



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON  
COUNCIL HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS AT 10.30 AM ON  
THURSDAY 23 JUNE 2022**

**Note:** the meeting had originally been scheduled to take place at Clarges St., London, but in view of a national train strike, it was held remotely.

**PRESENT**

Ms D Cox	Midlands
Mr J Farr	Wales
Miss F Godfrey	South East/East Anglia
Mrs S Hyde	Midlands
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr D Moxon	South/South West
Mrs C Patrick	Scotland
Mrs K Russell	North West
Ms A Shaw	South East/East Anglia
Mr N Slater	Midlands
Ms N Thomas	Wales
Mrs L Turner	South/South West
Mr N Walton	North East

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss H Lawrence	Education Manager (part of item 3 only)
Miss C McHardy	Manager - Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team
Miss A Morley	Officer – Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team

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

**IN THE CHAIR**

**MR M MCCARTNEY**

1. Mr McCartney welcomed all to the meeting, noting with regret that due to disruptions to rail services it had not been possible to hold the meeting on a face-to-face basis as originally planned.



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

2. Apologies were received from Mrs J Le Fevre. It was also noted that Mr R Wakelin had stood down from his role on the Council.

## **ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022 were approved as being an accurate record.

## **ITEM 3. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### Regulation K3.c. Obedience Warrants

4. At its previous meeting, the Council had raised concerns regarding the inclusion of the following wording within the regulation relating to the criteria for claiming an Obedience Warrant: 'All wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2019 can be included when calculating points.' It had been of the view that the inclusion of this wording effectively precluded many dogs which would otherwise have been able to claim points from places won prior to 2019, from being able to achieve the award.
5. The Council noted that the matter was discussed by the Activities Committee at its meeting on 17 March 2022. The Committee was understanding of the Council's views, and the following amendment was approved by the Board at its meeting on 5 April 2022, with immediate effect:

### Regulation K3.c. Obedience Warrants

#### **TO:**

Obedience Warrants. An Obedience Warrant will be issued on application by the registered owner at the time of qualification in respect of a dog that has obtained 100 progression points (as defined in General Regulations G Annex A). The points are to be gained at Championship, Premier or Open Obedience Shows, as follows and must include the following:

- (1) 20 points in Novice Class.
- (2) 30 points in Class A.
- (3) 30 points in Class B.
- (4) 10 points for a first prize in Open Class C on at least one occasion.
- (5) 10 additional points in Open Class C, **which must be gained after 1 January 2022.**
- (6) Where a dog had to progress because it had won a first prize, or first prizes, at a higher level, then additional points achieved at a higher class may be used to supplement points at a lower class to achieve the 100 points total.
- (7) The title 'OW' may be used after the name of the dog on show entries and in catalogues.
- ~~(8) All wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2019 can be included when calculating points.~~  
(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through.)  
(Effective immediately)

### Training for commentators

6. At its last meeting, the Council was advised that it would be necessary for training for commentators to take place on a face-to-face basis, and that it was hoped that the training would take place during the course of 2022.



7. However, on consideration, and noting that the commentary provided for obedience at Crufts 2022 had been excellent, it concluded that the training was no longer required.
  
8. Obedience Festival  
The Council noted that a number of meetings had taken place between the working group consisting of Mrs Patrick, Mrs Lavender, Mr McCartney, Mrs Smith, and Mrs Russell regarding plans for the above event. Miss Lawrence had also been invited to assist the group due to her extensive knowledge and experience. Mrs Smith had now left the working group and had been replaced by Ms Cox.
  
