MINUTES OF THE FIELD TRIALS LIAISON COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 31 MAY 2022 AT 10.30 AM IN THE BOARDROOM, THE KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET

PRESENT

Mr S Adams	Shropshire & Staffordshire Working Spaniel Society; Welsh Kennel Club
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
Mr K Byron	Suffolk Gundog Club; Cambridgeshire Field Trials Society
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 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 J Goldsmith	Tyne Tees and Tweed Field Trials Association; Yorkshire Sporting Spaniel Club
Mr R Gould	Gordon Setter Field Trial Society; Southern Pointer Club
Mrs J Hay	Golden Retriever Club of Northumbria; Golden Retriever Club of Scotland; Northern Golden Retriever Association; Yorkshire Golden Retriever Club
Mr J Henderson	Scottish Gundog Association; Tay Valley Gundog Association; Strathmore Working Gundog Club
Mr A Hopkins-Young	Leicestershire Gundog Society; Cocker Spaniel 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
Mrs B Kuen	Chiltern Gundog Society; International Gundog League (Retriever Society); Mid Norfolk Gundog 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 A Rees	Carmarthenshire Working Gundog Society; Glamorganshire Field Trial Society
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
Mr T West	South West Scotland Gundog Association; Gordon District Gundog Club; Forth & Clyde Working Gundog Association
Ms S Whyte	Lincolnshire Gundog Society; Midland Counties Labrador Retriever Club; Northumberland and Durham Labrador Retriever Club; Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society
Mr N Wroe	Weimaraner Association; Hungarian Vizsla Club

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss C McHardy	Manager – Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs A Mitchell	Senior Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team
Miss A Morley	Officer – Working Dog Activities Team
Mrs C Welch	Senior Officer – Working Dog Activities Team

GUEST

Mr S Jenkinson	Access and Countryside Advisor to The Kennel Club (item 8 only)

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.

ITEM 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL

1. There were two nominations for the role of Chairman for the term of the Council, both of which were seconded: Mr R Major and Mr S Richardson. A vote took place, and Mr Richardson was duly elected.

IN THE CHAIR: MR S RICHARDSON

ITEM 2. TO ELECT A VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL

2. There were two nominations for the role of Vice-Chairman, both of which were seconded: Mrs S Jenkins, and Mr A Rees. A vote took place, and Mrs Jenkins was duly elected.

ITEM 3. TO ELECT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE FOR THE VARIOUS SUB GROUPS EFFECTIVE FROM JUNE 2022 TO MAY 2025

3. The Council considered the election of representatives for each of the four sub-groups to the Field Trials Committee. Two representatives were required for each sub-group.

4. Mr Richardson, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council, automatically became a representative on the Committee, and would represent the Retriever sub-group. Three further candidates were proposed and seconded to represent the sub-group: Mr Rees, Mr West and Ms Whyte. Following a ballot, Ms Whyte was elected to the role.

5. Three candidates, Mr Adams, Mrs Cox, and Mr Hopkins-Young were proposed and seconded to represent the Spaniel sub-group. A ballot took place, and Mr Adams and Mr Hopkins-Young were duly elected.

6. Mr Major and Mr Kimberley were proposed and seconded to represent HPRs, and were duly elected.

7. Mrs Asbury and Mrs Kirk were proposed and seconded to represent Pointers and Setters, and were duly elected.

ITEM 4. PRESENTATION TO THE COUNCIL ON KENNEL CLUB STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES

8. The Council received a presentation on The Kennel Club and Liaison Council structure and procedures, and the role of Council representatives.

9. The office undertook to circulate a copy of the presentation to all members of the Council.

ITEM 5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

10. Apologies were received from Mr M Clifford, Miss J Hurley, and Mr J Kean. Mr R Proctor and Mrs V Stanley were not present.

ITEM 6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 AUGUST 2021

11. The minutes from the meeting held on 18 August 2021 were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING AND RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS PASSED TO THE FIELD TRIALS COMMITTEE (RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS)

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

Handlers with more than one dog

13. As noted within the Results of Recommendations document, after careful consideration, the Field Trials Committee had acknowledged that there was a growing issue in relation to handlers with more than one dog.

14. The Council received a further 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. A copy of the full statement is attached at **Annex A to the Minutes**. Further updates would be provided in due course.

Dogs entered at more than one trial on the same day.

