



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL
HELD AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES
STREET ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024**

PRESENT

Mrs P Bann	Essex Working Trials Society
Miss J Carruthers*	North East Counties Working Trials Society
Mrs L Cottier*	Scottish Working Trials Society
Mr D Craven*	Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Mr S Ford	Surrey Dog Training Society
Mr B Gilbert	ASPADS Working Trials Society
Mrs S Haim	Wessex Working Trials Club
Mr N Hines	Lincolnshire German Shepherd Dog & All Breeds Training Society
Mrs D Ling	East Anglian Working Trials Society
Ms L Newbold	Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
Mr C Taylor	British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Mr N Sutcliffe	Bloodhound Club (From paragraph 8 onwards)
Mrs S Wright	Iceni Working Trials Club
Mr J Wykes	Leamington Dog Training Club

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss C McHardy	Manager – Education, Training and Working Dog Activities Team
Ms R Mansfield	Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team
Ms H Byrne-Ingle	Administrator – Working Dog Activities Team

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

IN THE CHAIR:

MR C TAYLOR

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies had been received from Mrs J Holt, Mrs J Howells and Ms L Marlow. Mr D Robertson was not present.

ITEM 2. KENNEL CLUB RESEARCH PROJECT

2. The Council was due to receive a presentation from Mr M Bermingham (Interim Strategy & Implementation Executive) which would provide an update on the research project into 'Organisers and Participants of Dog Activities'.
3. The presentation was postponed until Tuesday 20 February 2024 and would be with all discipline councils and working parties to enable more time to be dedicated to the presentation and allow adequate time for questions and answers.

ITEM 3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

4. Mr Ford requested that paragraph 71 of the minutes be amended. It stated that he had been the trials manager for the Kennel Club Working Trials Championship, and that was not the case. The office agreed to remove 'trials manager' from the minutes for accuracy and the amended minute would now read 'An update was requested from Mr Ford, of Surrey Dog Training Society...'
5. Mr Ford also requested that paragraph 74 of the minutes be amended to state that 'Mr Ford confirmed that information regarding the Kennel Club Working Trials Championship had been sent to Mr M Skillin who looked after the website'. It had stated that Mr Ford had had the conversation with Mr Skillin himself, which was not the case. The office agreed to amend the wording accordingly.
6. The minutes of the meeting were approved as an accurate record, subject to the above changes.

ITEM 4. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

7. Following the resignation of Mr J West, the Council welcomed Mrs S Haim as the approved new representative for Wessex Working Trials Club.

ITEM 5. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

8. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 22 November 2023, approved the following amendment to regulations:

Regulation I(B)2. Heelwork

TO:

The judge should test the ability of the dog to keep its shoulder reasonably close to the left knee of the handler who should walk smartly in a natural

manner at normal, fast and slow paces through turns and among and around persons and obstacles. The halt, with the dog sitting to heel and a 'figure of eight' may be included at any stage.

Any act, signal or command or jerking of the lead which in the opinion of the Judge has given the dog unfair assistance shall be penalised. Extra commands shall be permitted in the introductory stake.

Where required the lead ~~should~~ **must** be attached to a close fitting smooth collar. Retractable leads or head collars are not to be used.

(Deletion struck through. Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2024)

Proposal to permit judges to enter dogs in their ownership/part ownership

9. At its meeting on 21 September 2023, the Activities Committee discussed the Council's proposal to permit judges to enter their dogs at working trials whilst recorded in their ownership or part ownership at the trial they were judging.
10. The Committee discussed the logistics surrounding the proposal and how it would be implemented and the impact that it would have on trials managers. It also considered whether it would be able to be applied fairly for all judges. The Committee concluded that it would put an undue burden on trials managers and that it would not be able to be applied fairly as it would not be possible for championship TD and PD judges to compete with their dogs due to the amount of judging required.
11. The Council noted that the Committee therefore did not approve the regulation amendment.
12. A suggestion was made that societies could hold two separate trials which included different stakes which would then allow judges to compete in one trial and judge in the other, thereby making judging more desirable.

