



**MINUTES OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 AUGUST 2021 AT 10.30 AM AT  
THE KENNEL CLUB BUILDING, STONELEIGH**

**PRESENT**

Mrs M Asbury	Dukeries (Notts.) Gundog Club; Scottish Field Trials Association
Mr P Askew	East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club; Eastern Counties Retriever Society; Utility Gundog Society
Mr G Bird	Golden Retriever Club; Yellow Labrador Club
Mrs H Bradley	Labrador Retriever Club; Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks & Hants Retriever Society
Ms C Bridgwater	Essex Field Trial Society; Meon Valley Working Spaniel Club
Mr K Byron	Suffolk Gundog Club; Cambridge Field Trials Society
Mr M Canham	North of Scotland Gundog Association; Lothian & Borders Gundog Association
Mr D Capel	Midland Gundog Society; Coventry & District Gundog Society
Mrs C Carpenter	Bristol & West Working Gundog Society; Hungarian Vizsla Club
Mr J Castle	Golden Retriever Club of Scotland; Moray Firth Spaniel and Retriever Club
Mrs C Clarke	Lancashire & Merseyside Field Trial Society; North West Labrador Retriever Club
Mrs M Cox	Cornwall Field Trial Society; West of England Labrador Retriever Club
Mr S Crookes	South Western Golden Retriever Club; Northern Golden Retriever Association; Eastern Counties Golden Retriever Club; Flatcoated Retriever Society
Mr S Cullis	Arun & Downland Gundog Society; Southern & Western Counties Field Trial Society
Mr R Gould	Gordon Setter Field Trial Society; Southern Pointer Club
Mrs J Hay	Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria; Yorkshire Golden Retriever Club
Mr J Henderson	Strathmore Working Gundog Club; Scottish Gundog Society
Mr P Highfield	East Midland Gundog Club; Dove Valley Working Gundog Club; Leicestershire Gundog Society
Mr A Hopkins-Young	Midland Counties Field Trial Society; Cocker Spaniel Club
Miss J Hurley	German Shorthaired Pointer Association; Hungarian Vizsla Society
Mrs S Jenkins	West Dartmoor Working Gundog Club; Westward Gundog Society
Mrs A Johnson	Italian Spinone Club of Great Britain; Norfolk and Suffolk HPR Field Trial Club
Mrs W Knight	Eastern Counties Spaniel Society; London Cocker Spaniel Society
Mrs S Kuban	German Longhaired Pointer Club; German Shorthaired Pointer Club



Mrs B Kuen Mr H Lane	Chiltern Gundog Society; Mid Norfolk Gundog Club Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire Retriever and Spaniel Society; West Midland Field Trial Society
Mr R Major	Barton on Humber Gundog Club; Large Munsterlander Club; Brittany Club of Great Britain
Mr M Stanbury	Duchy Working Gundog Club; North Devon Working Gundog Club
Ms S Whyte	Lincolnshire Gundog Society; Northumberland and Durham Labrador Retriever Club; Midland Counties Labrador Retriever Club; Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss K Broers	Kennel Club Field Trial Secretary
Miss C Hallisey	Events Coordinator
Miss C McHardy	Manager – Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team
Miss A Morley	Officer – Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs C Welch	Senior Officer – Working Dog Activities Team

**Note 1:** any recommendations made by the Field Trials Liaison Council are subject to review by the Field Trials Committee and The Kennel Club Board, and will not come into effect unless and until Board approval has been confirmed.

**Note 2:** As J Regulations have recently been subject to some amendments which have resulted in renumbering, where a regulation number is quoted in the following minutes, it is shown as it appears in the 2021/2022 Kennel Club Year Book, not as shown in the J Regulations booklet which was published in January 2021, or within agenda papers for the meeting.

1. The Chairman welcomed all present, and thanked them for attending.
2. A one-minute silence was observed in memory of Mr JM Taylor, previous Chairman of the Council, who had passed away in March 2021.

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

3. Apologies were received from Miss C Calvert, Mr S Chant, Mr S Charlton, Miss S Drysdale, Mrs D Harrison, Mr R Johnston, Mr J Kean, Mrs EF Kirk, Mr W Megaughin, Mr J Organ, Mr R Proctor, Mr C Scott, Ms V Stanley, Mr P Turner, Mrs J Venturi-Rose, Mr T West, and Mr F Wright. Mr S Smith, Mr P Turner, and Mr R Young were not present.



## **ITEM 2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2019**

4. The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2019 were approved as being an accurate record.

## **ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE (RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS)**

5. The Council noted the Results of Recommendations document which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

## **ITEM 4. ELECTION OF COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE FOR THE SPANIEL AND POINTER & SETTER SUB GROUPS EFFECTIVE UNTIL MAY 2022**

6. At the Council's meeting on 16 May 2019, Mrs Jenkins and Mr Organ were elected to represent the Spaniel sub-group on the Field Trials Committee. Shortly afterwards, Mrs Jenkins was elected to the Committee by the Board as a Kennel Club member. Accordingly, the Council was required to elect a Spaniel representative to serve on the Committee for the duration of its current term of office i.e. until May 2022.
7. Mr Kean, who served on the Committee as a member elected by the Council, had also been elected to the Committee by the Board, and accordingly the Council was also required to elect a Pointer & Setter representative.
8. It noted that, following consultation via email, the following had been elected: Mr A Hopkins-Young for Spaniels and Mrs EF Kirk for Pointers & Setters.
9. Both appointments would be for the duration of the Council's current term of office i.e. until May 2022.