15. The Council had previously discussed the practice whereby an owner would enter and accept a run for two dogs on the same day at two different trials, in order to maximise their chance of getting a run. Some owners had reciprocal arrangements with others, in which one owner would run their own dog as well as a dog belonging to the other, at the same trial. It was of the view that this was not considered to be within the

spirit of the discipline and wished to refer this matter to the Committee for its views on how this matter may be addressed.

16. As noted within the 'Results of Recommendations' document, the Committee suggested that this matter be considered together with the issue of handlers with more than one dog. Further updates would be given in due course.

ITEM 8. USE OF FIREARMS

17. The Council received a presentation from Mr S Jenkinson (Access and Countryside Advisor to The Kennel Club) on legal issues relating to the use of firearms during Kennel Club licensed events. A copy of Mr Jenkinson's presentation is attached at **Annex B to the Minutes**.

18. The following points were particularly highlighted in respect of rights of access:

- Public access rights are usually independent of land ownership
- Most public access rights are across privately-owned land
- Equally, there is no right of public access to land in public ownership
- Rights of public access across almost all land in Scotland
- Also private access rights for neighbours and utility companies
- Duty of care towards trespassers

19. In relation to the carrying and use of firearms, it was emphasised that in general terms (bearing in mind differences across the UK and under a range of statutes) the provisions of the Highways Act 1980 and the Firearms Act 1968 took a pragmatic and proportionate approach, as set out below:

Highways Act 1980

161 Penalties for causing certain kinds of danger or annoyance.

[F2(2) If a person without lawful authority or excuse—

(a) lights any fire on or over a highway which consists of or comprises a carriageway; or

(b) discharges any firearm or firework within 50 feet of the centre of such a highway,

and in consequence a user of the highway is injured, interrupted or endangered, that person is guilty of an offence and liable to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.]

Firearms Act 1968

19 Carrying firearm in a public place.

A person commits an offence if, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse (the proof whereof lies on him) he has with him in a public place

[F1(a) a loaded shot gun,

(b) an air weapon (whether loaded or not),

(c) any other firearm (whether loaded or not) together with ammunition suitable for use in that firearm, or

(d) an imitation firearm.]

20. The ultimate duty lay with a firearms user to always act lawfully, however field trial societies were advised to take the following measures in relation to the use of firearms:

- Written access risk assessment: public, private, trespassers
- Record due diligence when selecting firearms user
- Obtain written landowner permission for firearm use to show "reasonable excuse"
- Take care to recognise legitimate public concerns

21. A query was raised in regard to the duty of care to those using land, and in particular to trespassers, as to whether the responsibility lay with the landowner or the organiser of a field trial. It was confirmed that there was no hard and fast rule as individual circumstances may vary (for example where land is tenanted), but in general, it was safest as a first step to assume joint responsibility applied to all parties to avoid misunderstandings and ensure the appropriate safety measures were in place. Trial organisers should liaise with landowners but should also take reasonable steps themselves to minimise risk. They were also advised to liaise with their insurers. Ideally, arrangements should be confirmed in writing.

22. There being no further questions, Mr Jenkinson was thanked for a highly informative and useful presentation. Mr Jenkinson left the meeting at this point.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES

Proposed amendment to Regulation J5.c.(6)

23. Midland Gundog Society, represented by Mr Richardson, wished to propose an amendment to Regulation J5.c.(6), whereby before a judge could accept an invitation for a judging appointment, he must have attended a Kennel Club Judges Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and have passed the examination. This would replace the existing wording which stated that a judge must have passed the examination prior to being added to a Panel.

24. The amendment would also state that with effect from 2 February 2025 all judges must have attended a Kennel Club Judges Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and must have passed the examination, unless the judge has 'Grandfather rights'. The existing regulation stated the above provision was with effect from 2 February 2023.

25. The proposal was made with the objective of ensuring that all judges had a good understanding of the J Regulations prior to accepting a judging appointment. It was seconded by Ms Joint.

26. It was noted that a similar discussion item had been submitted by the Labrador Retriever Club (which appeared on the agenda under item 10), and the two items were considered together.

27. A number of concerns were raised that implementing such a measure would place undue emphasis on taking, and passing, the examination, at the expense of practical experience. Passing the examination without other experience would not in itself provide adequate insight of the practical elements of fieldcraft which was necessary to judge effectively. Further, it may be seen by some potential judges as a barrier, and may prevent them from coming forward to undertake judging appointments. This was especially undesirable at a time when, due to Covid-19, there had been a significant reduction in the number of trials which had taken place over the previous two seasons, and it was important to ensure that new judges were able to progress.

