



## THE KENNEL CLUB

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT 10.30 AM ON TUESDAY 20 JULY 2023 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

#### PRESENT

Ms D Cox	Midlands
Miss F Godfrey	South East/East Anglia
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mrs J LeFevre	South East/East Anglia
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr D Moxon	South/South West
Mrs C Patrick	Scotland
Mrs K Russell	North West
Ms A Shaw	South East/East Anglia
Mrs B Smith	Midlands
Ms N Thomas	Wales
Mrs L Turner	South/South West
Mr N Walton (Until Item 6)	North East

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss C McHardy	Manager – Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team
Miss T Collins	Administrator – Working Dog Activities Team

**NOTE: any recommendations made by the Obedience Liaison Council are subject to review by the Activities Committee and The Kennel Club Board, and will not come into effect unless and until Board approval has been confirmed.**

**IN THE CHAIR      MR M MCCARTNEY**

#### **ITEM 1.      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1. Apologies were received from Mr J Farr (Wales), Mrs S Hyde (Midlands) and Ms H Weaver (North West).

#### **ITEM 2.      APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

### ITEM 3. KENNEL CLUB RESEARCH PROJECT

3. It was previously planned that the Council would receive a presentation from Mr M Bermingham (Interim Strategy & Implementation Executive) and Ms L Smith (Customer & Competitors Strategy Development Project Manager) which would provide an update on the research project into 'Organisers and Participants of Dog Activities'.
4. The office informed the Council that this had been postponed, in order to engage all councils with the full results as part of a roll out plan at a future date.

### ITEM 4. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Proposed amendments to Regulations G35.g., G(A)10.a. and G32.c.

5. The Council noted the following regulation amendments approved by the Board.

Regulation G35.g.

**TO:**

Food and/or toys shall not be carried or given to a dog under test except in Introductory, **and Pre-Beginner Classes** where silent toy and food rewards may be used in accordance with the **relevant** class Regulations and in a Special Class if specified in the class definition. Competitors must not distract other dogs when rewarding their dog with food, toy or play. (Refer to Obedience Code of Conduct)

(Insertions in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation G(A)10.a. Pre-Beginners

**TO:**

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) and have not elected to progress on points from Pre-Beginners. **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.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation G.32.c. Approval of judges.

**TO:**

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~~ **won out of Beginners at a licensed championship, premier or open obedience show as a handler.**
- (2) ~~have won out of Beginners at a licensed championship, premier or open obedience show as a handler, and have acted as a caller~~ **steward or scribe (for the whole class) for any scheduled standard classes** ~~or marker steward on six~~ **eight** occasions at licensed **championship, premier or open shows, at least three of which must be as caller steward** and
- (3) have 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 a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging Seminar and passed the assessment.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

6. At its previous meeting, the council had put forward a proposal which would allow a new judge to shadow qualified judges. The Council had hoped this would make the training more accessible and straight forward. This proposal was taken to the Activities Committee but was not supported as there was a concern that those undertaking the shadowing may not have undertaken any training themselves, or been approved in any way.
7. The Council suggested that rejected proposals could also be noted on the agenda in future, along with a short explanation as to the reason it was not taken further.
8. It was understood that discussions at the Activities Committee were confidential, however the Council was in agreement that communications about rejected proposals were also important to include on the agenda so that all parties involved were aware of the outcome.

#### Kennel Club Obedience Festival

9. The Council received a verbal update on the ongoing plans for the Obedience Festival from Mr McCartney. Due to some unforeseen circumstances, there had been minimal progress for the event and the Council was encouraged to provide further feedback and suggestions as soon as possible.

10. Due to some restrictions with the previously suggested venue of Westmorland County Showground, the Council was required to consider other venues with the most accessibility for competitors.
11. After some discussion, the Council representatives from the Midlands were tasked with considering possible venues in their area that would be suitable for an event of this size.
12. It was noted that venues such as Bingley Hall, Staffordshire County Showground, would be suitable and could be considered for September 2024.
13. The Council expressed the view that the Obedience Festival should not be run in conjunction with any other Obedience shows. The office confirmed that competitions were only visible on Find a Show when the licences had been fully approved and paid for. This meant that not all booked dates would appear on Find a Show and might prove difficult to find a date that would not interfere with other events.
14. The office undertook to investigate if it would be possible to supply the Council with a list of all the Obedience shows applied for in 2024.
15. Mr McCartney reported that other disciplines had expressed an interest in joining the Obedience Festival, specifically Heelwork to Music. The Council considered this collaboration and were in agreement that Heelwork to Music would be a good addition to this event.