## **ITEM 5. HANDLERS WITH MORE THAN ONE DOG**

10. A number of items, both proposals and discussion items, had been submitted in respect of this issue.
11. The Council was initially requested to consider whether the concerns regarding handlers with more than one dog related to all four sub-groups, or if they were applicable only to Retrievers. It was highlighted that one of the proposals had been submitted by the Cocker Spaniel Club, but Mr Hopkins-Young, speaking on behalf of the club, wished to confirm that following further discussion, the club no longer wished to support the proposal as it was of the view that proposed changes to the existing regulations would not be helpful in the case of Spaniels, and in fact may prove detrimental.
12. Two members of the Council expressed a view that the issue was applicable to Spaniels as well as to Retrievers. In HPRs and Pointers and Setters there were handlers who handled more than one dog but it was acknowledged that this was often beneficial in that it allowed cards to be filled.



13. A vote took place, and by a majority, the Council agreed that the matter of handlers with more than one dog was only of concern in relation to Retrievers, and any further discussion would take place on that basis.

14. Mr Highfield presented a brief history in relation to the issue, as follows:

**1992:** Regulation J6.d stated that 'Societies may have discretion to confine entries in the first ballot to one dog per **handler.**'

This regulation remained in place until it was replaced in 2002 with the regulation below:

**2002: Regulation J7.g:** Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per **handler**, but all eligible owners should be given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot provided it is appropriately qualified.

This regulation was subsequently replaced in 2008 with the regulation below:

**2008 Regulation J7.g.** Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per **owner.**

The above remained in place until it was removed from the J regulations in 2017.

15. Those members of the Council who were due to present proposals or discussion items on this topic were requested to do so, without debate at this stage. Once all items had been presented, a full discussion would take place as to the merits of each, at which point it was hoped that a consensus could be reached as to how to progress.

#### Proposals

##### Gamekeepers National Association - proposed amendment to Regulation J6.g.

16. The proposal was due to be presented by Mr Scott, but as he had sent his apologies for the meeting, the proposal was noted but was not formally presented or seconded.
17. This proposal was based on the increasing numbers of entries to Retriever societies for field trial runs and the potential consequence of multiple handling, against the current background of levels of demand for a place at a trial outstripping available supply. The Association sought to promote the one handler one dog principle, as a fairer and more equitable approach to creating balanced availability of places for a wider membership. The proposal was as follows:

Regulation J6.g.

#### **TO:**

Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible. **Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler while reserves stand. If numerous dogs are entered by members with the stated intention of being run by one handler, in the event of being drawn in the ballot, those eligible owners should have the opportunity to substitute their handler before 7 days of the trial.**

(Insertion in bold)

##### Moray Firth Spaniel & Retriever Club and Golden Retriever Club of Scotland - proposed amendment to Regulation J6.g.



18. The proposal was presented by Mr Castle and was seconded by Mr Henderson.
19. Mr Castle, as the Field Trial Secretary of Scottish Field Trials Association, had attended the annual February meeting of Scottish field trial societies. At that meeting, broad agreement was reached in terms of the need for the J Regulations to effectively revert to pre-2008/9 provision, when 'one handler, one dog' was an option open to societies.
20. The following clubs had provided letters of support/endorsement for the proposal: Grampian Gundog Club, North of Scotland Gundog Association, Gordon District Gundog Club, and Forth & Clyde Working Gundog Association. The proposal was as follows:

Regulation J6.g.

**TO:**

Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible. **Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler while reserves still stand. If numerous dogs are entered by members, with the intention of being run by one handler, in the event of being drawn in the ballot, those eligible owners should have the opportunity to substitute their handler before 7 days of the trial.**

(Insertion in bold)

Labrador Retriever Club - proposed amendment to Regulation J6.g.

21. The proposal was presented by Mrs H Bradley and seconded by Mrs Bridgwater.
22. The Club wished to propose the following amendment:

Regulation J6.g

**TO:**

Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a Trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible. **Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler, but all eligible owners should be given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot providing it is appropriately qualified, and while reserves stand.**

(Insertion in bold)

Norfolk Gundog Club and Eastern Counties Retriever Society - proposed amendment to Regulation J8.b.(6)

23. The proposal was presented by Mr P Askew and seconded by Mr Castle.
24. The above clubs wished to propose the following amendment, with the objective of ensuring that all handlers had equal opportunities to run in trials.

Regulation J8.b.(6)

**TO:**

(6) Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than two dogs in a stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J6). **Clubs/Societies may limit the number of dogs a handler is able to run to one handler one dog in their Retriever stakes.**

(Insertion in bold)

Midland Counties Field Trial Society - proposed amendment to Regulation J8.b.(6)



Note: this proposal was originally also supported by the Cocker Spaniel Club which, as noted earlier, no longer wished to support it (paragraph 11 refers.)

25. The proposal was presented by Mr Hopkins-Young, and seconded by Mrs Bridgwater.
26. The proposal was made in light of the fact that some handlers were obtaining runs with two dogs registered in different names before another handler was able to secure a run, which was seen as being unfair. The clubs were of the view that there should be a restriction of one handler one dog until everyone had been offered a run. Handlers with more than one dog would be able choose their preferred dog to run in that stake. The proposal was as follows:

Regulation J8.b.(6)

**TO:**

- (6) Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than ~~two~~ **one** dog **until everyone has been offered a run in that draw whilst other members' qualified dogs stand dogs** in a stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or breeds that Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters.(See also J6).

(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)

Midland Gundog Society - proposed amendment to Regulation J6.g.

