



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT
10.30 AM ON TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 2023 IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

PRESENT

Ms D Cox	Midlands
Miss F Godfrey	South East/East Anglia
Mrs S Hyde	Midlands
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mrs J LeFevre	South East/East Anglia (via Teams)
Mr M McCartney	Northern Ireland
Mr J McIntosh	Scotland
Mr D Moxon	South/South West (via Teams)
Mrs C Patrick	Scotland
Mrs K Russell	North West
Ms A Shaw	South East/East Anglia
Mrs B Smith	Midlands
Ms N Thomas	Wales
Mrs L Turner	South/South West
Mr N Walton	North East
Ms H Weaver	North West

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Head of Canine Activities
Miss C McHardy	Manager – Education, Training, and Working Dog Activities Team (via Teams)
Mrs A Bastick	Committee Secretary – Working Dog Activities Team
Miss T Collins	Administrator – 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

ITEM 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1. Apologies were received from Mr J Farr (Wales).

ITEM 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2022 were approved as an accurate record.

ITEM 3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

3. The Council noted that Mrs B Smith would represent the Midland area, following the resignation of Mr N Slater and Ms H Weaver would represent the North West area, following the resignation of Mr R Wakelin.

ITEM 4. KENNEL CLUB RESEARCH PROJECT

4. It had been planned that the Council would receive a presentation from Mr M Bermingham (Interim Strategy & Implementation Executive) and Ms L Smith (Customer & Competitors Strategy Development Project Manager) which would provide an update on the research project into 'Organisers and Participants of Dog Activities'.
5. As there were no findings available to share, the presentation would be postponed until the Council's July meeting. In the meantime, the Council noted a short briefing note which had been circulated prior to the meeting.
6. The office was requested to provide an update.
7. The Kennel Club would be sending out a survey to competitors and collating responses to gain more insight. Competitors would be asked questions about why they participated in their activity, why they stopped participating and what had changed. The survey would also be requesting input on what was expected of The Kennel Club, in order that they, the competitors may be encouraged to help, organise or compete in events. The survey would be shared via Our Dogs (a breed focused newspaper) and also on the Kennel Club's social media channels. There would be no limit to the number of participants.
8. The office advised that the survey company had been provided with details of people's names in various activities and in-depth interviews would be held with these individuals.
9. The Kennel Club Board had agreed to 8 strategic objectives of which one was improving participation in canine activities.
10. **NOTE:** The survey was distributed on 2 February 2023 and closed on 15 February 2023.

ITEM 5. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Kennel Club Obedience Festival

11. The Activities Committee, at its meeting held on 12 July 2022 noted the intention to organise an obedience festival and supported the initiative. The Board, at its meeting held on 13 September 2022, noted that further information, including a business case, would be required before the idea could be progressed. The Council was requested to discuss the formulation of the business case.
12. After holding discussions with various parties, it had been determined that the first venue selected was unsuitable, however a second option would be Westmorland County Showground in the Lake District which had ample grounds.
13. It was intended that this event would be held at the end of July, early August in conjunction with two clubs hosting events over the same week (Lune Valley Dog Training Club and Wigton Dog Training Club). The Council would communicate with the clubs concerned and provide an update at the next meeting.
14. It was noted that it was too late to hold the festival this year considering the amount of work involved, therefore it would be looking at this event being held in 2024.
15. A query was raised regarding assistance required and it was confirmed that the following was needed for the business plan:
 - identifying and obtaining sponsorship.
 - developing a full business/finance plan completed by a person with the suitable expertise.
 - advertising.
16. In discussing sponsors, it was suggested that these would likely be planned for specific classes only on this occasion and to offer rosettes to those class winners for the first year.
17. As the Obedience Festival grew, qualifying rounds would take place where the winners of the rounds would go forward to compete in the final.
18. The Council noted there was a serious amount of work to be completed and that it was important that positive engagement from all members of the Obedience Liaison Council took place in order to make the event a success. It was also emphasised that Board approval was necessary before any plans could be confirmed.

Amendments to Regulations G(A)9.b and G(A)5

19. The following amendments were approved by the Board at its meeting held on 13 September 2022:

Regulation G(A)9.b

TO:

To compete in the Introductory Class a handler or dog must not have **gained a 1st place in any obedience class or and have not elected to progress on points from Introductory.**

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2023)

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)

(Effective 1 January 2023)

20. In response to a query, it was confirmed by the office that the regulations could not be applied retrospectively, and that those competitors who had already progressed out of Introductory would not be eligible to go back into that class. As the regulations had been approved by the Board, nothing further was discussed.