Voting Rights at Council Meetings

13. At its last meeting the Activities Committee discussed the Council's proposal that, at Working Trials Liaison Council meetings, societies may be represented by a nominated substitute should their usual representative be unable to attend. The substitute representative would need to be pre-approved by The Kennel Club Board and the Liaison Council Chair notified of their attendance in advance of the meeting.
14. The Council noted that as a strategy review was in progress by The Kennel Club which was particularly looking at the ways liaison councils were made up and how they worked it was not possible to affect any change to council structures until such time as the review was completed.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

15. The Council noted a written report from Mr Gilbert on the meeting of the Sub-Group held on 30 August 2023.

16. It was noted that the Dog Health Group had considered the Working Trials Research Group's recommendation for request for research, and it had raised concerns with respect to the benefit and the end purpose of the working trials research.
17. The Sub-Group requested the Council to review and discuss the research and agree on the priorities and end purpose of the research.
18. The Council considered an update on the progress from the Working Trials Research Group which had been provided. There was some concern that the Dog Health Group had not had the full information when considering the research proposal and had not appreciated that the intent of the research was to use more scientific measures to record the data being requested.
19. It was stressed that no regulation changes were being proposed and could not be until the research had been undertaken and it had been discovered if there was any significant impact on dogs jumping and negotiating the scale.
20. The Council agreed that the annex provided by the research group contained the relevant information for the Dog Health Group to reconsider the proposal and it was suggested that this be submitted to the Group at the next possible meeting. It was requested that the Council members read through the document and submit any comments to the research group within a week of the meeting so that the paper could be amended if necessary and submitted to the Dog Health Group.
(Afternote: An updated document had been prepared and would be submitted to the Dog Health Group.)
(Annex A to the minutes refers.)

ITEM 7. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

21. The Council noted a verbal report from Mr Gilbert following the Activities Judges Sub-Group meeting on 15 November 2023.
22. Concerns were raised about an error in the 2024 regulation booklets where a regulation which should have been removed still appeared. The office apologised for the mistake and noted that it had been corrected in the online version and an insert had been created for the physical copies of the books so that people would know the regulation appeared in error.
23. The Council offered assistance in proofreading the regulation booklets ahead of publication to prevent future errors. The office thanked the Council for its offer of help and endeavoured to reach out should it be necessary.
24. Another query was raised about updates to the Kennel Club Academy exam questions. It was confirmed by the office that this was being actioned for all disciplines and it was hoped it would be completed soon.

25. A comment was made that the addition of 'down on the move' to the heelwork section of the TD and PD control exercises had caused confusion within the working trials community. The specific confusion was over where to note the marks on the score sheet. It was noted that if the two elements of the heelwork test were separated on the score sheet, some would perceive them as separate exercises.
26. A discussion was had on the best way to manage the concerns, and it was agreed that guidance would be created by Mr Gilbert along with the working trials Accredited Trainers on how to judge the test and included with the minutes for the council to feedback to their clubs.
(Annex B to the minutes refers)

ITEM 8. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

27. The Council was requested to review the strategy document which Mrs Cottier had updated to reflect the items which had been completed or not continued. This left only four items outstanding.
28. Mrs Cottier noted that she had been responsible for the five year strategy and had put a lot of effort into the document, but felt it necessary to step back from it at this time. A request for volunteers to take over the document was made, but no one was immediately forthcoming. It was agreed that ownership of the document would be discussed outside the meeting and resolved.

ITEM 9. REPORT FROM THE PD STAKE PANEL

29. The Council noted a verbal report from the PD Stake Panel which detailed that two PD taster weekends had been held with great success. It also noted that the panel had produced a PD helper document in consultation with PD helpers which covered all aspects of a PD round in the hopes of helping with consistency.