27. The proposal was presented by Mr Capel, and was seconded by Mr Byron.
28. The Society wished to address the growing custom of the transfer of ownership of dogs into other members' names, in order to submit multiple entries to one trial, and thus gain advantage in field trial draws. The proposal was as follows:

Regulation J6.g.

**TO:**

- g. Societies may, or may not, after an entry has been accepted, allow an applicant to substitute a dog before a trial with another dog owned by him or her, the dog must, however, be eligible. **Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler, but all eligible owners should be given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot provided it is appropriately qualified.**

(Insertion in bold)

Coventry & District Gundog Society - proposed amendment to Regulation J6.e.

29. The proposal was presented by Mr D Capel and was seconded by Ms Whyte.
30. The Society proposed that 'Approved Handler' status would be registered at The Kennel Club for a period of up to one field trial year. Owners requiring an Approved Handler would apply to the committee of their local club (a club approved to run open stakes) giving the reasons why the request was necessary and the name of the handler they wished to use. In general no person would be granted Approved Handler status for an owner from the same address although an exception may be granted in extenuating circumstances.
31. The entry fee for any dog to be handled by an Approved Handler would be double that of other competitors.
32. The main purpose of this proposal was to prevent owners obtaining an unfair advantage in the draw by entering several dogs in the names of people who had no intention of running.



33. The Society wished to emphasise its concern that, if the practice of multiple entering was not prevented, the situation would deteriorate as more owners would enter dogs in names other than their own. The proposal was as follows:

Regulation J6.e.

**TO:**

- e. If entries or nominations exceed the number of permitted runners, the right to compete in a Trial shall be decided by ballot (subject to Regulation J6.i. which relates to preference in the draw for open stakes). ~~Societies must ensure that all eligible owners/members are given the opportunity of having their preferred dog entered into the first ballot (See J6.i.)~~ **The draw will be undertaken using the names of the handlers. In the event that any handler's name appears more than once in any section of the draw all entries in that name will be rejected i.e. only one entry will be permitted per handler, with the following exception:**  
**Some handlers will be designated as 'Approved Handlers' and will be permitted more than one place in the draw, although the provisions of Regulation J8.b.(6) will apply.** The society must publish the result of this ballot in full to all applicants. Where an online system, approved by the Kennel Club, has been used to take entries, the ballot must be carried out using the same online system, and the result forwarded to the Kennel Club at the same time that competitors are notified.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

#### Discussion items

##### Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria – suggested amendment to Regulation J8.b.(6)

34. The discussion item was presented by Mrs Hay.
35. The Club noted that amateur competitors contributed a great deal to the discipline, and was keen to ensure that they had every opportunity to participate in trials as, without them, there would be no helpers, no guns, and no field trials. The Council's views were sought as to the following suggested amendment:

Regulation J8.b.(6)

**TO:**

- (6) Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than ~~two~~ **one** dogs in a stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J6).

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

##### Yellow Labrador Club – suggested new Regulation J6.e and amendment to Regulation J8.b(6)

36. The discussion item was presented by Mr Bird.
37. The Club noted that noted that it had become increasingly common within the Retriever field trial community for one handler to represent a number of members, and that such handlers had a higher chance of getting one or two runs in each draw. It wished to ensure that each handler had an equal opportunity in the draw, the majority of members also being the handler.
38. It wished to suggest that at the time of entering the trial, each owner would have to nominate one handler, and that where a handler had been nominated to handle more than one dog, he/she must select which dog they wished to handle as their first preference dog owned by another member.



39. The Club's suggested wording was as follows:

New Regulation J6.e: Entries

**TO:**

- e. For Retriever stakes, each member must nominate one handler on their entry. Where a handler has been nominated to handle more than one dog, they must be requested to select which dog they wish to handle as their first preference dog. A handler may only handle a second dog where this dog comes from the second preference draw (after all other members with a first preference dog have been offered a run), or if a stake is undersubscribed.**

(Insertion in bold. Subsequent paragraphs to renumbered)

Regulation J8.b(6)

**TO:**

Control of dogs and competitors under trial

Except in the championships, no handler may handle more than two dogs in a stake for ~~Retrievers~~, Spaniels or breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any stake for Pointers and Setters. (See also J6). **For Retrievers, except in the championship, where a trial is undersubscribed or members with second preference dogs are offered a run, no handler may handle more than one dog in a stake.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold)

Mr S Capstick

40. The discussion item was presented by Mr Capel.
41. Mr Capstick acknowledged that the current rules may be subject to potential abuse by some handlers, in order to obtain an additional chance of obtaining runs by putting their own dogs in the names of friends and family members, which was not in the spirit of the discipline. However, he was of the view that imposing a blanket ban on multiple handling would result in a detrimental impact on many owners, and on the retriever breeds. Mr Capstick wished to emphasise the importance of ensuring that the best dogs were able to compete at trials, regardless of ownership, as winning dogs were likely to form part of breeding programmes.
42. The Council's views were sought regarding a suggestion that owners who were unable to handle their own dogs would apply to The Kennel Club for a 'permit' to enable a chosen handler to handle their dogs for them. This would be conducted on a season-to-season basis and in order to maintain fairness and reduce potential abuse of the system, it would not be permissible for the handler to be changed mid-season.
43. This brought to an end the presentation of proposals and discussion items relating to handlers with more than one dog. The Chairman thanked all present for their courtesy in giving their attention to the above presentations without comment, and opened the debate.
44. A wide range of views were expressed on the issue but it was noted that the common theme to all of the proposals and suggestions was the perceived inequality in the draw system in its current form.
45. It was suggested that should an amendment to J Regulations be made, it should be kept as simple as possible in order to avoid any potential for confusion or misunderstanding. However it was also acknowledged that caution was necessary to ensure that there were no unintended consequences which may have a detrimental impact on competitors. Some owners were unable to run their own dogs, or did not wish to, and it was emphasised that there was no intention to prevent them from using





the services of handlers to run their dogs, which was a long-standing tradition within the field trialling community. It was also essential to ensure that the discipline remained inclusive to all, and that participants did not feel that there was any discrimination against owner/handlers with only one dog.