9. The Council received a detailed presentation which had been formulated by Mr McCartney and Miss Lawrence, and which was presented by Miss Lawrence. Key points were:
  - The Festival would be a midweek two-day prestigious outdoor event that would celebrate British obedience
  - To be scheduled alongside Hatchford Brook Dog Training Club and Solihull Dog Training Club's shows
  - Venue: Solihull Bees Rugby Ground, Foreshaw Heath Lane, Solihull, West Midlands
  - Proposed dates: Wednesday 9 August & Thursday 10 August 2023
  - Aimed at dogs and handlers at every level
  - International element which could develop over time
  - No pre-qualification requirement to enter
  - Cup competitions at each level of progression (qualifying on a points-based system on day 1, with finals held on day 2)
  - Range of other classes including special classes
  - Social programme on one or two evenings to celebrate obedience and encourage engagement between competitors
  - Support and practical assistance from the obedience fraternity would be required
  - The event would need to be self-funding or covered by sponsorship
  
10. Mr McCartney and Miss Lawrence were thanked for a highly informative and positive presentation. A copy of the full presentation is attached as **Annex A to the Minutes**.
  
11. It was hoped that as many Council representatives as possible would attend the Festival, although it was accepted that work or other commitments may prevent some from doing so. However, any assistance or support in preparation for the event would be welcome even for those unable to be present during the event itself.
  
12. A query was raised as to why there was no provision within the plans for a cup competition for handlers at Introductory level. It was confirmed that there would be no issue in adding such a competition.
  
13. It was acknowledged that a considerable number of judges and stewards would be required for the event, and this may prove challenging. However it was hoped that the obedience community would be fully supportive, and that people would wish to be involved and would be happy to offer their services. A suggestion was made that a package of benefits (which may include a gift, expenses, camping etc.) could be provided for stewards in a similar way to that provided for ring parties assisting at agility shows, and it was agreed that the working group would give further consideration to this. It was also hoped that training clubs at all levels may be able to provide stewards, giving prior training, if necessary, for the role.



14. It was also suggested that judges may be encouraged to take part if they were able to judge on one day of the Festival and to compete on the other day.
15. A further suggestion was that clubs (registered or listed status) could be encouraged to take ownership of a specific class (or classes), and would provide a judge and a steward, and possibly sponsorship, for those classes.
16. Noting that it was planned that all standard classes would be mixed sex classes with a separate set of awards for dogs and bitches in each, a query was raised as to the practical way in which this would work. It was clarified that the class would be judged as a single class, with both dogs and bitches competing, but each sex would have its own set of results and awards. It was not anticipated that this would cause any undue difficulties.
17. The working group was keen to ensure that the 2023 Obedience Festival would be the starting point for an annual event which would continue to develop on a year-by-year basis. By way of comparison, it was highlighted that the International Agility Festival had initially been a relatively small two-day event but had enjoyed increasing success over the 15 years since its inception.
18. The Council expressed its unanimous and enthusiastic support for the project, and it was agreed that the working group should proceed with initial planning. Next steps would include developing a full business plan to obtain Kennel Club approval, appointment of a management team, identification of sponsorship opportunities, and the appointment of judges, engagement of helpers in all capacities, and a formal announcement of the date, when approved.
19. It also wished to record its thanks to Hatchford Brook Dog Training Club, and Solihull Dog Training Club, for their assistance and co-operation in developing the plans.
20. Miss Lawrence left the meeting at this point.

Eligibility for Introductory class

21. At its previous meeting, the Council discussed the following proposed amendment to G Regulations which would amend the eligibility criteria for the Introductory class:

Regulation G(A)9.b

**TO:**

To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have ~~won one~~ **gained a 1<sup>st</sup> place in an** Introductory Class ~~or have achieved a 4<sup>th</sup> place or above in Pre-Beginners~~ or in any other class.

(Deletions struck through, insertion in bold)

22. On discussion, the principle of adding an option for progression on points from the Introductory class was supported, and it was agreed that consideration of the proposal to amend the criteria for eligibility for the Introductory class should be deferred until the Council's next meeting, where a revised amendment incorporating such an option could be considered.
23. Accordingly, the Council considered a proposal for a revised amendment, submitted by Mr Moxon. Some discussion took place as to the precise wording, in reference to a handler or dog having 'achieved a 4th place or above in Pre-Beginners or in any class, which it was agreed should be removed. Further, the proposed inclusion of a reference to places gained 'prior to 1st January 2023' was also discussed and it was agreed that this should not be included.
24. A revised proposal was submitted by Mr McCartney and seconded by Mrs Patrick. A vote took place, and the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:



