

**MINUTES OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 16 MAY 2023 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

PRESENT

Mrs M Asbury*	Dukeries (Notts.) Gundog Club; Scottish Field Trials Association
Mr P Askew	East Anglian Labrador Retriever Club; Utility Gundog Society
Mr J Bailey	Guildford Working Gundog Club; Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks & Hants Retriever Society; South Eastern Gundog Society
Mr G Bird	Golden Retriever Club; Yellow Labrador Club
Mrs V Brookes	North Devon Working Gundog Club; Wiltshire Working Gundog Society; English Springer Spaniel Club of Wales
Mrs C Brown*	Pointer Club; Strabane & District Setter & Pointer Club
Miss C Calvert	Northern Ireland Pointer Club; Ulster Irish Red Setter Club
Mr M Canham	North of Scotland Gundog Association; Lothian & Borders Gundog Association
Mr S Capstick	Three Ridings Labrador Club; Yorkshire Gundog Club
Mrs C Carpenter	Bristol & West Working Gundog Society; Weimaraner Club of Great Britain
Mr J Castle	Gamekeepers National Association; Moray Firth Spaniel and Retriever Club; Grampian Gundog Club
Mrs C Clark	North West Labrador Retriever Club, Lancashire & Merseyside Field Trials Society
Mrs M Cox	Cornwall Field Trial Society; West of England Labrador Retriever Club
Mr S Cullis	Arun & Downland Gundog Society; Southern & Western Counties Field Trial Society

Mr N Doran	Ulster Gundog League; Craigavon Gundog Club
Mr D Elliot	German Longhaired Pointer Club; German Shorthaired Pointer Club
Ms H Ford	Flatcoated Retriever Society; South Western Golden Retriever Club
Mr R Gould	Gordon Setter Field Trial Society; Southern Pointer Club
Mr J Henderson	Scottish Gundog Association; Tay Valley Gundog Association; Strathmore Working Gundog Club
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
Mr R Johnston	Ulster Retriever Club; Labrador Retriever Club of Northern Ireland
Ms F Joint	Labrador Retriever Club; Burns and Becks Gundog Club
Mr S Kimberley	German Wirehaired Pointer Club; Worcestershire Gundog Club
Mrs F Kirk*	English Setter Club; International Gundog League (Pointer & Setter Society)
Mrs W Knight	Eastern Counties Spaniel Society; London Cocker Spaniel Society; Mid Sussex Working Spaniel Club
Mr R Major	Brittany Club of Great Britain; Large Munsterlander Club; Hunt, Point & Retrieve Gundog Association
Mr S McGrath	Usk Valley Working Gundog Club; Dove Valley Working Gundog Club; United Retriever Club
Ms M McNally	Pembrokeshire Working Gundog Society; Duchy Working Gundog Club
Mr M Megaughin	Fermanagh Gundog Club; North West Ulster Spaniel Club
Ms P Pinn*	Midland Counties Field Trial Society; Shropshire Gundog Society; Welsh & English Counties Spaniel Club

Mr S Richardson	East Midland Gundog Club; Midland Gundog Society; North Western Counties Field Trials Association
Ms T Siwek	Leconfield Working Spaniel Club; Western Counties & South Wales Spaniel Club
Mr P Smith	English Springer Spaniel Club of Northern Ireland; Antrim & Down Springer Spaniel Club; Mid-Ulster Gundog Association; Northern Ireland Working Cocker Club; Foyle Valley Working Cocker Club
Mr P Turner	Ulster Golden Retriever Club; Northern Ireland Gundog, Field & Show Society
Mrs J Venturi-Rose	Kent, Surrey & Sussex Labrador Retriever Club; Hampshire Gundog Society
Ms R Webster	Hunt, Point & Retrieve Gundog Association; Hungarian Wirehaired Vizsla Association
Mr N Wroe	Weimaraner Association; Hungarian Vizsla Club

*In attendance via Microsoft Teams

IN ATTENDANCE

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

Note: 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.