46. It was also important to take into account circumstances such as two owners from the same household who may on occasion wish to run each other's dogs, or dogs in joint ownerships, and to ensure that such owners were not disadvantaged by any changes to existing regulations.
47. A brief discussion also took place as to the use of the word 'may', which was regarded as being ambiguous, whereas the word 'must' would be clearer. The Council also considered whether clubs should be given discretion to decide for themselves whether or not to allow handlers to handle more than one dog in a trial. Such discretion had been given in the past, and it was pointed out that such flexibility may be invaluable, as local circumstances may vary considerably, with clubs in some areas struggling to fill a card whereas in other regions, trials were over-subscribed.
48. For this reason, it was highlighted that any proposed amendment to the current J regulations must take into account the situation regarding reserves. In some cases, in order to fill a card, a handler already handling a dog at a trial may obtain a run with a second dog as a reserve, and it was essential to ensure that it remained possible for them to do so. It would be highly undesirable for a trial to be cancelled due to insufficient numbers where a suitable dog was available to run.
49. In particular, it was highlighted that in many cases, 'amateur' handlers were often unable to accept runs as reserves at short notice, due to work and other commitments, whereas 'professional' handlers tended to have more freedom to accept runs as reserves. A regulation which prevented handlers from accepting runs as reserves may prove detrimental.
50. It was highlighted that there were two issues requiring consideration, one of which concerned the situation where one handler may handle dogs for more than one owner, and as a result that handler may be seen as having an unfair advantage in a draw over an owner/handler with only one dog. A view was expressed that there was some doubt as to whether any such issue actually existed as no objective evidence had been provided, and that such evidence should be sought prior to any decision being made. However the overall view of the Council was that there were justified concerns within many, although not all, clubs.
51. The second issue concerned the situation where dogs were being transferred into the ownership of family members or friends with the objective of gaining more runs, although it was acknowledged that in such cases, it would be necessary for the owner of the dog to become a member of a club in order to ensure that the dog was placed in the first preference draw. The Council accepted that this was a more complex matter and that there were difficulties in formulating a definitive solution which would address both of these issues without disadvantaging some individuals.
52. A suggestion was made that the second issue may be addressed to some extent by ensuring that clubs were careful in stringently screening new applicants for membership, for example by requesting information from the applicant as to their experience in field trials and their future intentions. It was hoped that this may prevent friends or family members who had little or no interest in running a dog from joining clubs, and that therefore dogs transferred into their name would not be eligible to obtain preference in a draw.



53. The Chairman acknowledged that the issue was a complex one, and thanked all Council members for a courteous and productive discussion. In order to progress the matter, a number of votes took place.
54. In the first instance, the Council was requested to vote as to whether it was in support of a regulation which would allow societies the discretion to restrict handlers to running one dog. It was highlighted that this would apply only to Retrievers, as agreed earlier, and not to any other sub-groups. By a majority, the Council supported the introduction of such a measure.
55. A second vote took place regarding the proposal for the introduction of an 'Approved Handler' scheme, under the terms of which designated handlers only would be permitted to handle two dogs in a trial. By a majority, this initiative was not supported.
56. A further vote took place in relation to the suggested implementation of a system whereby owners who were unable to handle their own dogs would apply to The Kennel Club for a 'permit' to enable a chosen handler to handle their dogs for them. By a majority, this suggestion was not supported.
57. The Chairman noted that the majority of the proposals related to amendments to either Regulation J6.g. or J8.b(6). Noting the discussion and the views expressed, he wished to propose the following amendment to Regulation J8.b(6), which would allow clubs to have discretion as to whether to restrict the number of dogs in a trial to one per handler, whilst there were reserves standing:
- Regulation J8.b(6):
- (6) Except in the Championships, no handler may handle more than two dogs in a Stake for Retrievers, Spaniels or Breeds which Hunt, Point and Retrieve, or more than 5 dogs in any Stake for Pointers and Setters. **Retrievers only: Societies may have discretion to confine the handling of dogs to one dog per handler whilst there are reserves available.** (See also J6).
- (Insertion in bold)
58. It was anticipated that this would be a simple and clear change to existing regulations which would address the issue of handlers with multiple dogs. It was accepted that it would not address the issue of the transfer of ownership into the names of friends and family members, but this was a more complex matter which could not be resolved by a simple regulation change. The Council was however of the view that transferring dogs in this way for the purposes of obtaining runs was a dishonourable practice and was not in the spirit of the discipline. It requested that its views be considered by the Field Trials Committee with a view to issuing a statement to that effect in order to discourage the practice.
59. It was suggested that in addition, clubs should be recommended to review their membership criteria in order to ensure that only bona fide owners could become club members. Should The Kennel Club issue such guidance, it was hoped that in due course such good practice would be reflected in club constitutions.
60. The above proposal as submitted by Mr Highfield was seconded by Mr Hopkins-Young. A vote took place, and by a majority, it was **recommended** for approval.