Qualifications for judges

21. A proposal regarding qualifications for judges was submitted by Ms D Kay represented by Mrs Lavender. It was suggested that over the next few years, people in their sixties and early seventies would be ceasing to judge. There was a need to recruit new people so as to replenish judges and to create new opportunities for them to obtain qualifications. Accordingly this item was discussed later in the meeting. (paragraphs 41-55 refer)

Use of food rewards and toys

22. At its meeting in January 2022, the Council had discussed the possibility of introducing food rewards into Pre-Beginners and Beginners 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.
23. Following the discussion at its meeting held in June 2022, Mrs LeFevre requested the Council to consider the proposal.
24. Mrs Smith commented that Beginners class should not be included as part of the proposal due to the Council having excluded this class previously and proposed that 'and Beginner' be removed.
25. Mrs Turner seconded the proposal.
26. A vote took place and with a majority vote, regulations G34.g. as amended and G(A)10. were **recommended** for approval.

Regulation G34.g.

TO:

Food and/or toys shall not be carried or given to a dog under test except in Introductory, **and Pre-Beginner Classes** where silent toy and food rewards

may be used in accordance with the **relevant** class Regulations and in a Special Class if specified in the class definition. Competitors must not distract other dogs when rewarding their dog with food, toy or play. (Refer to Obedience Code of Conduct)
(Insertion in bold)

Regulation G(A)10. Pre-Beginners

TO:

To compete in Pre-Beginners a handler or dog must not have won two first places in either Pre-Beginners or Beginners nor gained a third place or above in any other Obedience class (Introductory Class excepted) and have not elected to progress on points from Pre-Beginners. **In this class only incentives in the form of a toy or rewards are allowed to be carried by the handler in the competitive ring and may be given to the dog at the end of an exercise or in between exercises. Rewards include food which must be carried in a small closed container during the exercises. The judge will designate an area in the competitive ring where food may be given to the dog by the handler.**

(Insertion in bold)

27. At the meeting held in June 2022 the Council had concluded that at some point it would be necessary for handlers to compete without the use of food or toys and allowing rewards beyond Pre-Beginners would delay the requirement for them to do so. Accordingly, a proposal to amend regulation G(A)11 to allow the use of food or toys in Beginners was **not** recommended for approval.

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

28. The Activities Committee considered the Council's wish for a review of the designated geographical areas relating to the Council and to Inter Regional teams, as there were currently some 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 team, as a result of which there was some confusion.
29. The Council noted that the matter had been referred to the strategy review group, and its views would be taken into account as part of ongoing strategic and operational development work. The Show Executive Committee had also been advised of the Council's views, and the Crufts Committee would also be advised.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

30. The Council noted a report written by the office following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 24 November 2022.

ITEM 7. ACTIVITIES HEALTH AND WELFARE SUB-GROUP

31. The Council noted a written report from Mrs LeFevre following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 15 September 2022.
32. The Sub-Group advised that it would be willing to consider suggestions for suitable research projects. These should be submitted to Mrs LeFevre.

ITEM 8. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

33. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Lavender.
34. The Council noted that some clubs were holding training days for young handlers, and it was hoped that these could be promoted as widely as possible. Dates should be checked and confirmed with the office in order to plan a diary of dates.
35. It was clarified that membership of the YKC was open to young people aged 6-24 years whether they owned a dog or not. Those with a dog may compete in all disciplines or take part in training days and activities if they wished and membership was not contingent on their participating in a competitive capacity.
36. It was also noted that some people were not aware they could qualify for Crufts via the Pre-Beginner Stakes class, and it was hoped that this could be publicised more widely to attract competitors.
37. The Council discussed the Rebecca Pointer trophy which had originally been given to the winner of a points-based competition but had now been re-allocated to the YKC Special Pre-Beginner competition. It was considered that this needed to be brought back or another trophy be considered, as incentives were required to keep the younger generation interested. It was noted that not many YKC classes were taking place and that the holding of these events needed to be promoted.
38. It was considered important to improve communications with The Kennel Club in order to assist competitors to train, attend camps and qualify for Crufts and to encourage entry into pre-beginners and beginners classes.
39. A suggestion to consider changing the route to a points-based system for qualifying for Crufts was suggested, which may achieve more interest and entries. Heats would need to be awarded to specific shows.
40. Mrs Lavender agreed to look into this matter and report back at the next meeting.