28. A suggestion was made that it may be more helpful for potential judges to be issued with some form of competency certificate which confirmed that they had practical experience of attending field trials and had undertaken roles such as game carrying and stewarding. Shadowing a judge, or being mentored, would also be included as relevant experience.

29. It was noted that the HPR community had already agreed a formula for non-Panel judges which included passing the examination but also contained minimum criteria for practical experience. It was emphasised that the guidelines for HPR judges stated that the criteria were desirable rather than being compulsory.

30. It was also suggested that the J regulations examination should not be referred to as only for judges, as all participants in field trials should be familiar with the regulations. It was confirmed that the seminar scripts available on The Kennel Club website had recently been renamed as ‘Seminar script for Kennel Club J Regulations’. The J regulations themselves referred to the ’Kennel Club Judges Training Programme seminar on Kennel Club J Regulations and…examination.’

31. Having considered the proposal carefully, the Council concluded that in the interests of encouraging new judges, and of retaining an emphasis on practical experience, the proposal could not be supported. A vote took place, and by a large majority it did not recommend the proposal for approval.

<u>Minimum number of retrieves at a Retriever stake</u>

32. The Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society, represented by Ms Whyte, wished the Council to consider a proposal for a new regulation which would set a minimum number of retrieves at Retriever stakes, which would be required before a winner may be declared. Under the terms of

the proposal, at a one-day trial there should be a minimum of 6 retrieves, and for a two day trial, a minimum of 7 retrieves. Only in exceptional circumstances should a dog be allowed to win on fewer retrieves.

33. The Society noted that in recent times there had been a reduction in the number of retrieves at a Retriever trial before a winner was declared, and five retrieves had become the custom and practice. In some cases, stakes had been won on four retrieves. It therefore wished to introduce a regulation stating a minimum number of retrieves. It was of the view that it would be preferable for such a minimum to be mandatory rather than being a matter for guidance and advice to judges.

34. With concerns over the standard of dogs running in trials and the number of entries in Opens, a definite minimum number of retrieves would also ensure that the dog winning the trial had been tested and observed, and that the standard was sufficiently high.

35. The proposal was seconded by Mr Capstick.

36. The Council accepted that the principle of the proposal was to improve standards, and there was some support for it, noting that it included provision for exceptions to be granted in exceptional circumstances.

37. However some concerns were raised regarding the potential implications of implementing such a regulation which would not provide adequate flexibility to allow for circumstances, such as a lack of sufficient game. Further, it was highlighted that a dog which had performed exceptionally well during a trial may be denied a win due to an artificially fixed criteria, which could not take into account the wide range of natural factors involved in trialling such as ground conditions, game supply, and weather. This was considered to be highly undesirable.

38. It was also highlighted that there would be a financial cost to societies which may be required to pay for additional birds, which in turn may be reflected in increased entry fees. A view was also expressed that shooting extra game for the sole purpose of fulfilling a regulation would be highly undesirable and would create a negative perception of the discipline. There may also be a risk of losing grounds should undue pressure be placed on hosts and keepers to supply additional game.

39. The Council was of the view that the existing system of selecting winners was satisfactory and there were no major concerns regarding the standard of dogs winning open trials. It also considered that judges should be permitted to use their own judgement in assessing the quality of a dog’s work rather than on a pre-set number of retrieves.

40. A vote took place, and by a large majority, the Council did not recommend approval of the proposal.

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Award of an eye wipe at Retriever trials

41. The discussion item was submitted by, and presented by, Mr Smith, who noted that there was considerable confusion about what constituted an 'eye wipe'. Noting that as the award of an eye wipe could significantly affect the final placings in a trial, Mr Smith was of the view that absolute clarity was necessary, and accordingly the views of the Council were sought in relation not only to Retrievers, but to all dogs which were required to retrieve.

42. It was noted that there was only one reference to eye wipes, as it applied to the retrieve of a runner, in the current J Regulations – Regulation J(A)4.(h). This stated:

'If a dog is performing indifferently on a runner, it must be called up promptly. If more dogs are tried on the runner, the work of all these dogs must be assessed in relation to the order in which they are tried. The handlers of the second and subsequent dogs down may be allowed to take their dogs towards the fall, as may the handler of the first dog if it has not had a chance to mark the game. Game picked by the second or a subsequent dog constitutes an 'eye wipe'. Dogs which have had their eyes wiped during the body of the stake, however it may have occurred, will be discarded. All eye wipes should be treated on their merits.'

43. Further information was also contained in the seminar script for Retriever field trial judges, as follows:

'Dogs should be called up promptly wherever they are performing indifferently, be it on a runner or on game thought to be dead.