Proposed amendment to Regulation I(B)17. Pursuit and detention of protected stewards

30. The PD Stake Panel proposed an amendment to the above regulation which it was hoped would clear up issues surrounding when a dog released a protected steward prematurely in the above exercise and how it should be managed.
31. It was agreed that there was inconsistency in the way in which judges handled the scenario where a dog pursued a protected steward and failed to bite or fell off the protected steward. When this happened it was expected that the protected steward should continue to run to give the dog further opportunity to detain them, however there were some judges that would instruct the protected steward to stop, which changed the nature of the exercise.

32. Mr Wykes seconded the proposal and by a majority the Council **recommended** the following amendment for approval:

Regulation I(B)17.

TO:

The dog will be off lead beside the handler. The position of the dog and command given to send the dog must be the same as that for the Recall exercise. The 'protected steward' will be challenged and will reply in order to gain the dog's attention before running away as directed by the judge. The handler will be told when to send his dog. A run-out point may be set by the judge. The dog must detain the 'protected steward' by holding him by the protected arm until commanded by the handler to release. **The protected steward should continue to try to escape if not detained by the dog.** If the dog fails to detain the 'protected steward', it shall lose any marks that it may have obtained for the Recall exercise, or it shall not be tested on the Recall. (Insertion in bold)

ITEM 10. REPORT FROM THE EQUIPMENT AND PROGRESSION PANEL

33. The Council noted a written report from the panel which included a summary of topics which had been put forward by the panel and the outcome of the Council's consideration over the past year. It was noted with disappointment that there had been a large number of rejected proposals as well as a lack of response from societies and Council members when asked for feedback.
34. It was noted that there had been some successful projects which included an article which would appear in the Crufts Show Guide about working trials, as well as an article in the Kennel Gazette later in the year. It was also noted that the Beginner's Guide to Working Trials leaflet that was available on the Dog Activities stand at Crufts had been updated in time for Crufts 2024.
35. An online entry system for working trials was being investigated and trials managers had been presented with information provided by With Your Dog, an online show processor, to explain how it would work.
36. It was noted by the panel that there had been confusion over whether paper copies of entry forms would still be able to be printed and it was confirmed that they would be able to be posted out by the company. It was stressed that using an online system would reduce the amount of work a trials manager would need to do when dealing with entries as the processor would manage many of the tasks and present a final list of entries to the trials manager once the entries had closed.
37. Reassurance was made that trials manager would have oversight of all entries coming in prior to the closing date and as such any errors in entries could be rectified in time. It was noted that the online system would also be able to have mandatory fields which would hopefully help prevent errors in entries as well.

38. The Council was asked whether it was happy for the system to be created, and while there were still some reservations, it was noted that as there was no minimum number of societies required to use the service it would be worth progressing. There would be no requirement for working trial societies to use the system, but it was hoped that once it was up and running, more societies would use the facility.

ITEM 11. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

39. No items had been received from societies/private individuals.

ITEM 12. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- British Association for German Shepherd Dogs (BAGSD) Mr Taylor
40. The Council was requested to discuss whether the time frame between championship TD and PD judging appointments should be reduced from six calendar months, even if on a temporary basis due to a decrease in the number of available judges.
41. The Council was generally in favour, but a suggestion was made that instead of the timeframe being in calendar months, whether it would be more appropriate to align with the qualifying period for The Kennel Club Working Trial Championships, which would be from week 35 to week 34 of the following year. The Council was in agreement that this was a suitable suggestion and Mr Taylor would submit a proposal for the next meeting.