IN THE CHAIR: MR S RICHARDSON

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Mr S Adams, Ms C Bridgwater, Mr M Clifford, Mr J Goldsmith, Mrs J Hay, Mr A Hopkins-Young, Mr J Kean, Mrs B Kuen, Mr R Proctor, Mr A Rees, Mr T West and Ms S Whyte. Mr K Byron, Miss J Hurley and Mrs V Stanley were not present.

ITEM 2. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2022

2. Item 7. Paragraph 14, Handlers with more than one dog.
As the annex had been read out at the meeting and members had not had sufficient time to digest the information prior to the meeting, the following amendment was agreed:

The Council received a further **verbal** update from the office, advising that the Field Trials Committee accepted that there were still concerns within the field trial community. Accordingly, the matter remained under active consideration by the Committee as to how these concerns may be addressed. Further updates would be provided in due course. A copy of the full statement is attached at Annex A to the Minutes. **The Council was concerned that this statement was read out at the meeting, which gave insufficient time for members to review or share it with their clubs prior to the Council meeting.**

3. Subject to the above amendment, the minutes from the meeting held on 15 May 2022 were approved as 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)

4. The Council noted the Results of Recommendations document which had been circulated prior to the meeting.
Handlers with more than one dog
5. As noted within the Results of Recommendations document, a working party had been formed to consider issues relating to handlers with more than one dog.
6. The Council noted an updated report from Mrs Chichester as chair of the Retriever Field Trials Working Party. A copy of the report is attached at **Annex A to the Minutes.**
7. The Council was disappointed that the report from the Working Party was only supplied on 15 May 2023 (the day before the meeting), which was insufficient time to review it or share it with their clubs prior to the

Council meeting. The Council requested that any future reports were circulated in good time prior to the meeting.

8. A query arose regarding the progress of the research, which was considered to be taking a long time to be concluded. Disappointment was expressed and the Council requested more detailed information on the causes for the delay.
 9. The Council was advised that analysis of all the data over the last 5 years was required and it was taking a long time to obtain all the statistics. It was essential that all the facts and figures were correct. A substantial amount of work had been completed collating data and capturing it onto a database, which was time consuming.
 10. In countering the above response, it was explained that a number of retriever societies had conducted their own member surveys on this matter and 80-90% were in favour of multiple handling being restricted. The Council was concerned that these surveys did not appear to have been taken into consideration.
 11. It was noted that work was being undertaken in the background, including contacting Field Trial Secretaries to access previous draw information. However, some clubs did not have the draw records, and these were required in order to compile the correct information. The office confirmed that historically field trial draws had not been retained longer than 12 months as there had not been seen to be a necessity for this, it was confirmed that field trial cards were kept indefinitely.
 12. The Council noted that there was a perceived unfairness, and it was imperative that full research was conducted, however, there were concerns as to the length of time the research was taking. It was accepted that the research should be based on sound facts, rather than opinion. A timescale was required to expedite the process to bring a speedy resolution and to remind clubs that their draws were required to be submitted.
 13. The Council agreed that there was a need to accelerate the matter, and it was suggested that The Kennel Club should seek opinion from the members of the various societies that facilitated multiple handling.
- Dogs entered at more than one trial on the same day
14. The above issue was also being considered by the working party and further information would be provided when available.
- Experience required for Judges
15. An opinion had been expressed, that whilst acknowledging the subject of aspiring judges recording their experience in some form had been discussed previously, it was still considered that having a record of proven activity in field trials prior to a judging appointment would be of

assistance. It was noted that other disciplines had Steward Record Books, and these could easily be adapted for field trials and judges.

16. The Council agreed to direct the above sentiments to the Field Trials Committee.

ITEM 4. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

Proposed amendment to Regulation J(E)1.

17. The German Longhaired Pointer Club, represented by Mr Elliot wished the Council to consider a proposal to amend Regulation J(E)1 in respect of breeds which hunt, point and retrieve clarifying that all elements of the Basic Requirements should be tested.
18. There was no seconder for the proposal, and it was therefore not discussed further.

Use of grounds for HPR field trials

19. The German Shorthaired Pointer Club represented by Mr Elliot wished the Council to consider a proposal not to permit repeated use of a field trial ground within a field trial season.
20. The Council agreed to discuss the proposal together with the discussion item submitted by Mr Bird (paragraph 75 refers).
21. As there was no seconder for the proposal, it was not discussed further.

