so would be free to continue to schedule classes with a single set of awards, as currently.
- Alternatively, clubs may choose to schedule some height-classified classes, for example Introductory, Pre-Beginner and Beginner, whilst scheduling other classes with a single set of awards.
- The height categories would be as follows:

Small	For dogs measuring 35 cm or under at the withers.
Medium	For dogs measuring over 35 cm and 43 cm or under at the withers.
Standard	For dogs which have not been measured, or measuring over 43 cm and 60 cm or under at the withers.
Giant	For dogs measuring over 60 cm at the withers.

The Working Party was of the view that its proposal would provide an opportunity for dogs to compete against others of similar height, and to make the classes very inclusive and would therefore achieve the objective of promoting obedience to a wide range of potential competitors. However, it would offer full flexibility to clubs in making the decision whether or not to schedule height-classified classes.

Subject to approval by the Council of the above proposal, the office would formulate necessary amendments to Regulations, with a view to the introduction of height-classified classes from 1 July 2021.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE HEIGHT CLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION **Received from Robert Harlow, Chair of the Obedience Council**

This height classification proposal has been raised after conducting market research from people NOT ALREADY COMPETING in obedience. The survey was aimed at find out why people did not come into obedience and preferred to enter into dog sports such as Agility, Working Trials, Scentwork, Hoopers,

Mantrailling, IGP, Mondioring, Flyball, Rally etc etc etc - as you can see there is now a huge choice for consumers to take up dog sports should they wish to do so.

The fact of the matter is that KC Competitive Obedience has an ever decreasing number of people wishing to compete and a decreasing number of people willing to run shows as their age demographic increases and gets older with no new blood to run their clubs or shows. So when surveyed people who currently do KC Good Citizens they said they wanted something that they felt they could achieve at and that they did not have to travel a long way to do it. So already from those answers we can see that people want a greater choice of shows (never going to happen unless we get a bigger pool of people competing).

So this proposal, which by the way is OPTIONAL for clubs to take up (in part or in whole), was put together to draw new blood into the sport by making people feel that they have a fair chance and can achieve. This proposal has not been aimed at the experienced competitors who have honed their skills over many years showing that you can succeed with many breeds of many sizes. Those handlers who say they are offended at this proposal should bear that in mind. This proposal is about encouraging new people to have a go. So the proposal means that clubs have the option of having a class split into height categories. So that show can do this in whole or in part i.e. no height classes at all, height classes for each class OR a mix, so a club could say they are going to host the 4 height categories for Pre-Beg, Beg & Novice and not for A, B & C. A club can do any mix to encourage people in their area.

On the flip side it also means that Breed Clubs (let's just say the St Bernard or Westie or any other breed specific club) could turn their limited obedience class held at their annual breed show into an "open" obedience show/class where the wins count and therefore getting more people with different breeds into our sport. Why would anyone object to a proposal that gives clubs flexibility and encourages new people into the sport. What has gone on before is history; other ways of solving the problem such as "getting rid of stays" or "ABC classes" are not currently being discussed. The OLC are seeking feedback on this particular proposal so it is better if we do not go off topic. I know some clubs may not wish to partake but I am sure that if this proposal goes through, those clubs which do will be well supported.

Do I think it is much additional work for show organisers? I think it will be a very small amount of additional work but the increased income from increased entries will more than justify that position.

I have also seen comments about people who say "they wish to compete against the collies", well that's fine you still can because if you choose not to have your dog measured you WILL compete in the "Standard" size category where most of the collies will be. Frankly UK KC Competitive Obedience is dying on it's feet. It needs a radical approach that makes it accessible to the many - this proposal is a good start and remember no one is being forced to do this, running shows with height classifications is OPTIONAL.

What are your thoughts on this recommendation?

For ☐ Against ☐ Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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ITEM 9

a. Phoenix Obedience Dog Club

Mr R Wakelin

Proposed amendment to Regulation G29(f)3.

Phoenix Obedience Dog Club wishes to propose the following amendment:

Regulation G29.f(3)

TO:

Where a draw for the complete running order of Classes other than Championship Class C is not made, Show Managements must conduct a ballot to determine a running order for at least the first 10 **6** competitors/ dogs in these classes: ~~this may be reduced to 6 at shows with less than 200 dogs entered or where there are less than 25 dogs entered in a specific class.~~
Sub paragraph (3) does not apply to Limited Shows.
(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold.)

Rationale

Societies are finding it difficult to complete the draw especially at smaller open shows where classes may just be over the 25 per class/200 competitor threshold. This makes it a time consuming and sometimes difficult job that could be made slightly easier. Those societies which are fortunate to get larger entries could still draw 10 competitors / dogs per open class should they wish to do, as the above regulation states 'at least the first 6' so does not preclude them from drawing a higher number.

