



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OBEDIENCE LIAISON COUNCIL HELD AT
10.30 AM ON THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 2025 IN THE BOARDROOM, THE
KENNEL CLUB, CLARGES STREET**

PRESENT

Ms D Cox*	Midlands
Mrs S Hyde*	Midlands
Mrs D Lavender	North East
Mrs J Le Fevre	South East/East Anglia
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
Mrs B Smith	Midlands
Mrs L Turner*	South/South West
Mr N Walton	North East

IN ATTENDANCE

Miss D Deuchar	Senior Manager - Canine Activities
Miss A Morley	Activities Liaison Manager
Miss T Collins	Obedience & Rally Liaison Advisor

*Indicates attendance via Microsoft Teams

**ITEM 1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN FOR THE TERM OF THE COUNCIL
EFFECTIVE FROM JANUARY 2025 TO DECEMBER 2025**

1. Mr McCartney was proposed and seconded for the role of Chair, seconded by Mrs Patrick. There being no other nominations, Mr McCartney was duly re-elected.

IN THE CHAIR MR M MCCARTNEY

**ITEM 2. TO ELECT A REPRESENTATIVE ONTO THE ACTIVITIES
COMMITTEE EFFECTIVE FROM JUNE 2025 TO MAY 2028**

2. Three candidates, Mrs Lavender (seconded by Mrs Smith), Mrs Russell (seconded by Mr McIntosh) and Mrs Patrick (seconded by Mr Walton), were proposed for the role of representative onto the Activities Committee. A vote was conducted and Mrs Lavender was elected for the role.

ITEM 3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. Apologies had been received from Ms N Thomas.
4. Ms F Godfrey had retired from the Council. The Council wished to thank Ms Godfrey for all her time and effort and appreciated the work she had put into the Council.

ITEM 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5. The Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2024 as an accurate record.

ITEM 5. MATTERS ARISING/RESULTS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

6. The Council noted that the Board, at its meeting on 18 November 2024, approved the following amendments to the G Regulations:

Regulation G1.c

TO:

c. Only dogs of six calendar months of age and over are eligible for competition at Kennel Club licensed obedience shows. However, show organisers may accept Not for Competition entries at their discretion. ~~Dogs four months and over are eligible to enter Not For Competition.~~ **Dogs 12 weeks and over are eligible to enter Not for Competition.**
(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation G(C)1.f.(6) and (7)

TO:

(6) Pre- Beginners~~48~~ **12** dogs per hour

(7) Introductory~~48~~ **10** dogs per hour
(Insertion in bold. Deletion struck through)
(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation G40

TO:

Penalties

The Board shall have power to impose any of the following penalties upon any person for any breach of Kennel Club Regulations subject to a right of appeal, notice of intention of which must be lodged within 14 days from the date on which the decision is given and subject to the prescribed appeals process as shall be determined by the Board from time to time.

- a. Warn
- b. Censure/Reprimand

- c. Apology directive (Conduct Regulation or the Control of Dog Regulation)
- d. Fine
- e. Award disqualified

In addition, the Board may make the following directives;

- f. A dog's registration record may be marked 'incident recorded'
- g. A dog's registration record may be endorsed 'not eligible for entry in any event held under Kennel Club Rules and Regulations, nor any unlicensed event recognised by the Kennel Club.'

The right of appeal against directives f) and g) listed above extends to an appeal on the finding of fact of a deliberate dog bite only, but does not extend to an appeal against those directives f) and g) in terms of cancellation or modification of such directives if there is a finding of fact of an intentional dog bite.

In the event of any fine not being paid, or non compliance with any apology directive issued within the time stipulated by the Board, then that person may, at the discretion of the Board, be dealt with as if a complaint under Kennel Club Rule A11 had been lodged and proved to the satisfaction of the Board.