Proposed amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(iv)

22. Mrs Carpenter on behalf of Bristol and West Working Gundog Society presented an amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(iv) to ensure that competitors would be aware of the venue of field trials prior to entry.
23. Mrs Carpenter explained to the Council the concern that schedules were being circulated with only a shoot name and no indication of location as to where the trials would be held. The regulation amendment was requested in order to provide more information on schedules.

Regulation J4.c.(1)(iv)

TO:

(iv) The date, ~~and place~~ **locality and county** of the field trial. ~~and,~~
~~w~~**Where** the time and ~~place~~ **venue** of the meeting are not included,
 a statement that the time and ~~place~~ **venue** of the meeting will be
 communicated to competitors separately, and by what means.

(Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

24. The proposal was seconded by Mr Kimberley.
25. A vote took place, and by a large majority, the Council **recommended** the above amendment for approval.

Proposed amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)

26. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society represented by Mrs Carpenter wished the Council to consider an amendment to the above regulation relating to the issuance of draws. The amendment would leave no ambiguity as to when competitors might expect to receive the draw and could potentially reduce the number of withdrawals.

Regulation J4.c.(1)**TO:**

- (viii) The latest date for receiving applications for entry (**see J.6 c**)
 (ix) The date, place and time of the draw, and the method of notifying the full result to all entrants. **Notification to competitors should take place not less than 14 days prior to the stake (unless there is a need for a redraw).**

(Insertions in bold)

27. The proposal was seconded by Mr Canham.
28. Mrs Carpenter explained that club secretaries were sending out the draw less than 14 days before a trial was due to take place and this did not give people sufficient time to arrange accommodation and time off work to attend. It was suggested that the deadline, for when the draw would take place for competitors, should be at least 14 days prior to the trial.
29. It was also considered that the secretaries would receive less withdrawals as competitors would not be holding places in trials waiting for more local draws to be issued.
30. However, there were concerns that secretaries would be committed to a second deadline when they were involved with a variety of activities. It was noted that secretaries did their best to send the draw out as soon as possible.
31. A query arose regarding re-draws and the requirements for them, as well as some difficulties experienced by secretaries in how to proceed with re-draws. It was agreed that due to various circumstances under which redraws took place, no single, specific clear process could be provided.
32. A vote took place, and by a large majority, the Council was not in support of the proposal.

Proposed Amendment to J4.c.(1)(xii)

33. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society represented by Mrs Carpenter wished the Council to consider an amendment to Regulation J4.c.(1)(xii). The object of which was to ensure that all schedules conformed to The Kennel Club Specimen Schedule and to ensure that competitors had a means to directly communicate with the organiser.

Regulation J4.c.(1)(xii)

TO:

(1) The schedule must contain:

(xiii) The contact details of the Field Trial Secretary.

(Insertion in bold)

34. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Venturi-Rose.
35. A concern was expressed that Societies needed to be mindful of what information was being placed in the public domain.
36. A vote took place and by a large majority the proposal was **recommended** for approval.

Proposed amendment to Regulation J(F)1.

37. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society represented by Mrs Carpenter wished the Council to consider an amendment to Regulation J(F)1 to ensure that it was clear which dogs had gained their Champion Title via a field trial qualification rather than via gaining a Show Gundog Working Certificate (SGWC).

Regulation J(F)1.

TO:

The Show Gundog Working Certificate is not a qualification in itself, however, when awarded it enables the 'Sh' to be removed from the title of 'Show Champion' and the letters SGWC ~~may~~ **must** be used after the dog's name on entry forms and in show catalogues.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

38. The proposal was seconded by Mr Kimberley.
39. A discussion ensued to clarify the differences between the requirements for a field trial qualification and a SGWC.
40. Due to the amount of discussion the proposal had created amongst the Council, an amendment was suggested by Mrs Venturi-Rose to provide clarity, the amendment was seconded by Ms Ford.