#### Young Kennel Club

16. This was discussed under Item 7.

#### Eligibility for Beginners

17. At its previous meeting, the Council requested Mr Moxon to prepare a formal proposal based on the preferred option regarding eligibility for Beginners Class. The Council was invited to consider an amendment to the following 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 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.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

18. Mr Moxon explained that competitors were finding that they won out of Beginners and were then unable to progress or win out of Novice. This was disheartening and concerns were raised that competitors would give up trying to progress within Obedience.
19. Mr Moxon provided background for the proposal, explaining that it originated from the Beginner and Novice handlers who had found it quite disheartening going straight into Novice with a new dog and competing against much more experienced handlers.
20. It was also taken into account that most competitors had been competing with Novice as their lowest class for quite some time. It was suggested that to caveat that, an option could be included for handlers and dogs that had previously entered Novice as their lowest available class before 31 December 2023, these handlers may elect to continue to treat Novice as their lowest available class. This would then allow competitors the option.
21. It was mentioned that if the Council were happy to go ahead with this proposal, they would also need to consider the wording for judges approval. Currently, judges need to have won out of Beginners. If changed, the wording could be amended to say that judges need to have progressed out of Beginners as a handler.
22. A concern was raised about the position of this item on the agenda and there was some confusion about whether this was an official proposal. Some representatives admitted that they had not reviewed this item, therefore it had not been discussed with their area. A suggestion was made that this should be under Item 8, Proposals, instead. The office reassured the council that any items discussed at the previous meeting which were then brought back to consider again should be under Matters Arising, as demonstrated in previous agendas. The Council requested going forward proposals such as this one should be raised in Matters Arising as well as Proposals so that no sections were missed in future.
23. Mr Moxon confirmed that this proposal was only for consideration, other factors would need to be taken into account for clarity and to address experienced handlers within the regulation. Ideally this would attract more competitors back to the discipline.
24. A concern was raised that this was not fair for true Beginner handlers, as it may be unclear as to when competitors would be considered an experienced handler. With this amendment, the experienced handlers would be able to continue entering in Beginner classes.
25. It was considered that there were other developments happening at the lower levels of the discipline and a concern was raised regarding making progression

too easy, instead of encouraging more dedicated training and skill to the discipline.

26. It was also noted that rules cannot be made retrospectively, anyone who has already progressed out of Beginners to date would not be able to go back and enter this class.
27. An alternative point was made, regarding the need to modernise Obedience and move forward to make it more enjoyable for everyone involved in the discipline.
28. It was agreed that Mr Moxon would work on the wording for this and bring it back as a proposal for the next meeting. Any feedback from the regions would be appreciated to support Mr Moxon in this re-wording.

#### Exhibitor numbers

29. At its previous meeting, Wirral Alsatian Training Society had requested the Council discuss whether the requirement to wear an exhibit number remained necessary. It was highlighted that other disciplines, such as Working Trials and Agility, do not have this requirement.
30. Mrs Russell had undertaken to prepare suitable wording to the regulations to remove this requirement for the Council to consider. Mrs Smith seconded the proposal.

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)

Regulation G35.k.

**TO:**

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

(Deletion struck through. Renumber subsequent regulation)

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

Instructions as to the duties of Obedience Ring Stewards

**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 the correct ring number for their dog when entering the ring. ~~and that the number is prominently displayed whilst working.~~

(Deletion struck through)

31. A query was raised as to whether the word 'has' under G(D)2.b.(2) still implied that competitors would need to show the ring number to the steward. The Council suggested amending this to 'gives' to make the change clearer.

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

Instructions as to the duties of Obedience Ring Stewards

**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)

32. With this adaption, the Council felt that this was worded well and still gave the option for competitors to wear their ring numbers if they wished.
33. The amendment was proposed by Mrs Patrick and was seconded by Mr McCartney. The Council voted unanimously to **recommend** the regulation amendments for approval.