ITEM 13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

42. Mr Ford raised some concerns with the process of applying, paying for and receiving licences. The payment system currently required a society to pay for each licence individually by quoting the invoice number. The office agreed that the system was not ideal for either party and it had been raised as an issue. However, there was a significant number of issues to be resolved and only a finite number were able to be progressed at a time.
43. It was queried whether societies were required to print their own licences as physical copies were no longer being sent. The office clarified that the requirement for societies to display licences had been suspended and therefore licences did not need to be printed. Licences should still be able to be accessed should they be requested.
44. Another query arose as to why certain paperwork was still stating that licences needed to be displayed. The office confirmed that the licence paper was pre-printed with that information and a request had been submitted to amend it. The office confirmed it would clarify what other documentation requested the licences to be printed and would clarify the position with the relevant team.

ITEM 14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

45. The Council noted that its next meeting would take place on 11 July 2024 and that all agenda items must be submitted by 12 April 2024.
46. Mr Ford expressed his frustration that the July meeting clashed with the Surrey Working Trials Society's Championship Working Trial which ran from Thursday 11 July to Sunday 14 July and as such, he would not be able to attend the Council's meeting.
47. It was requested that an alternative date be considered, and the working trials diary be consulted when booking in meetings for future years. The Chair, Vice Chair and office would discuss alternative dates in the hopes that a suitable date could be found.
48. The meeting closed at 12.46pm

MR C TAYLOR
Chairman

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*

Liaison Societies for Non-Championship Working Trials Societies

Working Trials Society

Australian Shepherd Club of the United Kingdom
Aveley Obedience & Working Trials Society
Avon Working Trials Training Society
Aylesbury Canine Training Society
Banbury & District Dog Training Society
Billingshurst Dog Training Club
Birmingham & District German Shepherd Dog Association
Central Bernese Mountain Dog Club
Chipping Norton & District Dog Training Club
Cynllan Lodge Dog Training Club
Deveron Dog Training Club
Donyatt Dog Training Club
East Riding Working Trials Society
Grampian Gundog Club
Haslemere & District Dog Training Club
High Peak Dog Training Society
Hucknall & District Canine Training Society
Lochaber & District Canine Society

Representative Society

Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Essex Working Trials Society
Wessex Working Trials Club
ASPADS Working Trials Society
Leamington Dog Training Club
Southern Alsatian Training Society
Leamington Dog Training Club
ASPADS Working Trials Society
British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Welsh Kennel Club
Scottish Working Trials Society
Wessex Working Trials Club
Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Scottish Working Trials Society
Surrey Dog Training Society
North West Working Trials Society
Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
Scottish Working Trials Society

Working Trials Liaison Council
30.01.2023

Midlands Border Collie Club
Mid Wales Working Gundog Society
National Australian Shepherd Association
Newlands Working Dog Society
North of England Weimaraner Society
Northants & Bedfordshire Working Trials Dog Training
Northern Alsatian & All Breeds Training Society
Northern Newfoundland Club
Portland Dog Training Club
Rough & Smooth Collie Training Association
Scottish Kennel Club
Six Counties Working Trials Society
Slovakian Rough Haired Pointer Club (Provisional)
South Devon Agility & Dog Training Club
South Leeds Working Trials Dog Training Club
Spanish Water Dog Club (Provisional)
Spey Valley Dog Training Club
Sporting Irish Water Spaniel Club
Stonehouse Dog Training Club
Wakefield Dog Training Club
Weimaraner Club of Great Britain
Weimaraner Club of Scotland
Working Belgian Shepherd Dog Society

Midland Counties German Shepherd Dog Association
Welsh Kennel Club
Iceni Working Trials Club
Surrey Dog Training Society
North East Counties Working Trials Society
ASPADS Working Trials Society
Yorkshire Working Trials Society
British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Poole & District Dog Training Society
Leamington Dog Training Club
Scottish Working Trials Society
North West Working Trials Society
Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Poole & District Dog Training Society
Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Lincolnshire German Shepherd Dog & All Breeds
Scottish Working Trials Society
North West Working Trials Society
British Association for German Shepherd Dogs
Yorkshire Working Trials Society
Essex Working Trials Society
Scottish Working Trials Society
ASPADS Working Trials Society