ITEM 9. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Judges Qualifications

41. Ms Kay, represented by Mrs Lavender, wished the Council to discuss a change to G regulations in relation to the qualification of judges. (Paragraph 21 refers)

42. Ms Kay had highlighted concerns that many experienced judges on the circuit would be retiring over the next few years and there was a shortage of new younger judges coming forward which would not compensate for this loss.
43. Some aspects of the current judging qualification criteria were not straightforward to complete for many across the UK and a need had arisen to ensure the success of replenishing judges. Further, there was a concern regarding the requirement for judges to have attended a two-day Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging Seminar and to have passed the assessment.
44. It was suggested that an alternative was needed to the current regulations, and if approved, becoming a judge would be more accessible to everyone nationally and within a reasonable time frame, regardless of family/work commitments, financial situation, travel commitments or location. This would ensure that a system was in place as an alternative to the seminar as part of the qualification.
45. The Council had considered a proposal to change the judging qualification regulations, under the terms of which rather than being required to attend a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging Seminar and pass the assessment, a judge may instead, accompany or shadow a qualified judge.
46. The Council was concerned about the quality of judges training with a shadowing method, the standard of which could not be guaranteed, nor would there be a validation process on practical judging.
47. A comment was raised that judges did not have the time, if they had a large entry at a show, to explain their actions and decisions to people shadowing them.
48. Consideration of the proposal led to a brief discussion regarding the training of judges.
49. In considering the requirement for judges having to be away for two days to attend the seminar, it was suggested that to make it easier and more cost effective they should be able to complete the required seminar and course online. This would motivate potential candidates and provide access to people across the United Kingdom.
50. The Council was of the opinion that judges could update themselves on the rules and regulations at any time and complete the courses available on the Kennel Club Academy to refresh their knowledge. It was noted that seminars and examinations were now available online.
51. A query was raised in respect of established judges, and how a judge, qualified or not, would be able access the rules and regulations through the Kennel Club Academy. There was some confusion in terms of what was available for anyone wanting to update themselves on rules and regulations or watch videos.

52. The office confirmed that details were available on the Kennel Club website. Links to the appropriate page on the website would be circulated to Council members.
53. After a brief discussion, the majority of the Council were in support of introducing accompanied/shadow judging as an alternative. Mrs Lavender proposed an amendment to the wording to say '3 different qualified judges'.

Regulation G32.c.

TO:

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

- (1) Have judged a minimum of four 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.
 - (4) Have attended a Kennel Club Obedience Test Design and Practice of Judging Seminar and passed the assessment **or alternatively: have accompanied/shadowed 3 different qualified judges (who have fulfilled at least 6 judging appointments) at Kennel Club licensed shows to oversee the judging procedure, test design and marking techniques. Class Novice, A or B can be chosen to fulfil this task.**
- (Insertion in bold)

54. The proposal was seconded by Mrs Smith.
55. A vote took place for the amended regulation and with a majority vote it was **recommended** for approval.

ITEM 10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Eligibility for Beginners

56. Mr Moxon wished the Council to note that competitors found that they had won out of Beginners and then were unable to win out of Novice. In some cases, this was happening with their first dog and the jump from Beginners to Novice was then seen as a major hurdle to progress any further and was disheartening. It also meant with their next dog, a handler must start at Novice, alongside more experienced handlers, and considered to be at a disadvantage. A request was received to see whether a provision could be made to allow handlers that had not won or progressed out of Novice, or gained a first place in Novice, to compete with subsequent dogs in Beginners, providing such dog(s) had not won out of Beginners in their own right.
57. To achieve this, it would be necessary for this regulation to be changed as follows (amended sections shown in italic):

Option 1

Based on not eligible for Beginners if win one first place in Novice or above:

To compete in Beginners a dog must not have won a total of two or more first places in Beginners class or one first place in any other Obedience class (Introductory class and Pre-Beginners excepted) *and the dog not progressed on points from Beginners; plus, the handler must not have a first place in any other Obedience class (Introductory class and Pre-Beginners excepted) and have not elected to progress on points from Novice.*

OR

Option 2

Based on not eligible if won two first places in Novice or above (i.e. have won out of Novice):