#### Introductory Class

34. It had previously been agreed that a working group made up of Mrs Hyde, Ms Cox, Mr McIntosh, Ms Shaw and Mrs Turner would provide suitable wording for consideration regarding amendments to the Introductory class.
35. Ms Cox provided a brief background, explaining that they wished to breakdown some exercises to make them more user friendly and give opportunity for handlers to reward their inexperienced dogs.
36. It was noted that Play was not defined in either Annex A 'Schedule of Classes', nor Annex C 'Tests' and so was open to interpretation and was often expected to be with a toy. Although some dog and handler teams find play with a toy very easy, others do not. This proposal considered ways that the class content may be widened to make it more inclusive and to promote a more seamless transition from training to competition.
37. Mrs Turner seconded the proposals, the Council went on to consider the following amendments to regulations:

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 10 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 10 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

#### 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) **A large 'S' shape** **8 points**
- c) **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 be each 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, 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.  
Renummer subsequent regulations)

38. Ms Cox had received feedback about some Heelwork aspects, specifically the 'S' shape and Figure of 8, being considered quite difficult for this level. The Council was reassured that pet dog owners were taught similar skills under the Good Citizen Dog Training Scheme, also as part of some socialisation classes, which should make them capable of doing these Heelwork shapes.
39. It was raised that with the current wording, it may sound to competitors that all 3 exercises of Heelwork would take place in one class. This was not the case and it was suggested this could be made clearer in the regulations. The following amendment was made:
- (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
40. A question was raised as to whether a judge would need to mark out the Heelwork shapes on the ground before their classes. The Council agreed that it

would be easier for these to be marked out but it would be the judge's decision on the day.

41. A concern was raised that the amount of play suggested in this proposal would make classes take a much longer amount of time to complete, which could make the class too long a session for a dog at Introductory level. A personal account was noted, demonstrating that increased Play between exercises at a show when Introductory was first introduced still allowed the 46 entered dogs to finish before most of the other Obedience classes on the day. The working group believed that this increased Play should not negatively affect the timing of the class.
42. Feedback from competitors regarding the Recall exercises suggested that this exercise did not need to be broken up. The working group explained that this was to make it fair between on lead and off lead competitors, with the hopes of making Recall a more controlled exercise whilst allowing the dog room to come back to the handler with exuberance by creating distance, using only a long line or no lead at all.
43. The working group drew the Council's attention to some adaptations that would need to be made by show societies as part of this proposal. This included:
  - a) ensuring the ring size could accommodate both the reward and the work areas comfortably
  - b) placing the ring where possible, away from other rings, so that others were not disturbed
  - c) providing a netted ring to help competing teams feel more comfortable
  - d) making 'Judge's' special awards available to enable the judge to recognise and congratulate those teams that performed well, but may not have made the final placings.
44. These adaptations should be encouraged whenever possible and whilst not a regulation change, should be an advisory. The importance of ring size was emphasised in the discussion.
45. The Council agreed that they preferred the word 'engagement' instead of 'play'. It was raised that some dogs will work better without breaks between exercises for play. Sometimes play can break concentration and the dog will not focus back to the exercises after a session of play. The working group agreed that this was why they suggested the word 'engagement', that way handlers did not have to physically stop and play with their dog if they did not want to, as long as they were seen to be engaging the dog, examples of this included verbal praise.
46. A suggestion was made that this concept of engagement should be fed back to judges training. The working group suggested that it would be the judges' responsibility to find out about this class if they felt unsure of how to judge certain aspects.

47. Feedback regarding the marking of these exercises was provided, with the suggestion that more value could be added to all of the elements. The working group confirmed that the marking was taken from the original marks for the class, for example the original Recall was worth 10 points and the component parts of this exercise were broken down to remain equal to 10 points. The Council suggested that from a judging point of view it would be helpful to have more points on offer for these exercises but agreed that this was something that could be reviewed in 2 years' time if necessary.
48. The Council voted unanimously in favour of this proposal and **recommended** it for approval.