What are your thoughts on this proposal?

For ☐ Against ☐ Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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b. Proposed amendments to Regulation G(A)13 Capped Classes Mr B Luckock

Mr Luckock, an individual, wishes to propose an amendment to the above Regulation, with the primary aim of alleviating the splitting of classes at Championship Obedience shows:

Regulation G(A)13. Capped Classes.

TO:

- a. Organisers of **Championship and** Open Obedience shows may set a capping level on the entries to be accepted in any standard or special class, and may decline entries received after the capping level has been reached. **This shall not apply to Championship Class C.**
- b. Wins and places in standard classes capped in accordance with this Regulation will count towards progression at **Championship or** Open shows and for Obedience Warrant points.
- c. **Notwithstanding the requirements for Championship Class C, the** The capping level must be set at a minimum of 35 entries received. ~~There~~ **Other than for Championship Class C, there** is no maximum level at which a cap may be set. Capped classes may be split into two or more divisions in accordance with Regulation G29.b.

(Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through.)

Rationale

Ostensibly under the existing Regulation, Championship Class C is capped at 60 dogs that are allowed to work. There is no real advantage to excluding the capping of classes at Championship shows.

It is anticipated that allowing the capping of classes will assist show societies in potentially reducing the number of judges that may be required for the other classes which only hold the same status as at Open Obedience Shows.

At some smaller championship shows classes can be split for just two or three dogs, for example an entry of 63 must be split into two classes. This may not be viable for two main reasons:

- Trying to find sufficient judges and stewards when the shows are situated in areas distant from major conurbations (eg. Scotland, West Wales etc.)
- The cost per class: quite often it is not financially viable because costs for judges and stewards travelling for 'out of the way' shows are quite high.

In order to encourage newcomers, some classes with relatively low entries, such as Pre-Beginners or Beginners, may be run at a loss, and it may be financially problematic if other classes have to be split, and additional judges and stewards appointed.

What are your thoughts on this proposal?

For ☐

Against ☐

Abstain ☐

Any Comments?

c. **Ms R Aitken**

Mr J McIntosh

Proposed amendment to Regulation G(A)8.b.

Ms Aitken wishes the Council to consider the following proposed amendment:

Regulation G(A)8.b Novice

TO:

The detailed tests will be:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| (1) Heel on lead | 20 25 points |
| (2) Heel free | 25 20 points |

What are your thoughts on this proposal?

For ☐

Against ☐

Abstain ☐

Any Comments?

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. **Ms M Knapp**

Mrs F Godfrey

Out of sight stays

Ms Knapp, an individual, wishes the Council to consider the matter of out of sight stays, noting that there are strong feelings within the Obedience community regarding mental as well as (potentially) physical welfare aspects. There are also concerns that some individuals no longer compete in obedience because of stays. The majority accept that it is their decision as to whether to work this exercise or not, but would be much happier doing so if they could be

confident about the safety aspect. Some dogs, due to lack of handler experience of a show environment, are not trained to a sufficient standard prior to competing.

Ms Knapp wishes to suggest that in order to remove out of sight stays, there should be a constructive progression through the classes. Beginner stays should be conducted on lead in order to build confidence. In all classes, handlers should be in the ring at all times in order to ensure they can be responsible for their dog's actions.

Ms Knapp's suggestion is that stay exercises should be as follows:

Introductory: Sit OR Down, handler's choice, on lead, as part of the ring work, i.e. individually.

Pre-Beginners: No stays

Beginners: 30 seconds, sit OR down, at judges discretion, on a loose lead

Novice: 30 seconds sit, on a loose lead, 1 minute down, on a loose lead.

Class A: 30 second sit, 1 minute down, both off lead with handler 2 steps away, side on

Class B: 1 minute sit, 2 minute down, off lead, handlers in the middle of the ring, side on

Class C: 2 minute sit, 3 minute down, off lead, handlers in the middle of the ring, backs to dogs

Ms Knapp is of the view that most errors in stays occur within the first 30-40 seconds of the exercise and that there is no point in extended stay times, therefore this does not represent any 'dumbing down' of the exercise.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐

Against ☐

Abstain ☐

Any Comments?

b. **Mrs A Henry**

Mrs C Patrick

Styles of finish

Mrs Henry, an individual, wishes the Council to discuss the issue of finishes, noting that some judges are not marking the dog going through the competitor's legs whereas others are. In the interests of clarity and consistency, Mrs Henry wishes to suggest that G Regulations for all relevant exercises be amended to specify that the finish should be either a Continental finish or an English finish and not through the legs, which is a current practice among some competitors.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐

Against ☐

Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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c. Mr J McIntosh

Limit to number of wins in Open Class 'C'

Mr McIntosh wishes the Council to consider a suggestion that after 4 wins in Open Class 'C', a dog or bitch may only enter Championship Class 'C' Dog/Bitch classes. This would put Open Class 'C' in line with all other classes Introduction to Open C, and would also allow more people to be able to qualify for Championship classes.