Regulation J(F)1. as amended was as follows:

TO:

The Show Gundog Working Certificate is not a qualification in itself, however, when awarded it enables the 'Sh' to be removed from the title of 'Show Champion' and the letters SGWC ~~may~~ **must** be used after the dog's name on entry forms and in show catalogues. **As opposed to a dog which becomes a Champion by winning an award or Certificate of Merit at a field trial.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

41. A vote took place, and the amended proposal was unanimously **recommended** for approval.

Proposed amendment to Regulation J4.d.(2)(iv)

42. Bristol and West Working Gundog Society represented by Mrs Carpenter wished to propose an amendment to Regulation J4.d.(2)(iv) to remove the necessity for the inclusion of owners' addresses on field trial cards.
43. It was noted that the matter had already been addressed by the Field Trials Committee and approved by the Board at its meeting held on 10 May 2023.

Experience required for judges

44. The Council had been requested to consider a proposal whereby judges would judge to the level they had achieved in competition. It was noted that the matter had already been addressed by the Field Trials Committee and approved by the Board at its meeting held on 10 May 2023.
45. The Council was advised that for HPRs, before being added to the A Panel or B Panel, candidates would be required to have handled a dog to a win at a novice, all aged or open HPR stake. This was an additional amendment to Regulation J5.c.(3) and would be effective from 2 February 2024.

Show Gundog Working Certificate – proposal to remove the water test requirement to enter and swim and retrieve as per Regulation J(F)7(g)

46. Mr Wroe had proposed, for the purposes of passing the SGWC, to remove the requirement for all retrieving breeds to enter water freely, swim and retrieve.
47. There was no seconder for the proposal and it was therefore not discussed further.

Proposed amendment to Regulation J(E)2 to increase the upper limit of runners in HPR trials

48. Mr Wroe wished the Council to consider increasing the maximum number of runners in HPR trials to 14 dogs.
49. Regulations J(E)2.a and J(E)2.b specified that HPR field trials should be subject to a maximum of 12 dogs. However, a society approved to host Show Gundog Working Certificates (SGWC) may include up to two additional slots at an ordinary field trial for two SGWC entries.
50. Mr Major seconded the proposal.
51. Mr Major proposed a further amendment to the maximum number of entrants, allowing societies to decide whether to run 14 or 16 dog stakes. Mr Kimberley seconded the amendment.
52. After a brief discussion, a vote took place, and the following amended proposal was unanimously **recommended** for approval.

Regulation J(E)2.

TO:

Number of runners

To qualify for entry in The Kennel Club Stud Book, the number of runners permitted in stakes stated:

- a. Open stakes: maximum ~~42~~ **16**, minimum 10.
 - b. Other stakes: maximum ~~42~~, **16** minimum 8.
 - c. Championship - no maximum number
- (Deletions struck through. Insertions in bold)

Proposed amendment to decrease the minimum number of runners permitted

- 53. Mrs Asbury, on behalf of Dukeries [Notts] Gundog Club, wished the Council to consider the club's concerns regarding the reduction of entries due to various reasons, including withdrawals on the day. It was noted that it could lead to trials becoming non-qualifiers. Mrs Brown seconded the proposed amendment.
- 54. A vote took place and by a large majority, the following proposal was **recommended** for approval.

Regulation J(D)2. (Pointers and Setters)

TO:

Number of runners

To qualify for entry in The Kennel Club Stud Book, the number of runners permitted in stakes stated:

- a. Open stakes: maximum 40, minimum 16.
- b. Novice/All Aged Stakes: maximum 45, minimum ~~42~~ **10**.
- c. Puppy Stakes: maximum 45, minimum 8

Where an open and any other type of stake are to run on the same day, the maximum number of runners over the whole day is 45.

(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)

ITEM 5. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Examination of game

- 55. Midland Gundog Society represented by Mr Richardson wished the Council to discuss the wording of Regulation J(A)4.i regarding the examination of game for signs of hard mouth.
- 56. A query arose regarding the checking of game in that a vet had advised that it was impossible for the game not to be damaged on both sides. It was also suggested that The Kennel Club obtain advice from a vet on how best to examine game. It was confirmed that the seminar scripts did contain information and explained that both sides should be checked.
- 57. The Council went on to discuss updates to the seminar scripts and was advised that updates to the scripts were usually completed annually to

include any regulation amendments in time for the effective date of 2 February.