## **ITEM 6. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES**

### Proposed amendment to Regulation J8.b.(7)

#### English Springer Spaniel Club

61. The proposal was due to be presented by Mr Proctor, but in his absence, it was presented by Mrs Bridgwater. The English Springer Spaniel Club wished to propose an amendment to the above regulation whereby an owner who had deputed the handling of a dog to another handler, would be permitted to be in the line as the dog was working, as was currently the case, but would not be permitted to be part of the day's proceedings such as in the role of a steward, gun, or picker up. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Cox.
62. The Club was of the view that as there was a perception that a steward, gun, or picker up may potentially influence the outcome of a trial, it was not acceptable for the owner of a competing dog to undertake any of these roles.
63. There was some concern that introducing such a regulation may be detrimental to a trial, should there be a shortage of suitable helpers on the day, and that it may particularly discriminate against couples where one wished to run a dog held in joint ownership or owned by the other partner, whilst the other acted as a steward, gun, or picker up. Further, there was some doubt as to whether an individual acting in such roles could have any significant influence on the outcome of a trial.
64. By a unanimous vote, the proposal was **not** recommended for approval.

### Proposed amendment to Regulations J5c.(5)(i) and J5c.(5)(ii) in relation to HPR's Brittany Club of Great Britain and German Longhaired Pointer Club

65. The proposal was presented by Mr Major on behalf of the Brittany Club of Great Britain, supported by the German Longhaired Pointer Club. It was seconded by Mr Canham.
66. The Club wished the Council to consider a proposal to increase the number of HPR field trial judging appointments required to qualify for appointment to an HPR judging panel, with the objective of improving the standard of judging at HPR field trials by ensuring that new judges were able to gain greater experience, exposure and feedback before progressing.
67. The Council noted a concern that some judges were applying for Panel status with the minimum required levels of experience, and it agreed that it would be beneficial for applicants to have more experience prior to making their application, especially in view of the wide range of different breeds within the HPR sub-group. It was hoped that this would result in due course in higher standards of judging.
68. A vote took place and, by a majority, the following amendments to J regulations were **recommended** for approval:

#### Regulation J5.c.(5)(i)

##### **TO:**

Before a judge can be added to a panel he must have judged:

- (i) B Panel: over a minimum period of 36 months, and a maximum period of 60 months immediately preceding the date of the application:

HPRs – a minimum of **4 6** stakes with at least 4 different judges.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold).

#### Regulation J5.c.(5)(ii)

##### **TO:**

Before a judge can be added to a panel he must have judged:



- (ii) A Panel: over a minimum period of 36 months, and a maximum period of 60 months, subsequent to their appointment to the B Panel:  
HPRs – a minimum of 68 stakes of which at least one must have been open.  
Reports must be available from at least 4 different A Panel co-judges.  
(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold).

69. At this point in the meeting a query arose as to whether Council members were permitted to vote on issues which did not relate to the sub-group which they represented. It was clarified by the Chairman that members were free to vote on any matters as they saw fit.

## **ITEM 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### HPRs competing in working tests

#### Mrs S Harris

70. The discussion item had been submitted by Mrs S Harris, and was presented on her behalf by Mrs Carpenter.
71. Mrs Harris noted that HPR breeds were generally highly intelligent and , bored easily, and as a result some dogs would be rehomed or placed in rescue. New owners were often advised to join a gundog dog training club in order to allow such dogs to express their natural working instincts. Having achieved an adequate level of training, owners were often encouraged to enter working tests. However, under existing regulations, dogs which were not registered with The Kennel Club were not permitted to take part in working tests. This often included rescue dogs which were therefore excluded from the opportunity to compete.
72. To address this issue, Mrs Harris suggested that Kennel Club Regulation J(G)4.d. be amended to allow HPR Gundog societies to accept unregistered HPRs as an AV HPR and be allowed to compete in the same way as every other HPR dog. Alternatively, it was suggested that Regulation J(G)4.d. may be amended to allow HPR Gundog societies to accept unregistered HPRs to register on The Kennel Club Activity Register and compete in working tests.
73. It was clarified by the office that any dog competing in a Kennel Club licensed event must be registered. For breed showing, field trials/working tests, and Bloodhound Working Trials, a dog must appear on the breed register. For other activities, it may be registered either on the breed register or on the activity register. This would ensure that all dogs participating in a competition could be identified in the event of an incident occurring.
74. It was highlighted that some clubs, when running working tests, would allow unregistered dogs to take part on a 'not for competition' basis, or would provide opportunities for them to undergo the relevant exercises in the test on an informal basis, although as stated above, this may cause difficulties in identifying dogs should in incident occur.
75. The Council also acknowledged the difficulties inherent in identifying an unregistered dog as being a full HPR, based purely on its appearance, although it was drawn to the Council's attention that dogs of breeds already fully recognised, whose breeding was either impure or unverified, may be accepted for registration on the Breed Register under certain circumstances.
76. After discussion, the Council was not in support of the amendments to J regulations which were suggested by Mrs Harris. However, it hoped that in many cases owners of



unregistered dogs would in due course acquire a registered dog and would go on to compete fully in working tests and field trials.