There are different types of eye wipes, for example, game-finding eye wipes where a dog goes to an area previously worked by another dog and either finds the game or takes a line and picks a runner, and that where a dog picks game which other dogs have tried and failed to reach. While there are distinctions to be drawn between the game-finding eye wipe and those that are more dependent on handling, it is not correct to diminish the eye wipe on the basis that the dog picked game because it could be handled easily to hunt an area in which it found the game when others could not. This must be distinguished from over handling. There is also the technical eye wipe which is achieved behind a dog of no merit and is graded simply on the retrieve itself.

Except in a run-off, where a dog has its eye wiped by another dog sent by the judges, or by the judges themselves, it should be eliminated from the Trial.'

44. Some Council members were of the view that the guidance provided within the seminar scripts for both Retrievers and Spaniels was quite clear, and that further clarification was not necessary. It was highlighted that the scripts contained references to different types of eye wipes, including a 'technical eye wipe which is achieved behind a dog of no merit and is graded simply on the retrieve itself', but it was emphasised that judges should assess an eye wipe on its quality and should mark accordingly.

45. There were mixed views on the inclusion of content relating to eye wipes within the J regulations. It was accepted that the J regulations did not currently provide detailed information regarding eye wipes, but it was not possible for every scenario to be covered within the regulations and it was often necessary for judges to use their own discretion depending on the circumstances at the time. However some Council members were of the view that the wording contained within the seminar script should be included within the J regulations.

46. It was agreed that guidance regarding eye wipes should be issued via the Field Trials Newsletter to ensure that a consistent approach was taken by judges. This would consist of the extract from the seminar script as noted above.

47. A suggestion was also made that a condensed version of the seminar extract should be incorporated into the J regulations. It was highlighted that if the Council wished for this to be considered by the Field Trials Committee, a suitable proposal, including the proposed wording to be included, should be submitted for consideration by the Council at its next meeting.

48. It was noted that the above discussions had referred to cases in which a judge was required to use his or her discretion when judging, and to the importance of judges having adequate practical experience. This led to a brief discussion regarding the broader issue of the competence of judges and ways in which training and support could be given to assist them in dealing with hypothetical situations which could arise during a trial. A further discussion on this matter took place later in the meeting (paragraphs 51-59 refer).

Experience required for judges

49. The Labrador Retriever Club, represented by Mrs Joint, wished the Council to consider a suggestion that before accepting a judging appointment of a Retriever Stake as a non-panel judge, a person must have attended a Kennel Club Judges Training Programme Seminar on The Kennel Club J Regulations for the appropriate sub-group and have passed the examination.

50. Discussion on this matter had taken place earlier in the meeting in conjunction with a proposal submitted by Midland Gundog Society (paragraphs 23-31 refer), and no additional discussion was necessary.

51. Mrs Joint also presented a further discussion item submitted by the Labrador Retriever Club which suggested that before accepting a first judging appointment, and to improve the aspiring judge's experience of how field trials are organised and judged, a person should have volunteered and actively helped at a minimum of six field trials over a minimum period of 2 years and not just have competed in trials.

52. The club was of the view that this would bring field trial judging requirements into line with other Kennel Club disciplines, for example in breed showing where a judge had to have had experience of stewarding before being appointed to judge at certain levels. This would enable competitors to have confidence in judges.

53. It was emphasised that there were ongoing efforts in place to educate all participants in field trials. Guidance for retriever competitors was issued in summer 2021 in the Field Trials Newsletter and via The Kennel Club website, which set targets for potential competitors to achieve prior to entering a field trial:

    https://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/events-and-activities/field-trials-and-working-gundogs/new-to-field-trials/attending-your-first-field-trial/

54. Issues relating to the necessity for judges to have practical experience of the different aspects of field trialling had been discussed earlier in the meeting, and the Council reiterated its view on the matter. It was also noted that some field trial societies were experiencing difficulties in obtaining enough helpers at trials, and that encouraging aspiring judges to offer their services would also address that issue whilst providing judges with relevant experience which would help them in their judging careers.

55. As there was general consensus on the matter, it was agreed that the Field Trials Committee should be requested to consider ways in which aspiring judges may be encouraged to undertake practical roles such as stewarding, game carrying etc., prior to undertaking judging appointments. The Council was in full agreement that the issue of suitable guidance for aspiring judges would be a highly positive step as part of the educational process.