Regulation G(A)9.b

**TO:**

To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have ~~won one Introductory Class~~ **gained a 1st place in any obedience class**, or ~~have achieved a 4th place or above in Pre-Beginners or in any other class~~ **and have not elected to progress on points from Introductory.**

(Deletion struck through. Insertions in bold)

25. In addition, the Council noted that an amendment to Regulation G(A)5 would also be necessary. Under the terms of the proposal, wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2023 could be included. However the Council noted that the existing provisions of Regulation G(A)5, which currently referred to progression from Pre-Beginners, Beginners, Novice, Class A, and Class B stated that 'All wins and places to fourth since 1 January 2019 can be included when calculating points.' It agreed that the inclusion of different date criteria for progression from Introductory would be inconsistent, and would cause confusion.
26. A revised proposal was made by Mrs Patrick and was seconded by Ms Cox. A vote took place, and by a majority, the following amendment was **recommended** for approval:

Regulation G(A)5

**TO:**

Points required for progression on points are as follows:

**1. 10 points required for progression from Introductory.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Subsequent items to be renumbered)

Use of food rewards and toys

27. At its previous meeting, the Council had discussed the possibility of introducing food rewards into Pre-Beginner and Beginner classes. It had concluded that it would be a positive step to allow food rewards, and possibly the use of toys, in Pre-Beginners but not in Beginners.
28. The Council noted that Mrs Le Fevre would submit a firm proposal for consideration by the Council at its first meeting in 2023. **Note:** a discussion item relating to the use of food and toys in Introductory, Pre-Beginners and Beginners was considered later in the meeting (paragraphs 67-74 refer).

#### **ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP**

29. The Council noted a written report from Mr McCartney following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 5 May 2022. Key points relating to obedience were highlighted as follows:
- A minute's silence had taken place in respect of the passing of Mr S Rutter and in recognition of his significant contribution to the Sub Group's work.
  - Ms K Allen had been appointed to replace Mr Rutter on the Sub-Group.
  - Mr McCartney had been appointed to replace Mr Harlow who had stood down from his role as a member of the Sub-Group.
  - Codes of Best Practice for all activities disciplines were reviewed. The only amendment required for obedience was the addition of guidance relating to social media. The Sub-Group also noted that reference should be made to the relevant codes of practice for judges



in all judging contracts, which should include wording to state that the judge agreed to be bound by such codes.

- The Sub-Group wished to remind judges of the importance of keeping their records up to date, and of keeping abreast of regulation changes within their discipline.
30. Mrs Patrick wished to record her concern that there had been no opportunity for nominations for a replacement member on the Sub-Group. It was confirmed that the Chair of the Judges Sub-Group was at liberty to invite members to the join group as deemed appropriate.

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

31. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Le Fevre following the Sub-Group's meeting which took place on 4 April 2022.

### Obesity in dogs

32. It was noted that the Sub-Group had discussed obesity in dogs, and wished to raise awareness regarding canine fitness, particularly in respect of owner knowledge of continual effective monitoring of their dogs' weight management using the Purina dog body condition tool.
33. Subsequent to the Sub-Group's meeting, Mrs Le Fevre had carried out a short survey within the obedience community, the results of which had been circulated prior to the meeting and are attached as **Annex B to the Minutes**. There was some disappointment that only 116 respondents had participated. The results would also be submitted to the Sub-Group for consideration at its next meeting,

### Levy for research purposes

34. The Council considered a suggestion from the Sub-Group whereby a small levy could be placed on entries for Kennel Club licensed shows in all activities disciplines. This levy would be used for specific purposes, such as to provide funding for research that would benefit the specific discipline which had raised such funding, or it may be of benefit to all disciplines. Feedback indicated that there was no support from the obedience community for the introduction of a levy, particularly in the current economic climate, and the Council was not of the view that it should be progressed in relation to obedience.

### Health Symposium

35. The Kennel Club Health Symposium which had been postponed due to Covid-19 had now been rescheduled to take place 12-13 November 2022 at Chesford Manor, Coventry.

