



**MEETING OF THE AGILITY LIAISON COUNCIL TO BE HELD ON  
THURSDAY 06 JULY 2023 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE  
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

**A G E N D A**

**ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**ITEM 2. 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 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 (copies previously distributed).

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

- a. The Council is invited to note that recommendations from its meeting held on 12 January 2023 were forwarded to the Board for approval following the Activities Committee meeting held on 30 March 2023. An update will be provided at the meeting.
- b. Capping Classes  
Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(A) 12.c  
At its two previous meetings, the Council had discussed a proposal to reduce the capping limit on classes. Further discussion at the Activities Committee considered that reducing the cap too low had the potential to result in very small classes. The Governance Panel has reconsidered these issues and have decided not to pursue the amendment at this time.

c. A-frame and dog walk up contacts

At its previous meeting, the Council was in support of the principle of amending the marking of contacts and the Judging Panel was requested to formulate a revised proposal.

There was a large amount of support for the above. However it was agreed the proposal should be amended to ensure it did not penalise dogs which had a naturally long stride.

The Council also discussed the use of diagrams to be included in the guidance on how to support the proposed regulation amendment. It is requested to consider the following suggested regulation amendment:

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)5.a.(18)

**TO:**

**A-frame and dog walk**

~~Contact area—5 faults for each failure to make contact.~~

**A-frame and dog walk approach contact: the dog must ascend onto the approach contact from the front and traverse over, but does not have to make contact with the approach contact area. Ascending onto the A-frame or dog walk from the side above the approach contact area - 5 faults.**

**A-frame and dog walk exit contact: the dog must touch the down contact zone with at least one paw or part of a paw. The dog is considered to have left the obstacle when all four paws are on the ground.**

**See-saw: the dog must touch both the up and down contact zones with at least one paw or part of a paw. Failure to do so – 5 faults each time it occurs.**

**The dog is considered to have left the obstacle when all four paws are on the ground.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold).

d. Proposed amendments to Regulations H19.e. and H27.a.(7)

At its previous meeting Mrs B Hodson had requested amendments to the above regulations to assist in encouraging judges to accept appointments if families, relatives and household members with co-owned dogs would also be able to enter shows.

It was noted that many families, couples and close friends share in the handling and training of their dogs. It was considered that placing limitations on judges' dogs being entered at a show would potentially deter people from giving up their day to judge, making it harder for secretaries to recruit judges. In order to provide more flexibility and help meet current demands, the Council had been in support of amending the regulations and requested that Mr Ellis submit a formal proposal for consideration at the next meeting.

The Council is therefore invited to consider the following proposed amendments:

Regulation H19.e.**TO:**

Judges at an agility show may not **judge** ~~enter for competition~~ a dog which is recorded in their ownership or part ownership; or handle a dog at the show/competition at which they are judging.  
 (Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through)  
 (Effective 1 January 2024)

Regulation H27.a.(7)**TO:**

Disqualification and forfeit of awards

A dog may be disqualified by the Board from any award whether an objection has been lodged or not, if proved amongst other things to have been;

(7): **judged by their registered owner** ~~or Entered for competition or~~ handled in the ring by a judge at that competition. This shall not apply to dogs owned by a judge appointed in an emergency.  
 (Insertions in bold. Deletions struck through)  
 (Effective dated 1 January 2024)

- e. Non-slip tunnels  
 At its previous meeting, a discussion had taken place to consider if all tunnels should be made from non-slip materials. The Council had been in support of the suggestion and agreed to refer the issue to the Equipment Panel for consideration. An item has been prepared by the panel and will be discussed under Item 10.f.
- f. Competition Manager's role  
 The above matter has previously been discussed by the Council and referred back to the Governance Panel for further consideration. The Panel's revised recommendations appear under Item 7.b.
- g. Measuring Issues  
 The Council has previously discussed the above matter and requested that the Governance Panel place a suitable item on the next agenda for further discussion and this appears on the agenda under Item 7.c.
- h. Introduction of a 'Soft' Wall – Regulation H(1)(B)3.b.  
 At its previous meeting, the Council had discussed the introduction of a 'soft' wall and had been in support of the principle for the soft wall to replace the current design as soon as possible. A proposal has been suggested by the Judging Panel under item 8.b.
- i. Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards & Guide to Agility Equipment  
 The Council is invited to note that the document is progressing to the publication stage and an update will be provided by the office at the meeting.