58. It was noted that although the latest regulation amendments appeared at the back of the J Regulations booklet, new secretaries would not be aware of past amendments, and this could lead to errors. It was noted that The Kennel Club provided a notice in the field trials newsletter with regulation amendments and a notice was posted on Facebook once the newsletter had been issued, it was also available on The Kennel Club website. Further discussion on the Regulations within the Booklets took place later in the meeting under paragraphs 109-114.
59. A query was raised regarding judges having access to the seminar scripts. It was suggested that as amendments to regulations were published in the newsletter prior to the effective date, that a notice be provided stating that the scripts would be updated in the Spring and to remind judges to check the scripts then. It was believed that to duplicate the script information in the newsletter would not be productive, however a link could be provided in the Spring Newsletter.
60. A request for details to be sent annually to Approved Presenters was also raised so that they may be kept up to date with the latest versions of each script. The office undertook to ensure all Approved Presenters were issued with an updated Script each year. The Council also suggested that changing the name from Seminar Script to Judge's Script may be appropriate.
61. The Council agreed to forward the matter regarding the examination of game for signs of hard mouth to the Field Trials Committee for discussion.

Inspecting damaged game

62. Mr Elliot wished the Council to discuss an amendment to the seminar scripts in relation to retrieves and the requirement to allow handlers the opportunity to inspect damaged game. It was noted that the requested amendment was already included within the seminar scripts twice, once under section 1 and also under section 4.
63. There was some concern whether it was practical for all judges to examine damaged game, in some circumstances.
64. It was considered that if two judges examined the game and the handler accepted that the game was damaged by their dog, they could choose to withdraw their dog from the trial, and the game would not need to be examined by the other judges. In other circumstances, a handler may request all four judges examined the game.

Dogs competing on a ground where they had previously won a trial

65. The Council discussed a suggestion raised by Mr Bird that a dog should not be permitted to compete on a ground if it had previously won a trial

on that ground qualifying it for preference in the draw for Open Stakes or FTCh status.

66. It was considered that in some areas, there was only one venue available for field trials. Estates could cover thousands of acres with different ground and game conditions on each day so it would not be practical for some areas.
67. An opinion was expressed that there was also perhaps a lack of understanding on the complexity of land and weather conditions, that made the grounds ever changing over the seasons.
68. After a brief discussion it was agreed that it was not practical, and the Council was not in support of the suggestion.

Running a dog under its breeder

69. Mr Bird wished the Council to consider a suggestion that a judge should not be permitted to judge a dog which he or she had bred.
70. The Council was of the opinion that it may be several years after the litter had been born that a judge could be judging a dog he or she had bred and that the dog could have been sold on from when the breeder initially sold the puppy. Advising judges that they may not judge a dog due to them having bred the dog would be impractical.
71. As there was no support for the suggestion, it was not discussed further.

Running a dog on ground being provided or hosted by the competitor

72. Mr Bird suggested that a regulation should be put into place to prevent a competitor running a dog on ground that he or she was providing/hosting in the interests of ensuring that no competitor had an unfair advantage.
73. There was no support for the suggestion and it was not discussed further.

Use of grounds for HPR field trials

74. The item was discussed earlier in the meeting alongside a proposal on the same subject. (paragraphs 20-23 refer).

Introduction of Certification to cover minimum standards at Kennel Club AV Novice Retriever Working Tests with a view to introducing this as an entry requirement for Kennel Club AV Retriever Novice Field Trials.

75. Mrs Asbury, on behalf of Dukeries [Notts] Gundog Club wished the Council to discuss the introduction of a basic level of certification, which could eventually be used as an entry requirement for novice field trials.
76. The above item was discussed together with the following item in relation to competing in novice trials.