### Shortage of glass phials

36. A concern had been raised with the Sub-Group by Mr Moxon in respect of the shortage of glass phials for the storage of vaccination medication. The Sub-Group had been of the view that there had been some issues with the supply of phials but this was now understood to have been largely resolved, although there may be outstanding issues in a few areas. No further discussion was considered necessary.

## **ITEM 6. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB**

37. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Lavender.
38. A number of YKC obedience events had taken place, or were due to take place, during the course of 2022, including:





- YKC final Obedience competitions held in the YKC ring at Crufts.
  - Young Kennel Club Training Day on Saturday 25 June 2022 at The Kennel Club Building at Stoneleigh
  - YKC Summer Camp to be held at Rutland Showground 31 July – 5 August 2022.
  - TBC September planning stages of holding a YKC Competitive Training Day
  - YKC Activity weekend to include training and Crufts qualifying competitions was currently being planned – date and venue to be confirmed
  - YKC Obedience Training Days were also being planned
39. Mrs Lavender would continue to liaise with the YKC office, particularly with regard to suggested trainers and judges, and any suggestions from Council members for suitable individuals to fulfil such roles would be welcomed.
40. Mrs Turner reminded the Council that she had compiled a list of potential helpers for YKC events some time ago and had submitted it to the YKC office. It was agreed that an up-to-date list of useful contacts in all areas would be very helpful, and all Council members were requested to compile such a list, on a regionalised basis, which would then be collated by Mrs Lavender and submitted to the YKC office for its use when arranging events.
41. It was noted that not all shows were able to schedule specific classes for YKC members, and a suggestion was made that YKC members, when entering open shows and competing against adult handlers, should be permitted to gain YKC points for places achieved. It was confirmed that the matter had previously been raised with the YKC office but had not been progressed. However, the Council was of the view that it was important to recognise the achievements of young handlers and that implementing such a measure would be greatly encouraging to them. Mrs Lavender undertook to raise the matter again.
42. Mrs Lavender had also requested that the Rebecca Pointer Trophy be reinstated for the YKC member who accumulated the most points won in obedience competitions in a 12-month period.
43. Council members were also encouraged to organise YKC training events in their own areas.
44. It was noted that Board member Mrs Garner had indicated her interest in having more of an involvement with YKC obedience. This was welcomed by the Council as it was hoped that it would be helpful in progressing initiatives to encourage more young handlers into the discipline.

## **ITEM 7. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS**

45. No proposals had been received.

## **ITEM 8. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Introduction of a new 'Progressive C' class



46. Ms L Tozer wished the Council to consider ways to increase the number of competitors eligible to compete in Championship Class C. Ms Tozer noted that in recent years the number of competitors in Championship Class C had fallen, and this had been made considerably worse by the pandemic over the last two years due to dogs retiring, and fewer opportunities to qualify new dogs. The discussion item was presented by Mrs Hyde.
47. Accordingly it was suggested that a second Class C could be scheduled, a new class called 'Progressive C'. Eligibility for this class would be for dogs that had not won Open C and had been placed no lower than 3<sup>rd</sup> on three occasions in Open Class C. The test and qualifications would remain the same as for the existing scheduled Open Class C. The existing Open Class C would still be scheduled as normal and would remain open to all dogs.
48. The Council was appreciative of the objective of the new class, which would be to enable eligible dogs to qualify into Championship Class C without competing against obedience champions and other highly experienced dogs, without detriment to the overall standard in Championship Class C. However there were some concerns that the introduction of a new class would result in 'dumbing down' the discipline, and further, that already small classes may be split even further.
49. It was highlighted that originally, criteria had been set to ensure that dogs qualifying for Championship Class C were capable of performing at a satisfactory and consistent level. However, the criteria had been increased over the years as a way of dealing with high entries in Championship Class C at the time.
50. One area reported that there had been some support for Ms Tozer's discussion item, but it was highlighted that only a low number of comments had been received, and the majority of those were from competitors working in lower classes. It appeared that the idea was not generally supported by those currently working dogs in Open Class C in that area.
51. Although there was no statistical evidence, it appeared that more dogs were qualifying for Championship Class C, but that due to current very high costs of travel, the number of entries into the class were lower than they might otherwise have been. However it was accepted that gaining a win in Open Class C was difficult, and some competitors were becoming discouraged as a result.
52. Rather than the introduction of a new class, a number of suggestions were made as to ways of addressing this issue. These included:
  - Removal of the existing criteria for a dog to have won Open Class C on one occasion, whilst retaining the requirement for it to have won out of Novice, Class A and Class B, or have progressed on points from those classes, and to have been placed not lower than third in Open Class C on three occasions.
  - As above, but with the requirement to have been placed not lower than third in Open Class C on three occasions to be increased to four occasions.
  - Reconsideration as to whether allowing progression on points from Open Class C should be permitted, although this had been dismissed when progression on points had originally been discussed.
  - Permitting a second place in an Open Class C to count as a 'win' for the purpose of qualifying for Championship Class C, but only where the first placed dog had already qualified.