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

The Council is invited to note a written report following the Sub-Group meeting on 17 April 2023.

**(Annex A refers)**

**ITEM 6. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT PANEL**

The Council is invited to note a written report from the Equipment Panel.

**(Annex B refers – to follow)**

**ITEM 7. REPORT FROM THE AGILITY GOVERNANCE PANEL**

a. The Council is requested to consider a report from the Agility Governance Panel.

**(Annex C refers)**

b. Competition Manager's role

A proposal to amend Regulation H(1)9.c and to propose an Annex H(1)E had been discussed at the last three Council meetings and the Governance Panel was tasked with reviewing the proposals due to various issues raised and to prepare a revised proposal for consideration.

At a Kennel Club licensed show, it is required that there be a single person appointed as Competition Manager for the event. The purpose of this proposed regulation amendment is to clarify what the role of this person is, what skills they need and how they relate to other people involved in running the show.

A new annex in the regulations is also to be considered. The requirement would be that all Competition Managers at agility shows must have passed the online judge's exam on The Kennel Club Academy, within the last 5 years. It is not a requirement that the person be a fully qualified judge. This is a suitable test to see that they are keeping up to date with the regulations and any changes. The Guide for Agility Judges and Stewards would need to be updated as a consequence of the regulation changes.

The Council is invited to consider the following new regulation and Annex:

New Regulation H(1)9.c.

**TO:**

**The person appointed as Competition Manager should be aware of their responsibilities as laid out in Annex H(1)(E) of these regulations and should meet the criteria for this role.**

(Insertion in bold)  
(Subsequent paragraphs to be renumbered)

New Annex H(1)(E)

**TO:**

**INSTRUCTIONS AS TO THE DUTIES OF AGILITY COMPETITION MANAGERS**

**1. Experiences and Qualifications**

- a. **The Competition Manager should have a sound knowledge of the Kennel Club Rules and H Regulations, and a familiarity with the Kennel Club complaints procedure.**
- b. **The Competition Manager must have completed and passed the online part of the agility judges examination on the Kennel Club Academy within the last five years.**

**2. Responsibilities**

- a. **The Competition Manager's responsibilities are to at all times ensure that competitors and judges abide by the Kennel Club Rules and H Regulations.**
- b. **The Competition Manager acts as decision maker in all matters relating to the Kennel Club Rules and H Regulations for the duration of the show.**
- c. **The Competition Manager must fully document all decisions and actions taken in relation to the H Regulations in the show's Kennel Club incident book.**
- d. **The Competition Manager supports the show management team in the smooth running of the show.**

**3. Duties**

- a. **The show committee shall appoint a Competition Manager whose name must be announced in the schedule, and who must not enter for competition a dog which is recorded in their ownership or part ownership or handle any dog at the show.**
- b. **In the event of extreme adverse conditions at a show a judge may remove mandatory equipment from a class as deemed appropriate at the time but must always obtain full agreement of the Competition Manager, unless in an emergency situation. The Competition Manager must be advised of the change and the reasons for it at the earliest opportunity. Any alterations must be recorded in the Incident Book and be reported, by the show management, to the Kennel Club within 14 days of the date of the show.**
- c. **Should a judge be prevented from completing a class which has already started, the Competition Manager shall decide what action is to be taken. Guidance is covered in the Guidance for Agility Judges and Stewards.**
- d. **The Competition Manager and the show management must act to remove a dog from the show under the conditions of Regulation H13.**
- e. **If there are any concerns over the suitability of a course the Competition Manager must consult with the relevant judge,**

**and if available Accredited Trainers, and agree the proposed course of action**

- f. Any complaints or matters arising at the show should be referred, in the first instance to the Competition Manager, who may consult with other members of the show team before taking appropriate action. All incidents, even if they are resolved on the day of the show, must be recorded in the Incident Book and be reported, by the show management, to the Kennel Club within 14 days of the date of the show.**

(Insertions in bold)

c. Measuring issues

At its previous meeting the Council considered that it was an appropriate time to consider if the ability of owners to declare their dogs Large should be removed ensuring that all dogs were measured and run in their correct heights. A regulation change would be required to ensure all dogs were measured before they competed but might allow for 'obviously' Large dogs to have the second measure struck out.