Unwelcome competitors

77. Mr Byron, on behalf of Cambridge Field Trial Society, requested guidance from The Kennel Club as to what action should be taken in the situation where a competitor was present at a field trial, having been previously advised by the host that they were not welcome at the ground, and where the organising club was not aware beforehand that this was the case.
78. The Council was mindful of the necessity for ensuring that the wishes of hosts were respected. In cases where it was known in advance that a particular competitor would be unwelcome at the ground, the competitor may be advised in advance that the society/club committee has refused their entry. It was suggested that entry forms may include a caveat whereby competitors would be required to confirm that they were unaware of any reason for them not to be present at the venue (including any restrictions imposed by ground hosts), and that this would be an effective means of addressing the matter.
79. Clubs were also reminded of the necessity of ensuring that they had a good screening process for new members in place, as discussed earlier in the meeting, with a view to ensuring that applications from unsuitable individuals could be declined (paragraphs 52 and 59 refer). Applicants may be reminded of the provisions of Regulation J8.b.(13) with regard to behaviour of those taking part in competitive gundog work.
80. However, where the club was unaware in advance that there was an issue, the matter was more complex, and it was agreed that guidance should be sought from the Field Trial Committee, and published in due course in the field trials newsletter.

Reserves withdrawing within 7 days  
Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria

81. Mrs Hay, representing the Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria, sought the Council's views on a suggested amendment to Regulation J6.f., whereby a club may retain the full entry fee where a handler withdrew within 7 days of a trial. The matter was raised in view of concerns regarding handlers who, having accepted a run from a reserve list, wished to withdraw in favour of accepting the offer of a run closer to home from another society.
82. It was clarified that where a handler had accepted a run, provision was already in place for the club to retain the entry fee if they wished to do so, and therefore no amendment to regulations was necessary.

Dogs registered as 'Colour not recognised'/ Labradors entered in trials that are registered as 'colour not recognised'  
Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club/Yellow Labrador Club.

**Note:** two discussion items on this issue had been submitted by the Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club and the Yellow Labrador Club. As they both addressed the same issue, they were discussed together.

83. Northumberland & Durham Labrador Retriever Club, represented by Miss Whyte, wished to raise the issue of the increasing numbers of 'dilutes' (colour not recognised) which were being registered by The Kennel Club and were therefore eligible to enter field trials.
84. The club was concerned that if a dog registered as 'colour not recognised', such as silver, and achieved an award at a trial, it would be eligible to be entered into The



Kennel Club Stud Book. This was perceived as being detrimental to the breed, as such a dog would not comply with the relevant breed standard which stated that the only permitted colours were black, yellow, and liver/chocolate.

85. Accordingly, the Club wished to suggest the use of an additional clause to the field trial conditions of entry, which could state 'Entries will only be accepted in field trials by dogs of a colour recognised by the Kennel Club', together with provision on the field trial entry form for the colour of the dog to be stated.
86. Mr Bird, on behalf of the Yellow Labrador Club, wished to highlight concerns that recent changes to the registration of Labradors which were not black, yellow, or liver/chocolate could mean that dogs of 'colour not recognised' or their offspring could run in working tests or trials. As a result, a dog of a non-standard colour may be awarded a Stud Book Number.
87. The Club did not consider this to be desirable and did not wish the breeding of, for example, 'champagne' or 'silver' Labrador Retrievers to be encouraged. It wished to suggest a simple addition to the entry form/process for Retriever working tests and trials to preclude dogs registered as 'colour not recognised' from entering such events. This would take the form of a box for 'colour' to be included on the form. Anyone entering a dog for a competition stating on the form a colour not recognised would be advised that their entry was not accepted. A dog entered as a recognised colour, but where its physical appearance led to queries about its breeding, would be subject to investigation.
88. It was also noted that a dog which appeared to be of a standard colour for its breed may potentially be a carrier of a dilute gene which may result in its progeny being of a colour not recognised.
89. The issue had originally arisen as a result of silver dogs being imported from the USA some years ago. Under the terms of The Kennel Club's reciprocal arrangements with the American Kennel Club (AKC), a dog which was registered by the AKC was automatically eligible for registration by The Kennel Club.
90. The Council was also advised that similar issues existed in the Weimaraner, where litters of 'blue' puppies were being registered by The Kennel Club.
91. The Council was fully in agreement with the views expressed by the clubs, especially in view of concerns that silver Labrador Retrievers appeared to be subject to genetic health issues such as alopecia. It accepted that the issue was complex in nature, and it was not clear as to the best way of addressing it. At present, field trial judges were required to judge a dog based purely on its working ability and not by its appearance. For this reason it was not permissible for a dog to be penalised at a field trial based on its coat colour.
92. It was noted that similar concerns, relating to dog showing, had been raised by The Kennel Club Breed Liaison Council.
93. The Council considered the suggestion that dogs of a non recognised colour should be refused entries to field trials. It was pointed out that such a measure would not preclude entries from dogs carrying a gene for a non-standard colour, or from individuals who chose to misrepresent the colour of their dog either in its registration, or on the entry form. A further suggestion was that entrants be required to submit a copy of the dog's pedigree with the entry form so that checks could be carried out, but it was acknowledged that this would involve significant input from field trial secretaries and would not be effective, particularly in HPR breed where secretaries could not be



expected to have sufficiently detailed knowledge of the pedigrees of individual dogs. Further, many entries were made online and there would be no associated mechanism for the submission of a pedigree.

94. It noted that at present, societies may not prevent a dog from competing on the sole basis of its coat colour.
95. Having considered the matter, the Council agreed by a large majority that dogs of non-standard colours should not be permitted to run in field trials, and expressed its strong support for measures which would preclude them from doing so. It wished to refer its views to the Field Trials Committee for consideration of how this may be achieved.

#### Shooting at championships

##### Spaniel Club

96. Mrs Cox, on behalf of the Spaniel Club, requested the Council to discuss shooting at any championship. The Club was of the view that anyone who had qualified a dog for a championship, either as a handler or owner, should abstain from shooting at that championship that season even where their dog was handled by someone else. It was concerned that there may be a perception that a gun could have an influence on the outcome of the trial and it was keen to ensure that there was no perception of unfairness.
97. Having discussed a similar issue earlier in the meeting (paragraph 63 refers), the Council reiterated its view that it was unlikely that a gun would have any significant influence on the outcome, and it did not therefore support the views of the Spaniel Club.