56. It was also suggested that societies should be encouraged to undertake training days for judges at which a group of non-Panel judges could shadow an A Panel judge to observe a number of retrieves and to discuss relevant judging issues as they arose. Some societies were already holding such seminars and had found them to be very successful.

57. Training days for stewards or other helpers may also prove to be of value.

58. A further suggestion was that a mentoring scheme be set up whereby an aspiring or less-experienced judge could be mentored by an experienced judge. Such schemes were already in place for some other Kennel Club activities, and for sports such as rugby and hockey, in which they had proved to be very valuable for referees and umpires.

59. The above comments were noted and would be referred to the Field Trials Committee for consideration.

Issue of schedules and entry forms

60. Mrs Cox, on behalf of Cornwall Field Trial Society, requested the Council to discuss the way in which clubs and societies send schedules and entry forms to their members, and how it could be made more uniform and fairer to ensure that members did not miss out on trials. It did not consider it acceptable for a schedule to be placed on a club's website with the expectation that competitors would have to search for it, nor was it acceptable to email members and tell them to go to the website and download it, as it noted that not everyone had access to a computer/internet connection or knowledge of how to obtain online information.

61. The Council was reminded that guidance had been included in the Winter 2021 edition of the Field Trials Newsletter, following previous guidance issued in 2016. There was a concern that despite this, some societies were not complying with this guidance.

62. A discussion took place as to how this situation may be addressed. It was acknowledged that societies could not be expected to mail physical copies of schedules to all members, especially in the case of breed clubs where there was a proportion of members whose interest lay in showing rather than trialling.

63. It was accepted that the majority of people had access to the internet, and a suggestion was made that members of a society should receive an email with a copy of the schedule as an attachment, rather than providing a link from which the schedule could be downloaded. Hard copies could then be posted out to those who needed them. A statement from a society on social media to advise that schedules were available was not considered to be adequate.

64. However, it was acknowledged that some online mailing systems which were used by societies did not allow for attachments to emails, and in such cases it was only possible for the email to state that a schedule was available, together with a link to a website from which it may be downloaded.

65. It was highlighted that where members were not happy with the way in which schedules were disseminated, they should raise the issue at the Annual General Meeting of the society concerned.

66. All Council members were requested to contact the clubs they represented to emphasise the necessity of ensuring that all members had access to schedules, in compliance with guidance previously issued, as below:

Field Trials Newsletter, Winter 2021.
'Following recent concerns received, we would like to remind clubs that your field trial schedules must be available to all competitors. Therefore, clubs should not be accepting online entries only, postal/email entries should be accepted and details of this needs to be included on your schedule. Clubs should also be mindful that not all competitors will have access to a computer. Whilst online and email entries may be stated as preferable, please ensure your members or any competitor wishing to enter your trial can request a posted copy of your schedule and entry form.'

Acceptance of entries

67. Mrs Cox presented the item on behalf of Cornwall Field Trial Society, which noted that there were various ways in which entries may be accepted by clubs, for example, by post, email, via FTMS or Fosse Data. It was of the view that there were drawbacks to some online methods, such as administrative issues or costs, and some competitors may not wish to enter via these means. It wished to raise concerns that some clubs did not accept postal entries, and that others were reluctant to accept entries and were making administrative charges of up to £5 for those wishing to do so, which the society considered to be a discriminatory practice.

68. Accordingly the society suggested that it should be mandatory for clubs to accept entries by post. Further, although the imposition of administrative fees did not contravene Kennel Club regulations, the society wished to discuss whether it was acceptable for clubs to do so, effectively charging a higher entry fee to those not using online entry methods. It was noted that only a few competitors wished to make postal entries, but that nonetheless it was important that they had the facility to do so.

69. Whilst noting the guidance outlined within the Field Trials Newsletter (Winter 2021) that postal/email entries should be accepted and details should be included in schedules, a view was expressed that societies should be free to accept entries in the manner of their choosing and that there should be no mandatory measures put into place.

70. There was general consensus that as suggested earlier in the meeting in relation to the distribution of schedules, members should raise any concerns at a society's Annual General Meeting.

Publication of regulation clarifications and guidance

71. Two very similar discussion items on this issue had been received, and were considered together.

72. The Flatcoated Retriever Society, and Midland Gundog Society, represented by Ms Ford and Mr Richardson respectively, wished to suggest that guidance and clarifications relating to the J regulations which were published within the Field Trials Newsletter should also be reproduced as an appendix within the J Regulations booklet.

73. Both societies were of the view that this would be helpful in ensuring that such guidance was easily accessible to all participants in field trials, to the benefit of all. Not all judges received the Newsletter, and even for those that did, it was easy for guidance to be overlooked, or subsequently forgotten. The inclusion of guidance as an annex to the J regulations would provide a permanent record.

