



**MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD VIA
MICROSOFT TEAMS AT 10.30 AM ON THURSDAY 20 JULY 2023**

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 17 January 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) and Ms L Smith (Customer & Competitors Strategy Development Project Manager) 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 10 May 2023, approved the following amendments to regulations:

Proposed amendments to Regulations G35.g and G(A)10.a

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)

b. Kennel Club Obedience Festival

The Council is invited to receive a verbal update on plans for the above event.

c. Young Kennel Club

At the previous Council meeting, Mrs Lavender had suggested a possible change to a points-based system for qualifying for Crufts which may encourage more interest and entries. The YKC had also agreed to investigate the use of the Rebecca Pointer Trophy and report back to the Council (Item 7 refers).

d. Eligibility for Beginners

At its meeting held on 17 January 2023, the Council requested Mr Moxon to prepare a formal proposal based on the preferred option agreed to.

The Council is 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)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Rationale

Competitors are finding they win out of Beginners and then find they are unable to progress and/or win out of Novice. In some cases, this is happening with their first dog and the jump from Beginners to Novice is then seen as a major hurdle to progress any further and is disheartening. It also means with their next dog, a handler must start at Novice, alongside more experienced handlers, and feel at a disadvantage. A request has been received to see whether a provision could be made to allow handlers that have not progressed in Novice, e.g. gained a first place in Novice, that they can compete with subsequent dogs in Beginners, providing such dog(s) had/have not won out of Beginners. At its meeting in January, the Council gave a majority support to the above option (handler ineligible for beginners with one win in Novice or above rather than for handlers needing to win out of Novice).

e. Exhibitor numbers

Mrs Russell on behalf of the Wirral Alsatian Training Society had requested the Council, at its previous meeting whether the requirement to wear an exhibit number remained necessary, or whether it was a custom and practice which could be updated.

The Council had been of the opinion that exhibitor numbers were not necessarily required, and Mrs Russell had undertaken to prepare a proposal which removed the requirement for handlers to wear ring numbers.

The Council is requested to consider 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. Renumber subsequent regulation)
(Effective 1 January 2024)

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)
(Effective 1 January 2024)

f. Introductory Class

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.

The Council is invited 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 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~~ 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 handlers, 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. Renumber subsequent regulations)

Rationale

This review would be in line with the review of classes planned within the Council's 5 year strategy. 'Play' is not defined in either Annex A 'Schedule of Classes', nor Annex C 'Tests' and so is open to interpretation by judges/competitors, and often it is expected to be with a toy. Whilst some dog and handler teams find play with a toy very easy, others do not – based on breed/breed type, temperament, previous experience, learning history for example.

It is suggested that this class, whilst going part way to supporting inexperienced handler and dog teams in having a go in the competitive ring environment, the limited content of the class is so far removed from Pre-Beginners, that it does not fully promote the leap from training into Pre-Beginners and upwards within Obedience competition, particularly when looking at the heelwork element.

Following discussions, Ms Cox, Mrs Hyde, Mrs Turner, Mr McIntosh and Ms Shaw would therefore like to make the above proposals, in line with the plans in the Council's 5 year strategy, around how the class content may be widened to make it more inclusive and to promote a more seamless transition from training to competition.

As part of this proposal, appreciation must be given to those show societies who make adaptations to promote entry to this class, such as:-

- a) ensuring the ring size can accommodate both the reward and the work areas comfortably
- b) placing the ring where possible, away from other rings, so that others are 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 perform well, but may not have made the final placings

These adaptations should be encouraged whenever possible and whilst not a regulation change, should be an advisory.

ITEM 5. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

The Council is invited to note a verbal report from Mrs Le Fevre following the Sub-Group's meeting which took place on 17 April 2023.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

The Council is invited to note a written report from Mr Kebble following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 25 April 2023.

(Annex A refers)

ITEM 7. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

The Council is invited to note a verbal update from Mrs Lavender.

ITEM 8. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Ms A Rogers

Ms Cox

Amending the qualification requirements for eligibility to enter Championship C Classes in order to increase the numbers in that class, and potentially, also then the numbers qualifying for the Crufts Championship Classes

The Council is requested to consider the following amendment to regulations:-

G(A)

ELIGIBILITY AND SCHEDULE OF CLASSES - ELIGIBILITY

3. A dog not qualified to enter Championship Class C must be entered in the lowest available class for which it is eligible and may also be entered in another class if desired plus one additional class at the society's discretion. Only qualified dogs may be entered in Championship Class C and these dogs may also enter Open Class C and one additional class at the society's discretion. (Note the qualifications for Championship Class C and Obedience Warrant.)

15. Class C.

TO:

- a. For Championship Class C at Championship Shows, dogs must have won out of Novice, Class A and Class B, or have progressed on points from those classes, and have **either** won Open Class C on one occasion and have been placed not lower than third on three further occasions: **or to have been placed not lower than third on a minimum of four occasions, and to have achieved a minimum of 20 merit points**; all Open Class C places and wins must have been won under different judges at Kennel Club licensed shows.

(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold)

Rationale

There is considerable concern amongst competitors within both Championship C and Open C Classes, about the declining numbers of competing teams in Championship C Classes compared with the 60+ of up until about 15 years ago. There has been another decline in numbers following the Covid pandemic, which saw the retirement of some teams and with no shows. These were not immediately replaced by newly qualified teams – though this recent decline in numbers seems to be improving again now. The lower numbers competing in Championship C Classes has partly been caused by the failure of competing teams to acquire the win in Class C required to progress into Championship C Class. This failure to win, is due in part to those handlers taking multiple wins in Class C. Ms Rogers would like to acknowledge the dedication and skill of those handlers that enables that level of success in these classes.

With lower numbers in the Championship C Classes, there is a genuine fear amongst the Class C and Championship C Class competitors, that there are then less opportunities for the ticket wins to be spread across a greater number of competitors, and so will potentially have a knock on effect to the numbers qualifying for the Crufts Championship Classes (it is acknowledged that if the teams don't achieve a win in Class C, there is no guarantee that they will achieve a win in Championship C Class either, however their chances of winning a class, are increased). With the removal of stays from all classes, and with potentially reduced numbers in the Crufts Championship Classes, the fear is that these A and B classes could be amalgamated, and their timeslots replaced by other activities. This proposal would increase the numbers eligible to compete in Championship C Classes, which may then have a knock on effect to the numbers qualifying for the Crufts Championship Classes – enabling the sport to continue to fill 2 days of competition at Crufts.

This proposal may also incentivise C class competitors to continue to compete as qualification for the Championship C Classes will be seen as more achievable – this will increase revenue to the show societies. If they qualify for the Championship C Classes, they will then be able to enter 2 classes instead of 1, which again will increase revenue.

This proposal reverses a rule change made in the '80's which was designed to reduce the number of competitors eligible to enter Championship C Classes, when potential numbers in those classes, were regularly far greater than the 60 allowed.

The idea to alter the eligibility requirements to progress from Class C to Championship C Class gained support during the discussions last year following Ms Tozer's suggestion of having 2 C classes scheduled at shows – an open C class and then one just for those who had not yet qualified for Championship C Class - also in an attempt to address the issue of low numbers competing in Championship C Classes.

Warrant points would remain unchanged.

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

No discussion items have been received.

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 B 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 be announced in September 2023.

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