53. The Council was of the view that removing the requirement for a win in Open C would not be detrimental to the standard of competition as the lack of a first place did not necessarily indicate a lack of quality in the dog's performance, and there was general consensus that the first of the four options above may be viable.
54. After careful consideration, the Council concluded that there was no support for Ms Tozer's suggestion for an additional class, but it accepted the principle behind it. Accordingly, it agreed its views should be referred back to Ms Tozer with a view to submitting a formal proposal in future, based on the options which had arisen during the discussion, should she wish to do so.

Qualifications for judges

55. Ms D Kay, represented by Mrs Lavender, wished the Council to discuss the following suggested changes to G Regulations in relation to the qualifications for judges.

G31.c

**TO:**

*Qualifications for judges at premier and open shows and for the non certificate classes at championship shows-*

On first appointment judges must satisfy the show committee that they:

- (1) have judged a minimum of ~~four~~ **two** appointments within at least two years at a lower level including limited/companion obedience shows and matches/club or fun competitions.
  - (2) have won out of Beginners at a licensed championship, premier or open obedience show as a handler, and have acted as a caller, scribe or marker steward on six occasions at licensed shows; and
  - (3) have completed and passed an Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure examination on the Kennel Club Academy ~~prior to attending a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar~~ **prior to accompanying a qualified KC judge at an open or championship show.**
  - (4) ~~have attended a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging Seminar and passed the assessment~~ **accompany/shadow a qualified judge (who has fulfilled at least six judging appointments) at a Kennel Club licensed show to oversee the judging procedure, test design and marking techniques. Class Novice, A or B can be chosen to fulfil this task.**
  - (5) **have reviewed the document containing example test design for each class from the KC website.**
56. Ms Kay highlighted concerns that many experienced judges were in their sixties and seventies and would be retiring from judging over the next few years, and that there may not be a sufficient number of new judges coming forward to replace them.
57. In Ms Kay's view, there were two specific parts of the current judging regulations which had become problematic for those wanting to achieve judging status: the judging seminars, and judging at limited/companion shows and matches. Ms Kay wished to simplify these requirements to make it quicker and easier for people to get qualified, and at the same time retain their motivation and enthusiasm. It was hoped that this would encourage more competitors to step up to the judging role.
58. Ms Kay expressed particular concern regarding the two-day Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging seminar, and the practical difficulties of running enough of these seminars to enable an adequate number of judges to qualify. Such seminars were also costly and unduly onerous on the organisers.
59. The Council was in agreement that the development of judges was an important issue and that Ms Kay's discussion item raised some interesting points. There was also support for Ms Kay's



concerns regarding the requirement to have attended a two-day Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging Seminar and to have passed the assessment.