74. A query was raised as to whether doing so would result in the J Regulations booklet becoming overly large and unwieldy, making it more difficult for it to be easily carried during a trial. Further, the inclusion of additional content may result in an increase in printing costs.

75. A suggestion was made that the booklet could include a note of the issue and a link to the relevant newsletter, but it was accepted that this would not be effective as back copies of the newsletter were not retained on The Kennel Club's website indefinitely.

76. In response to a query as to what content should be included, it was suggested that it should relate to those matters which were particularly problematic, and which were raised on a regular basis.

77. The office undertook to raise the matter with the Field Trials Committee, and to investigate feasibility.

78. In the meantime, judges were reminded that it remained their own responsibility to ensure that they were up to date with knowledge of the J regulations and with current guidance, including that contained within the relevant seminar scripts which were available via The Kennel Club's website, as follows:

ft26-seminar-script-for-retriever-ft-judges.pdf (thekennelclub.org.uk)

ft27-seminar-script-for-spaniel-ft-judges.pdf (thekennelclub.org.uk)

ft28-seminar-script-for-hpr-ft-judges.pdf (thekennelclub.org.uk)

ft29-seminar-script-for-ps-ft-judges.pdf (thekennelclub.org.uk)

Substitute dogs

79. Mr Capstick, on behalf of Yorkshire Gundog Club, wished the Council to discuss the difference between a substitute dog and a 2nd dog. It noted that over the last few years it had started to become common practice for members to alter the entry form and replace '2nd dog' with the wording 'substitute dog'. This was confusing to secretaries and the Club sought clarification as to whether members may alter the entry form in this way. It was unclear as to whether a field trial secretary should put a substitute dog as a 2nd dog in the draw or leave it out of the draw altogether. The club also sought clarification as to whether, if a dog was on the entry form as a substitute dog, the member may run a different substitute which was not on the form.

80. It was noted that for entries made via FTMS or Fosse Data, there was no facility for substitute dogs. There was also a view that a substitute dog should not be included as a 2nd dog in the draw unless a second entry fee had been paid.

81. It was noted that it was at the discretion of societies as to whether they accepted substitutions, depending on their own constitution. Notice of any restrictions or conditions attached to the stakes, including arrangements for the substitution of dogs, must be stated within a schedule.

82. The Field Trials Committee would be requested to check that all online systems used to take entries were fully compliant with Kennel Club requirements.

Wrong retrieves at Retriever trials

83. Cheshire, North Wales and Shropshire Gundog Society, represented by Mr Capstick, requested that the Council discuss the provision of further guidance/clarification as to the correct procedure in respect of 'wrong retrieves' in relation to Retrievers.

84. The society noted that the J Regulations clearly stated that for Spaniels and HPRs, picking the wrong retrieve was an eliminating fault, but that this rule also appeared to be applied by some judges in relation to Retrievers, therefore clarification was sought as to how a 'wrong retrieve' was defined and under what circumstances a dog should be eliminated specifically in respect to Retrievers.

85. The Council noted that every scenario was different, and it was important that judges were able to use their own discretion depending on the circumstances. It was of the view that the issue related to the training of judges which had been discussed earlier in the meeting, with particular reference to the way in which judges were educated in the

practical aspects of judging, and that it should be addressed via that route.

Exceptional circumstances - odds & evens

86. Ms Whyte, representing Yorkshire Retriever Field Trial Society, wished to discuss exceptional circumstances with regards to odds and evens, and the order of the dogs when the trial had multiple handlers.

87. The society noted that Regulation J(B)3(c) stated: 'Whether the trial is run in numerical order or split in *exceptional circumstances* dogs must not come into line in the second round under the same judges as in the first round' and it sought clarification as to what would constitute an exceptional circumstance when dogs were split under the odds and evens system. Further, it sought guidance as how dogs should be split within the odds and evens system where a trial had one or more multiple handlers, and those handlers had both an odd and an even numbered dog, and why the odds and evens system could not be used on the second day of an open trial.

88. The Council was informed that the matter of the odds and evens system had been considered by the Field Trials Judges Sub-Group earlier in the year, and would be further discussed by the Field Trials Committee in the near future. It was anticipated that suitable guidance would be included within the summer issue of the Field Trials Newsletter.

Use of cold game on trial grounds and at Gundog Working Tests

89. On behalf of Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society, Mr Bailey wished the Council to discuss the use of cold game on trial grounds and at Gundog Working Tests (GWTs).