For complaints of conduct whether at a licensed event or on social media, in addition to a warning issued - a short term fixed period of refusal of entry/attendance at Kennel Club licensed events may also be imposed in accordance with procedures to be published from time to time to implement this regulation.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation G23

TO:

The owner, exhibitor, handler or other person in charge of a dog at Kennel Club licensed events must at all times ensure that the dog is kept under proper control whilst at the licensed venue, including its environs, car and caravan parks and approaches. This Regulation applies before (at any time during the set up period at the venue), during the event and afterwards (at any time during the breakdown of the event). The mating of bitches within the precincts of the competition, as stipulated above, is forbidden

An exhibitor or competitor should ensure that contact details for any handler are available and must be provided upon request in any investigation of a breach of this regulation by such handler.

(Insertion in bold)

(Effective 1 January 2025)

Regulation G35.I

TO:

No person shall carry out punitive correction or harsh handling of a dog at any time ~~within the precincts of the show~~ **whilst at the licensed venue, including its environs, car and caravan parks and approaches.**

(Deletions struck through. Insertion in bold)
(Effective 1 January 2025)

*Mrs Cox joined the meeting at 10:45am

7. A concern was raised regarding the penalties and the outcome letters sent to any banned dogs. It was confirmed that banned dogs were not allowed to compete or attend Kennel Club licenced shows. The outcome letters had recently been edited to make it clear that a banned dog could not be in attendance at a show.
8. A query was raised as to the reason that the Activities Committee rejected the proposed amendment to Regulations G15, G33j & G33k, relating to the removal of the stipulation that a dog must not have lost more than 15 points out of 230 to be awarded the Obedience Certificate.
9. It was explained that the view of the Activities Committee was that all disciplines had a specific standard for competitions and that the standard should be retained for Obedience at the time. Therefore, the proposal was not supported by the Committee, however that did not mean the proposal could not be reconsidered at a later date.
10. A concern was raised regarding transparency to the Council, it was requested that further information should be passed down to the representatives about their items and to the Council as a whole. Although the Committee and Board meetings were confidential, it was considered helpful to have more information from the minutes to aid understanding regarding reasons that proposals were not supported. The office confirmed that the Council review would be working toward improving transparency and communication from other meetings.
11. A query was raised as to why disciplines were not able to govern their own disciplines and the need to go through the Activities Committee. It was confirmed that Committees and the Board were in place to consider the bigger picture and The Kennel Club as a whole. Although the proposal was a specific Obedience matter, the standard for a Championship Certificate fell to the Activities Committee, as there was a standard across all of the disciplines that have championship status.

Renaming to 'Competitive Obedience'

12. At its meeting on 19 September 2024, the Activities Committee recommended the renaming of Obedience to 'Competitive Obedience'. This was approved by the Board at its meeting on 18 November 2024 and had been actioned from January 2025.

ITEM 6. ACTIVITIES JUDGES SUB-GROUP

13. The Council noted a written report from Mr McCartney following the Sub-Group's meeting held on 24 October 2024.
14. Mr McCartney provided further explanation regarding exploring the feasibility of a Test Design Seminar aimed at those looking to judge B & C for the first time. It was confirmed that this was only an idea at present but it would be investigated and discussed again at the next Sub-Group meeting.
15. It was noted that a new Obedience Accredited Trainer had been appointed and announced, Ms Fiona Holdsworth, who had received positive feedback from the Sub-Group and Obedience Accredited Trainers.
16. It was confirmed that the Academy questions had been updated in line with the 2025 regulations.

ITEM 7. YOUNG KENNEL CLUB

17. The Council noted a written report from Mrs Lavender and attention was drawn to the YKC events that needed additional help, including the YKC Summer Camp 2025.
18. Mrs Lavender stated that there had been positive progress with the YKC department. Discussions had taken place with the new YKC Manager regarding the issues with the YKC Obedience regulations and where improvements could be made. It was noted that the YKC department had planned to review the YKC regulations for all disciplines. The Council considered that good news and was hopeful that positive steps could be taken to help improve YKC Obedience.