Competing in novice trials

77. Mr McGrath wished the Council to consider the provision of a system whereby competitors' dogs were certified to be free from eliminating faults before such dogs were allowed to be entered in novice stakes. The system should be seen as a positive step to assist novice handlers, to ensure that their dogs had reached the minimum level of competency prior to entering a field trial.
 78. There was a concern that the same novice handlers and dogs were entering multiple trials and gaining the same faults. There was a concern that these dogs were gaining runs in trials when higher trained dogs were not getting runs.
 79. It was noted that the problem was not found in Pointers and Setters, and there was a concern that competitors who had achieved some success in working tests incorrectly assumed their dog was of a sufficient standard to compete in field trials.
 80. A suggestion was made that passing a Working Gundog Certificate on Game could be an assessment of a dog's competence prior to it entering a trial and preference could be given to those dogs being entered at a novice trial.
 81. It was also suggested that at the end of a trial, if a dog had been eliminated, The Kennel Club should be informed. The Kennel Club would retain information on the number of occasions a dog gained eliminating faults to follow up with the competitor.
 82. In opposing the above suggestion, it was emphasised that members had a right to enter trials. It was not possible for anyone to determine whether another's dog was fit to enter or not.
 83. It was suggested that training days prior to trials could also be held to encourage people and advise new handlers of the standard required.
 84. A further suggestion was for a 'permit to trial' to be introduced. It would be clearly indicated that this was for handlers, not dogs.
 85. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that there was no support for either of the ideas and as a result they would not be discussed further.
- Elimination of competitors by non Panel judges
86. Mr McGrath presented Mr Smith's item to consider a suggestion that inexperienced non-panel judges should be prevented from eliminating competitors without prior consultation with the Panel Judge with whom they were paired.
 87. The Council was in general agreement with the above and considered that it was important that consultation with the panel judge at a trial took place prior to eliminating a dog, it was acknowledged that the situation was not unique to Retriever trials.

88. It was considered that it should be discouraging Panel judges from being too far away, leaving a non-panel judge to deal with eliminating dogs. One should be within a reasonable distance of the co-judge so discussions may take place and decisions made together. This would avoid confusion.
89. It was agreed that guidance should be provided in the newsletter and for trials organisers to provide officiating non-panel first time judges the required support.
90. The Council was in support of forwarding the matter to the Field Trials Committee for discussion.

Information on HPR judges

91. The Committee discussed the enhancement of data capture and information-sharing on HPR judges' background being made available to field trial secretaries. It was suggested that, as a minimum, the requirements of certain HPR Panel application form boxes should be mandatory in order to be admitted to any Panel.
92. A concern was expressed that there was a reduction in the number of new judges coming through the system and it should be addressed. One solution would be to accelerate non-panel judges with the requisite number of appointments, which would have newly mandated boxes on the application form completed. Similarly, fast tracking of existing B panel to A panel judges, subject to the mandatory requirements being met would mitigate the imminent crisis.
93. In explaining the above, it was considered that senior judges that had been on the list for a long time may not be interested under this new initiative. If they had not judged a trial in seven years, then they were presumed inactive. Upon being re-activated, they would be required to complete the judge's exam and seminar.
94. There had been mention earlier in the meeting regarding a stewards book to record experience, however, the information was available from panel applications and should be recorded. It was considered that it should be mandatory for The Kennel Club to capture the information from the nomination forms.
95. The Council noted that there was concern regarding the calibre of judges. A suggestion was made that the solution to the perceived problem regarding the calibre of judges coming through the panels could be to simply extend the number of trials they needed to judge from four to six. However, it was noted that this suggestion would cause another obstacle to the supply of judges.
96. It agreed that support was required, however, it was queried whether it was the responsibility of The Kennel Club or of the individual Clubs and

Societies to make sure judges were educated and to provide seminars and guidance from experienced judges. It was pointed out that The Kennel Club was involved in governance, the regulations and seminars, and essentially through the Field Trials Committee was involved in educating judges.

97. A further request was presented, for a list of non-panel judges so names could be visible for the clubs, although it was acknowledged that the same request had been rejected numerous times before.
98. The Council agreed to put the matter forward to the Committee to see what guidance could be provided to progress the matter further.