#### Selection of judges for the Cocker Spaniel Championship and Any Variety Spaniel except Spaniel [Cocker] Championship

##### Spaniel Club

98. The Spaniel Club, represented by Mrs Cox, wished to raise concerns regarding the way in which judges for the above Championships were selected. It was of the view that the current selection process was not sufficiently transparent, and that some clubs were discouraged from participating in the nomination process as a result.
99. It was confirmed by the office that each club which had Open status for Cocker Spaniels or Any Variety Spaniel except Spaniel [Cocker] was requested to submit four nominations for each of the above championships. These nominations were collated and submitted to the Field Trials Committee for the final selection of judges. Once invitations had been issued and the appointments were in place, having been confirmed by the Board, details were published in the field trials newsletter.
100. The Council accepted this but noted that it has previously been the case that the office would notify the clubs of the eight candidates with the most nominations, which the clubs would then put into order of priority, but this practice had been discontinued some time ago. It was clarified that this had been due to complaints from clubs that they were being required to hold two committee meetings in order to discuss the nominations and accordingly, the process had been changed.
101. The Council was assured that all votes from clubs were taken into consideration when considering nominations, and it was hoped that clubs would continue to take an active part in the process. Noting this, it requested that further feedback be provided to clubs to ensure that they were fully aware of the process.
102. A suggestion was made that details of the number of votes for each candidate be published, but the Council concluded that this would not be desirable. A further



suggestion was put forward that information as to which clubs had nominated particular candidates should be made available, but it was accepted this would be unduly complex and would not provide information which was of value to clubs.

103. Noting that details of the nomination process were included in the field trials newsletter each year, the Council requested that more detailed feedback be provided, such as information as to the number of candidates who had been nominated, how many clubs had submitted nominations, etc. This was duly noted.

#### Water Certificates

##### Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria

104. Mrs Hay presented the item on behalf of the Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria, which wished to seek the Council's views regarding its suggestion that Regulation K2.c.(3) should be amended to state that a special water test, which was a requirement for a Retriever to be described as a Field Trial Champion, may be conducted by two Panel judges, at least one of which must be an A Panel judge, rather than by two A Panel judges as was currently the the case.
105. The Club was of the view that as B Panel judges may sign a game certificate and award certificates to make a dog up to a FT Champion, they should be equally qualified to sign a water/drive certificate.
106. Some caution was expressed in considering the matter, as it was agreed that such a measure may lead to a demand for water/drive certificates to be available at novice trials, which in turn would result in a considerable amount of work for field trial secretaries. Further, an input of Kennel Club resources would also be required to issue certificates and log results. . Many of the dogs gaining certificates by way of 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> places at novice stakes may never progress to open stakes and the effort involved in providing them with water or drive certificates was therefore not justified.
107. In view of this, a suggestion was made that it should be permissible for water or drive certificates for Retrievers to be ratified by one A Panel judge and one B Panel judge (the current regulation specified two A Panel judges). However, such certificates would only be available at open stakes, for the reasons stated above.
108. The Council agreed that this would be a positive step, and wished to seek the views of the Committee as to whether it would support a regulation amendment to facilitate this measure.

#### Award of an eye wipe at Retriever trials

##### Mr P Smith

109. The Council noted that as Mr P Smith was unable to attend the meeting, he had requested that his discussion item be withdrawn from the agenda, and included on the agenda for the Council's next meeting.

#### Searching for birds at the end of a trial

##### Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society

110. Mrs Bradley presented the item on behalf of Mr A Thornton, representing Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society. Mr Thornton wished the Council to discuss the issue of handlers at trials refusing to help look for birds at the end of a drive/trial.
111. Mr Thornton was of the view that the practice was highly undesirable, and was disrespectful to gamekeepers, hosts and landowners. Whilst appreciating that handlers could not be forced to help look for game, guidance was sought as to how the issue may be addressed.





112. It was acknowledged that the picking up team was responsible for sweeping a ground at the end of the trial, but that it was helpful if handlers assisted in the process, especially in view of the fact that clubs may have financial limitations meaning that they could not afford to employ a large number of pickers up. Where a host or keeper requested assistance from handlers, it was hoped that they would comply as a matter of courtesy. Should they not do so, there was a risk that offence would be caused to a host and the ground may be lost to the club.
113. It was agreed that it would be a positive step to include suitable guidance in the Code of Best Practice for Competitors at Retriever trials, which was available on the Kennel Club website.

'First Dog Down'

Labrador Retriever Club

114. The discussion item was presented by Mrs Bradley, on behalf of the Labrador Retriever Club.
115. The Labrador Retriever Club wished to draw the Council's attention to a perception that the 'first dog down' rule was being inconsistently applied, with some judges at a trial putting out every first dog down whilst others at the same trial did not do so, even where the circumstances appeared identical. It suggested that it may be helpful to issue guidance in order to ensure fairness to all competitors.
116. It was highlighted that very clear guidance on the matter was already available within the seminar script for Retrievers, which was available on The Kennel Club website. The relevant extract was as follows:

J(B)7. Trial Procedure

***(7) A first dog failure, is when the first dog to be tried on a retrieve, fails. However, if there is any significant delay in sending a dog, then it should not be penalised as a first dog failure when the game is not subsequently picked by another dog, tried by the Judges, or by the Judges searching the area which the handler has been directed to search.***

There are two elements which make a first dog failure. The first is that the game is not picked by another dog, or by the Judges. If it is, of course, the dog sent first has had his eye wiped and is gone anyway.