ITEM 8. PROPOSALS FROM SOCIETIES/PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS

Miss L Williams

Mrs S Hyde

Proposal to change the description of Capped Classes

19. At its last meeting the Council briefly discussed the possibility of allowing Championship Obedience Shows the same option as Open Obedience Shows, to be able to cap classes. Miss Williams submitted a proposal with the capping levels for Championship Shows to be a minimum of 90. This was seconded by Mrs Patrick.
20. The Council considered the proposed amendment to the regulation:

Regulation G(A)17.c

TO:

c. The capping level must be set at a minimum of 35 entries received **in respect of Open Shows and 90 entries received in respect of Championship Shows**. There is no maximum level at which a cap may be set. Capped classes may be split into two or more divisions in accordance with Regulation G30.b.

21. Mrs Hyde explained that the proposal was due to increased difficulties in appointing sufficient judges to cover the number of entries received, especially in higher classes and when there were multiple shows on the same day. It was raised that on social media there were 22 out of 33 shows looking for C judges, which highlighted the extent of the issue.
22. It was emphasised that the suggested amendment allowed Championship Shows the option to choose to cap one or more class from the outset in order to accommodate exactly how many judges they would need to run their show.
23. The Council expressed that there were issues with entries for Open Show capped classes already, where many competitors were unable to attend certain shows due to entries being fully booked within a very short timeframe after the entries had opened. The issue was more prevalent if entries were opened at 10 o'clock in the morning when some competitors were at work or busy and had unfairly missed the opportunity to enter the show.
24. The capping limit at a minimum of 90 was discussed. It was noted that the larger shows often received over 90 entries in certain classes. It was queried to the judges on the Council as to whether the number of entries received would affect whether they would accept the judging appointment. It was noted that some judges coped better with smaller classes as judging 60 dogs meant standing for very long periods of time, however it was not an issue for all judges.
25. It was raised that mixed Dog and Bitch classes had saved on the amount of judges needed for shows and was a good option for any societies struggling to find judges. It was confirmed that Northern shows frequently did that and it had helped.
26. An issue was raised regarding competitors who travelled to shows in groups in order to reduce travel expenses. If classes were capped and some people were not able to enter in time, then the whole group of competitors may decide not to go to the show if it was too expensive to travel alone.
27. It was explained that the capped classes were originally for new or smaller shows, which did not have large enough venues to accommodate everyone, to get started and gather interest before expanding.
28. It was reiterated that the proposal stated that capping classes was optional. The Council reassessed the proposed regulation amendment and wished to emphasise 'optional' within the regulations, the office would work on the wording to make it clearer to societies.

29. The following amendments were also suggested to reference Championship shows.

Regulation G17.a

TO:

- a. Organisers of open **or Championship** obedience shows may set a capping level on the entries to be accepted in any standard or special class, and may decline entries received after the capping level has been reached.
- b. Wins and places in standard classes capped in accordance with this Regulation will count towards progression at open **and Championship** shows and for Obedience Warrant points.
- c. The capping level must be set at a minimum of 35 entries received. There is no maximum level at which a cap may be set. Capped classes may be split into two or more divisions in accordance with Regulation G30.b.
(Insertions in bold)

30. A vote took place and the above amendments were **recommended** for approval, with the provision of 'optional' being added to regulation G17.a.

ITEM 9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Mr D Moxon

Clarity on the wording for Class A Recall

31. Mr Moxon wished for the Council to discuss the interpretation for the Class A Recall and whether further clarity was needed in the wording for regulation G(C)4.f.

G(C) 4. Tests f. Recall

(3) Class A: The handler will be instructed to leave the dog in the sit or down position (handler's choice of position) and walk away from the dog. Upon further instruction, whilst the handler is walking away from the dog, the handler shall command the dog to come to the heel position and continue the heelwork until instructed to stop. The point at which the dog is called to heel and the halt point shall be the same for all dogs. After calling the dog to heel at no time shall the handler walk directly towards it.