HPR Open field trials

99. Mr Wroe wished the Council to request the Field Trials Committee to establish a clear and defined route for HPR clubs to secure permission to host second Any Variety HPR Open field trials.
100. Currently in the HPR trialling world, there were two breeds (German Shorthaired Pointer and Hungarian Vizsla) for which clubs had standing permission to host two open field trials each season. The Weimaraner breed was another founding breed which helped establish HPR field trials.
101. It was considered that clubs within the two breeds retaining dual open status had no logical rationale, if the privilege was to be denied to other breeds and clubs. It was not being argued that the privilege be discontinued, simply that it should be afforded to other breeds and clubs and on a rational basis.
102. In presenting possible solutions, Mr Wroe also explained that it appeared to be a closed subject when any other breeds applied for a second open trial, no feedback was provided with the results nor any recourse for an appeal.
103. It was suggested that a defined route be provided, indicating the requirements necessary for a club to apply. The Kennel Club could impose additional requirements, such as the Club having had 5 years experience of successfully running one open trial or similar.
104. It was acknowledged that the situation was only applicable to HPR clubs and other sub-group representatives were cautious about voting on sub-group specific items, however there was some support for clarification to be sought from the Field Trials Committee.

Conducting a Redraw

105. Mrs Carpenter representing the Bristol and West Working Gundog Society raised a concern relating to the number of field trial draws which were being required to be re-drawn and requesting official documentation and clarification on how to undertake redraws to remove

any ambiguity, ensure consistency and to ensure that the integrity of field trials secretaries was not called into question.

106. It was suggested that there be a Field Trial Secretaries handbook prepared due to there being quite a number of new field trial secretaries requiring the information. It was noted that The Kennel Club website had detailed information on how to run trials, which had proved very helpful to secretaries who were aware that it was available.
107. The Council agreed to forward the suggestion of a field trials secretaries guide to the Committee. It was noted that having a printed handbook would be easier for secretaries, however, it was more likely that an electronic version would be more acceptable which they could download and print.

Regulation Booklets and Retrospective Regulations

108. Mrs Carpenter representing Bristol and West Working Gundog Society advised that it had become apparent that for any new field trial secretaries the regulation booklet was not sufficiently comprehensive. Certain regulations held a retrospective application, for example permitting a dog which had qualified prior to the rule change to be deemed to be qualified after the change. These were notified at the time of the change, but later editions of the regulations did not include these details, leading to possible errors.
109. The Council agreed that to include all regulation amendments would be too much to insert into the booklet and would become confusing and unwieldy and that clarifications and guidance should be placed in the field trials newsletter. It was noted that the current method to obtain regulation amendments was through the newsletter. The office was still in the process of uploading the field trials newsletters to the website as a historical record. The Council requested the process be expedited.
110. The office advised that in the specific HPR instance mentioned it had transpired that the online processor had not updated its system to meet current regulations. The Kennel Club was currently reviewing the draws for all online systems to ensure they did meet the current field trial regulations.
111. A suggestion had been made to publish the re-draw advise online making it more convenient for secretaries. The office advised that requests for re-draws was collated with the reason they were required and the guidance provided by the Field Trials Committee. In general, however, it should be noted that some scenarios were different, and it had been agreed not to publish the guidance as a result. Guidance for various scenarios was available to clubs should the information be required.

112. It was suggested that all the scenarios with guidance be published on The Kennel Club website to make it easily accessible. If the advice was clear, it would remove frustration and improve efficiency for secretaries.
113. The Council agreed to forward the matter to the Field Trials Committee to review the decision not to publish the guidance.

When has a dog completed a run in a trial

114. Mrs Carpenter representing Bristol and West Working Gundog Society wished the Council to discuss when a dog was deemed to have finished its run.
115. After a brief discussion, the Council was clear that the dog's run had ended once the lead had been placed on the dog.

Incident Books

116. Mrs Carpenter representing Bristol and West Working Gundog Society wished the Council to discuss the different time-frames for reporting incidents. The Council noted there were different time scales within the regulations, immediately, 7 days and 14 days.
117. The Council was of the opinion that there should be one timeframe rather than three different timeframes. A suggestion was made, that seven or fourteen days would not work if in the case of an incident which was so grave, such as a fatality, that there should be immediate contact with The Kennel Club. It should be permitted for the field trial secretary to exercise discretion in a grave situation.
118. The Council agreed to forward the matter to the Committee with a request to standardise the timeframes for reporting incidents and other objections.