The Council had agreed that it was necessary to measure dogs including 'obviously' Large dogs and this should be reviewed.

The Council is requested to note an update from the Panel in respect of measuring.

**Measurement of Large/Intermediate Dogs**

Currently it is possible for an owner of a dog to choose that their dog will jump large irrespective of their actual height. It is inappropriate that our measuring systems allows an owner to opt to jump their dogs at a height higher than that which they measure into. The height classification system is there to ensure competition between dogs is equitable but also to help ensure that the dog's health and welfare is taken into account. Now that our intermediate height is well established there is no need for this regulation to still exist. Measurers would still have the option of striking through the second measure for dogs that measure substantially into the large height category.

There is also the anomaly that competitors are allowed to choose to move their dog up a height if they wish. This should also be removed as it allows handlers to choose to jump their dog over a height that is not deemed appropriate for a dog of that size.

The Council is therefore invited to consider a proposal to amend the following regulation to ensure that all dogs are measured before competing.

Proposed amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)4.

**TO:**

~~(2) Dogs competing in small, medium, or intermediate height categories~~  
**All dogs** must be measured for competition and must be at least 15 months old before their first measurement. Competitors must ensure that their dog is measured prior to their first competition and that the dog's Agility Record Book has been signed and dated by the measuring officials.

(Deletion struck though. Insertion in bold)

**TO:**

~~(4) Large dogs entered for competition will not require an official Kennel Club measurement. Once a dog has competed in any Class in the Large Height category at a Kennel Club licensed event it may not change to a different height.~~

(Deletion struck though and subsequent paragraphs renumbered)

**TO:**

~~(12) A dog will be eligible to compete in small, medium or intermediate height categories only after the official measurement has been carried out. Where a dog is measured out of the height category in which it has been entered it is permissible, at the discretion of the organising club, for entries to be altered in order that the dog can compete at the correct height category.~~

(Deletion struck though)

**TO:**

~~(20) At any time should an owner request to move a dog into the next higher height category they may do so, and it will be for the lifetime of the dog, with no further changes of height permitted. If the dog's owner(s) wish to take this course of action the dog's record book should, with the written permission of the owner(s) or in the presence of an owner, be signed by 2 senior measurers without being measured. In the case of a dog in joint ownership written permission must be provided from all of the owners. Alternatively the record book should be sent to the Kennel Club with a request that the dog's height be amended with a letter from the owner(s) giving consent for this to happen~~

(Deletion struck though)

**ITEM 8. REPORT FROM THE JUDGING PANEL AND OTHER JUDGING ISSUES**

- a. The Council is requested to consider a report from the Judging Panel.  
**(Annex D refers)**
- b. Introduction of a 'Soft' Wall  
Following discussions at the previous Council meeting where the safety of the wall had been considered, it had supported the principle for the

'soft' wall to replace the current design as soon as possible and the Council is requested to consider the following proposal:

Regulation H(1)(B)3.b

**TO:**

Wall – The height of the wall must be 600mm for Large Dogs, 500mm for Intermediate Dogs, 400mm for Medium Dogs and 300mm for Small Dogs. Width: 1.2m minimum. All central units must be easily displaced by the dog and not interlocking with the pillars. Pillars with a minimum height of 900mm must be used. **Central elements should have a uniform depth of 200mm. All elements must be made of an impact-absorbing material.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective January 2025 to provide sufficient time for equipment suppliers to replace equipment).

c. Dogs re-negotiating equipment

Following the Council's meeting held on 12 January 2023, the situation where a dog re-negotiated an obstacle due to the handler not being happy with the dog's performance, even though the dog had correctly completed the obstacle, had been discussed and it had been agreed for this item to be forwarded to the Judges Panel for further consideration. No further update by the Panel has been provided at this time.

d. Activities Judges Sub-Group

The Council is invited to consider a written report from Mrs Gardner following the meeting of the Sub-Group which took place on 25 April 2023.