32. It was explained that an issue had arisen where a diagonal was created between the handler leaving, calling and the picking up the dog. There had been different interpretations of the regulation however it was confirmed that the dog should be called whilst the handler was walking away from the dog. However, it was not always possible and the handler may turn left or right until the dog caught up.
33. It was noted that the size of the ring and the speed of the dog could be a factor which impacted whether a dog caught up to the handler before the handler turned around. Judges were given demonstrations of the A Recall in the Judges Practical Seminar and should adjust the course to suit the ring

size. If judges were not setting the test correctly then it was to be raised with the judge at the show or reported in the incident book.

34. It was suggested that the Accredited Trainers could prepare an announcement to remind judges and competitors of the regulation. The office would be able to post it on the Kennel Club Obedience Facebook page, provided that the Accredited Trainers supplied appropriate wording.
35. After some discussion, the Council felt the A Recall was clear enough in regulation G(C)4.f and decided not to progress with the discussion item further.

Ms D Cox

Price deduction for Show Licences

36. Ms Cox requested the Council discuss whether the Kennel Club was able to offer a price deduction for Show Licences and if that would help with entries and judging.
37. Some societies had held two shows on the same day or had split the show into two halves which seemed to have worked well. This allowed judges to judge in the morning and compete in the afternoon, for example. These options appeared to have doubled entries for some societies and was recommended in order to reduce costs. It was noted that many Breed shows had started holding a championship show in the morning along with their partnership show in the afternoon, in order to increase entries and save on expenses.
38. It was confirmed that a reduction in licence fees from the Kennel Club would be unlikely due to the Kennel Club's current financial situation. This would be a discussion for the AGM, however it was noted that other fees across The Kennel Club services were increasing.

ITEM 10. CHAMPIONSHIP OBEDIENCE CATALOGUES

39. The office wished the Council to standardise the format for submitting Championship Obedience Show results. The office requested that the results were clearly noted after each individual class in the catalogue, not in a table at the end. This was intended to make it clearer for staff to see which results related to which class when issuing the awards. It was hoped that this would save errors occurring when reading handwriting and having to double check class entries.
40. The office confirmed that awards@thekennelclub.org.uk should be used to raise any queries with certificates that had not been received.
41. It was queried as to whether the whole catalogue was required from the show secretaries, the office confirmed that only the Championship class results were needed. The results and catalogues should be sent to the show's Regional Support Advisor.

ITEM 11. STRATEGY DOCUMENT

42. The Council reviewed the Strategic Plan and discussed how the items may be progressed.
43. It was noted that the YKC items were ongoing and progression was being made as discussed under Item 7.
44. Progress had been made in reviewing the structure of Obedience classes, with the amendments made to the eligibility of Beginners and allowing food in the lower classes.
45. The Council expressed concern regarding the engagement with grassroots competitors as many other competing disciplines, such as Scentwork and Mantrailing, were available to choose from. It was noted that the Good Citizen Scheme was a good transitional discipline to encourage new competitors to Competitive Obedience, which often gave competitors the satisfaction of achieving certificates and rosettes. It was noted that some Rally competitors had also crossed over from Rally to Competitive Obedience too.
46. The Council wished to find ways to encourage new people to Competitive Obedience and acknowledged Mr McIntosh's efforts, it was noted that he regularly spent time with new competitors within the Special Pre-Beginners classes. Ms Cox had also arranged half day courses specifically for Introductory or Pre Beginner classes and provided competitors with advice on how to get the dogs motivated, enthusiastic, and rewarded within the ring. Ms Cox had received good feedback from those courses, specifically regarding working with other competitors who were competing at the same level, and noted that other Obedience judges had shown an interest in running similar courses too.
47. It was raised that ABC classes were a good way to encourage people to the discipline. However it was queried as to how to get visibility to new people who were not already going to shows. It was suggested that the Obedience Festival would be helpful to attract new people, although it was currently on hold.
48. The impact of social media was raised as an important tool in encouraging competitors within specific regions. Mr McCartney explained that Lisburn & District Canine Society had been posting images of competitors with their awards and videos of exercises and sharing those across different dog-related Facebook pages in the area. That had developed interest and encouraged the public to get in contact with the society or visit a show.
49. Concern was raised regarding the decreased engagement of grassroots competitors with the Obedience Liaison Council. The Council had advertised online meetings and had made themselves available at shows to speak to competitors who had any suggestions, however there had been minimal

uptake. The Council would continue to advertise meet ups on social media and monitor the feedback coming through.