60. It discussed the concept of shadowing an experienced judge, who would discuss their round and the way in which individual competitors were marked. There was considerable support for this, which was perceived as being a cost-effective and helpful measure, although it was agreed that should the idea be progressed it would be necessary to set clear parameters regarding the number, level, and variety of classes to be shadowed.
61. The Council also discussed whether judges should be required to have undertaken a set number of stewarding appointments, and whether or not these would include appointments as a scribe or score boarder, as well as caller stewards. Whilst it was agreed that it was desirable for a judge to have stewarding experience, it was acknowledged that those undertaking such roles would be concentrating on fulfilling them correctly and may not necessarily gain significant insight into matters related to judging.
62. One suggestion was that rounds could be filmed and then discussed with an experienced judge as to how they should be marked. The new judge could also be filmed whilst judging a round, and subsequently evaluated by the experienced judge. It was agreed that it would be necessary for any such filming to take place at a course set up for the specific purpose rather than at a competition.
63. The Council was reminded that a number of years ago, training sessions had been made available during which a panel of Class C judges had watched a handler work a round, and had marked it. Their marking had then been discussed with the audience. This had proved to be very useful training for newer judges. Such sessions had been self-financing, with members of the audience paying a small amount to attend.
64. A brief discussion took place regarding the availability of seminars for judges. The Council was reminded that clubs may offer themselves as hosts and could invite an Accredited Trainer to present a seminar at any time in order to satisfy demand in their area. It was also suggested that competitors should also be encouraged to attend Obedience Regulations and Judging Procedure seminars, as having a good understanding of the G Regulations was helpful to those participating in obedience in any capacity.
65. Ms Kay had also expressed concern regarding the requirement to have judged at lower-level competitions on four occasions. It was clarified by the office that the four occasions could include any appointments at limited/ companion obedience shows or at matches/club or fun competitions. The Council agreed that no further discussion was necessary on this point, although it may be helpful for the office to issue guidance or clarification as there was some misunderstanding within the obedience community on the matter.
66. It was agreed that Mrs Patrick would raise the issues highlighted by Ms Kay, and the Council's views as outlined above, at the Accredited Trainers Annual Seminar due to take place in October. A report as to the feedback received would be provided to the Council at its next meeting.
- Use of food and toys in Introductory, Pre-Beginners and Beginners
67. Knightswood Dog Training Club wished the Council to discuss suggestions that the following provisions be incorporated into the regulations applying to Introductory, Pre-Beginners and Beginners. The discussion item was presented by Mr McIntosh.



#### **Introductory, Pre-Beginners and Beginners.**

- Food or toy or both may be carried by the handler in the ring, carried either in the hand, or a pocket or training bag, in the same way as at a training club.
- Two halts in heelwork where handler may give food or toy or both as a reward, before continuing with the heelwork round.

#### **Introductory and Pre-Beginners**

- No sit or finish at end of heelwork, just break off and play.

#### **Beginners**

- Commence heelwork with heel free, followed by heel on lead. Reward may be carried but not given to the dog until the end of the heelwork round. With the finish and sit in this part of the round there would be three sits, after which the dog may receive praise and a reward. This would help prepare dogs for Novice.
- Recall: handler may use food or toy for present and finish.
- Retrieve: Handler may use food or toy for present and finish, although this would be at the handler's choice. If he or she wishes not to use any rewards in any part of the round, then that is acceptable.

68. The club was keen to encourage new competitors into the discipline in order to safeguard its future. It noted that many clubs were still offering training services but may not be running shows, and it was suggested that the training style and methods used in such clubs should be used to start people off in obedience. In the club's view, allowing them to use food and toys in a controlled way in Introductory, Pre-Beginners and Beginners would permit them to compete whilst using methods used within their training. It was hoped that new competitive handlers would be created via existing clubs.
69. Whilst accepting the Club's concerns in regard to attracting new competitors, the Council noted that in some areas, numbers in the lower classes were increasing, with a good number of new competitors entering the discipline, whilst in other areas they were static or decreasing.
70. The Council was reminded that the issue of food and toys had been discussed by the Council at its previous meeting. At that time, noting the feedback received from representatives, it had concluded that it would be a positive step to allow food rewards, and possibly the use of toys, in Pre-Beginners but not in Beginners.
71. The Council reiterated its previous view that the use of food and toys in Beginners and above should not be permitted. There were concerns that doing so would be problematic when the handler moved into Novice. It was acknowledged that at some point during a dog's progression through the classes, it would become necessary for handlers to compete without the use of food or toys and that allowing food rewards beyond Pre-Beginners would merely delay the requirement for them to do so.
72. The importance of good training techniques was highlighted, with food being used appropriately in order to motivate them and strengthen the dog's performance. It was suggested that simply allowing the use of food rewards during competition would not address issues caused by inadequate or incorrect training.
73. With regard to Knightswood Dog Training Club's suggestion that the heel free round should be carried out before the heel on lead round, it was clarified that the intention was to allow the handler and dog to complete heelwork exercises on the most positive note. Many less experienced handlers found the heel free exercise more difficult than heel on lead, in which they retained more control. Whilst noting this, the Council was of the view that judges should be