To compete in Beginners a dog must not have won a total of two or more first places in Beginners class or one first place in any other Obedience class (Introductory class and Pre-Beginners excepted) *and the dog not progressed on points from Beginners; plus, the handler must not have two first places in any other Obedience class (Introductory class and Pre-Beginners excepted) and have not elected to progress on points from Novice.*

58. The Council discussed the suggestions above and there was some concern expressed in respect of fairness and how this would affect new competitors if more experienced people decided to enter Beginners with their dogs. It was however, agreed that some incentive was required for new competitors in order to retain them in obedience.
59. The Council was in support of the principle and the majority agreed that option 1 was preferred. Mr Moxon was requested to prepare a formal proposal for the next meeting.

Eligibility for Beginners

60. Ms Cox representing Mrs C Cotton wished the Council to consider possible changes to the criteria included within regulations G(A)11 and G(A)12 regarding winning out of Beginners and having to enter Novice as the lowest/first class with a subsequent inexperienced dog, for handlers that had won out of Beginners with a previous dog but remain inexperienced as handlers at Novice level.
61. This had been discussed together with the above item. (paragraphs 56-59 refer)

Review of Introductory Class

62. Ms Cox wished the Council to conduct a review of the Introductory Class, based on her knowledge and experience of the class through having judged it, as both a pet dog training instructor and via involvement within The Kennel Club's Good Citizen Dog Training scheme (and its Special Pre-Beginner Obedience Stakes) as well as in judging a variety of other classes within Obedience.

63. Ms Cox highlighted that the aim of the class was to 'introduce and support newcomers to obedience competition' i.e. for both handlers and dogs to have a positive experience that would motivate them to want to continue to train and compete within the discipline.
64. It was suggested that, whilst supporting inexperienced handler and dog teams in having a go in the competitive ring environment, the limited content of the class was so far removed from Pre-Beginners, that it did not fully promote the leap from training into Pre-Beginners and upwards within Obedience competition. It was therefore suggested that the Council discuss how the class content may be widened to make for a more seamless transition from training to competition.
65. If agreed, this review would also be in line with the review of classes planned within the Council's 'Five-year strategy'.
66. Following discussions at previous meetings, Mrs LeFevre wished the Council to consider comment which was supported by Ms Cox on the Introductory class review.
67. **Note:** a proposal from Mrs LeFevre relating to the use of food rewards in Pre-Beginners and Beginners classes had been discussed earlier in the meeting. (paragraphs 22-29 refer)
68. It was suggested that in order to judge this fairly, all recall distances would need to be limited to a lead's length. Regarding the recall it was suggested that in the first instance the on lead option be removed, and that a minimum long line length was introduced instead, or that it was done off lead, but the ring would then need to be enclosed.
69. As heelwork makes up such an important part of the obedience competition, having such a small amount as one straight line or a circle, seemed very limiting as well as little/no preparation for Pre-Beginners.
70. Consideration on how to motivate a dog in the introductory class was discussed and it was commented that competitors needed to show they were encouraging their dogs in the 'play exercise', however there was some confusion by competitors as to what was required in performing the exercise. It was suggested that it may be worth reviewing the play exercise to see if it should still be included.
71. It was suggested that the idea be considered for the judge to be able to drop elements of the control at their discretion, or to separate elements out to judge as separate exercises, but still part of the overall 10 points, the 'present' to the 'finish' for example, or a 'wait' and return.
72. There was also concern that giving dog food rewards between exercises caused confusion and the dog may be distracted.

73. In looking at the Introductory class exercises, consideration of Pre-Beginners and Beginners exercises needed to be included to ensure that there would be continuity across all classes thereby bridging the gap between Introductory class and the Pre-Beginners class. It was also suggested that consideration be given to exercises in the Good Citizen Dog Training Scheme and whether these should be included in the Introductory class.
74. It was agreed that a working group made up of Mrs Hyde, Ms Cox, Mr McIntosh, Ms Shaw and Mrs Turner would look at the above items and work on suitable wording for consideration.