Standing over game

119. Mr Capstick representing Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire Retriever and Spaniel Society requested the Council to consider what constituted 'standing over game'. There appeared to be confusion amongst some judges as to what constituted standing over game, it was noted that it did not appear to be an eliminating fault, or a major fault within the J Regulations.
120. Traditionally it was understood that standing over game occurred when a dog was sent for a retrieve, went to the bird and stood there waiting for an instruction to pick the game, rather than picking up the game straight away.
121. Potential scenarios were provided where it would be necessary to consider whether a dog was worthy of being credited to stay in the trial, or whether to eliminate one dog and not the other. A well trained and obedient dog could potentially have been penalised over a dog which

ignored the handler by continuing to pick the game after being asked to stop, for example.

122. For clarity for judges and to ensure a fair and level playing field, further guidance was sought as to what constituted standing over game.
123. It was considered that at times it was a difficult call to make and a decision that should be reached between the judges. There may be occasions when a dog had shown natural drive, but other times when a dog was handler dependent. Anything less than a swift outrun, prompt pick up and swift return would draw attention to a dog's performance. Performance could be influenced by a nervous handler, or a whistle blown at the wrong time. It was also noted that even if a handler blew their whistle when a dog stood over the game it was common practice to state that the dog had been eliminated due to standing over game and this was what needed to be discussed.
124. The Council considered that there were many variables which made it difficult to clearly define what standing over was, however, guidance was required.
125. The following from the Seminar Script under credit points was read out: "Good retrieving and delivery, quickness and gathering game. The retrieve should be judged as a whole, including quickness and gathering the game, a good return and a clean delivery. A judge should not turn his back on a retrieve at any time. The retrieve is not over until the handler has delivered the game to the judge. The judge must not turn away or start writing in his book until he has examined the game, as to do so will inevitably mean that he will fail to observe some part of the retrieve. For example, the dog standing over the game or delivering poorly."
126. Further to the above, the following was also read out: "Under Refusal to retrieve. If a dog blinks a retrieve, that is finds the game, but ignores it to carry on hunting or stands over the game or will not pick it, then that is a refusal to retrieve, meriting elimination."
127. The Council agreed that the Field Trials Judges Sub-Group be requested to prepare suitable wording to clearly define 'standing over game' to include in the Seminar Scripts.

ITEM 6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

128. The Council noted that its next meeting would take place in June 2024. The exact date would be confirmed in due course.

ITEM 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

129. A query arose regarding the online judges examinations, there was a concern that changing to online exams was open to abuse.
130. The office confirmed that although the examination was online, the seminars still had to be completed in person. The matter had been discussed recently at the Field Trial Judges Sub-Group meeting, all Approved Presenters would be contacted to clarify the situation and provide more information.
131. The Council agreed that it was no substitute for hands-on experience in the field. It was agreed that whilst online methods had their merits, for judges' exams aspirant judges should be in the company of their peers, learning and listening. It had also become apparent in the last two years with online learning that judges considered themselves ready for appointments without any practical experience.
132. The Council noted that the online examinations and attendance of seminars in person was being misconstrued. It was also noted that the online examinations process had been approved some time ago through all the required Sub-Groups and Committees and approved by the Board.
133. The meeting closed at 1.20 pm.

MR S RICHARDSON
CHAIR

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*

Annex A to the Minutes

An Update from the Retriever Field Trials Working Party

The Retriever Field Trials Working Party are currently analysing the results from both the draws and the running cards for Open Retriever Stakes. Before making any recommendations to the Field Trials Committee, the Working Party are collating as much information as possible in order to determine the situation with multiple handling within these draws and cards.

Extracting this data has proved time consuming as the information is in various forms, some draws are missing and, in many draws, there is no distinction between the different preferences. The Working Party are aiming to look at the data in different ways, e.g., by date to see overlapping trials, geographic areas and number of dogs entered.

An example of the data the Working Party are looking at is how many handlers were drawn with multiple dogs, how many actually ran and compare that with the results of those with single dogs, then look to see how this related to the number of dogs in the draw and the geographical area of the trial.

Once we have all the facts and a clear picture of the situation over a number of seasons, the Working Party will be able to work on recommendations to put forward to the Field Trials Committee. There is no quick fix and any decision made may not suit everyone, however this decision will be based on the data.

Sara Chichester
Chairman
RFTWP