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

49. The Council noted a written report from Mrs LeFevre following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 17 April 2023.
50. Mrs LeFevre outlined the research currently taking place regarding heat mitigation, heart rate recovery, and obesity in dogs at shows.
51. The Kennel Club had purchased 3 wet bulb globe thermometers, recommended by the Sub-group, as a result of the hot weather last year. These devices were to be trialled at different events and used to capture data to monitor the environment of the show.
52. Although the study surrounding heart rate recovery was researched using agility dogs, the Council noted that the more experienced, and possibly fitter, dogs seemed to have a lower heart rate overall.
53. In regards to obesity, the sub-group wished to raise awareness and encourage fitness. Mrs LeFevre mentioned obese dogs competing in obedience at events where members of the public were watching. The Council was in agreement that there were dogs competing in obedience which could be considered unfit.
54. A question was raised as to how the Sub-Group would progress with this and if some guidance could be issued about fitness requirements. This item was to remain on the Sub-group's agenda in order to discuss the best way forward. Mrs LeFevre also mentioned the possibility of using a Body Condition Score which was used in a previous survey.
55. Reactive dogs with yellow leads, collars or harnesses was raised at the Sub-group's meeting. The Sub-group agreed that it was still the responsibility of the handler if anything happened with their dog at an event.
56. The Sub-Group advised that it would be willing to consider suggestions for suitable research projects. These were to be submitted to Mrs LeFevre.
57. A query was raised regarding research into the colours visible to dogs. The office confirmed that there had been questions raised about this in agility, leading to the tyre colours being changed to have contrasting stripes. It was

suggested that Obedience could be interested in this due to their send away and retrieve exercises.

58. The Council believed there was already research in this area. Mrs LeFevre undertook to find this research paper to distribute to the Council and as an online resource for competition organisers and judges.

**ITEM 6.      ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP**

59. The Council noted a report written by Mr Kebble following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 25 April 2023.
60. Mrs Patrick highlighted that information regarding judges training had been updated on Obedience UK and relevant Facebook pages.

**ITEM 7.      YOUNG KENNEL CLUB**

61. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Lavender which included dates of upcoming opportunities for the YKC members, such as camps and training days.
62. Mrs Lavender requested that the Council contact her if they were able to help at any of the 2024 events that still required trainers and thanked those who had already offered their assistance.
63. The YKC had provided Mrs Lavender with a new set of rules for YKC Obedience. Mrs Lavender and Ms Cox had gone through this paperwork and suggested amendments to the department.
64. A concern was raised from a competitor through Mrs Russell, regarding the new qualification routes to Crufts for the YKC handlers. Mrs Lavender explained that the aim was to eliminate the possibility of young people being put in a position that they were not ready for or able to cope with. Big events, such as Crufts, may be an intimidating and nerve-wracking environment for some young handlers.
65. Previously a win would qualify a young handler for Crufts, no matter how many entries there were in the class. With the new rules, a judge could decide to withhold first place if they thought that the handler was potentially not ready for Crufts.
66. Mrs Lavender would continue to work with the YKC department to discuss the best qualification route.

**ITEM 8.      PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

Proposal to Amend the requirements for eligibility to enter Championship C Classes

67. Ms Cox outlined the details of the proposal, put forward by Ms Rogers, for the Council which removed the need for a win to qualify for Championship C classes. Mrs Turner seconded the proposal.
68. After a lengthy discussion, the Council was in agreement that the number of competitors were increasing again since the Covid pandemic and this proposal would not create any more variety of competitors winning Championship C classes and could reduce the standard in Championship C classes.
69. The Council voted unanimously against this proposal.

**ITEM 9.      DISCUSSION ITEMS**

70. No discussion items were brought to the Council.

**ITEM 10.     STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

71. The Council reviewed the Strategic Plan which had been updated with any progression from the previous meeting.

YKC

72. The Council considered whether it was possible to arrange a better channel of communication between the council and the YKC department. A suggestion was made that a representative from the YKC department join one Council meeting a year to provide an update.
73. The Council was reminded that this had previously been organised at a past meeting but did not seem to bring any further developments.
74. Mrs Lavender reassured the Council that she was working with the department in regards to the points, progression and with the hopes of re-instating the Rebecca Pointer Trophy.

Council engagement with grass-roots competitors

75. It was highlighted that the Council now had more outlets to provide information to the Obedience community and engagement with competitors was still ongoing.
76. However, the Council was not receiving as much feedback as they had hoped for. The office noted that unfortunately this seemed to be evident across all of the disciplines.