With numbers being increased in the Championship classes they could use a system of points for the first 10 places. First 10 points - 10th 1 point, if numbers exceed 60 those with points are automatically in. Those with no points are balloted for remaining places if numbers reach great proportion then those with one point are balloted for remaining places.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐ Against ☐ Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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d. Ms R Aitken

Mr J McIntosh

Capping on number of wins

Ms Aitken wishes to suggest that a cap be placed on the number of wins in each class, except Open Class 'C' and Championship Class 'C'. This would allow more competitors to progress through the classes, while handlers having reached the cap could compete in the class until such time as the relevant closing dates have passed, but may not accept a win. This would be self-regulating as handlers usually know how many wins others have achieved, or the booking-in form could be marked in some way.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐ Against ☐ Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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e. Winchester City Dog Training Club and Mr D Moxon

Progression on points

The Council is requested to discuss the possibility for an option for progression on points. There is precedent for this in Agility where progression on wins is mandatory, but competitors may elect to progress on points. The recommendation is to utilise the Obedience Excellent points scheme, rather than adopt something new, for the number of points required to progress.

The scale of the points would be as follows:

1. 10 points for a first prize.
2. 4 points for second prize.
3. 2 points for a third prize.
4. 1 point for a fourth prize.

The required points to achieve an excellent qualification are as follows:

1. 10 points required for Introductory
2. 10 points required for Pre-Beginners.
3. 20 points required for Beginners.
4. 20 points required for Novice.
5. 30 points required for Class A.
6. 30 points required for Class B.

In summary, for Beginners and Novice competitors must have a first and three places (two seconds and at least a third) or five second places.

For A and B that becomes a combination of two firsts and three places, one first and five places, or at least eight places. Five second places to replace two firsts or eight for three seems a reasonable amount of activity to allow progression.

The objective is to allow competitors to progress and compete at the higher levels allowing more variety, rather remaining indefinitely in Novice, albeit continually in the places.

The intention would be to leave Championship Class C progression such that an excellent achievement is not a qualification for this class. For information currently 40 points are required for an Obedience Excellence award in Class C.

Obedience Warrant - Handlers would need to be careful on progression from Novice without the wins as that would stop them gaining an Obedience Warrant. Currently two wins are required. Likewise, two wins are required at A and B. If the points system is introduced it would be the intention to recommend that for the Obedience Warrant, it only has to be one win from Novice. Dogs would still need to progress and taking a Novice win out of the equation (at the front end) is not going to change the end standard for the Obedience Warrant title.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐

Against ☐

Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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Maximum number of dogs

Ms Holley, an individual, wishes the Council to discuss the maximum number of dogs which may be judged in one day.

G Regulations state that the maximum number of dogs a person can judge on one day is 60, however after speaking to a number of people Ms Holley is of the view that this number is too high and in Class B & C should be reduced to 50.

In C especially there are quite a few exercises and the recommendation is 8 dogs per hour. Taking into account stays and lunch, this could take up to 9 hours should all competitors turn up and no-one keeps the judge waiting.

Whilst appreciating that some shows struggle to find judges, Ms Holley considers that this may be due to the high numbers in classes. It may also be possible to combine dog and bitch classes in order to reduce the numbers of judges required.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐ Against ☐ Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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g. **Obedience Excellence award**

At present 10 points are required to claim an Obedience Excellent award in Pre-Beginners.

Noting that with effect from 1 January 2020, Regulation G(A)6.a will state that to compete in Pre-Beginners a handler or dog must not have won **two** first places in either Pre-Beginners or Beginners nor gained a third place or above in any other Obedience class (Introductory Class excepted), the Council is requested to consider whether it is necessary to make an amendment to the number of points required to claim the Obedience Excellent award in Pre-Beginners.

The current requirement states that 10 points are required to make such a claim.

What are your thoughts on this discussion item?

For ☐ Against ☐ Abstain ☐

Any Comments?	
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Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this questionnaire to your regional representative or to me, Carole Patrick at cpatrick1984@outlook.com

I should be grateful if all completed questionnaires could be returned to your regional representative no later than Tuesday 4th February 2020

PLEASE NOTE: If you live in the South East and East Anglia area you should not use this paper questionnaire, but use the Google questionnaire by following this link:
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