Promotion of Obreedience

75. Ms Cox requested that the Council discuss obreedience and ways in which it may be improved and promoted, noting that the discipline did not currently have its own Working Party or Council, and therefore lacked the support as a competition enjoyed by other disciplines.
76. Ms Cox suggested that obreedience was potentially suited to be within the remit of the Council, noting that the exercises are a mix of the Good Citizen Dog Training scheme exercises and traditional obedience exercises.
77. The Council commented that some competitors had filtered through to obedience due to the lack of obreedience events.
78. It had also been noted that the number of heats and teams taking part had reduced substantially due to the pandemic and the cost of fuel.
79. A query was raised regarding the limit on the number of breeds currently able to qualify for Crufts. The office explained that this was due to the rules stating that if more than three breed representative teams within the shortlist belonged to the same breed group, only the three highest scoring teams within that group would be invited to compete at Crufts. It considered that it was time to encourage a wider range of breeds to take part and set up teams. There was a suggestion that this could also help rare breeds and toy breeds. Mrs Russell reminded the Council that some dogs may not be eligible to compete at Crufts if they had docked tails.
80. After a brief discussion, the Council expressed a wish for The Kennel Club Public Affairs Team to raise the issue of docked dogs in obedience with DEFRA and to request the same dispensation as there was for agility dogs.
81. Ms Cox would liaise with the office to consider ways in which Obreedience could be improved. It was confirmed that it would not be necessary to refer the matter back to the Council.

25 Day Rule

82. Mrs Hyde reminded the Council that the 25 Day rule had been introduced with effect from 1 January 2022 and had been successful in that it did what was intended by limiting the number of wins. However, this meant that additional administrative work was required.

83. Mrs Hyde had a Facebook group for Show Secretaries and printers and there were concerns about some of the wording for this regulation. The 14-day limit was causing administration delays in compiling the running orders and subsequent printing. General thoughts from secretaries and printers were that they would like this to be amended.
84. In the G Regulations, 24.h. it stated that:
- ‘...In the event that a dog becomes eligible for the next class at a particular show, after the entry for that show has been sent, it was the competitor’s responsibility to notify the show secretary or the show processor at least 14 days before the date of the show...’
85. It was suggested that this be amended to read:
- ‘...In the event that a dog becomes eligible for the next class at a particular show, after the entry for that show has been sent, it is the competitor’s responsibility to notify the show secretary or the show processor **in writing, either by email or 1st class post, to be received 20 days before the date of the show...**’
(Additional wording in bold)
86. At present competitors were generally leaving it until the last minute to inform secretaries of amendments and tended to inform them by telephone. This was not always convenient and contact in writing would be much more advisable to avoid amendments being missed either by 1st class post, email, text, messenger etc. Online entries via With Your Dog would be amended by the competitor prior to closing date.
87. Under the current regulation, Mrs Hyde had been advised that it was acceptable to add a page to the catalogue with any amendments. That would be confusing to both judges and competitors:
- There was no requirement for a catalogue so not many shows produce them.
 - Currently the advice was that if the running order has already been prepared then a gap was left if someone moves up a class. This would have the effect of completely decimating the running order.
 - It would mean that we had informed the judge of the incorrect number in their class.
 - Class lists would need to be amended/reprinted.
88. It was suggested that there was nothing to prevent show secretaries placing a notice on the show schedule as to how the draw would take place and then keep strictly to the 14 days to avoid making changes on the day.
89. A question was raised regarding the amendments approved by the Board not being sent to show secretaries so that they were made aware of any

amendments. The Council commented that not all amendments went through this Council.

90. The Council was advised that all regulations would be published via social media and it was also possible for anyone to request The Kennel Club press releases announcing the regulation changes.
91. The Council noted that regulation amendments G.29.e and G.29.f(1) relating to championship classes were approved by the Board at its meeting held on 13 September 2022. As a result, the Council confirmed that no further amendments would be made as it was within the 2-year time.

Exercise Modification Forms

92. Mrs Russell on behalf of Ms E Guiney wished the Council to consider the introduction of an Exercise Modification form similar to that used in rally.
93. The form was used where a handler had an issue with walking, running and/or any other sort of disability/illness which prevented them from undertaking an exercise in the conventional manner. Under such circumstances, the form would be completed in advance of the show so that accommodation may be made for the handler's ability.
94. Ms Guiney stated that there were many handlers wishing to compete in obedience who could not, or did not because of some form of disability.
95. The Council did not support the use of Exercise Modification forms in Obedience but judges' training should emphasise the need to be empathetic to all competitors.

Wirral Alsatian Training Society Exhibitor numbers

96. Mrs Russell on behalf of the Wirral Alsatian Training Society wished the Council to discuss Regulation G35.d, which stated:

'Nothing may be carried, worn or displayed by a handler or a dog during judging which is capable of indicating the identity of the dog or owner nor must anything be said, or any action taken which identifies the dog other than by exhibit number...'