90. The society raised concerns that some competitors had been observed using cold game to give dogs 'warm up' retrieves at trial grounds ahead of the trial, and some had also been observed occasionally taking game from the game cart (including when the dog had been eliminated) and using it for retrieves to give the dog experience, particularly on game species such as snipe, woodcock, and hare. It was of the view that such use of a significant amount of cold game at working tests would make it undesirable for eating after being used for multiple retrieves, and that the use of game solely as a retrieving article was difficult to justify.

91. The office advised the Council that The Kennel Club Board, at its meetings on 5 April 2022 and 12 May 2022, had approved a number of amendments to J Regulations in relation to cold game, as follows. Relevant details would be published within the next issue of the Field Trials Newsletter:

Regulation J(G)3.e Organisation of Gundog Working Tests
TO:

e. The organisers must ensure that competitors are aware of the initial running order ~~and whether the GWT is to be conducted on cold game or dummies~~.

(Deletion struck through)
(Effective 2 February 2023)

Regulation J(G)3.g.

g. Only dummies ~~and dead game~~ acceptable to the judges, will be used for retrieves in GWTs.

(Deletion struck through)
(Effective 2 February 2023)

New Regulation J(A)4.j.

TO:

Only game shot by the guns during the trial should be used for dogs to retrieve whilst they are under the direction of the judges. Handlers may be required to use their dogs to look for game after the trial at the request of the keeper. Practising with cold game on the trial ground is forbidden.

(Insertion in bold)
(Effective 2 February 2023)

92. It was accepted by Mr Bailey that the above measures fully addressed the concerns raised by Herts Beds Bucks Berks & Hants Retriever Society, and therefore no further discussion was necessary.

93. Mr Castle wished to express his disappointment that the Council had not been consulted prior to the above amendments having been approved. It was confirmed that the issue of the use of cold game had been raised independently with the Field Trials Committee, by one of its members, but the time frames had not allowed for publication of the relevant amendments prior to issue of the Council agenda. This was noted by Mr Castle who wished to record his view that the Council should be more involved in the making of decisions relating to field trial matters.

<u>Use of a judge's stick</u>

94. Ms Ford, representing South Western Golden Retriever Society, requested that the Council discuss whether, during the course of a field trial (principally driven), the use of a judge's stick in the ground to show the whereabouts of a bird for retrieval and the close proximity of the judge to the bird, should be severely discouraged, except in exceptional circumstances.

95. The society noted that many judges when searching for a bird on open ground or fields, on finding the bird would then place their stick in the ground, rather than pointing out the area to their fellow sending judge and handler where it is, using natural items like hedges or trees as the reference point, and then moving well away. It was of the view that field trials should be as close to a shooting day as possible and if game

finding was of principal importance as stated in the J regulations, then the use of sticks should play no part in it.

96. The Council was in agreement that the practice, whilst becoming more widespread, was highly undesirable, and that the use of a stick in such a manner was only acceptable under exceptional circumstances.

97. It acknowledged that the issue may be best addressed via training for judges, and that it would be referred to the Field Trials Committee for further consideration.

Appointment of judges for the Hunt, Point and Retrieve Championship

98. Two very similar discussion items on this issue had been received, and were considered together.

99. The Weimaraner Association, represented by Mr Wroe, and Dukeries (Notts) Gundog Club, represented by Mrs Asbury, both wished to suggest that the Hunt, Point and Retrieve (HPR) open field trial status societies, which were entitled to representation on the Council, and which were expected to partially fund the HPR Championship through the levy, should be permitted a role in the choice of suitable A Panel judges to judge, or to be reserve judges for a subsequent HPR Championship. This would ensure transparency and fairness in the selection process.

100. Dukeries (Notts) Gundog Club suggested that a similar process should be used as that used for selection of judges for the Spaniel championships, whereby clubs holding Open Stakes would be invited to nominate two A Panel Judges to a short list to be considered by the Championship Working Party. The nominated Judges should have at least three years A Panel experience before the date of the Championship and, once an appointment was accepted, the chosen judges should decline judging an Open Stake from the time of appointment so as not to be putting dogs forward that may run under them in the Championship.

101. The Council expressed its full support for the principle, and agreed that it should be referred to the Field Trials Committee for consideration.

ITEM 11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

102. The Council noted that its next meeting would take place in June 2023. The exact date would be confirmed in due course.

ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Find a Judge

103. Ms Joint raised a concern regarding the Find a Judge service, observing that many field trial secretaries did not find it easy to use.