77. It was raised that the Obedience community might not have faith in their representatives to vote in accordance with their views, as it was previously minuted that a representative was not obliged to vote in favour with their region.
78. There was a discussion about this, with most representatives explaining that they made it clear to their communities that they would represent their region as a whole and vote as requested by the majority within their region.
79. The Council agreed to continue engaging with competitors in the hopes of developing a trust in their representatives to abide by their area's majority vote.

#### Encouraging more smaller shows

80. Ms Godfrey encouraged the Council to consider the increased costs and penalties for drivers and how this impacted competitors travelling to shows.
81. Competition organisers often avoid organising shows on the same days in the hopes of achieving increased entries. The Council considered that local shows could become the only events that competitors may be able to afford to attend in future.

#### Attracting newcomers to obedience

82. The Council wished to express its disappointment that Lisburn and District Dog Training Club were not given the opportunity to hold a Special Pre-Beginners Stakes Class this year, as the club often supported newcomers to the discipline. The office took note of this and referred it to the correct department for further investigation.

### **ITEM 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

83. A request for guidance was raised regarding competitors who required to work their dog on the right hand side. Mrs Turner brought this to the Council to discuss how best to mark specific exercises in this case, specifically about turns.
84. The Council discussed the possibility of competitors informing the judge, steward or show secretary in advance to make them aware. The Council suggested that the competitor could state in which direction they would be performing their turns prior to the class in order for the judge to mark accordingly.
85. A query was raised regarding the left about turn, for a lower level class this exercise would be too difficult if the competitor chose to work the dog on the right hand side. It was believed that the pattern laid out by the judge should stay the same, a discussion should be had with the competitor beforehand about which way they would prefer to do their about turns.

86. The Council was reminded of a previous circumstance where a competitor was given written permission from The Kennel Club to work their dog on the right. The office confirmed this, however this was not a frequent occurrence and the letter suggested that the competitor should contact the show secretary to give them advance notice.
87. It was suggested that competitors could notify the judge on their entry form that they would be working their dog on the right. The office reminded the Council that Rally have an Exercise Modification Form for this purpose, which was considered for Obedience at its previous meeting but was deemed as not necessary.
88. As stated in regulation G(C).1.c:  
In all tests the left side of a handler will be regarded as the 'working side' unless the handler suffers from a physical disability and has the judge's permission to work the dog on the right hand side.
89. This regulation would need to be changed if the Council did want competitors to include this information on their entry form.
90. The Council reiterated that the pattern should be adhered to, it should be the judge's decision on the day as to how they managed this and the handler should be able to discuss their ability to do the turns with the judge. There was an emphasis of judging competitors fairly and using good sense in making these decisions.
91. The Council requested an update from the office regarding dogs with docked tails competing. The office were in contact with DEFRA about this, although had no further update at this time.
92. A query was raised about a rescue dog with cropped ears wishing to compete. The Council enquired whether the dog could compete if the owner could prove this was a rescue dog and the ears were cropped in a different country.
93. The office confirmed that any dog with cropped ears cannot be registered and therefore cannot compete in Kennel Club licenced shows.
94. The Council raised issues with social media where competitors may post about judges not appreciating their dog at a show. A concern was that judges would be put off by this. Although the judge may not be named on social media posts, the competitors and those involved with the show would all be able to identify who the post was about. The Council wondered if there was anything against doing this in the Code of Best Practice.



95. Along with this it was raised that some competitors would not collect their rosettes if they did not agree with their placings. It was considered that this could be a form of intimidation to the judge also.
96. The office explained that if the judge was not named in a social media post, there was a limit to what could be done. It was the competitors choice as to what they post on social media, if it was on a public page where the judge was named there might be more action able to be taken.

**ITEM 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

97. The date for the next meeting of the Council would be announced in September 2023.

The meeting closed at 2pm.