ITEM 12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Docked Dogs

50. Mrs Le Fevre raised the issue of dogs with docked tails and wished to discuss the DEFRA law regarding when a dog could compete at shows. The letter from DEFRA stated that 'the 2006 Act made it an offence to show a dog at an event to which the public is admitted if the dog has had its tail removed'.
51. It was argued that Obedience was a way to display working ability. The office confirmed that the Gundog display at Crufts, for example, was allowed to include docked dogs as it was a display, not a competition. Any docked dogs that attended were not competing. The office also clarified that this was a DEFRA law and not a Kennel Club decision.
52. It was suggested that competitors should be made aware of this law to prevent disappointment for those who would have qualified for Crufts. The office had sent an email to Mrs Smith, the Midlands Inter Regional manager at the time, to advise of this rule in December 2023 which was circulated to the competitors at the time.
53. It was queried as to why agility was exempt from the DEFRA law, it was believed that an agility competitor had contacted DEFRA directly and had then informed the Kennel Club of the statement received. The example of agility was given as a working sport in the letter from DEFRA dated January 2023, it was suggested that this could be an example only and could include other dog sports. The letter stated that 'the ban did not apply to certified docked dogs being shown only for the purpose of demonstrating their working ability (e.g., in agility trials)'. Clarification had been sought from DEFRA by an Obedience competitor but no further communication had been received.
54. Mrs Le Fevre was requested to contact the obedience competitor who raised this issue to find out if correspondence had been received from DEFRA and if the differentiation was made regarding conformation. The office would be able to follow this up with the Public Affairs Team if new information was brought forward.
(Afternote: A subsequent letter had been received reiterating the previous statement.)

Show Entry Query

55. Mr Walton raised a query from a show secretary regarding show entries. A competitor had entered two classes and had won out of her lowest class but did not inform the show secretary in time. It was noted that whilst the competitor should have informed the show secretary, they were still able to compete in the new lowest eligible class but not the class they had won out of. For example if the dog had been entered in Novice and class A but had won out of Novice it would still be able to compete in Class A.

Criteria for Championship Judges

56. Ms Shaw raised the issue of appointing Championship Class C judges and queried whether changing the criteria for a Championship judge would allow for more people to become Championship judges, even if that was only a temporary change. The office confirmed that it was possible to request the Activities Committee to suspend or amend the criteria for a period of time. However a regulation change would need to be submitted for the June agenda. It was believed that the issue would need to be raised with the Accredited Trainers to discuss their views too.

Extendable Leads

57. Mrs Russell had been requested to discuss whether there would be an option to prohibit extendable flexi leads in the show vicinity. It was noted that not many people had experienced the issue which led to discussions about competitors needing to keep their dogs under control. It was confirmed that out of control dogs should be reported in the Incident Book, if multiple issues arose regarding out of control dogs on extendable leads then the matter could be raised again and reviewed. The importance of using the Incident Book for any issues at shows was reiterated.

Judges for ABC Classes

58. Mrs Russell raised an issue with regard to getting judges for ABC classes and a query was raised as to whether societies could have an exception to appoint non-qualified judges to judge the ABC classes or fun classes. It was noted that ABC classes were a good experience for judges as they still brought in good entries and encouraged new competitors to Competitive Obedience. It was confirmed that there was no differentiation in the regulations, special classes would need to have fully qualified judges appointed. It was suggested that a proposal be brought forward regarding judges for special classes and that the issue also be raised with the Accredited Trainers for their feedback.

ITEM 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

59. The Council noted the next meeting of the Obedience Liaison Council would take place on 12 June 2025 via Microsoft Teams. Items for the agenda must be submitted by 14 March 2025.

The meeting closed at 1.18pm

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'