permitted to carry out exercises in the order of their choice and that specifying a set order within the regulations would be unduly prescriptive.

74. The Council's views were noted, but no further action was considered necessary at present, noting that a proposal on the matter of the use of food rewards and toys (paragraphs 27-28 refer) would be submitted to the Council by Mrs Le Fevre at its next meeting.

Area revision for Obedience Liaison Council (OLC) and Inter Regional teams

75. Mrs Hyde wished the Council to consider issues relating to designated geographical areas relating to the Council and to Inter Regional teams. There were inconsistencies in the designation, with some competitors finding themselves in a different area for the purposes of the Council to that applying to the Inter Regional teams, as a result of which there was some confusion. Mrs Hyde was of the view that the areas should be consistent for both.
76. It was noted that the areas for the Inter Regional competition were set by the Crufts Committee, but it would be possible for a review to be requested.
77. The Council was also advised that any changes to the areas designated for Council purposes would affect all six of the Liaison Councils, which covered the full range of disciplines, and it would therefore be necessary for any proposed changes to be referred to the Activities Committee, the Show Executive Committee, and the Field Trials Committee. It was noted that there were fewer Inter Regional areas than Council areas, so should the two be aligned there would be fewer opportunities for dogs from each area to compete at Crufts.
78. The Council was supportive of the views expressed by Mrs Hyde, and accordingly, the office was requested to progress the matter.

## **ITEM 9. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY**

79. The Strategic Plan was noted. Many items included in the plan were being addressed and had been discussed during the course of the meeting, such as the Obedience Festival, YKC, the provision of guidance for judges, and attracting new competitors.
80. It was noted that some aspects of the plan had not been updated, and the office was requested to do so prior to the Council's next meeting.
81. It was agreed that the following item should be added to the plan:
- Encouraging more smaller local shows: to address concerns regarding costs of travel and climate change issues
82. At its previous meeting, the Council had been in agreement that the Strategic Plan should be more dynamic in nature, with specific action points highlighted to ensure ongoing progress. This view was reiterated, and it was suggested that the plan should be updated to include names and timeframes which would clearly identify specific tasks, the individuals who had taken responsibility for carrying them out, and timeframes for doing so.
83. It was agreed that the office would update the document by ensuring correct dates were shown, and by removing any out-of-date information and tasks noted as having been completed. The revised document would then be circulated. All Council members were then requested to contact the office should they wish to add new items, and to offer to undertake specific tasks as outlined on the document.



## **ITEM 10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### Docked dogs

84. In response to a query regarding docked dogs competing in obedience competitions at Crufts, it was confirmed that there was no Kennel Club regulation in place relating to docked dogs. DEFRA rules stated that docked dogs may not compete at events at which the public paid an admission fee, unless an exemption had been granted by DEFRA. Event organisers were not responsible for the enforcement of the relevant rules.

### Marked running orders

85. The office wished to remind championship show secretaries that they must submit a marked running order for the championship classes, including all the information detailed in the Regulations. This may be submitted via email, preferably in a Word or pdf format (not Excel) as documents are retained indefinitely by the office. It was not permissible to just send a list of the results.

### Draws

86. In response to comments received from some competitors who expressed concerns at being consistently drawn, it was confirmed by the office that all draws were conducted on a random basis.

## **ITEM 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

87. The date for the next meeting of the Council would be announced in September 2022.

The meeting closed at 2.30 pm.

**MR M MCCARTNEY**  
**Chair**

### **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'**