**MR M MCCARTNEY**  
**Chair**

**THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT**

**'The Kennel Club is the national body which exists to promote the general improvement, health and well-being of all dogs through responsible breeding and ownership'**



**Activities Judges Sub-Group  
Meeting held on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023**

Report to Obedience Liaison Council

- The group discussed the progress on the wording of a statement to be included on all schedules drawing the attention of all competitors to their responsibility for the behaviour of their dogs at all times whilst at a licensed event. The Activities Health and Welfare Sub-Group were to finalise the wording at their meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup> 2023 with the intention to issue a press release as soon as possible.
- The office were requested to remove the Standardised Stay Marking Sheet from the judges section of the Kennel Club Website as this is no longer relevant.
- The Accredited Judges Trainers for Obedience have requested the addition of the following sentence to the Judges Invitation letter (Regulation G.34.b.  
After “.....you are qualified to judge in accordance with Obedience Regulation G.32 (insert) In addition you will familiarise yourself with the Kennel Club G Regulations which are current at the date of the judging appointment.”  
As this will potentially affect all disciplines, the office will investigate before presenting the proposal to Activities Committee.
- At the request of the Accredited Judges Trainers for Obedience the office are exploring the possibility of placing download links to useful information on the judges section of the KC Website. Examples of the type of file to be used are specimen judging sheets and permitted turns summaries

Richard Kebble  
May 5<sup>th</sup> 2023



**Five Year Strategy Status  
LAST UPDATED: 17 May 2023**

Subject	Detail	Actions	Action By	Action Date and status	Next action date
Young Kennel Club Obedience	<p><u>List of Judges</u> Compile a list, over time, of Judges who are interested in judging YKC classes and who have appropriate experience.</p> <p><u>Training</u> Encourage a larger number of experienced Obedience participants to become involved with YKC training in order to help younger competitors to have realistic expectations and to be aware that things can often go wrong when under test.</p> <p><u>Improved integration</u> Identify actions to get Obedience participants more involved with YKC activities, in order to break down the 'us and them' attitude that is prevalent.</p> <p><u>Judges Guidance</u> Produce guidance for judges on YKC structures and regulations and what is expected of judges in YKC classes, with the guidance incorporated into Judges' Seminars and training.</p>	<p>Collect the names of experienced Obedience participants who are willing to be involved as judges, instructors and in other roles, and send them in to the Kennel Club office to prepare a list.</p>	Debra Lavender	Ongoing Debra Lavender to be point of liaison between the OLC and YKC in her role as the Council's YKC representative. Update to be provided at every Council meeting.	20 July 2023

<p><b>Reviewing the structure of obedience classes</b></p>	<p>To consider ways in which the discipline could progress and develop in the future, in light of concerns over low entry numbers.</p>		<p>All Council members</p>	<p>Suggestions for ways in which the structure of classes may be amended are considered on an ad hoc basis.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p><b>Council engagement with grass-roots competitors</b></p>	<p>Improve methods of Council engagement and communication with grass-roots competitors to encourage wider participation in Council matters.</p>	<p>Review effectiveness of current communication methods and consider improvements. Area meetings to be publicised to clubs when Council agendas are issued to increase attendance. Survey Monkey used to garner views on agenda items with competitors.</p>	<p>All Council members</p>	<p>Noted improvement in engagement at shows and via social media, discussed surveys by area to provide feedback (17 January 2023)</p>	<p>Ongoing review</p>
		<p>Clubs to be provided with an explanation of the Council process and committee structure within the Kennel Club.</p>	<p>All Council members</p>	<p>To be reviewed</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>
		<p>Review the process of Council nominations and consider methods of implementation to promote better involvement of grass-roots competitors in the procedure.</p>	<p>All Council members</p>	<p>To be reviewed</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>

<p><b>Attract newcomers into Obedience</b></p>	<p>Provide additional opportunities and incentives for Pre-Beginners level competitors in order to continue attracting new people into the discipline.</p>	<p>Discuss innovative ideas and review the effectiveness of existing initiatives such as the Special Pre-Beginners Stakes.</p>	<p>All Council members</p>	<p>Ongoing - Eligibility for Beginners and review of Introductory Class discussed 17 January 2023</p>	<p>Amendments to discuss on 20 July 2023</p>
		<p>Promotion of Obedience within the regions by providing demonstrations at clubs to allow more people access to the discipline.</p>	<p>All Council members</p>	<p>To be reviewed</p>	<p>To be confirmed</p>
	<p>Development of Obedience Festival</p>		<p>Michael McCartney</p>	<p>Discussed July 2022 – further update to be provided</p>	<p>20 July 2023</p>
<p><b>Encouraging more smaller shows</b></p>	<p>To address concerns relating to the costs of travel and climate change issues</p>	<p>To be agreed</p>	<p>All Council members</p>	<p>To be reviewed</p>	<p>20 July 2023</p>