97. The society had requested the Council to discuss whether the requirement to wear an exhibit number remained necessary, or whether it was custom and practice which would be updated.
 - Since Covid and the practice to limit multi-handling of equipment etc. most clubs required that competitors brought their own ring number and pencil to the show. The ring number could be any size or shape.
 - When a handler entered the ring to compete in an obedience test, they gave their ring number verbally to the judge, often along with their name and the dog's name.
 - Working trials did not require the handler to display their number.

- In agility the scribe asked the handler to confirm their name and possibly the dog's pet name to ensure the correct person was running. The handler was not required to display any ring number.
98. The society was of the view that there did not appear to be any reason for the handler to display their number other than for spectators to see it.
 99. The Council discussed the need of exhibitor numbers being worn and was of the opinion that these were not necessarily required as all the information was recorded on the judge's sheets.
 100. It was, however also commented, that should there be an incident, and a competitor needed to report it, they would not be able to see the number to identify the competitor whose dog was involved.
 101. Mrs Russell undertook to prepare suitable wording to the regulations to remove the requirement for handlers to wear ring numbers for consideration at the next meeting.

Qualifying for the Obedience Championships at Crufts

102. Mrs LeFevre representing Ms S Tooley requested the Council to discuss the merit of introducing a policy whereby, should the winner of an Obedience Certificate already be qualified for the next Obedience Championship competition at Crufts, the winner of the Reserve Obedience Certificate should be invited to compete at the next Crufts assuming they had not qualified in their own right.
103. This would increase the number of competitors on each day of the Obedience Championships therefore making the rounds more realistic from a timing and length point of view and encouraging more enthusiasts to attend and support their friends. This would make the event more interesting and better attended.
104. It was commented that Crufts was considered the pinnacle of events and it would devalue Crufts and the achievement of qualifying for the Championship final.
105. The Council considered that there would always be obedience at Crufts and whilst entries in Championship classes had decreased due to Covid it was hoped that entry numbers would increase again over time and therefore did not support the suggestion.

ITEM 11. STRATEGY DOCUMENT

106. Representatives reviewed the Strategic Plan, which had been updated in line with requests from the Council made at its previous meeting and discussed how the items could be progressed.

107. It was noted that two new items had been included and it was hoped that more would be added, with the document being regularly updated in line with the Council's activities, decisions, and objectives.

Engagement with grass-roots competitors

108. It was noted that engagement with competitors had improved with more conversations at shows. Social media had also been utilised to communicate on various groups.
109. It was found, however, that when using social media some people were disparaging with their comments at times and the Council discussed the procedure in those instances. Council members offered their time voluntarily to help the obedience community and should not be on the receiving end of negative comments.
110. The office suggested that rather than removing the person, a warning was posted and the person only removed by the administrator as a last resort.

Surveys

111. There was some discussion on the use of surveys and the responses, i.e. using Survey Monkey, Facebook polls and google form surveys. The Council discussed how feedback was obtained and it was agreed that completing surveys by area may provide the most accurate views.

Attracting newcomers to Obedience

112. Various items were placed on the agenda to help newcomers to obedience, and these were in process, however, any other ideas would be welcomed.
113. The Council acknowledged that it would be helpful to remain aware of any issues that may affect shows in the future and to continue to consider ways in which they may be addressed.

ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

114. The Council noted that there were some instances where scoreboards were not being updated and judges would be requested to ensure that the scoreboard was updated frequently, ideally after every 4-5 dogs to ensure that competitors could check their scores in a timely manner. This was not a Kennel Club regulation, however clubs could look into issuing requests to their judges.
115. In considering names of judges to invite for appointments, a question was raised as to whether a list of judges was available, as this would aid club secretaries. The office confirmed that only judges qualified to judge at championship level were listed on the Kennel Club website.
116. The office advised that due to the General Data and Protection Regulations (GDPR), judges contact details were no longer provided online.

117. A discussion regarding any championship judges who no longer wished to undertake appointments or who had passed away took place. Council Representatives were requested to review the judges in their areas and advise the office if any needed to be removed.

ITEM 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

118. The date for the next meeting of the Council would be 20 July 2023. Any items for the agenda must be submitted by 21 April 2023.

The meeting closed at 15.20.

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'