104. It was clarified by the office that it was no longer possible to issue a list of Panel judges with full contact details. However, the Find a Judge facility offered a number of features to assist secretaries, such as the ability to select judges for a specified sub-group, on a particular panel, and by distance from a selected point. A brief demonstration was provided by the office.

105. Field trial secretaries requiring assistance in using the Find a Judge service were advised to contact the office. It was also confirmed that adding a 'print friendly' option for users of the facility was currently under consideration.

Publication of members' lists

106. In response to a query, it was confirmed that under the provisions of GDPR, societies may still publish list of members in yearbooks or similar publications, provided those listed had provided consent for their details to be published.

Date and place of a field trial

107. Noting that the regulations stated that schedules must include 'the date and place of the field trial and, where the time and place of meeting are not included, a statement that the time and place of the meeting will be communicated to competitors separately, and by what means', Mrs Carpenter wished to raise a concern that some societies were not specifying the location of the meeting to members. However as the matter had not been raised prior to the meeting it was not discussed, but may be raised at the Council's next meeting.

Purchase of defibrillator

108. The Council noted a concern from the Golden Retriever Club which had wished to purchase a defibrillator for use at its trials, but had been advised by its insurance company that it could not provide cover.

109. The office had raised the matter with the insurance company, which had undertaken to contact the club directly in order to ascertain what cover was being sought, such as whether it was being requested to cover incorrect use of the defibrillator, or Public Liability cover should it fall on someone, or if someone tripped over it.

Confidentiality

110. In response to a query, it was confirmed that no information regarding the outcome of the meeting may be discussed until such time as the minutes had been published.

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

The meeting closed at 3.00 pm

MR S RICHARDSON
Chairman

THE KENNEL CLUB'S MISSION STATEMENT

'The Kennel Club is the national body which exists to promote the general improvement, health and well-being of all dogs through responsible breeding and ownership'

One dog one handler statement for Field Trials Council 31 May 2022
At the Field Trials Liaison Council meeting held in August 2021 there were a number of proposals/discussion items relating to restricting handlers to only running one dog at a trial, except at the Championships. At the Council meeting it was confirmed that the issue only affected Open Retriever field trials. The Field Trial Council supported a regulation change to state that if societies wished they could state that whilst reserves stood handlers could only run one dog at the trial.

The matter was referred to the Field Trials Committee for consideration. The Field Trials Committee noted that it had not been provided with any statistics or details of the depth of the issue. It therefore agreed that research would be undertaken during the 2021/22 field trial season and reviewed at its meeting in early 2022.

All Open Retriever field trial draws and marked cards were reviewed by members of the Field Trials Committee from the 2021/22 season. It was confirmed that there were 15 handlers who handled dogs for other people, in addition to running their own dogs. It was noted that some were professional handlers handling for other owners. There was some concern that there were some handlers who were deliberately manipulating the system in order to maximise the number of runs they were able to obtain.

It was also agreed that should the ‘one handler one dog’ rule be implemented, there would be significant implications for those owners who, despite being fully paid-up members of a club, may find their dog excluded from a draw where their chosen handler had already gained a run with a dog belonging to a different Club member. It was agreed that it was not possible to just pass a dog to a different handler for each individual trial. Further, where it was necessary to fill a card, runs may be allocated to reserves which potentially could include unqualified dogs or dogs belonging to non-members, in preference to those owned by paid-up members who were not able to handle the dog themselves. This was not considered by the Committee to be an acceptable position.

Noting that it was the owner who gained a run, not the handler, it was accepted that it would not be a positive step to create what would in effect be a two-tier system which distinguished between those who handled their own dogs and those who did not do so. This was viewed by the Committee as being unfair, and highly undesirable. It was of the opinion that an owner should be free to use the services of a handler if they wished to do so, without any negative impact on their chance of gaining a run.

Noting that there are still concerns within the field trial community regarding the ‘one handler one dog’ issue, the Committee has agreed that alternative ways of addressing the issue, such as ensuring that clubs have stringent membership application processes in place as suggested by the Council, and exploring the options of larger draws would be considered at the Committee’s next meeting.

It is suggested that to maximise the number of runs available that the extension of 16 dogs in a one-day open retriever stake should be utilised more, providing 4 handlers per trial an extra run. It should be noted that in 2019 only 4 one day open retriever stakes were 16 dog stakes, all the others were 12 dog stakes.

Further discussion is still ongoing at the Field Trials Committee meeting and updates will be provided in due course.