The second, and more important, element is timing.

For a dog to be classed as a first dog failure the game must not subsequently be picked by another dog sent by the Judges or by the Judges themselves, and the dog must have been sent for the retrieve without any significant delay.

The term itself almost perfectly defines the answer.

The practice of deliberately delaying the sending of dogs to artificially create 'second dog down' situations is directly contrary to Regulation J(A)3.c., is a dishonest practice and consequently a breach of the high standards of behaviour required from Field Trial Judges. It should never take place. Apart from the obvious, it also robs the dog of the best opportunity to show what it can do on a running bird, the retrieve of which might well win the Stake.

A delay is a delay, and preferably there should be none. The dog should be got away as quickly as possible. However, for any delay which occurs to trigger a 'second dog down' situation that delay must have significantly prejudiced the opportunity for the dog to pick the game.



Sometimes, of course, it may become apparent that other circumstances have effectively conspired to make unreasonable demands on a dog and on those occasions Judges should take account of such factors.

There is also a third element in that was the game pickable? See also Reg J(A)4.h above *'If the first dog sent shows ability by acknowledging the fall and making a workmanlike job of the line, it need not automatically be barred from the awards by failing to produce the game'*

117. The Council agreed that all judges should be aware of this guidance, and accordingly, it wished to recommend that the extract should be published within the field trials newsletter.
118. It was also hoped that all judges at a trial would confer extensively prior to commencement of judging in order to ensure that a consistent approach was taken.

Grandfather rights for judges  
Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria

119. Mrs Hay, on behalf of the Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria, sought the views of the Council in respect to the granting of grandfather rights, as set out in Regulation J5.c.(6) which currently reads as follows:

(Note: Judges deemed to have "Grandfather rights" and who are therefore exempt from Regulation J5.c.(6) are: judges who were appointed to the 'A' Panel prior to 1 January 2010, and/or were involved in the pilot scheme for the judges training programme and/or those who are, or have been a Kennel Club Approved Presenter.)

120. The Club was concerned to note that B Panel judges who had not passed the examination, but attended the pilot scheme, had not been granted grandfather rights, although A Panel judges in a similar situation had. It pointed out that there were a number of very experienced 'B' Panel judges who had achieved success with their dogs but were happy to remain on the 'B' Panel, and it was keen to ensure that such judges were not lost to the discipline. For this reason it wished to suggest that the provisions of Regulation J5.c.(6) should be extended to include them.
121. The Council was in full agreement with the views expressed by the Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria, and wished to refer the matter to the Field Trials Committee for review.

Proposed new Regulation J6.g.  
Coventry & District Gundog Society

**Note:** this proposal was on the agenda under item 5 but as it did not directly relate to the issue of handlers with more than one dog, the discussion was deferred until later in the meeting.

122. The proposal was presented by Mr Capel on behalf of Coventry & District Gundog Society. In the light of discussions which had already taken place earlier in the meeting, the proposal, the objective of which was to provide all owners with as many runs as possible within the framework of the ballot system, was revised to read as follows:

New Regulation J6.g.

**TO:**

**g. No owner is allowed to run more than one dog on any one day.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)



123. The proposal was seconded by Mr Cullis.
124. Mr Capel outlined concerns that some owners had reciprocal arrangements in which one owner would run their own dog as well as a dog belonging to another owner, at the same trial. Whilst this did not constitute a breach of existing regulations, this practice was not considered to be within the spirit of the discipline.
125. A concern was raised that the introduction of such a regulation may have a detrimental impact on those who owned dogs in partnership with another owner or owners. It was acknowledged that this may be the case. It was also highlighted that clubs may, if they wish, refuse to allow a substitution of handler, and request that a dog be withdrawn should the original nominated handler not be able to run.
126. It was also highlighted that there may be circumstances where it may be necessary for an owner to run two dogs, where a stake was not fully subscribed and an owner's second dog may be requested in order to fill the card on the day. This practice was perfectly acceptable.
127. Mr Capel agreed at this point that the proposal may be considered as a discussion item only, and therefore no vote was necessary.
128. The Council accepted that an issue existed, and that the practice of changing handlers was a dishonourable act. However it was not of the view that any amendment to J Regulations was required, but wished to request that the matter be referred to the Field Trials Committee for its views on how the matter may be addressed.

#### **ITEM 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

129. The Council noted that the next meeting would take place in May 2022. The exact date would be confirmed in due course.

#### **ITEM 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

129. Mrs Kuen wished to raise an issue regarding the awarding of trophies and what action would be appropriate should the winner of a stake refuse to accept a trophy. There was a concern that doing so was disrespectful and may be offensive to societies or to hosts. Trophies were often of historical value and it was hoped that winners would accept them gracefully when they were awarded.
130. It was acknowledged that some competitors were reluctant to take trophies home due to the responsibility of safeguarding them, some trophies being of considerable financial value. In other cases competitors did not wish to accept the costs or practicalities of having them engraved.
131. It was suggested that under such circumstances, it would be quite acceptable for the competitor to accept the trophy as part of the public presentation at the end of the trial, and to then return it privately to the field trial secretary once the presentations were over.
132. It was also agreed that it would be a positive step for societies to stipulate within their conditions of entry that competitors who were awarded trophies would be required to accept them, or to agree to the cost of having them engraved.



133. There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all those present for attending.

**The meeting closed at 3.20 pm**

**MR P HIGHFIELD**  
**Chairman**

**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'**