**(Annex E refers)**

**ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

No proposals have been received.

**ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

a. Ms J Wheeler

Mrs E Bostock

Introduction of a Micro Height

Ms Wheeler wishes the Council to consider introducing a micro height for very small dogs with a jump height of 20cm in agility competitions. Currently these very small dogs are struggling to be competitive against the small dogs due, in part, to factors such as the delayed tip on the seesaw due to their lighter weight.

This could begin with the introduction of a micro option within the small classes, allowing the smallest of dogs to jump 20cm with a combined result. Hopefully in time, more people will start competing instead of just



training these micro dogs and demand will increase to warrant a separate height.

b. Mr Tait  
Continuing Personal Development (CPD)

Mr Tait wishes the Council to discuss CPD within the agility community in respect of judges, and to gain insight on how it can support judges in their development by providing guidance and CPD in a formal way.

In order to meet the above, the primary focus of judge's trainers could be changed from training new judges to providing assessments/support to existing judges. This would be especially helpful should The Kennel Club need to recruit new accredited judges' trainers. This would provide an opportunity for current judges' development to be ongoing and up to date. This would be a free of charge support and the secondary role would be training new judges.

The main purpose of this item is to obtain views and ideas to help support current judges that do not incur large costs and can be done whilst judges are at shows.

c. Mr Tait  
Equipment variations

The Agility Liaison Council has been working hard to regulate the equipment used but there are still some variations of size dimensions. A discussion is required as to whether there is a need to re-visit these pieces of equipment to standardise them more. The jump pole is one of these items in that they can vary in length and diameter.

d. Mr Tait  
Judging queries

The Council is invited to discuss a recent query where a judge had been unsure how to mark a jump cup that had moved. At the event, a discussion had taken place amongst members of the Council and Activities' Judges Sub-Group which provided a solution at the time. The matter had been communicated to The Kennel Club and clarification had been posted online.

The Panel wishes to know if this process should be formalised as a process for other such queries that may arise and if so, what would that look like. It is suggested that a panel made up of a Chair of equipment and judges' panels, Council Chair, judges' trainer and a member of the Judges Sub-Group could be formed for this purpose.

e. Mr Tait  
Course Design

Ms T Davis

The Council is invited to discuss whether or not the overall course distance should be reduced based on dog grades.

Rationale

The skills and course difficulty and course length is getting longer, and difficulty is increasing. This can be demotivating for young dogs. When dogs and a new handler start out, they begin with shorter sequences and build up to running whole courses. If at their first few shows, a judge sets a very long course, this can demotivate the dog who has to do more before they receive their reward. Whilst more experienced handlers will train their young dogs to cope with this, the grass roots of agility is made up of people who may struggle more with this. These people and their dogs need to be kept motivated to continue with the sport. If the number of obstacles is limited, the course length can still easily exceed 200 metres simply by 4x5m tunnels and a dog walk. An average length would still give a judge freedom to design their own style of course. Judges also can feel the need to set long courses, by setting them some parameters (min and max) within the measuring matrix, which is already in widespread use, they will feel more confident in their course design.

f. Mr EllisMr G LottNon-slip tunnels

At its previous meeting, the Council discussed materials used for the tunnel and considered an amendment to Regulation H(1)(B)3.i. The Council had been of the view that all tunnels should be the same anti-slip material, however, some research would still be required on which materials would work best for the safety of dogs. The issue had been referred to the Equipment Panel for consideration.

The Council is invited to note a report supplied by Mr Ellis which provides details of in-depth research undertaken together with suggested regulation amendments.

**(Annex F refers)**

**ITEM 11.     STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

To note and review the current strategy document.  
**(Annex G – to follow)**

**ITEM 12.     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 13.     DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the Council's next meeting 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*